Yang Terukir



Malay Language and Literature

in Celebration of 50 Years of Singapore's Independence

Yang Terukir: Malay Language and Literature in Celebration of 50 Years of Singapore's Independence

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Sehelai Sirih

Encik Lee Hsien Loong, Perdana Menteri Singapura

Lima puluh tahun dalam pembangunan satu tamadun bukanlah satu jangka waktu yang lama. Sama juga dengan pembangunan sebuah negara. Namun, bukan jangka waktu yang menjadi penentu kejayaan sesebuah tamadun atau negara.

Lima puluh tahun persuratan Melayu di Singapura juga bukanlah jangka waktu yang menjadi kayu ukur bidang persuratan Melayu di Singapura yang sememangnya mempunyai sejarah yang panjang dan gemilang. Tetapi, sepanjang 50 tahun ini pelbagai peristiwa telah mencorak dan mewarnai negara kita dan bidang persuratan telah mencatatnya dalam pelbagai genre – puisi, cerpen, novel, artikel akhbar dan banyak lagi. Yang istimewa lagi, bidang persuratan telah berjaya merakamkan dan menyerlahkan pelbagai emosi penulis dan masyarakatnya melalui karya-karya mereka. Gabungan fakta, kreativiti dan emosi membuatkan bidang persuratan amat menarik sekali.

Tahniah saya ucapkan kepada Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura yang berjaya menerbitkan buku Yang Terukir – Bahasa dan Persuratan Melayu Sempena 50 tahun Kemerdekaan Singapura. Saya pasti buku ini akan menjadi rujukan penting generasi ini dan juga ge-nerasi mendatang tentang segala usaha kita untuk mengekalkan bahasa dan budaya Melayu di Singapura agar jati diri Melayu di Singapura kekal terjaga. Jati diri Melayu adalah sebahagian daripada jati diri Singapura. Pemerintah akan terus menyokong usaha setiap kumpulan masyarakat untuk meningkat usaha melestarikan bahasa dan budaya kita agar warga Singapura mempunyai ciri-ciri istimewa yang menjadi aset kepada mereka dalam dunia global sekarang.

Majulah Singapura.

ha al g r

This article is presently not available in English.





Sekacip Pinang

Masagos Zulkifli Masagos Mohamad, Menteri di Pejabat Perdana Menteri, Menteri Kedua Ehwal Dalam Negeri dan Ehwal Luar dan Pengerusi Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura

Kesedaran yang tinggi melalui pemikiran yang tajam merupakan aset penting dalam usaha mengukuhkan identiti sesebuah tamadun. Insan yang mempunyai kelebihan ini berupaya menggugah dan mengubah masyarakat dengan tingkah-laku dan tutur kata yang dijadikan teladan. Selama kita berdiri sebagai sebuah negara, ramai warga kita yang telah menyumbang ke arah pembangunan negara kita dan ramai sekali antara mereka yang telah membentuk pemikiran masyarakat kita dengan pena (atau sekarang dengan papan kunci) dalam bidang persuratan.

Perjuangan dan usaha generasi perintis kita dalam menyampaikan idea untuk sama-sama membangunkan Singapura tidak sia-sia. Kita masih mahu memartabatkan bahasa dan persuratan kita. Kita masih bangga dengan adat dan budaya kita. Kita mahu generasi masa depan terus mempamerkan identiti masyarakat Melayu Singapura – masyarakat progresif yang kukuh nilai dan budaya Melayunya.

Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura(MBMS) telah merakam perjalanan persuratan Melayu kita dalam buku Yang Terukir – Bahasa dan Persuratan Melayu Sempena 50 tahun Kemerdekaan Singapura dengan harapan buku ini menjadi dokumen bernilai untuk generasi seterusnya. Sama ada melalui penceritaan kreatif mahupun wacana sejarah, setiap sumbangan memberikan gambaran hitam putih dan pelbagai warnanya sosiobudaya masyarakat kita. Ulang tahun Singapura yang ke-50 merupakan waktu yang baik untuk kita melihat semula usaha bersama kita membangunkan bidang persuratan negara sepanjang 50 tahun ini dan menjadikannya iktibar untuk ke tahap yang lebih baik lagi.

Sekalung budi saya ucapkan kepada para penulis yang menyumbang artikel mereka dalam buku ini, sidang editor yang telah berkerja keras untuk memastikan mutu penerbitan buku ini dan sekretariat MBMS yang telah menjambatani segala urusan keperluan pentadbiran. Syabas dan tahniah.

This article is presently not available in English.

EDUCATIONAL MEAS

AND PRACTICE

Those Who Ink

Dr Hadijah Rahmat Project chairman and editor-in-chief

The celebrated

Yang Terukir: Malay Language and Literature in Celebration of 50 Years of Singapore's Independence is a commemorative book to mark Singapore's jubilee, an effort by the Malay Language Council, Singapore (MBMS) for the SG50 celebration throughout 2015. Four other commemorative efforts include the special festivities during Malay Language Month, the Mastera (Southeast Asian Literature Council) conference and seminar, the Malay Literary Awards and the Arif Budiman Malay Language Teachers' Award.

This book documents the history of Malay language development in Singapore in the various phases leading up to 2015. The articles in this book are extensive, spanning across language, literature, history, geography, education, religion, music, theatre and film — where Malay is the language of expression — and focusing on significant events, critical stages of development, notable pioneers and contributors, selected genres of work, supporting bodies and institutions, and platforms and media (both traditional and new).



There are two versions of this book:

- The coffee-table book is an abridged, compact, print and illustrated edition to generate interest among readers and the general public.
- 2. The e-book features a more extensive content, and can be read on the MBMS website *www.mbms.sg*, for those who want more in-depth information and knowledge.

The desired

Yang Terukir chronicles the journey of Malay language and literature throughout Singapore history, especially in the past 50 years. The book serves as a repository with three goals in mind:

- To document the heart, mind, spirit and struggle of Malay writings that are positive, dynamic and prideworthy.
- 2. To appreciate the contributions of Malay writing to Singapore's growth and that of Malay literature.
- 3. To serve as a historical document and reference for future generations.

The providers

It took about two years to prepare this book, which is the brainchild of Minister Masagos Zulkifli, who is also Chairman of MBMS.

As Deputy Chairman of MBMS, I was entrusted with the project in 2013 and started planning the book's concept in early 2014. The Editorial Board and assistants were appointed before we sent out letters to writers on 12 May, inviting them to contribute essays related to their expertise and experience. The writers come from various backgrounds — scholars, journalists, educators, creative writers and advocates from the different fields related to Malay language and writing.

We met on 20 June to discuss the goals, scope, guidelines and timeframe in producing the book. We are indebted to the writers for their timely and detailed contributions, which became an irony as we faced the physical constraints of the planned coffee-table book. The Editorial Board, in wanting to feature all the writings, decided on producing two versions of the book.

The project led us on a journey further in history than we had expected, specifically to Temasek about 700 years ago.

The writings in this book bear witness to the vitality, dynamism and flexibility of the Malay language, literature and culture.

The presentation and the expectations

Yang Terukir contains a total of 27 articles in 12 sections, categorised according to theme or focus. The book is a collaborative effort to document the history, collective memories and heart of the Malay language and writing in Singapore up to 2015. The project incidentally led us on a journey further in history than we had expected, specifically to Temasek about 700 years ago.

It is evident that the development of Malay language and literature is very much alive, evolving with the tides of politics, urbanisation, modernisation, educational development, social and religious awareness, multiracial and multicultural connections, technology and communications media, and domestic and international environments.

The voices have been articulated and inked with the assistance and contributions from those who sustained, pioneered, anchored, supported and lifted — their writings a continuity in creations by a younger generation that continues to bloom with the emergence of new platforms and media. The writings in this book bear witness to the vitality, dynamism and flexibility of the Malay language, literature and culture.

The history of the Malay language and literature has been etched into the nation's life story and they continue to overcome the perils of their journey. May the Malay language and literature continue to thrive and make history, building on its identity, humanity and civilisation in the future. God willing.

Praise be to God, I have been blessed to work with fellow Editorial Board members who were hardworking, dedicated and professional. Without their expert contributions and sacrifices, *Yang Terukir* would not have been as well done.

With much gratitude and humility, we present to you Yang Terukir: Malay Language and Literature in Celebration of 50 Years of Singapore's Independence, an enriching sustenance for your heart and mind. May you reap benefits from it. God willing.

Greetings from the Editorial Board.



Part 1 That Which Is Etched 1

Singapore Malay language and writings have a long history, beginning as early as the 13th century. The developments and transformations in their milieu resulted in both experiencing much ebb and flow. Nevertheless, language and writings continue to grow and adapt to ensure their vitality to this day. TELINE 1

DEVELOPMENT OF SINGAPORE'S MALAY LANGUAGE AND LITERARY LANDSCAPE (1299–1964)

Prepared by Hadijah Rahmat, Mohd Raman Daud, Nur Amalina Shalan, Nur Nadia and Farshad Chand.

HISTORICAL EVENT

Arrival of Sang Nila Utama and the founding of the Kingdom of Singapura

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Singapore becomes the theme and backdrop in folk literature

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Tale of Sang Nila Utama and the origin of the Kingdom of Singapura

HISTORICAL EVENT

Majapahit attacks Singapura and Iskandar Shah flees to Melaka, leaving Singapura in the hands of Sri Bija Diraja and under the protection of the Melaka Sultanate

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

Singapore becomes a literary translation hub for Hindu-Buddhism works

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- The Singapore Stone at the mouth of the Singapore River
- Translations of Ramayana and Mahabharata

398

HISTORICAL EVENT Johor-Riau-Lingga Kingdom

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE Malay Canonical Text

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Sejarah Melayu (the Malay Annals), set in Singapore.
- Hikayat Hang Tuah is produced with Singapore as the backdrop.

1612

1299

HISTORICAL EVENT

- Raffles arrives in Singapore, marking the start of British colonial rule
- The establishment of housing in Kampong Glam and its surroundings including Kallang, Kampong Melaka at Havelock, Telok Blangah and Pasir Panjang

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Printing by Mission Press takes off in Melaka and expands to Singapore
- Munshi Abdullah arrives in Singapore from Melaka to help Mission Press with publishing works

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Singapore Regulations written by Raffles and translated by Munshi Abdullah

1824

HISTORICAL EVENT

- 17 March Anglo-Dutch Treaty
- 3 August
- Full British colonial rule and scholarly contributions from the Europeans

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

• 17 March

The Malay Archipelago is split between the British and Dutch

Jawi text is produced

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Sejarah Melayu translated by Dr John C Leyden

1827

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Vocabulary of the English and Malay Languages containing more than 2,000 words published by Mission Press



HISTORICAL EVENT Sultan Hussein Shah moves to Melaka



DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Birth of Jawi classic text

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Kitab Adat Segala Raja-Raja Melayu Dalam Segala Negeri (book detailing royal customs)

1838

HISTORICAL EVENT

Raffles returns to Singapore, which is now a trading hub and a layover for Haj pilgrims from Southeast Asia

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Singapore becomes the centre for Malay-Muslim Publishing

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah (book on Munshi Abdullah's travels and voyages) is produced

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

The Malay Annals published by Thomas MacMicking for the Singapore Institution



المتدافق فيا أول توان ورددولية كت لديكمان ملومة

الملك والدار فيرود والدولكار وروال كالفاد

الموادي - المارت كالتوى الا يغدته المواد الوق وان وكواكن وان وال المراجع يتلا بياي وان والمات

Kitab Adat Segala Raja-Raja Melayu Dalam Segala Negeri

1843

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE Syair becomes popular

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Syair Singapura Terbakar and Cerita Kapal Asap by Munshi Abdullah

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Syair Kampung Gelam Terbakar by Munshi Abdullah

1849

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Pioneering of the autobiographical genre

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Hikayat Abdullah published, sparking off modern Malay literature



Munshi Abdullah

1851

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Cerita Darihal Haji Sabar Ali

1854

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Negeri Jeddah

1855

HISTORICAL EVENT

Sultan Ali crowned Sultan of Johor and Temenggong Ibrahim reigns over Singapura

1858/9

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Majalah Cermin Mata bagi Orang yang Menuntut Pengetahuan

1865

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Raja Ali Haji begins writing *Tuhfat Al-Nafis*, chronicling events which Singapura is recorded as an important state in Malay history

1868

HISTORICAL EVENT

Temenggong Abu Bakar crowned as Maharaja of Johor, ending the power of Malay kings in Singapore

1876

PRODUCTION/ PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Jawi Peranakkan newspaper published (till 1895) and used as a reading material in Malay vocational primary schools

HISTORICAL EVENT

The rise of Semangat Reformasi Islam and Nasionalisme Kaum Muda movements led by Syed Syeikh Alhadi and Syeikh Tahir Jalaluddin, both influenced by the thinking of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida from Egypt

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Al-Imam magazine, led by Syaikh Muhammad Salim Al-Kalily as editor, is published (till 1909). Its tone is similar to that of Egypt's Al-Manar

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Al-Imam magazine by Syed Syeikh Alhadi lists 26 values for newspapers to adhere to, including ideation, historical reflections, devotion, and guidance for apostates

1907

HISTORICAL EVENT The rise of Malay intellectuals

PRODUCTION/ PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Mohd Eunos Abdullah heads Utusan Melayu (1907–1914) before leading the publishing of the *Lembaga Melayu* newspaper

1926

HISTORICAL EVENT

Kesatuan Melayu Singapura established. The semi-political body at Istana Kampong Glam fights for Malay rights in education and land privileges, including the resettlement of Malays from Kallang to Kampong Melayu

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Faridah Hanum by Syed Syeikh Alhadi is published



Formation of Kesatuan Melayu Singapura or Singapore Malay Union, a semi-political organisation at Istana Kampong Gelam in 1926.

Mohd Eunos Abdullah, head of Utusan Melayu



Utusan Melayu newspaper launched in 1939

Maulana Abdul

PRODUCTION/ PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Melur Kuala Lumpur by Harun Aminurrashid is published

1930 1932/3 1939

HISTORICAL EVENT

Muslim Missionary Society Singapore (now known as Jamiyah Singapore) founded by Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddique

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Laila Majnun, first Malay feature film starring Pak Suki and Shariff Medan, is produced

Aleem Siddique founds the Muslim Missionary Society Inow known as Jamiyah Singapore)

HISTORICAL EVENT

Era of Malay magazines and newspapers

PRODUCTION/ PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

The launch of Utusan Melayu supported by Kesatuan Melayu Singapura and managed by Yusof Ishak



The magazine Fajar Asia first published on 25 Jan 1943 by Al-Ahmadiah Press

1942-1945

HISTORICAL EVENT

- Japanese Occupation
- Singapore becomes the administrative post for the Japanese forces

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

Fight against British colonisation takes centre stage in Malay literature

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Pioneering of a new style of poetry led by Masuri S N.
- Biweekly magazine Fajar Asia (Jan 1943 – Apr 1944) published by Al-Ahmadiah Press. Standardised spelling adopted throughout Malaya and Sumatera

HISTORICAL EVENT Founding of Singapore Malay Teachers' Union

1948

HISTORICAL EVENT

P Ramlee arrives in Singapore and invited by B S Rajhans to work with Malay Film Production Studios under Shaw Brothers

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Founding of Malay Youth Literary Association (4PM)

HISTORICAL EVENT

Post-war era



P Ramlee arrives in Singapore and works with Malay Film Production Studios under Shaw Brothers



Natrah Riots in 1950

1950 (6 AUGUST)

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Asas '50 established by Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad and 18 other co-founders at 24H Henderson Road

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

The motto "Literature for the Community" is introduced

HISTORICAL EVENT

Natrah (birth name Maria Hertogh) Riots

1950 (OCTOBER)

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE Founding of Lembaga Bahasa Melayu

HISTORICAL EVENT Malaya Era

1952 (12–13 APRIL)

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

The Pan-Malayan Malay Literary Congress officiated at Hotel Sea View, Singapore by Ibu Zain (Siti Zainon Musyi Sulaiman, mother of writer Adibah Amin), head of the Kaum Ibu Umno



Asas '50 established by Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad in August 1950



Zainal 'Abidin Ahmad (Za'ba) heads the Malay Studies Department at the University of Malaya in 1953



Harun Aminurrashid publishes Pantun Soal Jawab in 1954

HISTORICAL EVENT Malaya Era

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Establishment of the Malay Studies Department at the University of Malaya headed by Zainal 'Abidin Ahmad (Za'ba) 1954

HISTORICAL EVENT Malaya Era

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

The Second Malay Language and Literary Congress held at King George V School in Seremban, Malaysia

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Pantun Soal Jawab by Harun Aminurrashid 1955– 1956

HISTORICAL EVENT

- Majlis Pelajaran Melayu (council focusing on Malay studies) established to fight against the Reorientation Plan by the Colonial Education Department. The council supports the People's Action Party (PAP) which would win the 1959 general election.
- Malay recognised and adopted as the national language.
- Founding of the Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



Zubir Said forms Perkumpulan Seni

A Samad Ismail forms Singapore Malay Journalists Association with Zahrah Za'ba.

Mahmud Ahmad forms Malay Cultural Association

• Other cooperative movements established, including the Singapore Malay Teachers Co-operative

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Founding of Sriwana by Nongchik Abdul Ghani, Sulaiman Jeem and others
- Founding of Perkumpulan Seni by Zubir Said, Mustaffa Yassin, Hussein Jahidin, A Ghani Hamid, Bani Buang, Usman Awang, and others
- Founding of Singapore Malay Journalists Association by A Samad Ismail, Zahrah Za'ba, Ramli Abdul Hadi, Sulaiman Jeem and others

- Founding of Malay Cultural Association by Mahmud Ahmad, Ramli Abdul Hadi, A Ghani Hamid and others
- Founding of Singapore Malay Youth Library Association to cultivate reading habits

A Ghani Hamid

is also a founder

of Malay Cultural

Association



DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Third Malay Language and Literary Congress held at Istana Bukit Timbalan Johor Bahru, with the conference held at the University of Malaya's Bukit Timah campus. Za'ba honoured with the title Pendeta by Abdul Razak Hussein, Minister in charge of Education.
- Lembaga Tetap Kongress established in both Singapore and Malaya

HISTORICAL EVENT

- The Singapore Islamic Scholars and Religious **Teachers** Association (Pergas) established by Ustaz Daud Ali, Kiyai Zoohri Mutamin, Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji Mohamad and others
- Muhammadiyah Singapura • established by Ustaz Abdul Rahman Harun
- 31 August The Federation of Malaya achieves independence with Tunku Abdul Rahman as its first Prime Minister

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

WAKIL KELUAR PERSIDANGAN

BERITA HARIAN

UMNO TERIMA RANG PERLEMBAGAAN

ITU LAH YANG BAIK SEKALI KITA DAPATI KATA DATO RAZAK

Embassy

Berita larian: akhbar intok Sprank UCHAP SELAMAT KETUA MENTERI

KAPADA AKHBAR BERITA HARIAN

—Begitu juga dari Raja2 Melayu

UMNO mahu sekolah di-segerakan

RED LION

1000

- 1 July The Berita Harian newspaper was established by The Straits Times Press in Kuala Lumpur, with A Samad Ismail and Hugh Mabbet as editors
- Jalan Bahasa Mudah (Malay textbook) by MAS
- Panduan Membaca dan Menulis Jawi by Mahmud Ahmad

Berita Harian first published on 1 July 1957

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Mahmud Ahmad introduces the concept of national culture in the Qalam publication, followed by lectures on radio in the early 60s
- The national anthem Majulah Singapura, written by Zubir Said, played at the reopening of the refurbished Victoria Theatre
- Panglima Awang by Harun Aminurrashid published
- Belajar Bahasa Kita (school textbook) by Harun Aminurrashid published

HISTORICAL EVENT

- Singapore self-governs and tries to join the Federation of Malaya
- Malay language classes organised for public servants
- Dr Goh Keng Swee promises Malay to be the lingua franca

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Majulah Singapura adopted as the national anthem

1960

HISTORICAL EVENT

- Malaya Era
- Malay Language Month held annually till 1966

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Majalah Budaya contributed by the Chinese community
- Institute of National Language and Culture established to front the national language movement

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Quarterly magazine Majalah Budaya published to promote cohesion through a common language, lasting for only three editions

1961

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Salina by A Samad Said published by DBP, with Singapore as the setting for the novel
- Puisi Melayu Baru anthology published

HISTORICAL EVENT

• Malaya Era

1962-1969

- Dewan Bahasa dan Kebudayaan Melayu (DBKK) established by Ministry of Culture, headed by Professor Slamet Muljana (1929– 1986) who is on loan from Nanyang University (Nantah)
- Malay secondary education begins at Sang Nila Utama (1962) and Tun Seri Lanang (1964) Secondary Schools

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Majalah Sastera Nanyang, contributed by the Chinese community
- DBKK organises meetings between Malayan writers in Singapore

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Majalah Sastera Nanyang published by Nantah educators

1963

HISTORICAL EVENT

Strike by Utusan Melayu workers after the newspaper moved its operations to Kuala Lumpur

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

DBKK Singapura organises short story writing contests in four languages



Malay secondary education begins at Sang Nila Utama Secondary School in 1962



Conference to discuss the establishment of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday Memorial Scholarship Fund (LBKM) in 1964

HISTORICAL EVENT Angkatan Pelukis Aneka Daya established

Association of Adult Religious Students Singapore (Perdaus) and Young Women and Men Society Singapore (Perwanit) established

Conference to discuss the establishment of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday Memorial Scholarship Fund (LBKM)

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Launch of Language Week

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Asas Tatabahasa by MAS

Panduan Ejaan Rumi by Mahmud Ahmad


Part 2 Those Who Learn

The use of the Malay language was widespread and flourishing before and just after Singapore was a part of Malaysia. However, changes in the political climate and demands of economic survival after the nation attained independence in 1965 led to the English language taking on a more prominent and leading role. These days, we face the challenge of revitalising the learning and use of our mother tongue.

Malay Language in Education Planning Successes and Challenges



Dr Mohamed Aidil Subhan

Introduction

Bilingualism is the cornerstone of Singapore's language policy, English being the language of administration, business and education, while the mother tongue plays the role of cultural repository. The policy framework was sketched out in 1956, based on a report by the All-Party Committee which propagated for the use of English in schools alongside Chinese, Malay and Tamil in Singapore's multiracial society. Although the primary purpose of the report was for the preservation and use of the Chinese language, it also emphasised equal inclusion of the Malay and Tamil languages in the Singapore education system.



REIGN OF MALAY LANGUAGE IN SINGAPORE: Kota Raja Malay School was one of the many Malay schools that sprouted throughout the island.

The bilingual system, which places emphasis on the English language and one other mother tongue, is described by Pakir (1993) as an English-knowing bilingualism, with English as the main language. After more than 50 years of bilingualism, the Malay language remains a relevant and widely used language — especially in education — through the programmes designed and implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE) Singapore.

Singapore education phases

In studying the development of teaching and learning of the Malay language, we have to consider the phases in Singapore education since its independence in 1965. There have been three phases — survival-driven (1965 to 1978), proficiency-driven (1979 to 1991) and ability-driven (from 1992) — each with its own set of challenges in relation to the relevance and function of the Malay language.

Development of Malay language in survivaldriven education phase (1965 to 1978)

I refer to this phase as the Golden Age of the Malay language in Singapore. Although Singapore had separated from Malaysia, the Malay language played a vital role as the language of unification, commerce and administration albeit just at the beginning.

There was exponential growth of Malay schools at primary, secondary and pre-university levels in this phase. Well-known Malay schools at the time included Pasir Panjang Junior School, Tanglin Tinggi Malay School, Kota Raja Malay School, Yusof Ishak Secondary School, Sang Nila Utama Secondary School, Monk's Hill Secondary School, Tun Seri Lanang Secondary School, Ahmad Ibrahim Secondary School and the pre-university centre at Bartley Secondary School.



FOR PROFICIENCY: Hawazi Daipi, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Education, speaking with a group of students during one of his school visits.

Development of Malay language in proficiency-driven education phase (1979 to 1991)

In this phase, there was a decline in the emphasis on the use of the Malay language. This could be due to, among others, a decrease in the number of Malay schools caused by a drop in student enrolment. The emphasis in education was more focused on the use of English, while Malay and other mother tongues were relegated to cultural repositories.

It was also in this phase that changes were implemented in the Singapore education system to consider differing abilities among students. The report by Goh (MOE, 1978) scrutinised the decline in proficiency of Chinese and English in the bilingual system. To counter this, MOE introduced the streaming system which channelled students with poor academic results to either the Extended or Monolingual stream in primary schools with an additional year or two of primary education. In secondary schools, they were put in the Normal (Academic) or Normal (Technical) stream with an additional year of education.

These changes benefited the Malay students as they could learn at a more manageable pace. Students who were weak in Malay were given more time to master the language and attain better results, thus improving their proficiency in the language.

Development of Malay language in abilitydriven education phase (1992 to date)

The streaming system was updated in this phase, expanding the students' abilities to include non-academic areas. Mental and physical health were emphasised to develop students with a competitive edge in the era of globalisation.

With the cessation of Malay schools, the Malay Language Curriculum and Pedagogy Review Committee in 2004 pushed for initiatives that focused on the Malay language. It was the first time MOE conducted a review that focused on curriculum and pedagogy for a mother tongue subject. The committee had been formed to identify the weaknesses of programme administration and implementation, their implications, and redress.

In the 2004 review, the focus was not only on students' linguistic abilities but also their communication skills. Schools were encouraged to place emphasis on students' verbal communication and the link between learning and their daily needs. After studying the three phases, we notice substantial changes in the planning of the Malay-language education. The Malay language that used to be the language of unification and mediation now holds the status of a mother tongue language within the framework of an English-knowing bilingualism in Singapore. Government initiatives and programmes have been enforced through its agencies to cultivate this development of the Malay language. Let's take a look at the initiatives.

Brief explanation of Cooper

The Cooper framework divides language planning into three models — status, corpus and acquisition. "Whereas status planning refers to the various functions languages have in societies, corpus

planning refers to modification or maintenance of the actual forms of language, which are deemed appropriate for the functions of the language. Acquisition planning looks at the organised efforts to promote the learning of language." (Cooper, 1989)

This article specifically focuses on the acquisition planning of the Malay language in education from 1965 to 2015.

Cooper's acquisition planning model

This study explores Cooper's acquisition planning in the Malay language. Acquisition planning of a language is evaluated based on its objectives and methods.

Method	Type of acquisition	Examples of implementation	
Overt language planning	Acquisition of language as a second or foreign language	Acquisition of Malay as a third language under the Malay (Special Programme)	
	Reacquisition of language	Reuse or reacquisition of the Malay language in particular domains, such as religion and culture	
	Retention of language	Addressing the decline in language use through language planning in education, such as the Elective Malay Language Programme for Secondary School (EMAS)	
Goal-driven methodology	 Create and enhance the opportunities and room to learn the language Create and enhance incentives to learn the language Create and enhance opportunities and incentives to learn the language 	 Direct methods such as classroom learning, design of instructional materials, use of authentic materials (included in new measures) Indirect methods such as using a simplified form of the mother tongue to facilitate learning (language corpus planning) Pegging eligibility for higher education to results in Malay Language immersion or bilingual education programmes such as bicultural studies 	

But the fact remains that the language will increasingly face challenges even beyond the next 50 years.

Overt language planning

There are three acquisition types in this method — acquisition of language as a second or foreign language, reacquisition of language and retention of language.

1. Acquisition of language as a second language

The acquisition of language as a second or foreign language has been reflected in MOE's initiative since the 1990s in offering the learning of Malay as a third language for the top 15 per cent of the student cohort entering secondary school each year. MOE also offers the Malay (Special Programme), or M(SP), within the framework of learning a third language for interested secondary students regardless of their PSLE results. This allows more non-native speakers to be exposed to the language and to include Malay as a subject in their O-level exams.

2. Reacquisition of language

Emphasis is placed on the use of the Malay language as a window to culture and values in this method. The Vision of *Arif Budiman*: A Case Study of Malay Language Education in Singapore, which talks about the shaping of a cultured and learned individual who can contribute to the community, has become a catalyst in the learning of the Malay language.

This vision was introduced in 2005 after a 2004 review on the Malay-language curriculum and syllabus. It serves as the foundation of Malay language education from primary school to pre-university, in hopes that positive values can be inculcated in the students through the language.

Since the release of the vision, MOE has stressed the importance of inculcating positive values through studentcentric and value-driven education. Although implemented across the board, the focus has been on teaching the Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) lessons using the book *Rakyat Yang Budiman*. This increases the importance of the Malay language as a support to the universal use of English and strengthens the use of Malay in teaching values and culture.

3. Retention of language

MOE proactively reviewed special Malay-language programmes in 1999 and initiated three main ones that paved the way for elite users of the language — EMAS, Malay Language Elective Programme (MLEP) at junior college and the opening of undergraduate Malay language and literature programmes at the National Institute of Education/Nanyang Technological University (NIE/NTU). Starting with just two secondary schools and a junior college, EMAS and MLEP have expanded to six secondary schools (including the MOE Language Centre in Bishan) and three junior colleges, and the NIE/NTU undergraduate programme has covered 15 cohorts. This illustrates a progress in the acquisition planning of the Malay language.

Goal-driven methodology

In achieving the goals of language planning, there are three acquisition methods that Cooper employed in his evaluations — the creation and enhancement of opportunities and room, incentives, and both opportunities as well as incentives to learn the language.

1. Increasing learning opportunities

The creation and enhancement of opportunities and room can be done either directly or indirectly.

Directly

This can be implemented through classroom learning, the design of instructional materials and use of authentic materials — as seen in the new Malaylanguage syllabus from 2008 to 2015. In the new syllabus, the emphasis is on designing student-centric teaching materials that take into account the different needs, abilities and interests. Student-centric learning has to be authentic and viewed in its context, and calls for syllabus updates to keep up with current trends. To create an *Arif Budiman*, the syllabus focus and emphasis have to meet the students' needs.

Indirectly

The form of a language can be simplified to facilitate learning. In addition to the language standardisation that has been implemented since the 1980s, the language components are also simplified accordingly and emphasis is placed on understanding the language instead of merely knowing it. This will enhance learning and in turn improve the students' linguistic competence and communication skills. The drive to improve their communication skills is a bid to create individuals who are proficient and confident in using the Malay language in various situations.

2. Increasing learning incentives

Incentives to learn a language can be created and enhanced to achieve the learning goals. In teaching and learning the Malay language, the programmes have incentives such as the automatic eligibility to Higher Malay Language at secondary level for those who pass Higher Malay or excel on the whole at PSLE. Further incentive is offered to students who excel in Higher Malay Language at O levels, in the form of a two-point discount for admission to junior college. The incentives make the programme relevant and attractive to students who are interested in learning the Malay language.

3. Increasing learning opportunities and incentives

Lastly, we can create and enhance opportunities and incentives in learning a language. We have seen an increase in opportunities for students to participate in overseas immersion and bicultural programmes. In immersion programmes, schools are given funds to take students to Malaysia or Indonesia for homestays, enabling students to experience Malay culture and language in an authentic village environment.

MOE also expanded outdoor programmes through the Mother Tongue Fortnight, where schools are given funds to organise linguistic, cultural and literary activities outside curriculum time. The initiative was introduced in the Nurturing Active Learners and Proficient Users: 2010 Mother Tongue Languages Review Committee report. Among its recommendations are for the teaching and learning of the Malay language to be held in an authentic environment and the students to acknowledge that active use of the language has to extend beyond the classroom.

Findings of Cooper-based Malay-language acquisition planning

The acquisition planning of the Malay language in education has been encouraging and developing well. More options are offered to students studying the Malay language, in the form of programmes and incentives, up to the intended levels. This is the crux of Singapore's mother tongue acquisition planning, particularly for the Malay language, in pushing for the learning of a language that is driven by students' interests and abilities.

The planner's job is to provide a platform in the form of learning opportunities and incentives — something Singapore has succeeded in for over 50 years. But it should be noted that this success is measured mainly from the Malay language acquisition planning.

The Cooper framework also assesses the status and corpus planning of a language. These have been tough to implement for the Malay language. Based on the framework, Cooper (1989, 98) developed an accounting scheme to analyse language planning.

"What actors attempt to influence what behaviours of which people for what ends, under what conditions, by what means, through what decision-making process, with what effect?"

The term "actors" refers to individuals or organisations involved in policymaking, "behaviours" refers to premeditated behavioural changes, "people" refers to the target of the intended language change and "ends" refers to behaviour regardless of its relation to the language. "Conditions" are determined by time, environment, structure, culture and information. The term "means" refers to various forms of implementation, such as coercion, motivation and promotion, "decision-making process" refers to the legal framework in which issues and objectives are formulated and "effect" refers to the outcome.

Based on Cooper's accounting scheme, we see government agencies such as MOE and the Malay Language Council, Singapore (MBMS) as "actors" trying to influence the behaviour of language users through education. This is to strike a balance in all the mother tongues and modernise education by using policies such as bilingualism to retain the use of the language. Language planners can use their findings through the Cooper framework to clarify, predict and explain the effectiveness of their activities.

Challenges in the next 50 years

Complex challenges may arise from the steady success of the Malay language acquisition planning in education, which creates the impression that the Malay language is in safe hands and will always be watched over by the government and its agencies. But the fact remains that the language will increasingly face challenges even beyond the next 50 years.

In forecasting the challenges, I have divided them into categories based on three factors — education, proficiency and relevance. They have to be the cornerstone of Malay-language acquisition planning in Singapore.

Education

In the survival-driven education phase, Malay language education leaned towards drills, and students were assumed to have possessed basic proficiency. In the proficiency-driven phase, the emphasis was on exam results, prioritising the ability to answer questions to get the best scores. In the ability-driven phase, emphasis is placed on students' abilities and interests in varied teaching methods steeped in engaging interaction with students.

Multimedia technology and social media platforms are used to stimulate learning. I foresee the use of social media becoming even more common over the next 50 years and affecting the use of languages, making them more compact and abrupt. Case in point: Wordy emails were upstaged by shorter Facebook posts and followed Instagram and Twitter with their character limits. This raises the importance of understanding the concept of visual literacy and use of Malay language on these platforms, inducing the need for a change in the methods of teaching and learning the Malay language. The teaching methods have to depend on the context of its use and user's proficiency.

Proficiency

The proficiency required in the next 50 years will be different when we consider the changes through time and relevance of the Malay language. Halliday et al (1968) mentions the seven functions of language — instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative and representational.

I believe these functions are no different for the Malay language and will remain consistent, but proficiency will be affected in its use online. What is needed but increasingly becoming a challenge is the prudent use of the Malay language and frequent use of its more refined form. The expert use of the Malay language reflects on a person's wisdom and knowledge, the personification of *Arif Budiman*.

Relevance

The 2010 population census showed that there was an upward trend in English being used in Malay households. Although small when compared to the Chinese and Tamil language, the 10 per cent transition from the year 2000 indicated a shrinking use of the Malay language in private space.

MOE's study in 2004 also showed a similar transition among students who studied the Malay language. Students and parents were increasingly viewing the Malay language in a bad light, citing the increasing difficulty in learning the language and diminishing interest to be among the contributing factors. There is a need for a paradigm shift and acquisition planning should factor in these views and the shrinking use of the Malay language.

Conclusion

In acquisition planning, MOE as the leading figure has introduced initiatives and programmes that have benefited the teaching and learning of Malay and other mother tongues. The initiatives and programmes, based on the seven review reports that have been produced between 1956 and today, are crucial to the realisation of the *Arif Budiman* vision.

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Key reports on Malay language acquisition planning in Singapore

- 1. Report by the All-Party Committee of the Singapore Legislative Assembly on Chinese Education, 1956 (The bilingual system begins)
- Report by the Ministry of Education, 1978: Assessment of the Bilingual Policy (The catalyst for the Efficiency-Driven Phase and commencement of multiple streaming systems).
- Improving Primary School Education Report, 1991 (The catalyst for Ability-Driven phase. Expansion of special programmes based on students' interests and abilities)
- 4. Malay Language Review Steering Committee, 1999 (The beginning of the EMAS and MLEP programmes, and BA in Malay Language & Literature)

Mother Tongue Languages Curriculum & Pedagogy Review Committees, 2002–2004 (The birth of the *Arif Budiman* vision and learning according to students' abilities)

Primary and Secondary Education Review and Implementation Committees, 2009–2010 (emphasis on active and authentic learning).

Mother Tongue Language Review Committee, 2011. *Nurturing Active Learners*. (Catalyst to the new syllabus that, among others, emphasises explicit learning)

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Maintenance of Malay Language in Singapore



Dr Roksana Bibi Abdullah

Introduction

The Malay language, which was the lingua franca in most of Southeast Asia and language of commerce in Asia from the 7th to 16th century, grew rapidly and lives on as a modern language. It underwent robust programming when it became the national and official language in countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore.

According to Asmah Haji Omar (2008:14), more than 500 indigenous tribes (Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia) in the Malay world have their own ethnic language for communication within their kin groups but Malay remains the unifying language between the communities.

Singapore, which used to be a part of Malaysia, has traversed rapid linguistic currents. The local Malay community comprises different ethnic backgrounds and vernacular languages, with most of the Malay groups hailing from Indonesia's Java, Madura, Makassar, Minangkabau and the Riau Islands. They joined the native Malays who share the same language and culture as the Malays in Malaysia.

As documented in Singapore history, the Malays were the indigenous population headed by a Temenggong at the time of Raffles' arrival in 1819. The Malay group grew through immigration, especially of those from Malaya and the Riau Islands. The economic boom as Singapore grew in trade attracted more immigrants eager to seize the opportunities, resulting in a widely

diverse local population.

Early history of Singapore's Malay language

Looking back at Singapore's history, the status of the Malay language has changed radically since the People's Action Party (PAP) became the ruling party in 1959 and implemented the bilingualism policy. There are four official languages in Singapore: English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil. Malay, Mandarin and Tamil are the mother tongues of the ethnic population, while English is a colonial legacy used as the language of administration, a common working language.

- Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English shall be the four official languages in Singapore.
- 2. The national language shall be the Malay language and in Roman script, provided that:
 - a. No person shall be prohibited or prevented from using or learning any other language, and



MALAY AS A NATIONAL LANGUAGE: The song Majulah Singapura composed by Zubir Said was selected as the National Anthem of Singapore.

Singapore's complex sociolinguistics is the result of the existence of the mother tongues and more than 10 dialects and vernacular languages such as Javanese, Bawean, Banjar, Bugis, Arabic and Urdu spoken by small groups of people. Chinese dialects such as Hokkien, Cantonese and Hainanese also contribute to the nation's multilingualism.

The PAP picked Malay as the national language in its language policy which can be found in the Singapore Independence Act, 1965:

 Nothing in this section shall prejudice the right of the government to preserve and sustain the use and study of the language of any other community in Singapore. (Singapore Gazette Acts Supplement, 1965: 99–100)

PAP at the time believed that not only did the learning of the Malay language in Singapore have to develop beyond primary school level, but it also deserved to be prioritised over other languages as a second language in English-, Chinese- and Tamil-medium schools. PAP also emphasised that Malay should be the principal language in Singapore. In the May 1959 elections, PAP promised that Malay would be the lingua franca in Singapore. During the hustings, Goh Keng Swee promised a prominent position for the Malay language in PAP's language policy. He said:

"... in future society, we hope to bring about the barriers between groups that have disappeared. People will no longer live in groups isolated from each other. There will be free communication through a common language — Malay". (Goh, 1959)

The Malay language's esteemed political standing was evident in its status as the national language,

which was stipulated by the PAP. That status was not merely symbolic but also an indication that Malay was to be the bridging language and for work. The PAP had believed that Singapore's survival, be it political or economic, depended on the wider external through a unification with Malaya.

The Malay language under the PAP administration has had its fair share of challenges despite the government's move to bolster the stature of the language especially through the education system. Among the government's early efforts included the formation of the Malay Education Advisory Committee which, after a visit to Indonesia in 1960, proposed that:



The use of the Malay language in Singapore continues to face challenges, fighting against the wave sweeping over the Malays amid globalisation.



MANDATORY ENGLISH: As an industrious country with no natural resources other than its people, Singapore needs a fluency in English to attain economic progress.

- The government support the development of Malay-medium education based on Indonesia's ability in using Bahasa Indonesia as the language of instruction at tertiary level,
- 2. A Primary 1 pass in Malay be made mandatory for teachers,
- The use of the national language be encouraged through a more aggressive campaign,
- More textbooks published in Indonesia be used as reference material and a translation bureau be formed to make up for the lack of textbooks,
- 5. The teacher exchange scheme kick off with English language teachers going to Indonesia,

- 6. Malay language teachers who want to upgrade the skills be given extensive courses, and
- 7 A Malay-medium vocational school is established. (Gopinathan, 1974: 41)

Language use and status

According to Lubna (2008: 46), "In order to accomplish a successful merger with the Federation of Malaya, Malay was, from a strategic point of view, the most logical choice". In its bid to join Malaya for political and economic stability, the government made efforts to develop and spread the use of the Malay language among all races in Singapore.

Initiatives to recognise the importance of the Malay language included:

- Heavy subsidy for the local radio to launch a programme teaching the Malay language,
- Making it mandatory for non-Malay teachers to pass Primary 1 Malay and government employees to pass Primary 2 Malay,
- Bonus incentives for teachers who passed Malay exams \$200 for Primary 2 level and \$500 for Primary 3,
- 4. Launch of language weeks in 1964 and the National Language Month from 25 November to 11 December 1965,
- Naming Zubir Said's Majulah Singapura as the national anthem which to this day is sung in schools every day in a bid to popularise the use of the national language,
- 6. Designating Malay as the language of military drill commands,
- Making knowledge of the national language mandatory for new citizens,
- Teaching Malay as a second or third language in schools

 second in English schools and third in Chinese and Tamil schools,
- Establishing the independent and inclusive National Language Action Committee to promote the use of the Malay language, especially among non-Malays, and
- 10. Prioritising public announcements and civil service directives in Malay.

The united effort by the government and people of Singapore elevated the status of the Malay language. The leaders got what they hoped for when Singapore became part of Malaya on 16 September 1963. But the political challenges confronting the government and the navigation of the four streams of the education system intensified. While the government made every effort to give equal treatment to all four school streams, economic and social transformation widened the gap between the utilitarian value between the English language and the mother tongues. The hope that the Malay language would become a bridge between communities started to fade (Gopinathan, 1974: 49).

After 9 August 1965, when Singapore gained its independence, Lee Kuan Yew at a press conference said:

"We are going to have a multi-racial nation in Singapore... we unite regardless of race, language, religion or culture."

Two days later, he said:

"There would be equality of races but Malay would remain the national language and existing Malay privileges would continue. The Government's multiracial policy would be written into the Singapore Constitution with safeguards for minorities and steps to raise the economic and educational standards of the Malays." (Gopinathan, 1974: 43)

Decline of the Malay language in Singapore

Although there was the promise to champion the Malay language, the economic survival of a country without natural resources took precedence. By 1966, after a series of political changes between Malaysia and Singapore, it was clear that the Malay language had to take a back seat, a proficiency in the language not enough to guarantee a bright future for the people. The national language became "more ceremonial than functional" while English rose to become the important language in Singapore (Afendras, 1980).

In the wake of major political changes, the status of the Malay language was greatly affected, such as:

- 1. Disappearance of Malay lessons in the media,
- 2. Discontinuation of bonuses for fluency in Malay in the early 1960s,

- Removal of mandatory knowledge of the Malay language for a post in a government office,
- 4. Growth in prominence for the teaching of English and Mandarin in print media and English lessons in broadcast media,
- 5. Increase in the use of English in public notices and signs on roads and public places, and
- 6. Prioritisation of English in the education policy that eventually eradicated Malay schools. Singapore's language policy, which was directly linked to education and politics, shifted its emphasis from the Malay language to English, as highlighted in Lawrence Basapa's article in *The Straits Times* on 12 April 1970. A poll by the media also showed that the majority of the Malays would choose to send their children to English-medium schools (Gopinathan, 1974: 45).

Status of the Malay language in Singapore

As the smallest country in Southeast Asia, Singapore had a population of about 5.5 million including immigration — 74.3 per cent Chinese, 13.3 per cent Malays, 9.1 per cent Indian and 3.3 per cent Others (Department of Statistics, 2014).

The once fiery enthusiasm by the government and multiracial population to elevate the Malay language withered postindependence; proficiency in the language no longer seen as beneficial to the country's economy. This realisation also hit the Malay community itself.

The drive to learn and develop the Malay language diminished along with the decline in its use and relevance among both Malays and non-Malays in Singapore. The Malay community raced to master the English language to remain relevant and to be on equal footing with other ethnic groups, especially in the pursuit of employment. Singapore is a developed industrial country whose economic pulse beats to the rhythm of its main resource — its people. English inevitably became the foundation of Singapore's economic progress and among its people in their daily lives. This contributed to the Malay language losing its priority to English and Mandarin, as illustrated in these examples.

1. Displacement of Malay language as lingua franca in Singapore

The use of the Malay language keeps shrinking, falling from its role as a lingua franca to being hardly used among the younger generation and even in Malay households which prefer to speak in English. The number of families that speak English at home is rising, according to then Minister for Education Ng Eng Hen:

"Only 1 in 10 of Primary 1 Chinese students in 1982 (quartercentury, age 33 today) came from homes that used English — the figure today is nearly 6 in 10. For Indians it has moved from 3 in 10 to 6 in 10; Malays — 0.5 in 10 to 3.5 in 10. A seismic shift in language environment has occurred within one generation. Those above 40 years of age today would have grown up in homes that spoke their MTL, either predominantly or partly, either with parents, grandparents or siblings. But increasingly, children of all races now come from homes that speak English predominantly." (Ng, 2009)

Studies by scholars on language shift have shown that a common root to this phenomenon -a language that is of a higher importance in the daily lives of people in an area becomes the dominant language, leading to the language shift.

With changes that affected everyone, the use of the Malay language has shrunk even further, especially for students who get to learn the standard Malay language only in school and are not exposed to the use of colloquial Malay at home. This creates the fear of total eradication of the use of Malay at home, the worrying trend evident in this chart:

Language Most Frequently Spoken at Home	Total	Chinese Residents	Malay Residents	Indian Residents
Total	2,887,552	2,236,061	405,602	211,015
English	665,087	533,948	32,173	75,079
Mandarin	1,010,539	1,008,489	303	228
Hokkien	329,583	328,768	136	81
Teochew	141,569	141,337	16	38
Cantonese	163,703	163,279	53	58
Other Chinese Dialects	52,418	52,376	14	16
Malay	406,549	5,270	371,401	24,434
Tamil	91,015	29	286	90,621
Other Indian Dialects	19,862	32	187	19,522

Source: Census of Population 2010.

Both the colloquial and pidgin versions of the Malay language risk going extinct with the dominance of the English language. Once common in wet markets and most parts of the retail industry, the use of the Malay language between consumers and retailers is rare in the modern malls and even in markets that are now being run by the younger generation.

Religion, which used to be solely dominated by the Malay language, is also now taught in English, the preferred language by the younger generation. Religious classes and programmes in English, such as Kids alive and Teens alive, are well-received by the local community.

And with the ever-growing immigrant population in Singapore, several mosques even deliver MUIS-endorsed Friday sermons in English and Tamil. The Malay language no longer dominates the religious sphere, rivalled by other languages especially English.

2. Mother tongue option in schools

Malay students were automatically assigned the Malay language as their mandatory mother tongue subject in an allocation based on race. Since the implementation of the bilingualism policy, a child's race was determined by the father's race on record. This meant that a child would study Malay as a second language if his or her father were Malay or of a Malay sub-ethnic group, regardless of the race of the child's mother.

This method of determining a child's race was relaxed after it was brought into question by the public. On 2 January 2010, the birth registration form was revised to include a field for the child's race as specified by the parents.

"The Government does not assign race to a person but follows the general rule that a child's race would follow that of his or her father. Nevertheless, recognising that the diversity of Singapore's racial demographics has increased in recent years due to the inflow of immigrants and the rise in the number of locals marrying foreigners, with effect from 2 January this year, our birth registration forms were revised to provide for declaration by the parents on their child's race during birth registration.

"Previously, such a child would be registered following the general rule as having the race of the father. The recent change gives parents who are of different races the flexibility and choice to decide how their child's race should be recorded. The Immigration and Checkpoints Authority is not the authority or expert on 'race'. It will accept a race declaration so long as it falls within generally accepted notions of ethnicity by lineage. For example, a Caucasian-Chinese couple may decide to have their child's race recorded as Caucasian, Chinese or Eurasian." (Ho, 2010)

But even this move, which seemed fair, was questioned and sparked debates among Singaporeans. So, the government on 12 January 2010 announced that a child's race could be double-barrelled to reflect mixed parentage.

"The Government has considered this matter carefully, and has decided to allow parents of different races reflect both their races as a double-barrelled race in their child's NRIC, on top of the existing expanded options of choosing only one of the 2 different races, for their child. Some examples could be Indian-Chinese, Caucasian-Chinese or Malay-Indian.

"This policy change will be subject to certain rules. We all know the society trends suggest that a child of a mixed parentage tends to identify himself/herself more closely with one of the two races. For parents who prefer their child's race to be double-barrelled, they will have to decide the dominant racial identity for the child and this is to be put as the first of the two components of a double-barrelled race. "Take the example of an Indian father and a Chinese mother, if the parents decide that Chinese will be the dominant racial identity for their child, the race will be 'Chinese-Indian'. So, Chinese becomes the dominant race reflected first. If the mixedmarriage parents are undecided on the race to be reflected, but still prefer their child's race to be double-barrelled, ICA will reflect the race of the father first, 'Indian-Chinese' in the example where the parents don't make a choice.

"Of course, parents can still go with the default option of following the father's race, which is Indian, if they are undecided on which race to choose, or follow the mother's race, Chinese, if they so decide, and need not go for the double-barrelled race option. So, flexibility is now greater and more choices." (Ho, 2010)

The changes to determining a child's race at birth, to a small degree, affected the number of Malay-language students as children of mixed parentage are no longer obligated to study Malay as a second language. Mandatory learning of the Malay language for ethnic Malays was the government's move to preserve the culture, language and values of the community — now impaired by the option of a double-barrelled race.

Opportunity for use of Malay language

Singapore's rat race affects the Malay community's use of its mother tongue as the different races use English when communicating with one another. A hectic student life also limits interaction with older family members who generally speak Malay, resulting in the younger generation communicating in English more than Malay. This is evident in the higher percentage of social networking being carried out in English.

Based on studies on the use of languages in Singapore, younger respondents said they read more English books and watched more English TV programmes than Malay. The shrinking exposure to the Malay language inevitably resulted in weaker vocabulary among the young (Roksana, 2003; Kamsiah, 2000).

Impact on Malay language

Political, economic and educational developments have greatly affected the status of the Malay language in Singapore, the prominence eradicated by development in the education system and the need by the Malays to stay competitive in an Englishmedium workforce. Proficiency in the Malay language no longer guaranteed a secure future for Singapore's population including the Malays, the national language dethroned by English as the lingua franca.

Preservation efforts

Malay organisations and governing bodies have been taking steps to preserve the Malay language and culture, such as:

- Promoting oral communication in Malay by increasing the weightage of oral exams,
- 2. Encouraging students to read in Malay,
- 3. Greater support for Malay-language teachers looking to upgrade themselves,
- 4. Promoting lingual, literary and cultural activities among students, teachers and other users of the Malay language,
- 5. Developing reading materials for learners, from preschool to tertiary level, and
- 6. Enhancing student experience through expert-led study tours and training programmes overseas.

The Malay Language Learning and Promotion Committee (MLLPC) has funded activities organised by grassroots bodies and Malay organisations such as the Malay Language Council, Singapore, Malay Youth Literary Association, Singapore Malay Teachers' Union, Singapore Malay Language Teachers' Association, Asas '50 and MENDAKI. Minister for State for Education and Home Affairs Masagos Zulkifli in 2011 announced that the Ministry of Education would give up to \$3.6 million to MLPC over five years to support its efforts to create environments conducive for the learning and use of the Malay language.

Conclusion

The use of the Malay language in Singapore continues to face challenges, fighting against the wave sweeping over the Malays amid globalisation. Efforts to counter the decline in the use of the Malay language have yet to yield encouraging results albeit the awareness among the Malays of the deterioration in proficiency among the younger generation.

The young have had to compromise the growth of their mother tongue in their pursuit of perfection, weighing the heritage they would have to sacrifice against their own life goals. This is a constant dilemma faced by the Malay community in Singapore.

The prestige of the Malay language is a sensitive and complex issue that requires an evaluation of the language — is Malay inferior to English and other major languages of the world because of its inadequacy or lack of commercial values?

English is popular and widely used without the need to enforce its use on a community. People from all over the world want to learn English so they can tap various knowledge and seize economic opportunities in other countries. We can deduce that a language that can help spread modern knowledge in science and technology will become popular by itself, passed down generations with pride and learnt by non-natives hoping to reap its benefits. This distinct commercial value is not present in the Malay language, meaning the duty of championing the language should not be shouldered by linguists alone but to be shared by everyone in a Malay-speaking community, especially its professionals such as engineers, scientists, doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians and businessmen. The fate of the Malay language lies in the hands of its intellectuals who would need to innovate, introduce new knowledge or thrive in the business world and share the load of championing the language with its linguists and teachers.

It can be concluded that the onus to champion the Malay language does not rest exclusively on the shoulders of linguists but every member of the Malay community, uniting and working together regardless of political, economic and social boundaries. The Malay world should unite and think of ways to successfully elevate the racial integrity which will in turn uplift the language.

Only with meteoric success or the creation of new knowledge in Malay can prompt non-Malays to learn the language. Only then can the status and popularity of the Malay language improve, perhaps even upstaging English and other major languages in the world.

Language is like gold — the rise and fall of its value are not dependent on the quality of the gold alone but also the context and environment surrounding it. The value of the Malay language depends on the success, dignity and integrity of the Malay community.

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Seeds of Wisdom: History of gapore's Malay Education

Personal recollection

It is said that nostalgia is a recollection of something that has ceased to exist.

I attended the Geylang Malay Girls' School from 1953 to 1959 and was among the students who were taught in Malay from Primary 1 to 3 and English thereafter. We sat the Entrance Examinations in English after completing Primary 7.



Dr Kamsiah Abdullah

I went to Cedar Girls' Secondary School, which was next to Sang Nila Utama Secondary School, the first Malay secondary school in Singapore. The pioneer batch of Sang Nila Utama Secondary School had to temporarily hold their classes in my school while waiting for their building to be ready. I saw their joy and sorrow from the other side of the school fence and at the bus stop, unaware that I was witnessing the start of the golden age of Malay education in Singapore which would end abruptly due to political moves.

As a student who came from a Malay school, I certainly brought with me a culture unique to Malay schools, which will be demonstrated in this article.

Chronicle of Malay schools

The first Malay school, Telok Blangah Malay School, was established in 1856 and built by the British government with substantial funding from the Sultan of Johor. Malay schools remained at the primary level for 104 years — from 1856 to the end of World War II, to the post-war British governance, to the independence of Malaya in 1957, and to self-governance in Singapore in 1959.

Picture this: There were already 27 Malay primary schools during the Japanese Occupation and 8,436 Malay pupils in 43 Malay schools in 1950 but there was not a single Malay secondary school.

Here are pre-independence Malay schools, which I am listing here to immortalise the names of the schools and villages that have been buried by time:

- 1. Air Gemuruh Malay School
- 2. Bukit Panjang Malay School
- 3. Geylang Malay Boys' School
- 4. Geylang Malay Girls' School
- 5. Kampong Glam Malay School
- 6. Kampong Melayu Malay Boys' School
- 7. Kampong Melayu Malay Girls' School

- 8. Kota Raja Malay School
- 9. Telok Kurau Malay Boys' School
- 10. Telok Kurau Malay Girls' School
- 11. Sepoy Lines Malay School
- 12. Serangoon Malay School
- 13. Siglap Malay School
- 14. Padang Terbakar Malay School
- 15. Pasir Panjang Malay School
- 16. Pulau Bukom Malay Vernacular School
- 17. Pulau Seking Malay School
- 18. Pulau Sekijang Pelepah Malay School
- 19. Pulau Semakau Malay School
- 20. Sekolah Melayu Tanah Merah
- 21. Tanglin Besar Malay School
- 22. Tanglin Tinggi Malay School
- 23. Tanjong Katong Malay School
- 24. Tanjung Kling Malay School
- 25. Telok Blangah Malay School
- 26. Telok Saga Malay School(from Kratoska, P H 1977)

There was not a single Malay secondary school in the early 1960s, when I passed the final primary school examinations, so I was sent to an English secondary school to further my studies. It was there where I learnt to adapt to the new and foreign culture and compete with new friends of different races.

What I was unaware of was the new move by the government to introduce Malay lessons for Secondary 1 at English secondary schools, starting with Geylang Craft Centre and Kallang Secondary School. This was followed by 16 other schools such as Crescent Secondary School, Siglap Secondary School, Pasir Panjang Secondary School and Monk's Hill Secondary School.

Before we examine further developments, let's trace the development of early Malay schools, especially the Special Malay Class and the Re-orientation Plan that I was put through.



A National School in the Malay Stream: Sekolah Menengah Sang Nila Utama, the first Malay-stream secondary school in Singapore that was a pride of the Malay community not long ago.

Special Malay Class

The Special Malay Class was a concept that originated from Johor before World War II. Since the early 1930s, a percentage of Singapore Malay school leavers would continue their education at Johor English School through a transitional English class or special class scheme. Its original intention was to enable seven-year-old Malay pupils from the city to study in elementary English and Malay and religion in the evening. (Rahimah Abdul Aziz, 2000)

Singapore introduced the transitional English class to Primary 3 pupils from Malay, Chinese and Tamil schools who had passed a special exam to be eligible. Those who failed the exam would continue their studies in the Malay stream. But the scheme did not really work because of a disparity between the special class pupils, who were much older, and those who had been learning in English since Primary 1 using a different set of syllabus.

Too few Malay school pupils were benefiting from this special class programme — only up to five of them would pass the Secondary School Entrance Examinations out of the 150 candidates, never mind the Standard Nine or Senior Cambridge examinations.

Meanwhile, the pupils who continued their education in the Malay stream could not get jobs or were poorly paid. The only exception was the small number of them who became teachers and returned to teach at the Malay schools. This situation really grabbed the attention of the citizens to the advantages of higher education in English in securing a well-paying job. Sang Nila Utama Secondary School was the first Malay secondary school and it was the pride of Malay education in Singapore. Named after the founder of the Kingdom of Singapura...

1951 Re-orientation Plan

The colonial reverence for the English language in economy and education drove the government to introduce the Re-orientation Plan in 1951. The Special Malay Class, with its limited success in teaching subjects such as Maths, History, Handiwork, Geography and Health Studies to students who could not qualify for English schools, was abolished immediately.

Under the Re-orientation Plan, all pupils were to study all subjects in English from Primary 4, in preparation for the Secondary School Entrance Examinations at the end of Primary 7 of Malay school. This pushed the Malay language, which had been a medium of instruction, to take the backseat.

Malay education was undeniably impacted by the changes. Malay pupils without adequate preparation found themselves having to learn in a foreign language. At the same time, Malay teachers could no longer teach subjects such as Maths, Health Studies and Science, and they were replaced by foreign teachers who taught in English. It was no surprise when the first cohort of the Re-orientation Plan did badly at the major exams at the end of their Primary 7 in 1958. In my Geylang Malay Girls' School, *Sekolah Perempuan Melayu Geylang*, only two pupils out of two classes could make it to secondary school. The percentage of passes in the following year was just as disappointing.

The dismal passing rate following the implementation of the Reorientation Plan led to disgruntlement in the Malay community and was considered to have failed in improving the education of Malay students. Malay schools gained the reputation of producing incapable and weak pupils who were failures, falling behind their peers from non-Malay schools.

The Malay schools were even losing out to madrasahs, which had their own Arabic secondary schools such as Madrasah Aljunied. Students from English schools could pursue higher learning at the University of Malaya (UKM) and students from Arabic schools could go to Al-Azhar University. Meanwhile, students from Malay schools had nowhere to fit in. Malay leaders, especially those active in grassroots activities, then proposed for Malay secondary schools to be created. made by Malay leaders, especially those who were active in various organisations. Those who pushed for this move included the Singapore Malay Teachers' Union (KGMS), Singapore Malay United National Organisation (UMNO), Singapore Teachers' Co-operative Society (SKGMS), Malay Education Council and People's Action Party.

First Malay secondary school

Sang Nila Utama Secondary School was the first Malay secondary school and it was the pride of Malay education in Singapore. Named after the founder of the Kingdom of Singapura, the fourstorey building that came complete with an assembly hall and labs, was opened in 1961. The school at Upper Aljunied Road admitted direct-entry students who had passed the Secondary School Entrance Examinations in Malay and those who had been placed temporarily in English secondary schools while waiting for its completion.

The school uniform was characteristically Malay — male students wore white trousers and shirt and songkok while female students wore red sarong, white *baju kurung* top and red *tudung*. As mingling between the two sexes were still frowned upon, the Secondary 1 and 2 male and female students were separated male students on the first and second floors and female students on the third and fourth.

Veteran teacher and Science textbook author Ismail Aziz, who was once the principal of Siglap Secondary School, was appointed principal of Sang Nila Utama Secondary School. Harun Bajuri was vice-principal.

In 1964, the school's pioneer cohort sat the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) at the same time as their peers in Malaysia. The number of MCE candidates grew from 210 in 1963 to 1,270 in 1964 and 1,587 in 1965. Other Malay stream secondary schools sprouted throughout Singapore — Tun Seri Lanang Secondary School, Yusof Ishak Secondary School, Ahmad Ibrahim Secondary School, Kaki Bukit Secondary School, Swiss Cottage Secondary School and Maju Secondary School. The expansion of Malay secondary education made secondary and tertiary education more accessible to Malaystream students.

Almost immediately, many of the school-leavers found jobs in teaching, administration, broadcast and other roles. An undeniable improvement was the creation of a technical course for Malaystream students, starting with 40 Sang Nila Utama Secondary School students to set the ball rolling in 1966. Upper Serangoon Technical School was opened later to offer subjects such as Technical Drawing, Maths and Science in Malay.

For a more holistic secondary education, extracurricular activities (ECA) were introduced and made compulsory for all students. The ECA covered sports and games in athletics, football, table tennis, netball, softball and chess, and formed societies including photography, debating, drama, painting, literature, religion, adventure and career.

Students also showed a keen interest in Uniformed Groups such as the National Cadet Corps, National Police Cadet Corps, Red Cross Society, St John's Association, Scouts and Girl Guides. The Uniformed Groups helped to inculcate team spirit, patriotism, selfdiscipline and esprit de corps.

Sang Nila Utama Secondary School started offering pre-university in 1964 with a cohort of 50 students considered to be the cream of the crop. With a Malay pre-university in place, it was only natural that the community dreamt of a Malay university in Singapore, but alas, the nation's political and socioeconomic transformations had no room for Malay schools.

KGMS had already drawn up plans for a Malay university in Singapore at the time of the separation but the dream didn't materialise. The aspirants in Singapore could only look on in envy when the National University of Malaysia (UKM) became the first Malay university when it was built in Bangi. UKM opened its doors to graduates of Singapore's Malay preuniversity. Students from Form 6 Centre at Bartley Secondary School (replacement for Sang Nila Utama Secondary School's pre-university classes) enrolled at UKM and graduated in various fields of study. They included former *Berita Harian* economy editor Fadilah Majid, National Institute of Education/Nanyang Technological University (NIE/NTU) lecturer Rosnani Suni and NIE/NTU's Associate Professor Roksana Bibi Abdullah.

There were also students from the Malay stream of Bartley Secondary School (1982 and 1983), such as Zainun Hashim, who furthered their studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Zainun is a junior college teacher while her peer Karmin Abbas owns a company that organises Malay-language programmes for students and teachers. Two other students who went to NUS were Rahmat Subadah, who is now a specialist teacher for Malay Language with the Ministry of Education, and Mediacorp journalist Zainudin Afandi.

Malay university education

Before the cessation of Malay schools, a small group of their students had qualified to enter National Junior College and subsequently NUS. Among them were Hawazi Daipi, who became Senior Parliamentary Secretary for the Manpower and Education ministries, and Associate Professor Hadijah Rahmat, who was in Maju Secondary School's Malay stream. Hawazi received his primary education at Kota Raja Malay School.

These students were taught subjects such as Science and Maths in English, the bilingual curriculum practised also in Brunei and Peninsular Malaysia.

There were also a small group of Malay-stream students who pursued their tertiary education at Nanyang University (Nantah) in Jurong. Nantah, a Chinese university that was established in 1955, started offering Malay language and literature in 1968. Three out of the eight undergraduates who did Malay Studies in Nantah were Suratman Markasan, M Taha Jamil and Fatimah M Noor. Nantah in 1980 merged with the University of Singapore to form NUS, which was located at Bukit Timah Road. Nantah had terminated its Department of Malay Studies long before the merger, on these grounds cited by its Vice-Chancellor Raymond Huang:

- 1. Lack of interest among new students,
- 2. Limited employment opportunities for Malay Studies graduates,
- To avoid an overlap with the same course offered at NUS, and
- 4. Higher-than-average expenses for Malay Studies undergraduates.

When one door closes, another opens. The University of London's External System was offering a bachelor's degree in Indonesian and Malay Studies with a mandatory minor subject such as Sociology. Singapore teachers, including those from the Malay stream, enrolled in the external degree, which covered Modern and Classical Malay Literature, History, Malay-to-English Translation and development of Malay language in Indonesia and Malaya. The Jawi script and Dutch were later added as compulsory subjects.

In the 1970s, about 20 Malay teachers who had no opportunity to study at Singapore or Malaysia universities earned their bachelor's degree, some with Honours, from the University of London. I was one of those students, alongside Ibrahim Othman, Sidek Saniff (who became Senior Minister of State for the Singapore Education Ministry), A Rahman Ismail, Rohani Ahmad Dhafir, Ismail Abdullah, Ayub Mokhtar, Riduan Kamari, Ghani Osman, Ahmad Bujal, Ismail Ibrahim, Yaakob Mohd Yusof, Ismail Haji Kecik, Supki Haji Sidek and Hajis Salim. The Malay community showed their support and pride by presenting the graduates with awards and prizes from SKGMS (an effort by Yusof Abdullah and Hasan Thani) in 1978. I had enrolled in 1975, when I was still teaching in Brunei and it was there that I sat the Part 1 Examination paper in Sociology for the bachelor's degree and the remaining eight papers in Singapore.

Malay graduates were making a leap in higher learning, taking on new challenges such as learning Dutch. Without their success, our universities would have to import lecturers from overseas to make up for the shortage of local scholars.

This development was also an indication of the rising interest in a university education among the Malays. Students went to the University of Singapore, took sabbatical to study at Nantah, and those who could afford it went overseas to study at UKM. Others who excelled in General Paper and other subjects at the Higher School Certificate (HSC) level in English enrolled with the University of London.

What happened to students who attained the Malaysian Certificate of Education (STPM)? Another door opened for them. KGMS had engineered a bachelor's degree (S1) course under Indonesia's National University (UNAS), led by Professor Sidi Gazalba and Gazali Dunia, who were brilliant. I recall how friends like Masran Sabran and those who were not from the Malay stream, such as Abbas Mohd Shariff and Mardiana Abu Bakar, worked tirelessly on their theses for the course.

Master's degree education

Some of the Malay graduates progressed to pursue a master's even when most of them did not have an honours degree. Under the management of Professor Syed Hussein Alatas, the NUS master's degree programme made provisions for Malay Studies graduates with a three-year course to make up for the lack of an honours. Master's graduates from the Integrated Malay stream included Professor Hadijah and Sa'eda Buang. Teachers like Muhamad Said, Muhamad Jaafar, Fahul Rahman, Taha, Muhamad Ali Amat and Abbas received their Master of Education from Malaysia. Darlan Zaini chose to pursue the Advanced Diploma in Physical Education from the United Kingdom's University of Leeds followed by a Master of Education from University of Manchester.

The Singapore government subsequently granted scholarships for studies leading to master's degrees in Malaysia. Supki and I were granted scholarships for our Master of Education degrees from UKM through theses and coursework in Language Education in 1984. It was our first time on a university campus, learning subjects in Malay such as Education Methodology, Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics.

PhD — scholastic pinnacle

I can still remember my journey alongside my peers towards the scholastic pinnacle of a doctorate. Alhamdulillah, today we can discuss not just Malays with master's degrees but also those with doctorates.

In 1994, I was, to my knowledge, the only Malay teacher to have attained a PhD from the Department of International and Comparative Education at the University of London's Institute of Education. But a few years later, Malay lecturers such as Dr Hadijah, Dr Roksana and Dr Abbas lent the Malay community bragging rights with their doctoral achievements.

Dr Alimah Lob obtained her PhD from her part-time studies at Putra University Malaysia. She and Hamsani Raoh belonged to a small group that took the alternative route in pursuing their bachelor's and master's degrees, opting for part-time studies at the university. In discussing the academic journeys of Malay-stream students, we have to give credit to NIE's Asian Languages & Cultures Department for offering the part-time Advanced Diploma in Malay Language Education over several cohorts. The advanced diploma, which was comparable to a bachelor's degree, was created to meet the growing demand from Malay teachers in their urgent need to upskill before NIE's Bachelor of Arts (Malay Language Specialisation Programme) with Honours came along in 2001.

The Malay community gave a rousing welcome to the programme that answered the Malay teachers' call for a bachelor's degree programme. It was launched with a bridge to allow lateral transfers for Year 3 undergraduates between NUS and NIE but it proved to be impractical, so no transfers were made.

Today, NUS and NTU/NIE offer degrees in Malay Studies right up to a doctorate in Philosophy. NIE lecturers Kartini Anwar, Dr Abbas and Dr Sa'eda are alumni.

Conclusion

A majority of the Malay secondary school students who had excelled in their studies chose teaching as their vocation, forming the first group of Malay-stream teachers who were Malay-educated from Primary 1 to Secondary 4.

I was a part of the pioneer group of Malay-stream trainee teachers pursuing a Teaching Certificate in the Malay stream at the Teachers' Training College. But I also took a brief detour to sit the Cambridge School Certificate at an English school. My unique academic experience has taken me from the Malay schools to Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of London to Master of Education from the University of Malaya and finally to Doctor of Philosophy from the University of London.

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Part 3 That Which Is Written

The history of Malay writings began in early 13th century and has experienced its ebb and flow due to changes in its milieu. However, it continues to bloom in various spheres such as theatre, drama, film, and music. What is more important is the connection that binds this nation's Malay literature with other countries of the Malay diaspora till today.

Singapore Malay Literature Dr Hadijah Rahmat On the World Stage

Word chronicle

"Persuratan", which refers to all written works, comes from the root word "surat" (letter). It is a classic Malay word used and recorded in the early dictionary compiled by Marsden (1812).

In the early 20th century, it was replaced by "sastera" (literature), a contraction of the Sanskrit words "sas", which means directing, teaching, guiding or instructing, and "tra", which means instrument or means. The Sanskrit words "sastra" and "castra" mean teaching instrument or manual — a particular reference to Hindu scriptures.
The word then took on the prefix "su", which means beautiful, good or useful in archaic Javanese, to become "susastera". The amalgamation of words means highly valuable work or high literature. (Teeuw 1984, 23)

"Kesusasteraan" refers to written works that are of high quality, beautiful and beneficial. The term was used in retrospective by Malay intellectuals of the early 20th century in their search for the word that would be an embodiment of the spirit, function and objective of an artistic work. "Kesusasteraan" replaced "surat", "pustaka" (library), "karangan" (composition) and "ikat-ikatan" (ties).

Traditional Malay literature broadly covers all works or creations that touch on aspects of life, through the creative use of language. Professor Ismail Hussein explains:

"Literature in the Malay or Nusantara concept includes everything that uses words or languages in a creative way. There is no boundary between mythical fiction and a historical description, for example, and there is no boundary between an enumeration of the custom law and love poem. Some of the most serious theosophical expositions here have been put into beautiful poetry in its poetic form, because poetry is much more easily retained by memory and much more pleasant to hear... " (Ismail Hussein 1974, 12)

The Malays inherited two meaningful words of important concepts, each complementing and related to the other. "Kesusasteraan" (literature), which refers to beautiful and valuable artistic works of a spoken and written language, and "persuratan" (writings), artistic works of the written language that are creative and of value.

It is human nature to express verbally before writing. Written works are produced after a society has created its own system of writing but it is only thereafter that the artistic process can be accomplished. For example, a *pantun* is first created verbally before it gets documented in writing and a *syair* is composed in writing before it is recited. Likewise, drama scripts are first written and then performed on stage, television or radio — turning the writings into literature.

Documentation in Temasek

Malay literature and writing in Singapore did not begin in 1965, it's not 50 years old. The history of local writing stretches back 700 years. The development of Malay literature before 1965 can be condensed into five main periods.

- Stage 1: Classical (13th and 14th centuries)
- Stage 2: British occupation (1819 to 1900)
- Stage 3: Pre-war (1900 to 1945)
- Stage 4: Post-war (1945 to 1957)
- Stage 5: Independence (1957 to 1965)

Stage 1: Lion's roar in Malay literature²

Singapore emerged from the folds of 13th-century historical literature as the kingdom of Temasek. *Sejarah Melayu*, the classical text highlighting the glory of the Melaka Sultanate, mentions the Temasek of the 13th and 14th centuries in the history of Malay kingdoms that were closely linked to the sultanate.

The roar of Singapore literature was first heard when Palembang king Sang Nila Utama, or Sri Teri Buana, set foot on the island of Temasek in 1299 to establish a new kingdom. Significant events in Temasek are documented in the text, shining the spotlight on Singapore and its historical links with the Malay sultanate, especially in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula.

Sejarah Melayu states that although Sang Nila Utama was Singapore's first Malay king, the island was not his first kingdom, having already established one on Bukit Seguntang in Palembang. But he did not wish to remain there for long and was attracted to the "stretch of remarkably white sand" of Temasek (Abdul Samad Ahmad 1986, 38).



Historial separation: Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew announcing Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965.



Continuing the crusade: Malay writers chose to remain in Singapore despite being greatly affected by the separation from Malaysia.

The bitterness of the separation urged Singapore Malays to re-evaluate how they had lived their lives over the years and search for a new perspective and direction amid a new political ecology. He sailed to Temasek with his entourage, braving the storms and waves of the south-west and even throwing his crown into the sea. Sang Nila Utama had faith in Temasek's specialness as a kingdom, especially after his sighting of a magnificent beast, documented as a lion, there. He established his kingdom in Temasek and changed its name to Singapura.

"The kingdom of Singapura was then built by its people, with its citadels and canals, its palace with interior and exterior courtyards, and the houses of its people, shops and markets. So beautiful was the kingdom of Singapura." (A Samad Ahmad 1986, 41).

Singapore formed a family tie with the king of the Indian continent and became a major kingdom in the 13th and 14th centuries, even fighting an invasion by the Majapahit. Singapore became famous with the presence of the mighty warrior Badang, who was undefeated by other warriors including those from the Malay world, such as Perlak, and beyond, such as the Indian continent and the historical region of Kalinga in south India.

Sang Nila Utama and statesman Demang Lebar Daun were the two legendary figures responsible for the historic covenant with the code of honour defining the relationship between the king and the Malay people. The political leaders lived in Singapore up to their deaths.

Singapore was ruled by five generations of kings. The attack by Majapahit drove the last king, Raja Iskandar Syah, to flee and he went to Melaka, where he established the sultanate.

Glimpses of rise and fall of Malay grandeur

The epic *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, in narrating the life of the famous Malay warrior of the 15th-century Melaka Sultanate and before the arrival of western powers, uses Singapore as a significant backdrop to his life and struggles. It is believed that pivotal points of Hang Tuah's life took place in Singapore.

The warrior and his four childhood friends, with their gallantry and wit, overcame a band of pirates at the Singapore Strait. Hang Tuah's valour and success caught the attention of the chief of the sea people in Singapore. The chief reported it to the exchequer of Bentan, who at the time held authority in Singapore and subsequently recruited Hang Tuah.

The epic also describes the supremacy of the Melaka Sultanate and how the king of Melaka would travel to Singapore for recreation and amusement. During one such visit, he dropped his crown into the Singapore Strait. Hang Tuah dived into the water to retrieve the crown but a white crocodile seized his kris. Both the king's crown and Hang Tuah's kris were forever lost.

This incident was perceived as an omen, the crown's fall into the water symbolising the fall of a Malay kingdom, the loss of the kris to the crocodile symbolising the eradication of Malay heroism by foreign powers.

Singapore as a hub for Malay-Hindu literary text (new translations and adaptations)

Singapore's uniqueness is alluded to even beyond the abovementioned. During the reign of the Malay Sultanate in the 13th and 14th centuries, Singapore was the hub of translation and adaptation of Hindu text into Malay. This was explained by Teuku Iskandar (1995):

"In this age, Hindu works have been translated into Malay. The (Sanskrit epic) Ramayana was the first to be translated because of its popularity in Buddhist kingdoms. The (other Sanskrit epic) Mahabharata was translated from archaic Javanese. The Malays generally love exotic stories depicting characters from far-flung corners of the world. Following their acquaintance with Hindu literature, authors had the tendency to adapt its elements in their work while preserving the storyline and other Malay elements. This was how Malay literary classics came to life. Further down the line, Hindu works and characters were "Malaynised", making historical writing an extension of Srivijaya's tradition."³

Stage 2: Roar of British Empire and history of printing (1819 to 1900)

Malay literature changed significantly as a British colony. Printing technology transformed the traditional Malay literary landscape from handwritten manuscripts to printed form (stone printing, or lithograph, and letterpress). The printing press was introduced in Melaka in 1817, after Reverend William Milne from the London Missionaries Society (LMS) took one from Bengal, India, to Melaka in 1816. Munshi Abdullah, a son of the Malay lands, learnt the craft of printing when he was about 20 years old. He helped Reverend Claudius Thomsen print the first Malay magazine, *Bustanul Arifin*, from 1821 to 1822.

Abdullah came to Singapore with Rev Thomsen four months after Singapore permitted the British Company "to establish a factory or factories" in 1819. Although he was born in Melaka and learnt printing there, it was in Singapore that Abdullah displayed his creative flair and became a prolific writer. Most of his major works were instrumental to the development of literature in the Malay archipelago.

Stamford Raffles, with the help of William Farquhar, had planned and developed the island of Singapore, including land allocation for various development projects. He printed a proclamation on land allocation on 2 December 1822 with the help of Abdullah's expertise in language and printing. The proclamation made history by becoming the first article to be printed in Singapore.

Abdullah's contributions as the chronicler of Singapore's history from the time of Raffles have been documented in *Hikayat Abdullah*, which can be regarded as an equal to the documentation of the rule of Malay kings and the British administration. *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah* tells of the civil war in Kelantan that affected trade in Singapore and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah to Judah*, Singapore's role as a transit point for haj pilgrims in the region. Abdullah's syair, such as *Singapura Terbakar* and *Kampung Gelam Terbakar*, demonstrated the conditions of Singapore's urban community which were lacking in fire-control systems. *Cerita Kapal Asap* tells of the arrival of Western technology in Singapore.

Other than his role in the history of Singapore and printing in Southeast Asia, Abdullah also brought Malay writing and printing to prominence by publishing his books using the cutting-edge printing technology of his time. For example, the cover of *Hikayat Kalilah Dan Daminah*, published in 1830, was decorated with a red floral pattern — the earliest use of colours in book-printing in Southeast Asia.

The sophistication of Abdullah's printing technique was demonstrated in the printing and publication of *Kisah Pelayaran* in 1838, in both Jawi and Roman alphabets. The sophistication extended to the lithographic print of *Hikayat Abdullah*, published by Keasberry's Mission Press in 1849. The print was considered a deluxe edition at the time. Another print that Abdullah worked on — but appeared only after his death — was *Majalah Cermin Mata*, which was published in 1858 and 1859 in an attractive format that was considered to be the most beautiful print in Malay.

Abdullah translated and produced textbooks in Malay for elementary schools, such as *Ilmu Bintang* (1840), geography book *Hikayat Dunia* (1843), *Hikayat Eropah* (1843), *Hikayat Kapal Asap* (1843) and zoology book *Hikayat Binatang* (1846). Together with Rev Thomsen, Abdullah compiled a Malay dictionary in Melaka and its second edition was published by Mission Press in 1827. According to historian John Bastin, the dictionary was "the first Malay dictionary or word-list printed in Singapore".

So went Abdullah's contributions to printing in Singapore. He was the first person in the Malay archipelago at the time to study printing and produce books in Malay through sophisticated printing techniques and technology. He shared his knowledge of printing to nurture new experts who in turn became instrumental to the development of printing and publishing in Southeast Asia. Ibrahim Husayn, for example, who was under Abdullah's tutelage, printed the first copy of the Quran for production in Palembang in 1848.

The separation in 1965...has neither severed nor limited the literary relationship between Singapore, Malaysia and the Malay archipelago. In fact, there are prominent traits of the shared cultural fraternity that have shown up in the literary works...

Hub for Islamic publications and Southeast Asian prints (1860 to 1920⁴)

Printing activities continued to grow exponentially after Abdullah's death in 1854. Where he worked with the European printing and publishing houses in the pioneering stage, the next phase saw the emergence of Malay/Muslim publishers after they had learnt printing from the West.

The independent Malay/Muslim entrepreneurs had to compete with European and Peranakan publishers, all of them publishing Malay books that fulfilled their objectives, focus and preferences. For instance, the Peranakan Chinese produced works translated from Hokkien into Peranakan Malay. In addition to introducing a new kind of Malay literature that was related to the Chinese culture, they also enjoyed well-known Malay literary forms such as *pantun* and *syair*.

The trend among the publishers, both Malays or non-Malays, in publishing books in Malay indicates the role and function of the language as the lingua franca in Singapore's multiracial society. Malay/Islamic publishers appeared much later as compared to their European counterparts. The first Islamic publisher in Singapore appeared only in 1860. The printing of books in Malay, including religious ones, expanded briskly and boomed between 1880 and 1900.

Although Islamic publishers appeared only in 1848 in Palembang, Indonesia, and works were getting printed in Java in the late 1850s and early 1860s, these territories were no match for Singapore. Beyond the Malay territory, the publication of Islamic books appeared much later — Malay books were printed in Bombay only in 1874 and in Mecca in 1884.

Singapore as the leading book publishing hub of the 19th century was mentioned by Dr Ian Proudfoot, a scholar on early Malay printing:

"Singapore thus emerges early as the leading center of Muslim publishing in SEA during the nineteenth century, as the first centre of Malay language Muslim printing anywhere in the world." (Proudfoot 1993, 27) Dr Proudfoot also cited contributing factors to Singapore's prominence as the centre of publishing and printing in the 19th and early 20th centuries:

- Singapore was a major administrative and urban centre for the British colonies and the level of education and literacy among its population was higher than other regions.
- It was the centre of a trading and transportation network, the strategic position also making it a centre for the dissemination of information to the rest of the Malay world.
- 3. It was a transit point for haj pilgrims in the Asian region.
- 4. The politics and constitution of the British colonists were considered more liberal than the Dutch, enabling the religious printing, publishing and activities in Singapore.

Singapore's prominence as a book production between 1900 and 1920 took a beating from book imports from Bombay, Mecca, Cairo and Istanbul. The quality of these books, which were flooding the Southeast Asian market, was perceived to be better than locally-produced books.

But Singapore's role as a centre of Malay intellectual activity remained intact because by then local publishers, thinkers and leaders had shifted their attention and contributions to the newspapers and magazines that were gaining a foothold and sparking a change in the literary scene.

Stage 3: Pre-war roar of modernisation and Malay nationalism (1900 to before 1945)

At the beginning of the 20th century, there was a growing drive among Muslim scholars in Southeast Asia to improve the mind and life of their community so they would not remain stagnant and fall behind in education and the standard of living. With backing from the emerging Islamic reform movement in the Middle East, the group of Muslim scholars were educated and exposed to the Islamic reformist thinking and movement there. They returned home after their studies, bringing with them the equal enthusiasm for reform to re-evaluate life and the role of Islam in the Malay/Muslim community in Southeast Asia.

Education policies of the British and Dutch colonists, and political developments in other colonies, such as India and the Middle East, sparked a sense of awareness among the elites of the society in the need to improve the standard of living and fight for their country's freedom. This spirit of reform or modernity and the awareness of nationalism were compounded by the effects of the war and the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asian nations. This explains the elements of nationalism dominating the main themes in Malay writing and becoming a major source of inspiration for Malay literature at the time.

Among the writers championing the ideals of Malay nationalistic struggles was Harun Aminurrashid, a Tanjong Malim Sultan Idris Training College graduate who became a prominent figure in education and literature. The prolific Singapore writer produced dozens of historical and sociological works in hopes to raise awareness and drive within the community. Among his popular novels are *Panglima Awang* (1958), *Anak Panglima Awang* (1961), *Tun Mandak* (1963), *Gugur Di Lembah Kinabalu* (1963), *Wan Derus* (1966) and *Peristiwa Laksamana Cheng Ho Ke Melaka* (1969).

Harun's role in the development of historical novels gained international recognition when he was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the London-based Dictionary of International Biography which also listed him among world's eminent individuals in 1968. His sociological novel centring on a multiracial society, *Simpang Perinang* (1966), was selected by Unesco to be translated into English and Urdu.

Between 1876 and 1941, there were 147 Malays newspapers and magazines produced in Malaya and the Straits Settlements, most of which were in Singapore (68) and Penang (36). The first Malay newspaper first produced and published in Singapore was *Jawi Peranakkan*, which became the longest-running weekly newspaper in Malaya before 1941, having published for 19 years from 1876 to 1895. Jawi Peranakkan was managed by the Chettis, who regarded themselves as Malays, and reported on the affairs of the Malay community. The Peranakan community published *The Straits Chinese Herald* (1891), which had columns in Malay, and *Bintang Timor* (1894), which was entirely written in Peranakan Malay.

In 1906, the monthly magazine *Al-Imam* was published. It was regarded as the first Islamic reform magazine in Southeast Asia and was influenced by the *Al-Manar* magazine from Cairo. *Al-Imam* lasted till early 1909 and its pioneer editor Shaykh Mohd Tahir Jalaluddin was replaced by Abbas Mohd Taha.

Then came the fortnightly publication *Neraca*, from 1911 to 1915, followed by *Tunas Melayu* (1913) and *Majallah Al-Islam* (1914 to 1915).

The second phase of Malay journalism took place between 1906 and 1916, with the emergence of national daily newspapers and reformist magazines that were quite influential. The newspaper *Utusan Melayu* was launched in Singapore in November 1907, helmed by editor Mohamad Eunos Abdullah. *Utusan Melayu* was first published in Jawi but its main editorial content was in Roman alphabet. The newspaper was succeeded by the daily *Lembaga Melayu* in 1914, with Mohammad Eunos as its editor.

Despite his entry into journalism only in 1917, Abdul Rahim Kajai was dubbed "Father of journalism" for his role as the editor of the newspaper *Saudara* in Penang in 1929, *Majlis* in 1931 and *Warta Malaya* in 1935. *Warta Malaya* was released three times a week but became a daily and the only Malay newspaper with a consistent and wide circulation throughout the Malay Peninsula and Straits Settlement. It was not a Malay translation but the Malay edition of the *Singapore Free Press* newspaper, which was active till 1918.

This second phase was instrumental to the emergence of an all-Malay daily newspaper. Malay press at the time was still tied to the English press because they were the Malay editions of English newspapers, making it hard for the community to accept them as the genuine voice of the Malay people. The Malay newspapers were seen as being controlled by people who were considered close to the British government and still relying on non-Malays, such as wealthy Arab tycoons, for financial support. This pushed Malay scholars and thinkers to produce a newspaper that was representative of the Malay community and funded by Malays.

Onn Jaafar, a thinker of the new generation, became the first editor of the Singapore-based daily *Warta Malaya* (1930 to 1941), which grew in dominance until it was dethroned in 1939 by *Utusan Melayu* when it got its second wind.

Utusan Melayu was managed by Young Malays Union (KMM), a national political establishment founded by Ibrahim Yaacob and Ishak Muhammad. Its members Yusof Ishak and Embo Soloh had campaigned hard to raise money from within the community to publish a Malay-owned newspaper. KMM's efforts got the support of the community, drawing contributions even from cabbies, hawkers and farmers from the east coast of the Malay Peninsula. With Kajai at the helm, *Utusan Melayu* became the voice of the Malay community.

Syonanto, light of southern sun and bud of new Malay poetry

Propaganda during the Japanese Occupation, which lasted less than four years, tried to stamp out the supremacy of Western powers, with slogans such as "Asia for the Asians".

The Malay thinking and literature were not immune to the influence of the Japanese Occupation. Japan had unified Sumatra and Malaya, with its administration based in Singapore. Writers from Sumatra worked in Singapore as the editors of magazines and newspapers such as the daily *Berita Malai*, which was the merger between *Warta Malaya* and *Utusan Melayu*).

Despite restrictions by the Japanese authorities, Indonesia and Singapore writers shared a strong bond and it influenced the characteristics and development of language and literature. There was a widespread awareness of the role of language in fanning national spirit and political ambitions. The aspiration to progress as a nation was present even before the Japanese Occupation and the Japanese presence just stoked this spirit of nationalism.

Literary works — poetry, short stories, and radio and stage plays — were mostly intended to raise awareness of new responsibilities and emphasise the importance of a fighting spirit. What's noteworthy was how the melancholy, despondency and laments of poverty and the community's decline in Malay literature in the early 20th century gave way to patriotic content aimed at instilling a fighting spirit, such as Masuri S N's poems *Bunga Sakura* and *Ros Kupuja*. His poems and the works of other poets during the Japanese Occupation set the stage for a new phase in Malay poetry.

Stage 4: Roar of fight for liberty and people's voice (1945 to 1957)

After World War II, Singapore continued to be the centre stage for Malay cultural displays and writing, something made possible by its efficient infrastructure. It was recognised as a British port city for trade, administration and military, and a publishing hub.

Singapore was also an education hub, with its institutes for teacher training and higher learning, such as the Malay Teachers Training College in Telok Blangah (1878 to 1895), University of Malaya established in 1949 and Nanyang University (Nantah) in 1955. The establishment of the University of Malaya's Department of Malay Studies in 1953 was crucial to the language and literary studies in shaping the works of its scholars and writers.

Its efficient infrastructure helped Singapore become a cosmopolitan city of culture, a hub for the film industry, with the staging of *bangsawan*, Malay theatre and musical arts, and the pulse of Malay writing and journalism till the mid-20th century.

This reflection of the Malay political, educational, economic, social, cultural and journalistic developments gives an insight into the development of the community's mind, awareness, and social and political aspirations. Writers adapted and experimented alongside the developments around them in the dawn of a new era, such as with the use of the changing forms of communication and various creative models.

New writing styles from the West, such as in poetry and short stories, became the trend among new writers who began to explore them while preserving the tradition of storytelling and classical poetry such as *pantun* and *syair*. Newspapers and magazines, as new writing platforms, enabled new creative styles such as serial work, essays and nascent literary criticism. Journalistic elements and the emphasis on current affairs and facts instead of myths and legends became mainstays in literary writing.

On a whole, Malay literature had gone through a gradual and casual evolution, a mix of innovation and creativity amid convention and tradition. Literature naturally became the channel preferred by writers in discussing social issues and serving the community.

Asas '50 and rise of social ideals

An interesting phenomenon in Malay literature after World War II was the forming of the Writers' Movement (Asas '50) on 6 August 1950 by a group of 19 Singapore youngsters driven by their enthusiasm and ambition to bring about significant social reform through literary channels.

The group of young writers was determined to eradicate obstacles that hindered social progress, justice and well-being. Asas '50 aimed to free the mind and soul of the Malays from the shackles of old beliefs, feudalism, outdated teachings and bigotry. The entrance of Asas '50 reflected the idealism and dynamism of Malay literature that reigned supreme in the mid-20th century. The noble aspiration for the people and exaltation of the arts were reflected in their slogan: "Sastera untuk Masyarakat" (Literature for the community).

Stage 5: Roar of dream for unity

The period between 1957 and 1965 was critical in the history of Singapore and Malaysia. And the history of modern Malay literature is that of the struggle of the Malays against the tide of modernisation and independence.

Literature became the documentation and reflection of a society's awareness, passion and struggle in improving lives. The aspirations and hopes to break free from colonisation had been penned in literary works since the beginning of the golden age of classical literature and the pre-World War era to the Japanese Occupation and the days of Asas '50.

Independence, the dream of every occupied nation and society, was realised by the Federation of Malaya when it gained independence on 31 August 1957. Singapore was granted internal self-government in 1959 and united with Malaysia in 1963 in hopes of being part of a greater independent and sovereign nation.

Interest from non-Malays and contribution of Nanyang University

This phase was exciting, with the promise of prominence and a bigger role for Malay language and culture in Malaysia and Singapore, drumming up interest even among the non-Malays in Singapore. This resulted in the launch of a Malay Language course (Malay 1 and 2) in March 1958. The course was taught by Rashid Manan, the Indonesian Consul for Singapore and Malaysia, but he was replaced in October by Dr Li Chuan Siu.

The course was popular among non-Malays after Malay was officialised as Malaysia's national language and later, Singapore's (Li Chuan Siu 1967, 190). Nantah undergraduates produced 12 issues of the magazine *Ikatan Mahasiswa Universiti Nanyang*, which carried poems, short stories and news on student activities, between December 1958 and 1963. Graduates and scholars who contributed significantly included Yang Quee Yee, Liaw Yock Fang, Tan Chin Kwang, Goh Choo Keng, Chan Maw Woh and Tan Ta Sen. Malay teachers who studied at Nantah in the 1970s included Suratman Markasan, Fatimah Mohd Noor and Juri Wari.

Keroncong of hope for Singapore's progress

The hope for Singapore to unite with Malaysia featured in the song *Singapura Waktu Malam*, sung by Saloma in the movie *Labu Labi*, a classic film directed by P Ramlee and released in 1962.⁵ The song was composed by P Ramlee and its lyrics, written by S Sudarmaji, portrayed the political ideals of the union:

Singapura maju jaya (Singapore thrives) tetap dalam aman dan sentosa (in peace and harmony) makin hari makin kaya (prospering each day) apabila di dalam Malaysia (when with Malaysia)

Singapore would be more secure, serene and prosperous if it were part of Malaysia, as painted in the *keroncong*. The dream materialised in 1962 when Singapore merged with Malaysia in 1963.

Song of love and hope in a new Malaysia

The Malay community was elated when Singapore became a part of Malaysia, the love and hope for the people featured in the song *Malaysia Baru* from the 1963 movie *Kasih Tanpa Sayang*, directed by Omar Rojik. The song was composed by Kassim Masdor, its lyrics written by Omar and sung by Aziz Jaafar. It was re-recorded by M Bakri with musical accompaniment by The Antartics in 1965.⁶

Malaysia Baru (New Malaysia)

Andai hidup tak punya cinta (Should our lives be devoid of love) pada bangsa mahupun wanita (be it towards race or woman)

Hidup tidak punya artinya (Life would be meaningless) Kenikmatan tidak dirasa (No pleasure felt) Cinta bangsa rasa mulia (Love for race is pure) Cinta wanita rasa bahagia (Love for woman is joy) Menjadi kita penuh daya (Our source of motivation) mencipta hidup sempurna. (Creating a complete life) Andai kata kita lalai sertalah lupa (Should we be careless) Masa akan lari sia-sia (Time will be wasted) Jiwa kosong tak berharga (A void soul without value) Dunia bukan syurga. (World no longer heavenly)

Oleh itu mari kawanku (Therefore, my friends) berpimpin tangan ganding bahu (hand in hand) Segera capai cita yang satu (Strive for a united hope) di alam Malaysia baru. (in a new Malaysia)

But history has shown that the joy of "a shared hope in a New Malaysia" in the songs by Malay artists in Singapore was short-lived. The hope to develop a shared language, literature, peace, economy and bliss was dashed when Singapore was kicked out of Malaysia in a vote by the Malaysian parliament. The separation of the two nations put an end to a shared history and culture.

Grief of the 9 August 1965 separation

The impact of this separation and new independence on society and Malay literature in Singapore was profound. The

Malay community suddenly found themselves to be a minority in their homeland, cut adrift from the core of Malay culture and regional history that had sheltered them all the while. It unravelled the ties of peace and security of being part of a larger family, and brought on doubts on the Malays' survival in a newly independent Singapore.

The short-lived euphoria was in a blink of an eye replaced with gloom and loss, as reflected in the stage drama *Sumbangsih*, acted by Rawan Hiba (Rahman Abdullah), who wrote it a few months after the separation. The drama was directed by Bani Buang and staged by Singapore Arts Group (Perkumpulan Seni Singapura).

Sumbangsih tells of a romance between Yahya dan Sapura, who had to part because he was poor and he had his leg amputated. The storyline and characters symbolises the relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. Even the theme song, written by Zainal S Abbas, reflected the sorrow of the couple's separation:

Oh sumbangsih jiwa kecewa (Oh the root of heartbreak) Nada kasih lagu bahgia (The loving melody of a happy song) Nan kurindu masa ke masa (How I miss the time together) Tapi kecewa dilanda cinta (Disappointed in love)

Oh rembulan tempat mengadu (Oh moon to whom I lament) Kami insan dahaga rindu (We thirst for love) Ingin bersatu hidup bersama (Long to live together) Mengenang cinta mu yang mulia (Reliving your noble love) (chorus) *Kini semua hancur dan musnah* (All is ruined now) *Niat bercantum badan berpisah* (United in hope but physically separated) *Kembang mawar beri pada mu* (I present you a blooming rose) *Lambang kita pasti bersatu* (A symbol of our union)

Oh sumbangsih hati ke hati (Oh heart to heart) Nada rindu luhur sejati (The sublime longing) Kami insan rindu percantuman (We long for a union) Kami rindukan keadilan (We yearn for justice)

According to literary figures Sulaiman Jeem and Abdul Ghani Abdul Hamid, the drama "was philosophical, not only in its dialogue, but also in its backstory. Rawan's objectives were spelt out to the audience at the Victoria Theatre in 1964. The theme was nothing new, tales of young couples separating because of a wealth gap a dime a dozen. But what made *Sumbangsih* meaningful was its timing, shortly after Singapore separated from Malaysia. The impact of and reaction to the separation were profound and the heartache was expressed in the drama." (1997, 315)

Singapore writer and theatre critic Djamal Tukimin notes that "Rawan's work *Sumbangsih* features the cries for a reunification between Singapore and Malaysia. He appears to be the only writer of that era who was politically aware and would weave this awareness into his theatrical works." (2007, 60–61)

Tracing Jejak Batas and Satu Bumi, symbols of separation

Singapore's separation from Malaysia became a common theme of literary works here, in poetry, songs, dramas, short stories and novels. But no attempt has been made to collate and examine these works even though they are useful materials for tracing the growth of patriotism and awareness of Singapore's multiracial and multicultural society post-independence.

Three notable works centring on the separation are by three Singapore men of different backgrounds and generations: Harun's *Mengesan Jejak Pelayaran Munshi Abdullah* (1966), Mohamed Latiff Mohamed's *Batas Langit* (1996) and Isa Kamari's *Satu Bumi* (1998).

Premature end

Harun was patriotic, writing about his love and pride for Singapore without alongside affection for the Malay world. He was well aware of Singapore's ties to the Malay world and hoped to see the nation make history and attain global recognition for its achievements.

Harun was typical of a generation of Singaporeans who loved the motherland as much as they loved the expansive and united Malay lands. He championed the glorious history of the Malay world in his works and his profound sorrow over Singapore's separation from Malaysia was inevitable, likening it to the premature drop of the buds from a coconut tree.

The coconut tree grew in abundance throughout the Malay world, or Malaya, and was useful to daily life and culture. It was in Kampung Daling Besar, Kuantan, that Harun observed the similarity between the natural occurrence and his emotions.

"My thoughts wander, sometimes to the point where I wonder if there are others like me, who lose sleep over the 9 August event. ? I was daydreaming when I was jolted by the thump of something falling near where I was standing by the window. I looked at the coconut trees, thinking it was just someone passing by but there was just a squirrel. The thump was from a bud that had fallen after it was partially eaten by the squirrel.

"My inner voice said: 'There is after all a friend who's not asleep but it's too bad we can't chat or exchange views.' To the squirrel on the ground, I quietly said: 'The best of men are but men at best.'" (Harun Aminurrashid 1966, 179–181). This piece by Harun is compelling as it paints a picture of how he was affected by the separation, which mirrored the public response at the unexpected news.

"I sat in coffee shops... They aired their dissatisfaction over the shocking news and asked, 'Why does it have to be this way?'" (1966, 140)

"This momentous event of our land has happened... and almost a week after the 9 August event, my mind remains disturbed and I feel the void. There are endless questions, especially with regard to the Singapore Malays, who number more than 250,000 and are no longer part of Malaysia but people of an independent Singapore. They need to roll up their sleeves and toil alongside their non-Malay compatriots, as equal citizens of Singapore." (1966, 206).

Batas Langit (1996) by Mohamed Latiff Mohamed

The novel *Batas Langit* showcases the post-independence social problems and poverty beleaguering the multiracial inhabitants of a village on Geylang Road. The story is told through the voice of a boy named Adi who comes from a poor family and is plagued with problems. His father is a gambling addict who neglects his family and eventually dies from diabetes.

Adi is financially dependent on his mother but figured out a way to support her. He yearns for education and finds encouragement in his neighbour Dolah. Adi studies at a Malay secondary school and loves Malay literature. He is influenced by Dolah's advice and opinions. With Singapore as a part of Malaysia, Adi hopes his Malay education will secure his future.

Dolah said there would be a poll by the authorities to see if the majority of the people wanted Singapore to remain a part of Malaysia, before deciding on its next move. Adi believed a separation from Malaysia would render his education useless, along with the Malay language. "Aunty, you must vote for Malaysia!" said Dolah one night. "And you, too," he added to Habsah.

As he sipped the coffee made by Aunty Timah, Dolah continued: "They are foolish to oppose Malaysia! They're foolish!

"Our country is small and has no natural resources. They'll realise their folly when our country is seized by communists!"

Dolah's words sent a chill down Adi's spine.

"Only with Malaysia can we survive. They're foolish! They've been influenced by the communists!" added Dolah.

When Singapore separated from Malaysia on 9 August 1965, a critically ill Dolah foretold a bleak future for Adi.

Adi was shocked when he heard the news on the radio. He felt the rug yanked from under his feet.

"Singapore separates from Malaysia!" said the newscaster. Adi panicked and his eyes welled up with tears.

When he whispered the news to Dolah, his eyes glistened. He slowly turned towards Adi's ear and whispered these words one by one: "Dark... is... your... future... you... have... no... future..."

Adi held tight Dolah's hand and wept.

That's how the novel ends.

Banyan tree, protector of soul

In the novel, Adi often climbs a banyan tree to be alone. The tree symbolises his life and that of the other villagers and bears witness to their suffering amid the political turmoil. People have said that this banyan tree has been here for hundreds of years. It has a spirit and people avoid it when walking in the dark. The broad banyan leaves on the thick branches shelter the attap house beneath, with roots as thick as arms and a trunk etched with scars.

... Adi had to leave his beloved banyan tree that grew in front of his house. It had been his friend since before he could read, its roots and branches familiar with the scent of his skin. The skinks in the tree were familiar with Adi, who had to leave his neighbours. He could picture his sadness when the time came for him to move.

... Adi was sad as the lorry started to move. He gazed at the banyan tree and his house, tears welling in his eyes. Just the day before, he had climbed the tree and carved "MALAYSIA, definitely". He wanted to hug the banyan tree but, alas, it was too big for him to do that.

Who is Adi? He is not just a character created by the author but a representation of the generation of Malays in Singapore who were born or grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, amid political turmoil. They were educated in Malay at the time when political leaders gave the assurance that Malay education was the most appropriate and promising of a bright future.

But after the separation, Singapore's political and educational policies shifted the focus to English education. This had a grave effect on the Malays — represented by Dolah — especially when their opportunities became limited because of their Malay education.

Dolah is considered to be highly educated among the Malay villagers, having passed the Senior Cambridge exams and worked as a clerk, but has an aversion to working for others and lives off the dole. He was the personification of the mindset and life of traditional Malay leaders or educated Malays who were passionate in defending the community and possessed great artistic talents but lacked the drive to improve the economy or amass material wealth. The educated Malays at the time had continued with their cultural practices and traditional arts while paying less attention to the teachings of Islam. This group was worried, unhappy and insecure over the changes in leadership and political climate, of being at the mercy of colonial masters and other races. They were also critical of the Malays' gullibility.

"Our people do not understand liberty," said Dolah while he walked. "Liberty is noble! Liberty is pure! Just you wait and see who will be liberated, who will be occupied. Adi, Daud Cina and Mail Sengau were silent as they listened to Dolah's rant. "Our people do not know politics, they have no political awareness, they let others dictate the dignity of our race, country and themselves. They simply echo when they hear others shout, 'Liberty!' They're parrots! Donkeys! Mules!" Dolah kept ranting as he walked.

People like Dolah found it hard to accept Singapore's separation from Malaysia and were pessimistic about their own and the Malay community's future. Not only did they have doubts about the future of the younger generation, as personified by Adi, but they saw no hope for recovery and were just waiting for death.

This portrayal makes for a fascinating retrospective reflection, more than 20 years after it was written by an author who was educated in Malay, just like Adi. Malay-educated individuals probably feel their lives and future were most affected by the separation and it has haunted them since then.

Satu Bumi (1998) by Isa Kamari

This novel narrates an encounter between Irman, a young engineer, and Yassir, an elderly who digs graves at the Bidadari cemetery which will be cleared for a development project. Irman's grandmother, Swee Mei, is buried in the cemetery and her grave has to be exhumed and relocated. Irman tells Yassir the story of his late grandmother, who was Chinese by birth. During the Japanese Occupation, her family had given her up to Durhakim's Malay family. Swee Mei was 18 years old and her family were afraid that she would be mistreated or even raped by the Japanese. Durhakim's family changed Swee Mei's name to Aminah. She converted to Islam and married Durhakim's nephew Malek.

Yassir in turn tells the story of his struggles amid the turbulent political climate. The two stories are told simultaneously in an interweaving style throughout the novel and are symbolically and philosophically juxtaposed with the history of the struggles and political turmoil in Singapore's pursuit of independence.

Unearthing fight for beloved land

A heartbroken Yassir had crossed the Causeway after a break-up with his girlfriend. During the State of Emergency, he was involved in a political movement against the occupying authorities and got acquainted with a left-leaning activist named Hashim. But a Special Branch officer in Malaysia had advised Yassir to return to the south, where his fighting spirit was much needed:

"Perhaps the time has come for you to switch arenas, you are needed more there. Over here, the Indonesian Peninsular People Union (Kris) keeps challenging the Malayan Union. In fact, the British are rather taken aback and impressed by the unity and political aspirations of the Malays of Kris despite it representing the upper crust instead of the commoners. Go while you can..."

"You speak as if I were from a foreign land. Am I not a son of this land? And is this a threat? Will I be detained?"

"Observe the local customs of where you are. There's nothing wrong with you being here but you are needed on the other side. The south has been separated from the Straits cluster and is now a Crown Colony with a civil administration. I am aware that you're unhappy with the separation." "I am indeed. Anyone studying history would know that colonial masters portray themselves as saviours when they are just causing trouble in the sultanate. It's also the fault of the sovereign for focusing on personal gains. The land has divided and the British are taking advantage of it.

"This is why you need to be smart and quick in taking action. Go! People are waiting for you. And consider all that I've told you as a mere advice from an observer on the sidelines of the south. Treat the Johor Strait as the umbilical cord connecting mother to child. And like a growing child, you have to learn to be mature in politics."

Yassir returned to the south and became active at the Bukit Timah branch of Kris. He was also involved in a discussion on the liberation of the south when the Kris chief visited the home of chairman Hamid Khamis.

"Are you not including the agenda of the liberation of the south in your discussion at the capital city?"

The chief replied calmly but firmly: "What's important is that we gain independence for the mother before we even discuss the liberation of the child. Trust me, I won't neglect the south."

Yassir was concerned that a separate liberation would push the two sides even further apart. "What will become of us after the south is liberated?"

"We offer scholarships to Malay students in the south, so they have a choice of migrating to the north."

The chief's explanation angered Yassir.

"The Malays have never migrated, it has never been our intention. Despite being occupied by the British and Japanese, the Malays have never thought of migrating! We aren't Malays if we ditch our own country!" A Kris torpedo whizzed past and exploded in the sea of history, heard by ears that longed to ride the waves of a crusade.

Yassir's hope did not materialise. The chief continued to demand for the independence of the north from the British and succeeded. The declaration of independence was made at Tanah Tuah on 31 August 1957. Yassir was there.

His heart jumped in joy despite a cloud of anxiety hanging over his head.

He had bought a map showing the south as part of the Malay land, before heading to Tanah Tuah. He gave the map to the chief after writing on it: "Do not forget the south".

Yassir was unsure if the chief kept the map but it didn't matter to him as long as the request was honoured. It didn't even matter by whom, where and how. What's important was honesty and resolve.

He wondered if he should blame the chief for disregarding the south and trust when he himself had behaved similarly in ditching the south and his loved ones in search of sympathy up north? Didn't he himself migrate? But he'd never viewed the north and south as separate lands. He'd never had a change of heart in his struggles.

Yassir and the Malay community in the south had high hopes, having entrusted the chief with the fate of their future. Disappointed with the chief and Kris, Yassir eventually joined the new movement party PAB.

He was also sad that the chief had neglected the land, so he eventually decided to move to PAB. He regretted how Kris had disregarded the trust and importance of the Malays in the south. It showed how Kris did not have a clear vision with regard to the Malays in the south. The character Yassir can be regarded as an avatar for Dr Ya'acob Mohammed (1925–1989), a Singapore Malay political figure who left the Umno party for the People's Action Party (PAP), the party he believed could help the Malay community. His involvement in Singapore politics is significant, particularly for helping PAP garner the support of the Malay community.

In appreciation of Dr Ya'acob's service and contribution, National University of Singapore conferred him with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1981, when he retired as Senior Minister of State (Prime Minister's Office). He became the Singapore ambassador to Egypt, Turkey and Yugoslavia between 1982 and 1987. He died on 11 October 1989.

Severed umbilical cord - cracks of a family's sorrows

The other interesting story in the novel is about Aminah and her life with her adoptive father Durhakim during the Japanese Occupation. Aminah, who was a samsui at the harbour, stayed true to her new faith. Skin colour and ancestry did not affect the harmony and joy in the family. The family bond is similar to the merger of the southern and northern regions.

"Durhakim was elated to have his family, likening his ties with Aminah and her son Ilham to the inclusion of the south in the United Regions. The south was under the same roof as the United Regions. He was aware of the significance of the unification as compared to his family ties but he didn't see anything wrong in celebrating them just the same. He, too, felt sad over the turmoils in the country. He wept when he heard the song 'Nusa Secitaku' taking the place of 'Majulah Nusa Selatan' on the radio."

Unfortunately, the joy over the merger was short-lived following the political clashes.

"Kris supported the unification, having promised an advantage for the Malays. The left-leaning Labour Movement contended the unification and pushed out a propaganda to defend the oppressed Chinese community. Meanwhile, PAB sat on the fence with the slogan 'A nation for all citizens' to assure equal rights to everyone but this raised a concern among the Malays that their upper hand would be obliterated."

Similar to the United Regions, peace and harmony in Durhakim's family were threatened in the face of racial issues. Durhakim was killed when a racial riot broke out during a procession celebrating the birth of the Prophet. Aminah died after she was brutally raped by a group of Chinese youths angered and felt humiliated by her move to embrace the Malay community. Ilham, orphaned, wallowed in his grief.

"Since then, his life was drowning in grief as the joy and harmony he had enjoyed with his mother and grandfather had been destroyed. He felt lonely, having been forced to face the future alone."

The grief of the orphan is likened to the people's grief when the south separated from the United Regions.

"His mother and grandfather were with him when the Prime Minister (PM) announced the separation a year later. The PM had wept. Ilham couldn't decide what saddened him more. His tears for his mother had died up. The umbilical cord of love, knowledge and history connecting the turbulent south had been severed. 9 August mirrored my grief and heartbreak."

Imagery and meaning to symbolism in separation

Singapore's separation from Malaysia triggered a profound and unexpected historical shock, eliciting differing reactions in both countries, especially among the Malays in Singapore. Mature writers from the generation, such as Harun, calmly embraced the change despite feeling sad and disappointed at having their dream of being a part of a bigger Malay world shattered. Harun remained optimistic even when he was concerned about the Singapore Malays, who had become a minority group and were still lagging. He hoped the community would improve by learning from other communities' progress and prosper to become a symbol of Malay progress.

Second-generation writers who were Malay-educated, such as Latiff, who were caught in the pre-separation political upheaval, were equally surprised and sad. They were also frustrated and cynical because they saw themselves as victims of deceit and pawns in political chess. They were disappointed and thought their future ruined as their education could no longer guarantee a livelihood.

But the post-1965 generation of writers, as represented by Isa, who were English-educated in the new nation and enjoyed a stable and prosperous political and economic atmosphere, were more accepting of the situation. Concerned with the chain of events, they delved into the secrets of the past without the weight of the emotional baggage of history that had burdened the earlier generations of Malays.

They looked up to the courageous and noble actions of their leaders. They had faith in Islamic values to be the glue in social and national unity instead of race and ancestry.

Such was the cry of the lion from the pain of being ousted from the Malayan jungle.

Post-1965 literary development — roar of literature in Singapore

How was the growth of Singapore literature after 1965? It can be further categorised into three phases in a rough division based on the writers' thoughts/psychological perspectives embedded in their work instead of the period in history. Note that there are writers active before and after the period, such as Suratman, Ariff, Latiff and Isa. Post-1965 literature can be categorised into:

- 1. Loss (1965 to 1980)
- 2. Searching (1980 to 2000)
- 3. Rebuilding (2000 to date)

Phase 1: Loss (1965 to 1980)

The period was rather precarious or critical for the Singapore Malay community and its literature. It was turbulent as the political separation had led to feelings of loss and marginalisation with the sudden change in the status of the Malay community. The Malays felt sad, angry and hurt from the political expulsion and marginalisation. (Shaharudin Maaruf and Sharifah Maznah Syed Omar, 2000, 113).

This psychological state was exacerbated with the acceleration of development and urbanisation, making the Malays feel uprooted from their life traditions as they were moved out of villages and into flats.

Notable writers of the phase included this decade were Ariff, Masuri, Suratman, Noor S I and Ghani. Their works became the voice for the community in expressing the sense of loss. Examples of such works include short stories *Kemana Hati Hendak Kubawa* by Fuad Salim and Suratman's *Penghulu Yang Hilang Segalagalanya* (1998). The sentiment of loss can be summed up with Suratman's poem *Jalan Permulaan*. He was a veteran writer who led Asas '50 from 1977 to 1986 and from 1992 to 1994. Here's an excerpt from the poem:

Laut tempatku menangkap ikan (The sea where I fish) Bukit tempatku mencari rambutan (The hill where I pluck rambutan) sudah menghutan dilanda batu-bata (have become a concrete jungle) Pak Lasim tak biasa lagi jadi penghulu (Lasim is no longer village head) pulaunya sudah dicabut dari peta kepalanya (the island severed from the map of the head) anak buah sudah terdampar (the children are stranded) di batu-bata dan pasir-masir hangat (amid the warm bricks and sand)

Aku kehilangan lautku (I've lost my sea) aku kehilangan bukitku (I've lost my hill) aku kehilangan diriku (I've lost myself)

Suratman was also doubtful of a recovery from the loss:

Singapuraku (My Singapore) aku mengerti sekali (I truly understand) di sini tempatku (this is my place) tapi aku tak tahu bila (but I don't know when) aku akan menemui segala kehilanganku? (will I recover all that I've lost?) (Dewan Sastera, February 1981)

Pessimistic tone in writing

As a result of the profound sadness and sense of loss, the tone of writing in this phase to be pessimistic and unsure of a better life for the community. This can be seen in most literary genres such as poems, short stories and novels.

The pessimism was detected and discussed by observers of Singapore literature, such as Mohd Naim Daipi (1981), Masuri (1983), Rasiah Halil (1984), Hadijah Rahmat (1987, 1991), Maznah (1992) and Shaharudin/Maznah (2000). Let us study the analysis. "Prominent works of the 1970s and early 1980s reeked of pessimism. The writers responded negatively to the lag in Malay development and their status as a minority group. Instead of instilling hope and optimism through their works, inspiring the Malays to progress, prominent Malay writers mainly expressed pessimism and identity crisis through their works." (Shaharudin/Maznah, 2000, 115).

This got Masuri concerned and through his poetry and essays, he advised Singapore writers not to be hampered by history but to be more positive and forward-looking. Masuri himself channelled a positive attitude and view on life, featuring life problems and challenges with a constructive perspective and spirit.

He firmly rejected pessimism in life, in particular writers' voices and mutterings that readily surrendered in the face of challenges and whined to the extent of turning literature into a "house of laments".

Kita tidak bakal balik (We won't return) Menjadi perindu yang terus sendu (With ever-sobbing longing) Sambil merintih keluhan pedih (While perspiring in pain) Kita tidak bakal meneruskan (We won't continue) Gelisah pecah menjadi penghambat (Shackled by separation anxiety) Paling-paling jauh (As far as it goes) Kalau dilurutkan (If removed) Kita bakal mengutuk-ngutuk (We will condemn) Kalau diturutkan (If pandered to) Ke mana kita (Where will we be)

Dan anak cucu segala (And our children) Kita bakal didakwa (We will be judged) Pewaris putus asa (Descendents who give up) Yang memuliakan semangat papa (Venerating hardship) (Kita Tidak Bakal Balik, Mimpi Panjang Seorang Penyair, 1995, 143)

The bitterness of the separation urged Singapore Malays to re-evaluate how they had lived their lives over the years and search for a new perspective and direction amid a new political ecology. The community then rose again to face headon the changing systems in their new life and try to find a way out to excel in education and economics. It became the new focus and spirit in next phase.

Phase 2: Searching (1980 to 2000)

It was only after more than 15 years of independence that Malay literature in Singapore showed a transition to a new outlook by viewing life challenges from the perspective of a citizen amid the Malay world and the region. It's the era of awareness and soulsearching for the community and writers in comparing themselves to the Malays in neighbouring countries while maintaining a balance in national and cultural or ethnic elements.

This can be seen in Latiff's poem Melayuku Melayumu:7

Telah kutafsirkan makna Melayuku (I've interpreted 'my Malay') Dari mata dan bibir sejarah (From the eyes and lips of history) Yang luka bagai selendang berdarah (Hurt, a blood-stained scarf) Yang pilu bagai perawan berduka (Melancholic like a heartbroken lady) Melayumu adalah bulan purnama (Your Malay is the moon) harum cempaka wangi cendana (scent of magnolia, aroma of sandalwood) Melayuku adalah pelamin yang patah (My Malay is a broken dais) pusara yang legam (a dark shrine) dan malam yang pasrah (and a helpless night) (Dewan Sastera, March 1983)

Other than comparing with surrounding neighbours, the search also looked at the status of the Malay community on the world stage, measured against global achievements and universal Islamic values. This can be seen in Hadijah's poem *Di Tengah Alam*:

Bagaimana dan bila (How and when) manusia seperti aku dari bangsa kerdil (A person like me, from a diminutive race) di tengah negara kecil (In a small nation) akan lebih bererti dan disedari di peta dunia (to be more meaningful and recognised on the world stage) dapat mengukir sebuah bekas di jalanan sejarah (to carve out a notch in history) menggantung sebutir kejora di dada cakerawala (to suspend a planet in the celestial sphere) sambil mengecap keredaan Allah! (while enjoying God's blessings!) (Berita Minggu, 8 Mei 1983)

This process of searching and reshaping culture and literature was fairly extensive and became a focal point in literary works in Singapore.

Phase 3: Rebuilding (2000 to date)

In this phase, we see the voices of new generations of Malays educated in the post-1965 education system and who enjoy progress just like other Singaporeans. This generation has next to none of the historical baggage of the preceding generations. From this generation of authors comes new Malay voices confident in progressing and standing shoulder to shoulder with writers from other communities in Singapore and the Malay world.

They display their attention to history and their people's destiny and sensitivity to the challenges of life in Singapore. Among this group of writers are Rafaat Hamzah, Alfian Sa'at, Aidli Alin Mosbit and Noor Hasnah Adam.

The voice of this generation is possibly represented by Hasnah's poem *Pasak Temasek*, which depicts the dualism and complexity of the new life in Singapore:⁸

Binatang itu memang perkasa (The beast is indeed majestic) Tangkas lakunya putih dadanya (Agile and white of chest) Andai itu petanda yang mengaburi mata (Should this cloud the eyes) Mahkota tenggelam bersama kuasa (The crown sinks alongside power)

Gelora laut menjadi teman tapi musuh (The current is both friend and foe) Membawa rezeki membawa mati (Giving sustenance and taking lives) Namun kota Temasek ini tetap bertahan dan berdiri (But Temasek endures and remains standing) Biar lautnya merah todak menyerang (Let the sea turn red and the swordfish attack) Biar gegak gempita seteru menyerang (Let chaos wash over) Biar rajanya lari lintang pukang! (Let the king flee in haste!) Biar beratus tahun berlalu (Let hundreds of years pass) Binatang itu tak pernah beradu (The beast doesn't sleep) Pasak itu hanya membisu (The lock stays silent) Istana itu telah lama tak berlampu (The palace has been dim for years) Dan pulau ini masih dara bersemu... (And this island remains a blushing virgin...)

Vision of eminent laureate

We can see from the different phases of literary development before and after 1965 that the heart of Malay literature never stopped beating despite the shock and disruption in the Loss phase. Is Singapore literature cut off from Malaysia and the Malay archipelago?

Usman Awang, a doyen of Malay literature, wrote: "Politics may separate us, border maps may fence us, passports may curb free movements, but culture will continue to unite us and language and literature will transcend because of the inner voice that unifies the heart and soul of the people in the region." (1978)

This has proven to be true! There's been no literary severance between Singapore and Malaysia. In fact, there have been efforts to further strengthen the literary ties. Why and how? Let's review the steps that have led to this literary phenomenon in its most recent development.

5 literary links between Singapore and the region

1. Organisational activities

Literary, language, cultural and educational bodies in Singapore have been instrumental in forging and maintaining literary and social ties with Malaysia and other nations in the Malay archipelago.

"The fear of losing its identity and the threat of its tradition eroding with the rapid development have motivated literary and cultural elites in Singapore to take the initiative to organise activities at regional level to preserve the history and culture of the region. "Asas '50 organised the Regional Malay Literati Conference in 1977, Singapore Kemuning Society organised the 3 Asean Nations Drama Festival in 1980 and the Regional Drama Festival in 1982, Singapore Malay Teachers' Union (KGMS) organised the Regional Malay Teachers Meet in 1985, and Singapore Malay Journalists Association organised the Regional Journalists Inaugural Meet in 1988.

"Singapore to this day continues to be a friend, participant and supporter of important literary activities." (Hadijah Rahmat, 2002)

Asas '50 and KGMS still maintain their literary ties in the region and also bilaterally with institutions such as the Federation of National Writers' Associations of Malaysia (Gapena) and the Sultan Idris Education University (Upsi).

2. Publishing platforms

Singapore authors — such as Masuri, Suratman, Isa, Rohani Din, Peter Augustine Goh, Hadijah, Rasiah, Johar Buang and junior writer Munirah Jaafar — have had their works published in Malaysia by the likes of the Institute of Language and Literature (DBP) and the universities.

Other than their individual works, there are also established authors from Singapore who have collated the works of regional writers and published the compilations in Malaysia. For example, Suratman compiled the anthology *Cerpen Nusantara Mutakhir* and Rohani compiled and published poems by young writers from three countries, in *Bebas Melata Melantun Kasih* and *Bebas Melata Mesra Serumpun.*⁹

3. Education system

Since the founding of Sang Nila Utama Secondary School as Singapore's first Malay secondary school in 1961, Literature has been included in secondary and post-secondary curriculum. The subject was taught using Malaysian works such as Kelapa Nan Sebatang, Angin Dari Gunung, Lukisan Zaman, Seorang Tua di Kaki Gunung, Pulang Gadisku Pulang, Dekat Disayang Jauh Dikenang and Salina.¹⁰ Malaysian and Indonesian works were often the top choices for analysis. Local works, such as Sarah Pengarang Kecil, Mail Mau Kahwin, Tiga Warna Bertemu and Subuh Hilang Senja, were small in number. It was only in 2013 that Singapore's Education Ministry selected local literary works to be compiled into books — Tekad and Begitulah Kata-Kata¹¹ — for the Malay Literature syllabus at the secondary and pre-university levels.

The Elective Malay Language Programme for Secondary School (Emas) for secondary level and the Malay Language Elective Programme for junior college are special Literature programmes aimed at strengthening the ties through study visits to Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. The programmes also included experiential learning trips to Malaysia to introduce students to the backdrop and author of the novel *Restu*, Pulau Belitung in Sumatra to appreciate the novel *Laskar Pelangi* and to Bali to appreciate poetry.

At tertiary level, language and literature studies are still focused on the language and literature of the Malay archipelago. Regional scholars such as Dr Abdul Rahman Napiah (Mana Sikana) and Professor Budi Darma are appointed to teach at the National Institute of Education (NIE), where they introduce drama courses and literary theories. Scholars like Professor Dr Asmah Haji Omar are also invited to conduct masterclasses.

The local universities are active in organising language and literary activities that showcase regional and international scholars and writers. For example, the Malay Language and Culture division of the Asian Languages and Cultures (ALC) academic group of NIE in 2008 held an international seminar dedicated to Masuri. The scholars of Malay studies in Singapore also contribute to literary seminars and publications in Malaysia and the region.

4. Government platforms

There have been literary activities in the region and Asean countries that are backed by the government — such as the Asean literary project and Southeast Asian Writers Award¹²

- with the government enabling the links in the literary network. The National Arts Council (NAC) organises the annual Singapore Writers Festival and oversees the publication of works by writers from Singapore, the region and Asean countries. A recent collaboration was a joint translation project between NAC and the Malaysian Institute of Translation & Books (ITBM).

Another government body actively contributing to the development of Malay language and literature is the Malay Language Council, Singapore (MBMS), which spearheads essential language and literary activities at the national level, such as the annual Malay Language Month. MBMS also sponsors the Tun Seri Lanang Award, the nation's most prestigious literary award to recognise Singapore writers who have made significant contributions to the growth of literature here.

A significant involvement and commitment from the government has got to be Singapore becoming a member of the Southeast Asian Literature Council (Mastera) in October 2012. This can raise the standards of Malay literature in Singapore for it to be competitive in Southeast Asia.

Other contributors to the literary and language activities managed by the Ministry of Education are the Malay Language Learning and Promotion Committee, and the National Library Board.¹³ These efforts spur on and strengthen the historical, literary and cultural ties between the Malays in Singapore, Malaysia and other countries with similar roots.

5. Root of Malay classics

Singapore writers have not forgotten the cultural roots they share with their regional counterparts and they draw inspiration from great classics such as *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *Hikayat Abdullah* and folktales. There's a textual thread that runs through the Malay classics here, linking them throughout the local literary growth right from the early days. The Malay literary roots give writers an insight into the history of the people and country, inspirations and lessons in using literature as a reference when studying the problems faced by the community and country, and making critical assessments on women, regional politics and international issues.¹⁴

Writers of all ages love the classics or Singapore folklore, which have remained relevant. This holds true especially for the Malay community, as it grapples with rapid urbanisation and globalisation, in giving voice to women's rights (Malay and Asian), condemning the faults of world politics and defending fellow man.

This link across classic texts is also the bond that ties Singapore literature to the regional literature as they share a foundation in these classics albeit different interpretations between countries and generations, and according to living conditions.

Conclusion — roar of global literary resolution

The separation in 1965 left a profound impact on the heart and mind of literary writers, advocates and enthusiasts in Singapore. The sense of loss was a psychological effect of the political development that influenced the content, style and tone of writings created after 9 August. But it has neither severed nor limited the literary relationship between Singapore, Malaysia and the Malay archipelago. In fact, there are prominent traits of the shared cultural fraternity that have shown up in the literary works, a testament to Usman's vision from almost four decades ago.

Although Singapore writers, especially the younger generations, have a post-separation educational background and challenges that are different from Malaysian and regional writers', the network of literature has remained consistent across the countries. The roar of this resolution is backed by the Singapore government and has been well-received by Malaysian and regional advocates. May the roar and strong bond live on as we uphold the preservation of the bright and verdant cultural landscape. God willing. I close this chapter with this excerpt of a poem for us to reflect on:

Kita perlu cipta sebuah karya agung seni (We need a grand literary creation) rakaman dan cerminan sebuah perjuangan (that chronicles the crusade) mengorak langkah-langkah cemerlang (retracing the glorious steps) menghapus kesesatan (eradicate deviance) menangkis latah dan gejala rimba (dispelling crude behaviours) dengan kecanggihan ilmu, wahana dan wawasan waja (with the sophistication of education, options and aspirations) dan kentalnya iman dan amal (and steadfast faith and practice)

Kita pacu tenaga dan rebut keunggulan budi dan cita (We channel our energy and strive for excellent morals and ideals) mengukir citra indah bangsa dan manusia (carving the beauty of race and mankind) di panggung jagat raya (on the world stage) (Hadijah Rahmat, extracted from Cerita Rakyat III, 17 February 1992)¹⁵

Endnotes

- 1 This article is based on a paper presented at Seminar Serumpun at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang on 11 December 2013.
- 2 For a description of Singapore in classical texts, see Hadijah Rahmat 2002, "Patah Tumbuh Hilang Belum Berganti—Singapura Sebagai Kota Kebangkitan Seni". In SELVES – the States of the Arts in Singapore, editors Kwok Kian Woon, Arun Mahizan, T. Sasitharan and Hadijah Rahmat. Singapore: National Arts Council.
- 3 See Teuku Iskandar 1995. *Kesusasteraan Melayu Sepanjang Abad.* Brunei: Jabatan Kesusasteraan Melayu, Universiti Brunei, pp. 37.
- 4 For further details on the history of Malay printing, see Hadijah Rahmat 2011, "American Missionary Journey into the Malay Printing World". In Rainbows of Malay Literature and Beyond — Festschrift for Professor Muhd Salleh Yappar, editor Sinha, L. Pulau Pinang: Universiti Sains Malaysia, pp. 103–123.
- 5 This song also received a creative adaptation by Alfian Saat in his short story "Singapore By Night", in *Malay Sketches* 2012, 169–173. This theme of separation has also been applied in some of his works such as the drama "Causeway" in the book *Prisma Pentas* published by MBMS in 2004. This song also has become an exhibit at the Taman Warisan Melayu Kampung Gelam (Singapore Malay Heritage Centre) from 2012.

- 6 See the rendition by Aziz Jaafar in the movie clip, http://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=_dEWyvUtAUM. For M. Bakri's version, see http://www.youtube. com/watch?v=7hWkypoZHkE
- 7 See Mohamed Latiff Mohamed 2011. *Bangsaku Di Hari Lahirku*. Siri Warisan Singapura. published by Asas '50. 2011.
- 8 See FIFTY ON 50, editors Edwin Thumboo, Isa Kamari, Chia Hwee Pheng and dan K.T.M.Iqbal, NAC, 2009, 119–121.
- 9 See Mohd Pitchay Gani Mohd Abdul Aziz. ed., 2005 Dari Gerhana ke Puncak Purnama – Biografi Asas '50 55 Tahun Dalam Persuratan and http:// asas50.com/about/affiliations-and-partners/ Ed., 2005.
- 10 To view a complete list of literature texts, please refer to Rosnani Suni, Pendidikan Sastera Melayu Di Singapura, tesis Sarjana, NIE (2004, 324).
- 11 See Suradi Sipan 2013. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Education & NAC. Also Sa'eda Buang. 2013. Begitulah Kata-kata. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Education & NAC. 2013. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Education & NAC.
- 12 See Anthology of ASEAN Literature, The Poetry of Singapore, editors Edwin Thumboo, Wong Yoon Wah, Lee Tzu Pheng, Masuri S.N. and V.T. Arasu. Published and sponsored by the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information, 1985. The project was adopted by the Philippines in 1982 and subsequently approved as an ASEAN project on April 2, 1982. See also Modern Literature of ASEAN, editor Budi Darma. Jakarta: ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information, 2000.
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- 14 See Hadijah Rahmat, "Dari Teks Klasik Kepada Cerita Rakyat Singapura — Cabaran Sastera Melayu Tradisional di Pangung Jagat" a paper for an international seminar with the theme "Towards the cultural excellence of Japan and Asean" organised by Universitas Negeri Surabaya (Unesa), at Sheraton Hotel, Jl.Embong Malang Surabaya, 6–8 December 2004. See also "Kembali Ke Akar Diri: Cabaran Tradisi Dalam Sastera Moden Singapura". In *Mengharungi Laut Sastera Melayu*, coordinated by Jelani Harun and Ben Murtagh, DBP, 2013: 347–371.
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Malay
TheatreImage: Constraint of the second stateMohd Raman DaudIn Post-Independence
Singapore

In multiracial Singapore, theatre plays a significant role in entertainment and conveying social messages. Theatre enthusiasts have enjoyed traditional ethnic theatre performances such as Chinese opera and *bangsawan* since the 19th century. Indian theatre is believed to have started in Singapore in the 1950s.

English-language theatre emerged before World War II thanks to Singapore-based British officers and their wives. Singapore's oldest theatre group, The Stage Club, is believed to be founded by British officers in 1945 but it flourished only in the 1980s following the push for the use of English as the working language. According to the National Arts Council (NAC), the nation's economy and social stability in the 1990s drove the growth in theatre towards professionalism with a range of artistic capacities – from traditional and avant-garde to commercial and popular. The development was also brought about by the Report of the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts in 1989 which contained recommendations such as the provision of resources and assistance to the local theatre industry to cultivate talents and enable their performances to reach beyond our shores.

In 2014, there were over 130 companies and theatre bodies in Singapore, covering performances from traditional to modern debunking the prediction of British publisher and arts entrepreneur Donald Moore (1923–2000) that the future of Singapore's art would be "barren of audience" (Moore, 1976: 17).

Infancy

According to the "father of *bangsawan*" Sharif Medan (1919– 1997), there were several *bangsawan* troupes in Singapore between 1900 and the early 1940s, including those managed by three ethnic Peranakans of Chinese, Arab and Indian descents.

For example, entrepreneur Cheong Koon Seng in 1910 founded the Star Opera Bangsawan Group which featured popular actor couple Khairudin Tairu (1890–1964) and Cik Tijah (Wan Tijah Daud, 1905–1962, also Tairu's wife). Every performance at the Baba Cheong Theatre Royal at North Bridge Road (where presentday Raffles Hospital is located) was a hit.

Bangsawan started to fade away when the silver screen took centre stage in the 1930s and *bangsawan* actors like Pak Suki (M Suki Nurudin), Tijah, Sharif, Fatimah Jasmin, Syed Ali Mansoor Al-Attas and Khairuddin crossed over to films with their debut in 1933's *Laila Majnun*.

Pioneer

In early 1944, during the Japanese Occupation (1942–1945), Bani Buang (1929–1996) pioneered theatrical performances with a makeshift stage of oil barrels, wooden boards and canvas sheets at Kampung Agas in Pasir Panjang (Mohd Raman Daud 1982, 1989). Pemuda Baru Sandiwara performed the plays *Helang Hitam* and *Ahmad Berbudi* at the compound of the house belonging to a man named Tambi.

Bani was also the first to stage a Malay play at the Victoria Theatre. *Anak Tiri Boyan* was performed to raise money for the Bawean Association of Singapore in 1954. Bani directed dozens of plays including international works such as *Hamlet*, earning the title "father of modern Malay drama".

Better known as a director than a playwright or actor, Bani categorised the Malay dramas of his era into two genres:

- Historical, or *purbawara*, especially those set in times of unrest or monarchy, and
- Modern-realism, or sandiwara/citrawara, on stage, radio and TV.

Post-realism dramas such as absurdism or improv, according to Bani, existed in the mid-1970s due to the influence of theatre developments in Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.

"In the beginning, we staged dramas with leads or guides like in *bangsawan* but without scripts. We decided on the main character, dialogue, scene composition and so on," said Bani. But as with improv, actors often digressed and prolonged the stage performance. "I once acted as a hero with Hussein Jahidin (1933–2014, former journalist and founder of Perkumpulan Seni) as a villain who was supposed to die but he refused to. As the performance was about to end, I acted out a heart attack and died instead," Bani added, laughing at the recollection (Raman, 1982: 3).

Bani directed a number of Indonesian dramas under Cahaya Timur Sandiwara, staging works from Indonesia such as *Awal* and *Mira* by Utuy Tontang Sontani, *Sangkar Madu* by Bachtiar Siagian, *Gadis Moderen* by Adlin Affandi (to raise money for Anglo Malay Evening School in 1946) and *Corak Dunia* by Surapati.



DRAMA: Nadiputra develops himself as a writer, actor and drama director.

Post-realism dramas such as absurdism or improv, according to Bani, existed in the mid-1970s due to the influence of theatre developments in Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta.





FLOURISHING DUE TO CREATIVE IDEAS: The drama Bicara staged by Teater Artistik that was brought to Malaysia and Indonesia.

Groups that have been actively staging dramas since the 1950s include:

- Malay Youth Literary Association (4PM, 1948)
- Perkumpulan Seni, established by, among others, music composer Zubir Said, Bani, Malaysian National Laureate Usman Awang, journalist and playwright Hussein Jahidin and award-winning writer Abdul Ghani Abdul Hamid
- Sriwana (1955), founded by playwright and choreographer Nongchik Abdul Ghani and journalist Sulaiman Jeem
- Singapore Cultural Society (1967) that once featured playwright and director E F Kamaludin

- Singapore Kemuning Society (1977) which showcased improv dramas helmed by Lut Ali
- National Theatre Malay Drama Workshop (early 1960s–1984)
- National Library Writers' Corner (early-1970s-1988)

Bani and Kalam Hamidi (Abdul Malek Abdul Hamid, born in Umbai, Melaka, on 24 October 1936) were two prominent directors of the early days. Kalam, who headed 4PM's cultural arts, was a prolific dramatist whose works included *Sial Bertuah* and *Anak Nazar Tujuh Keramat* which was used as a school textbook in Malaysia.



PRACTICE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS: From Left) Noor Effendy Ibrahim, Aidli Alin Mosbit and Alfian Sa'at, among the most prominent young scriptwriters.



WILL KEEP PULSATING: It is clear, Malay theatre in Singapore—from bangsawan to teater rewang—will continue to pulsate as long as there are talents and support from government and private agencies as well as its followers.

From 1850 to the 1960s, Singapore was a hub for intellectual activities, publishing, filming and Malay literature in the region. Bani said the Malay film industry provided a pool of actors because artists like Normadiah and Habsah were open to stage dramas. "In the past, men, especially mild-mannered ones, even took on female roles!" (Raman, 1982: 4)

Among the personalities who contributed to the development of Singapore Malay drama in the 1960s were Rawan Hiba (Rahman B), Kalam, Onn Abdul Rahman, Nongchik, Hussein Jahidin, Yusnor Ef and Shaharom Husain.

Johor historian and arts practitioner Shaharom Husain (1919– 2008) was known for his period drama *Si Bongkok Tanjung Puteri*, which was staged repeatedly by 4PM. It tells of a Johor warrior named Si Bongkok, who rebelled because his services were not acknowledged and died after getting stabbed with his own *badik* (Bugis dagger).

Yusnor (Mohd Noor Mohd Yusofe, b. 1937), who was mentored by Kalam in 4PM, started off as an actor and moved on to writing and directing stage plays. Rawan wrote *Lela Satria*, a *purbawara* that centred on the Malays struggling against tyranny and was adapted into a film by Cathay-Keris Film. The late 1960s was the era of Nadiputra (b. 1946), who established himself as a scriptwriter, actor, director and designer. His first script, *Malisa*, was staged by 4PM. Nadiputra leans towards writing and directing scripts of period dramas and realism.

Scriptwriter Ramli Ahmad made his name in the 1970s through Sriwana's drama activities. The son of Ahmad Patek, a musician and composer of Malay songs such as "Embun Menitik", Ramli's most popular stage play was *Ekstremis* (1979) which received a grant from the Drama Promotion Scheme by the Ministry of Culture. It centred on individuals who were overzealous in their preaching, going against the teachings of Islam.

Impact of Separation

When Singapore separated from Malaysia on 9 August 1965, it affected the sustainability and stability of the country, including the arts. Perkumpulan Seni staged the drama *Sumbangsih* by Rawan and directed by Bani – featuring a one-legged youth who was separated from his lover. The drama premiered in Peninsular Malaysia under the title *Cinta Si Kudung*. The song "Sumbangsih", sung by M Bakri, composed by Zainal S Abbas and lyrics by Rawan, was performed in the drama staged at the Victoria Theatre on 5 December 1965. The song's symbolism moved the audience to tears (Ghani and Sulaiman, 1997).

Oh sumbangsih jiwa kecewa (Oh help the broken heart) Nada kasih lagu bahgia (Undertones of love in a happy song) Nan kurindu masa ke masa (Yearning from time to time) Tapi kecewa dilanda cinta (Disappointed in love)

Oh rembulan tempat mengadu (Oh to the moon we lament) Kami insan dahaga rindu (Beings overwhelmed with longing) Ingin bersatu hidup bersama (Wishing for a life together) Mengenang cintamu yang mulia (Remembering your pure love)

(chorus)

Kini semua hancur dan musnah (Everything is ruined now) Niat bercantum badan berpisah (Crushing hopes of togetherness) Kembang mawar beri padamu (I present you a blooming rose) Lambang kita pasti bersatu (A symbol of our certain union)

Oh sumbangsih hati ke hati (Oh join the hearts) Nada rindu luhur sejati (The yearning true and noble) Kami insan rindu percantuman (Beings longing for a union) Kami rindu akan keadilan (We yearn for justice) Drama advocates in post-independence Singapore were upset when members of the literary community returned or relocated to Malaysia. As early as 1964, Shaw Brothers Malay Film Productions actors such as P Ramlee and arts advocates started moving to Kuala Lumpur. Singaporeans at the time faced economic uncertainties and the Malay drama activities went on a decline. Bani said it was inevitable but organisations such as Perkumpulan Seni did not give up.

Re-emergence

In its bid to rejuvenate the local Malay literary scene, Asas '50 organised a Literary Village on 4 and 5 August 1973 at Tanah Merah Holiday Camp. The initiative, attended by then Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office Yaacob Mohamed, was to "review the development of Malay literature and ways to retain and cultivate it in a multiracial society, namely Singapore". Participants included more than 150 young authors, litterateurs, poets and supporters of Singapore Malay literature from Singapore, Malaysia, Sarawak and Brunei.

Sriwana, led by Nongchik, hosted the Sriwana Drama Festival to spot talents in acting, writing, directing and stage performances to boost the theatre scene. Following Rawan's blistering commentary in which he said the local Malay drama was going nowhere ("Drama Melayu", *Berita Harian*, 25 November 1981) and Sriwana's efforts, the theatre scene picked up the pace between 1968 and 1990.

Rawan, who was the festival's head jury in 1981, also expressed his critique in bi-weekly publication *Anika* and national newspaper *Berita Harian*. But Bani described the criticisms as unfair as Rawan did not watch drama performances by established groups such as Perkumpulan Seni and Sriwana.

On the bright side, the critique fanned the flames of the Sriwana Drama Festival, which introduced a new genre of comedy that incorporates *purbawara, bangsawan* and modern theatre under the leadership of M Saffri A Manaf (b. 1955). The festival also gave rise to talents such as actor and scriptwriter Nurbuana (Jumali Kasmadi, b. 1960). Renowned composer M Nasir acted in the absurd drama *Angin* at the festival in the early 1980s.

Regional ties

Asas '50 initiated the Regional Writers' Convention in 1977 to foster regional ties in Malay literature and it spurred the Singapore Kemuning Society to organise the Asean Drama Festival in 1980. The festival was renamed the Regional Drama Festival in 1982.

The Singapore Malay Teachers' Union organised a Regional Teachers Meet in 1985 and the Singapore Malay Journalists Association kicked off its regional conference for Southeast Asian journalists in 1988 with then Minister for Communications Yeo Ning Hong as guest-of-honour.

Regional gatherings organised by the Federation of National Writers' Associations of Malaysia (Gapena) and facilitated by Professor Dr Ismail Hussein (1932–2014) were also well-received. The regional ties helped Singapore get back on the map of Malay literature. "Nusantara" was a common term at the time, which was odd because of its political significance in association with Majapahit imperialism (Java and later Indonesia following the 1963–1965 Confrontation). The general acceptance of the term came after it was redefined as "united by the Malay language, culture and roots".

Search for bearings

Realism in drama has been an evolving concept in Singapore since the late-1970s. The absurdist theatre pioneered by Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) and other Europeans had also made its way to Asia.

Malay theatre in Singapore started adopting the acting techniques based on the concept of mental and physical motivations as taught by Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavsky (1863–1938) after theatre groups and advocates in Malaysia, such as Grup Elit under Dinsman (Che Samsudin Othman, b. 1949) and Mior Hashim Manaf in Kuala Lumpur, started to explore them.

Sri Mamanda Bangsawan was incorporated in 2014, with Nadiputra as its artistic director and on the support of a group of entrepreneurs including the owner of the restaurant Mamanda at the former Gedung Kuning. The group staged Raden Mas, a tragic tale of a Javanese princess growing up in Singapore, at the Esplanade in January 2016. Dinsman debuted in Kuala Lumpur in 1975 with his drama Bukan Bunuh Diri, which was also performed in Singapore by the National Library Writers' Corner in the early 1980s.

The Singapore Kemuning Society, founded in 1977, is an arts group delving in drama absurdism and realism through experiments by E F Kamaludin (Kamaludin Mohd Nor, b. 1935) and Lut Ali (b. 1957).

Kamaludin's involvement in theatre started at Indonesia's State Islamic Religious Institute where he was a student. His works, which explored religious and moral themes, included *Rentak Kiblat Membakar Kiblat, Suara Dari Astaka, Ibuku Di Tara Taqwa, Cecandan Di Kuburan* dan *Garis Lintang Anak Haram* which was staged repeatedly at Victoria Theatre in the 1970s and 1980s. Kamaludin also featured absurdism in his works such as *Cerberangkabo* and *Si Albacilakyiah*, and was instrumental in transforming the Malay theatre (Djamal, 2007).

Singapore Malay theatre of the 1980s was said to be anti-plot, they had no plot or storyline and focused on issues and ideas surrounding life in a cosmopolitan city like Singapore. According to Djamal Tukimin (2007), Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) scriptwriter Mohd Raman Daud added colour to Malay theatre by highlighting issues on leadership, identity, history, socioeconomic and environmental in programmes such as *Bicara* (in conjunction with Majlis Pusat's Cultural Festival in 1981), *Juara* (1983) and *Tugu* (1985). *Bicara* was also included in Robert Yeo's Modern Asean Plays anthology (MICA, Singapore 1991).

Ahmad Ishak analysed the concept of identity through Aku while his counterpart in Kupuja (youth wing of Asas '50) Nor Effendi Badron applied the concept of multilingual theatre by using Malay, Mandarin and English in his plays such as Cakap-cakap: Terima Kasih Pada Salam, Pada Bulan, Pada Bintang.

Former SBC scriptwriter Sapiee Ahmad Razali wrote dramas with dialogues that were simple yet powerful in tackling everyday issues and human hypocrisy such as *Terlalu Ramai Orang Di Sini, Orang*

Tua, Anjing Dan Laut, Perut, Hey and *Blah Blah Blah.* He adopted absurdism but his works could still be enjoyed by the general public thanks to their simple and brisk dialogue.

Theatre graduate of Malaysia's University of Science, Sabri Buang (b. 1964), wrote and directed dramas such as *Warna-warna Lakon* (1982), *Gersang* (1983), *Laksamana Muda Lela* (1986), *Arwah* (1988), *Setengah Jalan Merah* (1991), *Laluan* (1993) and *Uri* (2001). The master's degree holder from University of Hawaii also lectured at the National Arts and Heritage Academy (Aswara) in Kuala Lumpur.

But the most influential theatre advocate of the 1980s was Lut (b. 1957), with some of his works a complete departure from the conventional. He was active in the Singapore Kemuning Society and his mentors included Kamaludin. In 1988, Lut founded Teater Ekamatra, a professional theatre group that has ventured into English theatre.

The actor, director and writer of scripts such as *Kakiku*, which highlighted life challenges, was a non-conforming and inclusive theatre critic who helped turn around weak scripts into notable works such as the musical *Uda Dan Dara* by Usman Awang, *Tingginya Menyapu Awan* by Bidin Subari and political satire Seekor Kerbau Hitam Legam Dalam Mimpi Sang Pangeran TomTom by Djamal.

In 1997, Lut continued his theatre education at Edith Cowan University in Perth. His theatre activities came to an end when he shifted his focus to TV drama production. He did not make it big and moved to Perth with his family.

Were Malay theatre advocates of the 1980s influenced by the drama trend of surrealism in Malaysia and lacked their own identity? It is true that there were Malaysian dramas staged in Singapore, such as the works of Shaharom Hussain and Kala Dewata, but not as often as it was in the 1960s. Lut said Singapore, as a global art city, should tap on masterpieces from around the world. He adapted the existentialist work by French writer Jean-Paul Sartre into *Hilang Tanpa Bekas* (Djamal, 2007).

From the 1960s to the 1980s, Nadiputra (Almahdi Alhaj Ibrahim, b. 1946) emerged as the most prolific and second-most influential dramatist after Bani. Going by several pen names such as Esje Saha, Nadiputra directed and wrote about 70 stage plays that carried religious messages and social criticisms. Among his works were *Puncak*, which won the Literary Award, and *Malaikat* and *Selimut Putih*, which were awarded at the Drama Festival organised by the Ministry of Culture in 1983 and 1984, respectively.

In 1986, Nadiputra was awarded the Cultural Medallion by the Singapore government for his contributions to theatre and in 2013, the Tun Seri Lanang Award by the Malay Language Council, Singapore.

Ghani wrote stage dramas such as *Desa Ini Hatiku*, *Wak Cantuk* and *Enrique*, Nurbuana wrote *Patung-Patung* and Jamal Ismail (b. 1952) wrote the symbol-laden *Pengukir Gerbang* staged by Perkumpulan Seni in 1987. Malay theatre critic Djamal also wrote scripts such as *Amar Bin Yasir* (1975), *Simpang* (1981), *O* and *Seekor Kerbau Hitam Dalam Mimpi Pangeran TomTom* (1993).

Mediacorp scriptwriter Amar Hais (Hamed Ismail) wrote *Singkap* (1995) and *Anjing Untuk Diplomat* (Literary Award winner for drama in 1993), which centred on a diplomat involved in espionage and was staged in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. S Wira (Samsriwira Basri, 1952–1999) was well known for his works and direction of conventional, social critique dramas performed in Baweanese, such as *Ponthuk* and *Sumpah Seri Bayu*.

The National Theatre Club Drama Workshop featured writers such as Nurbuana, Zulkassim Daud and Mohd Yusoff Maruwi, who is known for his comedies such as *Wayang* (1988). Former leader of Teater Ekamatra, Rafaat Hamzah, dabbled in surrealism with his scripts such as *Suara Alam*. Theatre scholar and writer Ishak Abdul Latif wrote *Dewi Murn*i and *Hang Tuah Menderhaka*.

Also in the spotlight was Anwar Hadi Ramli, who was in his 20s when he produced his mind-bending script for *MERdEKAnya KITA*. It was backed by NAC and staged by Teater Kami in Singapore and Jakarta. The show was banned in Kuala Lumpur in 2013 for being insensitive.

The 1980s marked the revival of Singapore Malay theatre and its march towards the new millennium. The 1990s saw the birth of Teater Artistik, Teater Ekamatra and Teater Kami while established groups such as Sriwana, Perkumpulan Seni and the Singapore Kemuning Society lost their shine.

New players

Teater Artistik

Founded in November 1986 by Khairul Anwar Salleh, Muhammad Rafaat, Roslan Mohd Daud and Norman Hir at Pasir Panjang Community Centre, the troupe staged performances in Malay and English but saw a decline from 2000. Its theatre activities were limited to annual events and drama workshops.

Teater Artistik's past performances included Hatta Azad Khan's *Mayat*, Hamed Ismail's *Anjing Untuk Diplomat* and Sabri's *Tuk Ketua* and *Setengah Jalan Merah*. It also staged *Bicara*, written by Raman, in Singapore in 2008, Kuala Lumpur in 2012 on the invitation of the Southeast Asian Literary Council (Mastera) and Jakarta in 2013.

According to Roslan (b. 1965), "The main challenge was obtaining original scripts in a Malay setting but fit for international consumption. In terms of funding, we got assistance from NAC and others." The troupe became inactive due to the career commitments of its members.

Teater Ekamatra

Founded in 1988 by Lut and wife Rubie Lazim, Teater Ekamatra became the first Malay theatre group to receive an annual grant from NAC, which described the group as "a company that has the potential with its artistic leadership". It is believed that Teater Ekamatra was on a par with Teater Kami in the number of plays staged, with Lut setting the ball rolling with directing over 10 dramas including *Kakiku* (1991) and *Grrr* (1992).

Theatre graduate Noor Effendy Ibrahim wrote and directed Sangkar (1994), Cerita Cinta (1995), Bilik (1995), Ahmad (1996), Mencari Chen Pei Pei (1998) and Merdeka (1999). Two playwrights who contributed their works to Teater Ekamatra in the late 1990s were Alfian Sa'at with his satirical script Causeway and Hang Nadim Bertemu Mahsuri (1998), and Khairul Lizan Ahmadjirony with Semerah Padi (1999).

The group also staged foreign plays with universal messages, such as *Berakhirnya Sebuah Perjuangan* by French existentialism dramatist Jean-Paul Sartre in 1992, *Perhiasan Kaca* by American writer Tennessee Williams in 1993, *Orang Kasar* by Russian author Anton Chekov (1994) and *Raja Lawak* by Zakaria Ariffin (1994).

Teater Ekamatra performed at international art festivals in Singapore such as the M1 Fringe Festival, Singapore People's Theatre Festival and Esplanade Studio Series. It has won numerous Life! Theatre Awards by The Straits Times, including Best Original Script for *Kakak Kau Punya Laki* by Alfian in 2014.

Since 2000, Teater Ekamatra has opened up its board seats to non-Malays as a show of its professionalism. The group is led by award-winning director Mohd Fared Jainal.

Teater Kami

There was a new wave washing over the Singapore Malay theatre in the 1990s, following the establishment of Teater Kami in 1989 as a professional company (unlike Sriwana or Perkumpulan Seni that were registered as associations).

The group aimed to make theatre a career for its actors and workers for their involvement in stage production and theatre as an co-curricular activity in schools. In 2002, NAC granted Teater Kami the permission to receive donations from the public.

The group produced more than 100 plays between 1990 and 2014 under the leadership of Roslan Badron and Atin Amat (Halimah Jaafar) who is dubbed by the media as the "first successful Malay female theatre director". Roslan has directed and staged his scripts such as *Budi Sang Tikus* (1992) and *Tekanan* (1993). Notable works staged by Teater Kami included *Salina* (1993 and 1997), a classic novel by Malaysian National Laureate A Samad Said about a sex worker, and *Lantai T. Pinkie* in 1996.

In 1998, Teater Kami staged Hadijah Rahmat's *Munsyi*, which centred on the struggles and polemics of Munshi Abdullah, and Zakaria Ariffin's *Pentas Opera*, a satirical drama about the lives of comedians and *bangsawan* actors. The troupe also staged international works such as N Riantiarno's *Langit Kelabu* in 1992 and the Ryunosuke Akutagawa classic *Rashomon* in 1995.

The young dramatists of Teater Kami searched for the roots of Malay theatre by organising workshops, performances of the traditional dance-drama *mak yong* from the northern Malay Peninsula, such as *Anak Raja Gondang* (1996). Atin, who was under the tutelage of the "father of *bangsawan*" himself, was inspired to stage Teater Kami's first *bangsawan* performance, *Indera Bangsawan* (1997).

But funding and management could not keep up with the rapid rise of Teater Kami, resulting in a loss that affected many of its performances. Roslan and other founding members are no longer with the troupe but Teater Kami remains active to this day.

Future

From realism to surrealism

From drama scripts revolving around real issues to those buoyed by the imagination of the authors, the Singapore Malay theatre has tried to introduce variety through surrealism, absurdism and abstractism. It also tried to go mainstream by pushing the envelope of societal norms and censorship through dialogue and acting.

The drama *Anak Melayu* by Effendy (b. 1973) became the talk of the town. Effendy, a theatre arts graduate of Chicago Art School (1997–2000) whose first job was Teater Ekamatra's artistic director in 1991, staged *Anak Melayu* in February 1992 at the Substation. The audience was taken aback by the sexual innuendos, coarse dialogue peppered with lingos common with Malay youth and a depiction of their deviant lifestyle.

Singapore has only a small pool of talented Malay playwrights and young writers often presented unexplained ideas to the audience. Dr Abdul Rahman Hanapiah (Mana Sikana) said, "From my viewing experience, it was too abstract and I was reminded of the surrealism of Malaysian dramas of the late 1970s, which led to empty theatres. It is true that Singapore theatre is lethargic and meaningful performances are rare, hence the complaints from fans. So, we pin our hopes on Nadiputra, Hamed, Sabri, Aidli Mosbit, Hadijah, Alfian, Saffri and others to create challenging drama and theatre scripts, especially now that we have the Esplanade." (Mana Sikana, 2009: 49).

Teater rewang

Devised theatre, believed to have started in the United States around 1963, entered the Singapore Malay drama scene in the late 1980s. According to Djamal (2007), young directors and theatre graduates such as Sabri and Khairul Anwar experimented with producing scripts from collaborations among actors. Scripts such as Khairul Anwar's *Ke Garisan, Sedia, Mula* were produced and complemented with spontaneous dialogue and action as suggested.

Prominent female directors

Atin was born in Singapore in 1957 and was awarded the Cultural Medallion, Singapore's highest recognition of the arts, in 2011 for her role in theatre. She was Teater Kami's artistic director and directed numerous productions including those of international standard such as *Ribut* by Chinese dramatist Cao Yui and the Japanese classic *Rashomon*. Atin was upset when Teater Kami's *MERdEKAnya KITA* was banned at the last minute in Kuala Lumpur in 2013.

Aidli was born in 1973 and graduated from drama studies at Queensland University of Technology in Australia. Her role as Salina in the adaptation of the eponymous classic novel was outstanding. Her scripts *Kosovo* (1993) and *Dan Tiga Dara Terbang Ke Bulan* (1996) won the Literary Awards from the Malay Language Council, Singapore in 1995 and 1997, respectively. In 2003, along with Effendy and Alfian, Aidli published her scripts *Dan Tiga Dara Terbang Ke Bulan* and *Ikan Cantik* in the anthology *Bisik.* She received the Young Artist Award for Theatre in 2008. Zizi Azah Abdul Majid was born in 1980 and received the NAC Young Artist Award in 2012. After graduating from the National University of Singapore with a degree in Philosophy and Sociology, she worked part-time as stage manager and lighting designer with theatre companies such as The Necessary Stage and TheaterWorks before joining the Esplanade as full-time stage manager. Zizi was Teater Ekamatra's head instructor for writing and producer of English and Malay drama scripts. She also teaches in schools including the School of the Arts Singapore. For SG50, Zizi wrote and directed the drama *Yusof*, which revolved around her granduncle and Singapore's first president Yusof Ishak.

Conclusion

Nadiputra in *Berita Harian* on 1 July 2006 described the Malay theatre of the new millennium as "scholarly" because of the influx of young talents who graduated from universities in the region and the West, such as Fezhah Maznan, Zizi, Faralina Ali, Muhammad Najib Soiman (Bijan), Aidli, Effendy, Sani Husin, Hazriemanja, Roslan Mohd Daud and Islani Ishak.

"The face of Malay theatre appears more scholarly, wholesome and disciplined. Perhaps among the names mentioned, there are also faces and names of graduates quietly waiting for the time and moment to paint the Malay theatre scene with a discipline different from what that has ever been recorded in the history of this land." (Nadiputra, 2006: 39)

Meanwhile, there have been attempts to revive *bangsawan*, starting with former *bangsawan* scriptwriter Abdul Hamid Ahmad (1926–2011), who founded Sri Anggerik Bangsawan in 1986. The troupe managed to stage *bangsawan* performances before Hamid's illness and death, after which Sri Anggerik Bangsawan was led by Johari Bakar from 2006.

Sri Mamanda Bangsawan was incorporated in 2014, with Nadiputra as its artistic director and on the support of a group of entrepreneurs including the owner of the restaurant Mamanda at the former Gedung Kuning. The group staged *Raden Mas*, a tragic tale of a Javanese princess growing up in Singapore, at the Esplanade in January 2016.

It is clear that Malay theatre, from *bangsawan* to *teater rewang*, will continue to thrive in Singapore and remain attractive even in the age of the Internet. In addition to the established theatre groups, there are also ad hoc drama groups from community centres, clubs and student bodies.

But as argued by influential theatre reviewer Djamal, what is most important is a high-quality script or work with an intellectual point of view, complemented by beautiful prose, compelling character performances and convincing staging techniques. Success of the Singapore Malay theatre can be measured by the response from the audience. (Djamal, 2007)

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Development of Drama Scripts Since 1965



Hamed Ismail

Latest Genre

Television script, including that for dramas, was the last to join the literary family – at least in Singapore, where TV was introduced only in 1963. Scriptwriting started in the 1930s with the pioneering film *Laila Majnun* (screened in 1933) and scriptwriting for radio started in 1936.

Singapore's stable of established writers at the time was not keen to write for TV dramas as the transition from literary writing to writing for the camera was tricky. Scriptwriting for TV calls for visualisation in the implementation of the "show, don't tell" technique. A heavy narrative would make a drama appear more like a documentary.



A POPULAR SERIES: Pak Awang Temberang starring Salim Bachik (wearing glasses, standing second from left) was popular and became the longest-running sandiwara series ever produced by Televisyen Singapura 1966–1968.

Emotions and thoughts can be expressed with words in writing short stories and novels, but a TV script relies on its plot, character development, visuals, and dialogues for emotional expression. These elements are crucial for impactful storytelling on TV, with the plot riding on the principle of causality and developing through conflicts between characters or events.

TV drama scripts, with its characters developed to be convincing, reflect relatable everyday life for the audience. Examples of such cast members are the eponymous character searching for her identity in the drama series *Sayang Mona*, the mentally challenged Cik Leh in *Selagi Ada Kasih* and the teenage drifter Ruby (played by Norseha Sani) in *Anak Metropolitan*.

A local Malay TV drama's airtime is typically between 30 and 90 minutes and can be in a series of up to 20 episodes. There are a couple of constraints when scriptwriting for TV: time and cost. To work around it, the production of a TV drama script involves not

only writers, but also producers, technical support and other roles or functions. Scriptwriters must always take into account the team's capability and technical support, and be open to comments that might lead to script edits and revisions.

Era of black-and-white TV (Radio and Television of Singapore, 1963 to 1980)

Public TV was launched in Singapore on 15 February 1963 with two channels: Channel 5 for English and Malay programmes, and Channel 8 for Chinese and Tamil.

The Malay programme line-up included the hit series *Sandiwara* (a portmanteau of Javanese-Sanskrit words *sandi*, which means "secret", and *wara*, which means "story"). Zain Mahmood (1933–1994), Baseron Jumat (1930–1989), Yusof Ahmad and Rahim Jailani were among its producers.



NURTURING TALENT: TV Dramas play an important role in nurturing new acting talents.



THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SCRIPTS: A good drama script that is brought to life by experienced actors, can grab viewers' attention even with simple sets.

In the early developmental phase of *Sandiwara*, producers faced a litany of obstacles, especially the lack of scripts. There were, of course, scriptwriters of radio drama and playwrights for the stage but their works were not suitable for TV.

To smoothen the production process, Baseron, a prominent leader in the Malay community, invited prolific stage drama director Bani Buang (1929–1996), who was working at the Victoria Theatre, to assist in studio direction and acting. In 1973, Bani took on the role of a full-time drama producer.

Between 1966 and 1968, *Pak Awang Temberang* became the longest-running popular series. It centred on the issues faced by a Malay family that moved from a village to an HDB flat. The drama was so popular that the sofa used on the set came to be known as *kerusi Pak Awang*.

Its creator-producer Zain was assisted by famous playwrightdirector Kalam Hamidy. Despite its simple studio set, actors Salim Bachik (Pak Awang), Zainon Ismail (Mak Oteh), siblings Rahimah and Rahman Rahim (Pak Awang's children) and S M Alkaff (Pak Awang's neighbour) delivered a compelling dramatisation.

With the increasing demand for *sandiwara* when Channel 5 had two time slots in each week for dramas, series such as *Mama Sayang Papa*, *Pahit-Pahit Manis* and *Masa* were born. Viewers were treated to 30-minute dramas centring on family life every Sunday afternoon and 60-minute dramas on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

Part-time writers for *sandiwara* incuded Ramli Ahmad (1933– 1997), who was the most prolific, Maznah Abdul Hamid, Rawan Hiba, Kalam, Mohd Fuad Salim, Nik Fatimah Ismail, Bahri Rajib and Yusnor Ef (b. 1937). There were also writers from Malaysia such as Onn Abdul Rahman and Kamal Ishak.



IMPACT OF BROADCAST TIMES: With the allocation of longer broadcast times, TV dramas led to the emergence of many talented actors.

Kalam's stage drama *Harimau Pondan* was adapted into the *sandiwara* titled *Hati*. Similarly, the famous stage drama *Atap Genting Atap Rumbia* by Malaysian dramatist Kala Dewata was also adapted under the same name.

There were calls for quality dramas, as expressed in newspaper columns, such as this one in *Berita Harian*: Wijayarama slams loquacious dialogue in *Telatah*, likens it to a forum (*Berita Harian* 24 June 1979). J A Shuib, who saw TV sandiwara as a cornerstone of Malay productions, thought Kedahan Halim Osman's *Bukan Air Di Anak Sungai* dull.

Newspaper reader Hassan Husein wrote that although dramas like Buaya Darat and Siapa Salah were bad, there were others that were excellent. He lauded Baseron's Hilang Kabus Nampaklah la for its courage in exposing the hypocrisy among religious scholars that hampered the community's progress (Berita Harian 15 August 1970). Rahim was also praised for producing the period drama Bintan Telani (1971), which centred on teenage students, and Ramli (Ratnamanja) for writing Sumpah 100 Tahun. Studio-based TV dramas eventually started to bore viewers, prompting RTS producers to promise outdoor shoots albeit a disclaimer on show quality (*Berita Harian* 3 June 1977). Other than location, viewers were also critical of the content — *Mendung Pagi*, a drama written by Abdullah S and centred on a man named Melan whose crush turned out to be his own daughter, was slammed for inconsistent characterisation (*Berita Harian* 22 May 1977).

Religious figure Mohd Taha Suhaimi (1916–1999) in a forum called for moral education to be incorporated into TV dramas (*Berita Harian* 10 October 1979). It certainly was no mean feat to please everyone, especially when there were Western and Hindi programmes for comparison.

TV drama in colour

With TV broadcast entering a new era in 1976, the period drama series *Jejak Kembara*, co-written by Nadiputra (b. 1946) and Ramli, was in colour. The series that revolved around two influential provinces fighting for wealth featured traditional costumes, stylised acting, *pencak silat* and melodious dialogue.

Era of SBC (1980 to 1994)

In tandem with electronic media worldwide, RTS on 1 February 1980 was corporatized and renamed Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC). Its Malay Drama Unit was helmed by Bani and Othman M Noor as drama producers. National University of Singapore graduate Mohd Raman Daud became its first full-time writer and was later joined by producers Azizah A Malik and Jamal Ismail.

A drama expert from Television and Radio Indonesia (TVRI), Halim Nasir, was "loaned out" to SBC for a year to help improve production quality and hold workshops on TV drama acting and scriptwriting but his service was cut short. Mohd Raman ran the workshops from 1981 to 1983, including two workshops for Asas '50 on 15 and 29 November 1981. The few workshop participants who went on to do scriptwriting included Hartinah Ahmad and Anwar Hassanudin.

In the three years (October 1980 to April 1984) at SBC, before he switched to journalism, Raman wrote the scripts of almost half of the Malay TV dramas, such as the 14-episode Sepanjang Jalan and Dedaun Masa, Gurisan, Rindu, Satu Pilihan, Meniti Senja, Fajar, Selingkar Harapan, Dian, Berita Tengah Malam, Posmen and Gawang. He also wrote the scripts for cultural programme Mari Berpantun (produced by Mockram Kassim), magazine show Teka Kata (produced by Mohd Yusof Ismail) and children shows (produced by Khamaliah Salleh) including the famous Mat Yoyo. *Posmen* was about the bond between a postman (Taswadi Ahmad) and a village girl (Aznah Hamid). The girl was engaged to an undergraduate studying overseas, but the engagement was called off after his graduation. Spurred by the girl's advice, the postman took night classes and got his A-level certificate, which led to his promotion to assistant postmaster. *Posmen* ended with a cliff-hanger between the protagonist and the village girl.

Raman's works largely touched on intellectual development of the Malay community at the time, such as education-related concerns among ambitious youngsters and families. He also had lighthearted series like *Sepanjang Jalan* which featured comedic behind-thescenes of the writers reporting on societal issues for the magazine *Kelip-Kelip*.

In 1983, the Malay Drama Unit appointed Nadiputra as a full-time scriptwriter. Other than writing scripts, the former customs officer who had made his name in stage dramas also assisted Raman in mentoring freelance scriptwriters and editing their works. The works they produced between 1981 and 1984 included:

- 1. Hilang (Jumali Kasmadi@Nurbuana)
- 2. Mekar Semusim (Dahlia, 1982)
- 3. Six-episode Retak Membelah (Satria Wijaya, 1981)
- 4. Orang Minyak (Yusoff Maruwi, 1981)
- 5. Hantarannya Berapa Saja (M Saffri A Manaf)
- 6. Sumpah 100 Tahun (Ratnamanja@Ramli Ahmad)
- 7. Daun (Nadiputra)
- 8. Murai (Nadiputra)
- 9. Kunci (Nadiputra)
- 10. Haluan (Nadiputra)
- 11. Ke Mana? (Haljimah)
- 12. Fourteen, 30-minute episodes *Sepanjang Jalan* (Mohd Raman Daud)
- 13. Taqwa (Nadiputra)
- 14. Stage-drama adaptation Vila Singa (Nadiputra)

- 15. Stage-drama script adaptation Puncak (Nadiputra)
- 16. Pusaka (Maznah Abdul Hamid)
- 17. Ibu (Ahmad Awang)
- 18. Perasaan (Nik Fatimah Ismail)
- 19. Setitis Embun (Mohd Fuad Salim)
- 20. Pilih Yang Mana (M Saffri A Manaf)
- 21. Lagu Tiga Kupang (Saiful Omar)
- 22. Debaran (Nurbuana@Jumali Kasmadi)
- 23. Lumpur (Peter Augustin Goh)
- 24. Mekar Semusim (Dahlia)
- 25. Pengantin (M Saffri A Manaf)
- 26. Jumirah (Othman Abdullah)
- 27. Si Pencuri (Syed Mashoor)
- 28. Stage-drama adaptation *Berburu Di Padang Datar* (A Ghani Hamid)
- 29. Wanita (Noor S I)

The unit was also tasked with producing a drama for the Asean Film Festival in the Philippines. Researchers Amanah Mustafi dan Sabariah Ramilan drafted the story *Di Tabir Senja* and the script was written by Fuad. Directed by Othman M Noor, the story revolved around an elderly woman living on Pulau Ubin, who yearned for her children's and grandchildren's affection. The drama starred veteran actors Jorah Ahmad, Hamidah Wahab, Junaidah Jumari and Farah Diba. Azhar Norlesta made his debut with his role as a man with a disability.

In July 1985, Hamed Ismail joined the team as a full-time scriptwriter. Prior to that, he spent 12 years as a Reader at the Ministry of Culture where he had to read materials from overseas that needed approval to be sold in Singapore.

Anwar Rashid, who was heading SBC's Malay TV Drama Unit, introduced the process in which writers were required to discuss their stories with executives and producers. This helped to control costs and ensure the quality of drama scripts — scriptwriting for each scene would begin only after approval. Also in that year, Anwar Hassanudin, Maznah, Fatimah and Hartinah were invited to form a writing group for the six-episode sitcom *Bakar Panggung*. Despite his lack of experience in TV drama scriptwriting, Hamed won praise for his work such as *Asap Peluru Bunga Cinta* (1986), lauded as among the best produced by the unit (*The Straits Times* 17 June 1986). The drama was about a woman who sheltered a wanted man, their love a form of escapism from the hardships under the Japanese Occupation. But after the war, he wished to return to his sweetheart in the village, so the woman shot him dead.

Hamed's script for Yang Tersasar (1990) was commended for its casual and humorous dialogue (*The New Paper* 13 September 1990). In 1991, he wrote *Sketsa Cinta Biru* (1991), inspired by a novel written by Japanese winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Yasunari Kawabata. The drama starring Khairul Anwar Salleh and Fauziah Zie was met with mixed reactions, with viewers raising their concern about the scene where the couple lay in bed together — the woman used to date the man's father (*The New Paper* 6 July 1991).

Hamed also wrote *Mega-Mega Kelabu*, featuring a couple pretending to be strangers to rekindle their marriage. It was inspired by a stage drama by Harold Pinter, a British winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. For a different flavour, Hamed wrote period dramas such as *Nasib Petualang*, *Cepu Cendana*, *Ombak Melandai Pantai*, *Tanahnya Tembaga* and *Sesudah Perang* for TV.

In the 1980s, *Sandiwara* was aired every Wednesday — totalling 52 standalone dramas that viewers got to watch in a year, not counting the special programmes during festive periods such as Hari Raya and National Day.

The drama series Sayang Mona was a hit with viewers. Cowritten by Nadiputra and Hamed, it revolved around three young women who were close friends and their struggles in their pursuit of a comfortable life. A drama that broke the stringent censorship barriers was *Laut Tak Bertepi*, which broached the sensitive topic of homosexuality. It starred Khairul Anwar and Azroy Sultan. Another hit was the drama *Birat Gincunya* by Amar Hais, starring Tony Castello (who acted as Sazali in the film *Anakku Sazali*, 1956) and directed by Khamaliah.

The diversity in the types of story was a conscious effort made by the Malay TV Drama Unit. Its executive producer Bani was intrigued by Teater Artistik's stage play *Orang Asing*, which was adapted from the play *Lithuania* by Rupert Brooke. The play was about a woman and her child killing their wealthy guest after they were overcome by their poverty-triggered greed, only to find out that the victim was the woman's other child whom she did not recognise after the many years he had spent abroad.

Part-time Sandiwara writers like M Saffri A Manaf, Yusoff Maruwi, Zaiton Zakaria, Hafiza Talib, Rohana Amir and Hussin Saban were mentored by the Malay TV Drama Unit until they became successful scriptwriters. In 1987, the unit formed a quality control circle to improve and diversify stories in its response to the feedback expressed by viewers in mass media. This also led to a reduction of family-centric stories by 20 per cent.

In early 1991, the unit conducted a survey and found that parttime writers who were no longer active felt more at ease writing poetry and novels than TV dramas because of the amount of editing it entailed. Among them were Noor S I (Ibrahim Omar, 1933–1990) who wrote the script for *Wanita* (9 February 1982), Asmin (A Samad Salimin, b. 1957) for *Surat Dari Lawyer* (26 June 1985), Ismail Sarkawi for *Calar* (12 December 1985) and renowned literary figure Mohamed Latiff Mohamed (b. 1950) for *Di Kaki Ombak (*aired in 1982).

Jamal, who wrote *Orang Berdua* (9 Dec 1985), had his stage drama *Pengukir Gerbang* adapted for TV (15 and 22 November 1988). He was then a producer at the Malay TV Drama Unit and later became a programme producer for private television.

Suratman Markasan adapted his novel *Tiada Jalan Keluar* into a two-part TV drama while prolific short-story author Peter Augustine Goh enjoyed scriptwriting for romantic TV dramas.

Abdul Hamid Ahmad (1926–2011), a veteran writer of radio programmes and *bangsawan*, contributed *bangsawan* stories on TV, such as *Iskandar Jauhari* (28 November and 3 December 1984), *Bispuraja* (10 and 17 January 1988), *Putera Nila Kesuma* (20 and 27 November 1988), *Puteri Sakdung* (2 and 9 December 1989) and *Sang Rajuna Tapa* (10 and 17 June 1990). His other *bangsawan* stories *Cenderawasih* and *Puteri Nilam Puri* were also aired on TV.

Era of TCS (1994 to 2001)

On 1 October 1994, SBC was privatised and divided into Television Corporation of Singapore (TCS), Radio Corporation of Singapore (RCS) and Singapore Television Twelve (STV12). TV12 handled the channels Premiere 12 and Prime 12 on which Malay programmes were aired. The Malay TV Drama Unit was renamed Eaglevision and Nadiputra was made drama producer.

Full-time writer Hamed would at times step up to the plate and take on the role of director. He produced drama series such as *JCM*, *Teater Komedi*, *Patah Junjung*, *Watan* and *Kita*, *Kita*, *Kita*. He later gave up producing and directing to focus on scriptwriting and mentoring other Eaglevision writers.

Assisting full-time drama scriptwriters such as Amanah and Wan Firzaleenazrah Wan Ahmad were part-timers including Habsah Karim, Hartinah and Samsudin Said. Also in the stable of fulltime writers was former journalist Ahmad Mohd Don who served between 1997 and 1999.

The changes were made after the removal of *Sandiwara* from the SBC era, such dramas being reserved for special events or festivities such as Hari Raya, Mothers' Day, and collaborations with Brunei Darussalam.

From stage drama to Teater Komedi

Sriwana's comedy competition grabbed the attention of the Malay TV Drama Unit. Executive producer Bani decided to adapt *Teater Komedi* for TV, complete with stage set and props. Osman Kong's one-act comedy *Ekonotenat*, about a foiled bank robbery attempt, was well-received.

Other theatre groups were then invited to be on *Teater Komedi*. But what started off as a programme popular enough to be given a fixed time slot throughout the year, lost its lustre in the third year due to the lack of good scripts. The full-time writers were subsequently tasked to plug the gap. *Teater Komedi* was renamed *Fiesta Komedi* when the Suria channel was formed without changing the presentation format. Eaglevision remained the producer for *Teater Komedi* which offered comedies such as:

- 1. Lelong Enggang (Yusoff Maruwi, 1991)
- 2. Tukar Imej (Amar Hais, 17 May 1997)
- 3. Buang dan Pungut (Amar Hais, 3 May 1997)
- 4. Serigala Jadian (Nadiputra, 26 March 1993)
- 5. Satu Bumbung Bergegar (Nadiputra, 28 September 1994)
- 6. Ikut Macam Saya (Amar Hais, 1993)
- 7. Barang Lama, Barang Baru (Nadiputra, 1993)
- 8. Bila Senja Melarut (Nadiputra, 1993)
- 9. Teluk Bayu (Nadiputra, 1993)
- 10. Sidang Tergempar (Samsudin Said, 1988)
- 11. Tukang Gunting (Hamed Ismail, June 1996)
- 12. Setan Patah Tanduk (Amar Hais, October 2001)
- 13. Jamuan Kecundang (Hamed Ismail, October 2001)
- 14. Menjemput atau Mengundang (Hamed Ismail, July 2002)
- 15. Perhentian (Hamed Ismail, 2003)
- 16. Terminal Akhir (M Saffri A Manaf, 2003)
- 17. Ibu Mertuaku Gerek Seh (Samsudin Said, 2012)
- 18. Tiga Abdul Kembali (Hamed Ismail, 2010)
- 19. Kecoh (Amanah Mustafi, 2002)
- 20. Wad Beranak (Amanah Mustafi, 2001)
- 21. Cukup-Cukup Makan (Amanah Mustafi, 2001)
- 22. Bapak Metropolitan (Amanah Mustafi, 2004)
- 23. Anakku Sazali Datang Lagi (Amanah Mustafi, 2011)
- 24. Antara Dua Hajat (Amanah Mustafi, 2011)
- 25. Azura Forever (Wan Firzaleenazrah Wan Ahmad, 2011)

Era of Suria 2000 and MediaCorp

On 20 January 2000, Suria was formed for the sole purpose of Malay TV programming. Singapore Television Twelve was on 12 February 2001 renamed MediaCorp TV12 while TCS and Radio Corporation of Singapore were renamed to MediaCorp TV and MediaCorp Radio, respectively.

Suria, led by Basir Siswo, was given more airtime but shows from Malaysia and Indonesia had to be bought to make up for the low supply of local programmes. The Media Development Authority (MDA) offered sponsorship for shows to be aired on Suria, prompting the formation of Malay TV production houses such as Comm2000, MYI Productions, Mediamorphosis, Media Reels, Papahan, DV Studio, Shortman Film, Three G Karma, Oak Tree, Ochre Picture, 3M, Cokelat and Bos Picture.

The emergence of the production houses brought forth a new crop of writers including Isa Kamari, Abu Jalma, M Raihan, Haryani Othman, Mahfuz Mazlan, Johari Aziz, Rafaat Hamzah, Sriwahyuni Jaes and Wahyu Rahman. But not all the production houses could survive the stiff competition, especially if they did not have writers capable of producing good scripts and proposals to win MDA's sponsorship.

Isa is a prolific local novelist and wrote *Dua Wajah*. The drama series produced by Comm2000 featured a love story between a Singaporean (Nik Mikhail) and an Indonesian (Maudy Koesnadi) and traced the journey of a man in search of his identity in an unprecedented collaboration in Singapore TV drama production.

Other than producing scripts, part-time writer Johari also learnt how to produce a TV drama during his stint at Eaglevision. Among the new scriptwriters, Mahfuz and Haryani thrived and were highly sought after by private production houses. Hartinah and Samsudin were approached by companies such as Media Reel to produce scripts for their drama series. TV dramas produced by private companies included:

1. Seven-episode Menjejak Dalang (Kharizma Productions)	34. Ayah Kat Rumah						
2. National Service-themed drama <i>Soldadu</i> (MYI Productions)	35. Rahsia Sepi Di Hati						
3. Cemas	36. Sempadan Kasih						
4. Dua Wajah (Comm2000)	37. Syahdu Di Ambang Syawal						
5. Bara (First three seasons produced by Jamal Ismail)	38. Walimah						
6. Two-season Cinta Bollywood	39. Selamat Malam Maria						
7. 3 Dud(a)	40. Princess And Jurukamera						
8. Jalan Pulang	41. Di Pinggir Hati						
9. Two-season Pinggiran Ramadan	42. Pinggiran Ramadan						
10. Anak Adam	43. U.M.M.I.						
11.Soap opera <i>Gelora</i>	44. Ayah Kat Rumah						
12. Soap opera <i>Pelangi</i>	45. Ejen Cinta						
13. Anakku Sayang	46. Tak2ut						
14. Three-season <i>Dian</i>	47. Golden Oaks						
15.Two-season Sayang Semuanya	48.9 Nyawa						
16. Cleoprata	49. Belahati						
17. Two-season Di Luar Garisan	Eaglevision had to knuckle down in the face of competition						
18. Graviti 2	from private production houses and trumped on the back of its						
19. Cucuku Sayang	production expertise, discipline, and technology. Very few dramas						
20. Danielle	by private production houses were on a par with those produced by Eaglevision such as:						
21. Runner Runner	by Edglevision such as:						
22. Samar	Two-season Watan						
	2. Perca Kehidupan						
23. Sayembara Cerpen	3. 2x5 Dol						
24. O.K.B.	4. Three-season Anak Metropolitan						
25. Abadi	5. Anak Mak Samseng						
26. Satu Jam	6. Embun Di Tengah Hari						
27. Alya	7. Masih Ada Embun Di Tengah Hari						
28. Mencari Mimpi	8. Two-season Rahsia Perkawinan						
29. Wasiat	9. Twenty-episode <i>Cinta</i> Q						
30. MANdai UniTED	10. Two-season Dimensi ke-4 (in collaboration with Malaysian						
31. <i>CMYK</i>	production house Double Vision)						
32. Kereta Sewa	11. Two-season Gerimis Di Hati						
33. 1988 Segaris Sinar	12. Rima Hatiku						

13. Two-season comedy Erlin Montel

14. Hi Bro

- 15. Mengejar Mentari
- 16. Three-season comedy Tetangga
- 17. Five-season Teater Komedi
- 18. Fiesta Komedi
- 19. *Projek Cerpen* (adaptation of short stories in a collaboration with Asas '50)
- 20. Kerana Fateha
- 21. Blok 13
- 22. Ahakz
- 23. Zero Downpayment
- 24. Atas Heights
- 25. Two-season Atas Heights
- 26. Three-season Jeritan Sepi
- 27. Keluarga Kahar
- 28. Tak Sayang Mulut
- 29. Cinta Ixora
- 30. Buah Korma Air Zamzam
- 31. Mahligai Kaca
- 32. Syawal Kembali Lagi
- 33. Kalimah Terakhir
- 34. Ros Putih
- 35. S.O.S
- 36. Gaduh-Gaduh Sayang (in collaboration with Double Vision)
- 37. Cut Amirah (in collaboration with Malaysian production house AMC)
- 38. Kasih Berbisik (in collaboration with TV3 Malaysia)

Good drama series produced by Eaglevision that became popular included Perca Kehidupan, Rahsia Perkahwinan, Anak Metropolitan, Selagi Ada Kasih, Jeritan Sepi, Gerimis Di Hati, 2 x 5, Dol and Erlin Montel. Issues faced by the Malay community, marital disputes, intellectual poverty, and health problems were featured in the popular dramas. The portrayal of juvenile delinquents in *Anak Metropolitan* elicited intense debate in the media but it's a testament to the realism of the dramas and the relevance of the issues to the community.

Eaglevision attained success on the back of discipline, good scriptwriting techniques, compelling acting, meticulous direction and outdoor shoots (including renting homes for shoots).

Collaboration with RTB

It is only fitting that we discuss television dramas produced under a Memorandum of Understanding between Eaglevision and Radio and Television Brunei (RTB). For more than 11 years, the production and scriptwriting of the dramas alternated between the two countries. The collaborative dramas were considered important and allocated more resources than others. Filming locations included London, Egypt, China, New Zealand, Thailand, Indonesia and Turkey, and the storylines were diversified. Singapore–Brunei dramas included:

- 1. Kejut-Kejutan
- 2. Putih Awan Biru Laut
- 3. Tenggara
- 4. Dilema (1998, London)
- 5. Piramida Cinta (Egypt)
- 6. Kembara
- 7. Antara Dua Rindu
- 8. Antara Pasrah Dan Fitrah
- 9. Akar Berbunga (China, 2001)
- 10. Masih Ada Bintang Di Turki (Turkey, 2006)
- 11. Kerana Fateha (2007)
- 12. Bulan Di Malam Gersang (2009)
- 13. Sepuluh Tahun Yang Lalu (2013)

Credits

In 1993, Yusoff, Saffri and Peter were awarded the Merit Prize by the Malay Language Council, Singapore for their excellence in TV drama scriptwriting, attesting to the role of the craft in the nation's literary trove.

TV drama scriptwriting differs from other forms of creative writing, such as short stories or novels, with its own story development and aesthetics. Scriptwriting is not a mere narration but leans more towards the "show, don't tell" form of visual writing.

Malay Drama Unit head Anwar Rashid, who was also part of the Malay Literary Awards judging panel, advised full-time writers Hamed and Nadiputra against submitting their work for the awards to avoid a conflict of interest. It was only after 2006 that Mediacorp writers started submitting their scripts for consideration.

Recognition, not monetary gain, is the driving force of the development of TV drama scripts. Those that received accolades have become reference and research materials for students and budding writers in their work.

TV drama scriptwriting is not to be taken lightly — good writing techniques must not be compromised for the sake of making profits or meeting deadlines. Writing good scripts is an ongoing effort and responsibility.

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RECOGNITION AWARDED TO TV DRAMAS, 1993-2011

YEAR	TITLE/WRITER	NOTE
1993	Orang Rumah	TV
	Yusoff Maruwi	Hadiah Penghargaan (Merit Prize)
	Mak Mertuaku Sayang	TV
	M Saffri A Manaf	Hadiah Penghargaan (Merit Prize)
	Ombak Cinta Pantai Kasih	TV
	Peter Augustine Goh	Hadiah Penghargaan (Merit Prize)
1995	Merpati Terbang Tinggi	TV
	Hafiza Talib	Hadiah Penghargaan (Merit Prize)
	Bulan Tak Bermadu	TV
	Peter Augustine Goh	Hadiah Penghargaan (Merit Prize)
	Hilang	TV
	M Saffri A Manaf	Hadiah Sastera (Literary Prize)
	Bunga Raya Kembang Pagi	TV
	M Saffri A Manaf	Hadiah Penghargaan (Merit Prize)
	Terminal Terakhir	TV
	M Saffri A Manaf	Hadiah Penghargaan (Merit Prize)
2007	Masih Ada Bintang Di Turki	TV
	Hamed Ismail	Hadiah Sastera (Literary Prize)
2009	Syawal Kembali Lagi	TV
	Hamed Ismail	Anugerah Persuratan (Literary Award)
	Kalimah Terakhir	TV
	Amanah Mustafi	Anugerah Persuratan (Literary Award)

No	Name	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92
]	Ahmad Awang	1						1				
2	Al Baha							1	5	1	3	
3	Anwar Hassnuddin			2	9							
4	Mohd Fuad Salim		2	8								
5	Hafizah Talib							4	2	1	3	1
6	Husin Saaban						1	1		1	3	2
7	Ishak Latif				1	1						
8	Maznah Hj Abdul Hamid		4		13	3		1				2
9	Nik Fatimah Ismail	1		1	6	2	3					
10	Peter Augustine Goh	1		1		1					1	
11	Ramli Ahmad	1		1								
12	M Saffri A Manaff		1			1	2	2	3	4	1	1
13	Hartinah Ahmad		2	3	10	2	1	1				
14	Yusoff Maruwi			1					1	2	1	1
15	Zaiton Zakaria							1	2	1	2	
16	Mumtaz Mokhtar									1	1	2
17	Rohana Hj Amir									2	1	
18	Norliati Husein											1

Sandiwara scripts by part-time writers, 1982–1992

Recognition, not monetary gain, is the driving force of the development of TV drama scripts. Those that received accolades have become reference and research materials for students and budding writers in their work.

TV drama scriptwriting is not to be taken lightly good writing techniques must not be compromised for the sake of making profits or meeting deadlines. Writing good scripts is an ongoing effort and responsibility.

Malay Films on the World Stage



Sanif Olek

Introduction

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, or Cikgu Ariff, Singapore's literary and cultural laureate who made me realise the vital role a native Malay plays in preserving the mother tongue and culture.

Today, one does not often hear a Malay person speak in their mother tongue in Singapore. I grew up among non-Malay friends and was raised in an environment that was lacking in many ways. My parents were blue-collar workers and they encouraged my siblings and I to be proficient in English to level our playing field with members of the other races.





Actor and comedian Mahadi Shor played Haji Sabtu in the short film Lost Sole (2006), produced by Sanif Olek in both the Malay and Bawean languages.

Many Malay film lovers still peg the golden age of Malay films to films produced at Shaw Brothers Studio at Jalan Ampas and Cathay-Keris Studio at Jalan Buloh Perindu. Singapore at the time was part of Malaya and Malay was the lingua franca, hence films were produced in Malay.

English plays an important role in our everyday life in Singapore. But this does not mean that I have neglected or do not understand the Malay language because I am, after all, a Malay. Cikgu Ariff gave a piece of advice which I still hold dear: "It is fine to speak less Malay but do not lose its soul and language."

Singapore silver screen

Many Malay film lovers still peg the golden age of Malay films to films produced at Shaw Brothers Studio at Jalan Ampas and Cathay-Keris Studio at Jalan Buloh Perindu. Singapore at the time was part of Malaya and Malay was the lingua franca, hence films were produced in Malay. Scenes in the films would reflect on the life of the Malays and the dialogues were often critical narratives of the community, delivered casually and widely accepted.

During its infancy, the production of Malay films was by guest directors and crew members from outside of Malaya, especially from southern India. The storylines were adapted from foreign stories as evident in the films, *Laila Majnun* and *Chinta*. The guest directors were rarely fluent in the Malay language or knowledgeable about the Malay culture. Thus, the studios had to hire locals to assist the directors and the crew to help ensure that the foreign stories were adapted well to the local Malay context. Over time, the studio crew learnt the ropes and talented workers like P Ramlee and M Amin were trusted enough to be promoted to become directors. Ramlee (1929–1973) and Amin (1924–2003) kicked off their career as directors with the films *Penarik Beca* and *Lancang Kuning*, respectively, and marked the start of the golden era of the Malay silver screen.

Ramlee's films like *Ibu Mertuaku*, *Antara Dua Darjat* and *Semerah Padi* were created from the Malay perspective and reflective of the era when the films were made. Classical Malay literature and legends were adapted and turned into films such as *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *Lancang Kuning*, *Dang Anom* and *Batu Belah Batu Bertangkup*. Film production in Singapore plummeted when Shaw Brothers Studio moved to Hong Kong in 1967 and Cathay-Keris Studio ceased operations in 1972. Majority of the Malay artists and producers from the studios moved to Malaysia and thrived as *bumiputra* (of indigenous Malay origin). They would have struggled had they remained in Singapore as its film industry slumped.

Post-independence Singapore prioritised economic development, pushing arts and culture to the back seat. Television started to take hold and cinemas were making money from screening movies from Hollywood and Bollywood. As the industrial sector boomed, Singapore film production became a thing of the past.

Post-independence Singapore prioritised economic development, pushing arts and culture to the back seat. Television started to take hold and cinemas were making money from screening movies from Hollywood and Bollywood. As the industrial sector boomed, Singapore film production became a thing of the past. Only after the economy was stable and growing did Singapore form a Film Commission in 1998 to jump-start local film production. However, local film producers were more inclined to produce Mandarin and English-language films. There were no studios like Shaw Brothers Studio or Cathay-Keris Studio anymore that could revive the production of Malay films.

Lost Sole

In 2005, I produced *Lost Sole*, a short film (16.46 minutes) about Haji Sabtu who lost his slippers after Friday prayer at a mosque. The film received recognition at more than 30 international film festivals in North America, Europe, Africa, Australia and the Malay Archipelago, winning best film awards from Iran and India.

The idea for *Lost Sole*, which was produced in the Bawean and Malay languages, was first conceived at a time when languages other than Malay, Tamil, Mandarin and English languages were not encouraged in mass media. *Lost Sole* was the first film in Singapore that the Bawean language was used.

The short film was screened at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and was in 2009 lauded by prolific Malaysian writer and film producer Amir Muhammad as the Malay film that would trigger a new wave of Malay films in Singapore. This was a significant moment to me as the world was slowly paying attention to the "Malay voice" in Singapore cinema.

Perceptions

Lost Sole made me more aware that audiences are not knowledgeable or do not have much material to refer to with regards to contemporary Singapore Malay cinema. I was often asked at screenings about the difference between Malay, Malaya and Malaysia. At times, I would be asked, "Why are there darkskinned people in Singapore?"

In the past, many Baweanese in Singapore were embarrassed of their roots. They were reluctant to reveal their ethnic identity. With their older generations rumoured to be dabbling in black magic and the supernatural, there were even unfounded murmurs of how the Baweans were became successful only with the help of mystical powers. Funnily, it attracted many Chinese to live among the Baweans in hopes of getting lucky at the lotteries. Yet, it was also ironic that many religious teachers and scholars were of Bawean descent.

I produced *Lost Sole* 10 years after graduating from film school in 1996. I started my career in television and subsequently winning awards for directing. To date, I have produced many highly-rated television programmes.

At a time when being Baweanese is not mainstream, I feel that my admission of my Bawean heritage has caught the attention of many people. *Lost Sole* has earned me the Exemplary Bawean award from the Baweanese Association of Singapore in 2010. I was the sixth and youngest recipient of the award.

In 2014, the Bawean community was given the honour to become the first ethnic Malay community to showcase its culture in the exhibition *La-O-Be* (Bawean for "changed") at the Malay Heritage Centre, organised by the National Heritage Board.

Malay Archipelago and rise of Singapore Malay films

When Malay films get on the world stage, they do not get due attention as there are too few recognisable Malay filmmakers and icons among the global audience. Chinese cinema has icons like Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan, *kung fu* and internationally-acclaimed directors like Ang Lee. Indian cinema has Bollywood, Satyajit Ray, A Rahman Khan, Amitabh Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai. Can the Malay world produce its equivalent?

The 80-minute feature film, *Sayang Disayang*, attempts to feature many aspects of the archipelago with its rich heritage of food, music and practices. The film centres on Murni, a housekeeper who searches for that special *sambal goreng* recipe to please her employer.



Many Singapore and Malaysia Malay film lovers lament that the golden age of Malay silver screen died along with P Ramlee, as if the Malays today cannot replicate his achievements or those of his peers. The Malays in the region have gone through various cultural changes and undergoing different social narratives. Thus I am not sure if it is feasible or even necessary for us to compare the Malay films of the past with the films today with regards to where the golden age of Malay cinema lies? Just like *Lost Sole, Sayang Disayang* received mixed reviews. A lecturer claimed that *nusantara* is a term that belongs only to the lands within Indonesia and that *sambal goreng* is a national dish. Many Malaysian Malays call Singapura by its English name, Singapore, and their actors and scriptwriters debated the usage of the term *bilang* (Malay for say or tell), commonly used by Singaporeans instead of the term *cakap* to mean the same thing.

Members of the audience asked why the Indonesian songs "Si Jali-Jali" and "Pesan Kakek" were paired with "Sayang Disayang" by Zubir Said (1907–1987, a Singaporean born in West Sumatra) from Singapore and "Hanya Menari" by singer Imran Ajmain, a Singapore-born artist now based in Malaysia. They also questioned the choice of Aidli Mosbit (who played the role of Murni from Aceh) as she did not look Indonesian enough.

Tin Kosong

I adapted the short film *Tin Kosong* from a short story written by Muhammad Salihin Sulaiman, winner of National Arts Council's (NAC's) Golden Point Award and Pena MAS award. It was NAC's film project for the Singapore Writers' Festival 2014. The story centred on an old rag-and-bone man who collected and sold discarded items. It was my first film project based on a published literary material.

The process of translating the text to a visual medium was no mean feat. The filmmaker may have different visual perspective from the book author, but the essence of the story needs to be retained out of respect for the original writer. Many in the audience at the screenings were unaware of singer R Azmi's contribution to modern Malay music during the Malaya era. His song "Kalau Datang Ke Singapura" was featured in *Tin Kosong* in a Bollywoodstyle musical scene.

Crossroads

In 1992, Ngee Ann Polytechnic established the Department of Film, Sound and Video, where it pioneered the first film school in Singapore. Forty students were accepted into the first cohort. In 2014, the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) also offered filmmaking certificates and degrees respectively. Film courses were subsequently extended to many schools to turn Singapore into a media hub of excellence in Southeast Asia.

But we still face challenges. Does the number of graduates in filmmaking equate the quality of films they produce? It is often debated that aptitude is more important than paper qualifications in filmmaking but there's still the opinion that formal education from film schools is essential as a foundation for those who want to establish themselves in the art.

Famous Hollywood directors Paul Thomas Anderson, Quentin Tarantino and Christopher Nolan once claimed film schools were unnecessary as they believed that it was more beneficial to learn filmmaking by watching films.

In my opinion, knowledge learnt through formal education is an important foundation to understand techniques of filmmaking, after which the filmmakers can decide what's best for themselves. A film's role is to tell stories, so while technology may have made filmmaking more sophisticated, the story is still king. Alfred Hitchcock once said, "Script, script and script is what you need to make great films."

The DSLR camera has proven that anyone with digital video equipment can "make a film". While it is heartening to see more people articulating their thoughts and expressing their emotions through films, I wonder if they also take into account the value in their work. Filmmaking goes beyond flashy edits and special effects.

Conclusion

Beyond the Chinese and Bollywood films, perhaps the time is good for the film industry in Nusantara to collaborate to create an iconic identity that is recognisable at the international level. When we discuss regional Malay films, Malaysia and Indonesia films come to mind. But what about Singapore? Is Aaron Aziz known to Indonesians? How many Singaporeans and Malaysians know Reza Rahardian? Many Singapore and Malaysia Malay film lovers lament that the golden age of Malay silver screen died along with P Ramlee, as if the Malays today cannot replicate his achievements or those of his peers. The Malays in the region have gone through various cultural changes and undergoing different social narratives. Thus I am not sure if it is feasible or even necessary for us to compare the Malay films of the past with the films today with regards to where the golden age of Malay cinema lies. What will the response be like if we ask the Malays 50 years from now, where this golden age lies?

NOTE

Singapore has produced two Malay feature films: Sayang Disayang (2014, reeljuice Films) and Banting (2014, Papahan Films). Sayang Disayang was shortlisted to represent Singapore at the 2015 Oscars in the Best Foreign Language Film category. It was the first Malay-language film to represent Singapore.

Beyond the Chinese and Bollywood films, perhaps the time is good for the film industry in Nusantara to collaborate to create an iconic identity that is recognisable at the international level.

Waxing Lyrical in 50 Years of Independence

Throughout history, the Malays have been adept at melding cultural elements from beyond the Malay Archipelago that have reached our shores through trade, religion, and colonisation. Western music, for example, has had an influence on the creativity of Malay musicians since the early 20th century, when Singapore was still a British colony. Even so, Malay composers still preserved the excellence of Malay music.

During the golden age of *bangsawan* (1900–1950), composers who thrived included Ahmad Patek (Muhammad Ahmad, 1908–1943), who composed *Di Tanjung Katong* and *Embun Menitik*, and his brother Osman Ahmad (1910–1964), Wak Jarr (Jahari Ibrahim), who was grandfather to Kartina Dahari (1941–2014), and Zubir Said (1907–1987).



Azlan Mohamed Said

Malay music and movies were proliferating in Singapore while bangsawan lost its lustre after World War II. In the 1950s, Singapore lyricists Wanchu (1933–2001), S Sudarmadji (1923– 1989), Nordin Arshad (–1990) and H M Rohaizad (–1961)

often collaborated with leading composers such as P Ramlee (Ramli Putih, 1929–1973), Yusof B (Yusof Blugok, 1915–1968) and Zubir.

Pop Yeh Yeh (1964–1971)

Towards Singapore's independence in 1965, the genre Pop Yeh Yeh (a contraction of pop from the word "popular" and yeh yeh from the phrase "oh yeah" commonly heard in Western songs) made its appearance. It is believed to be inspired by the performances by Cliff Richard and his band, The Shadows, in Singapore in November 1961, and The Beatles in 1964. The nation's music scene has remained vibrant since then.



BLACK DOG BONE: A popular group that made its debut in 1977 and lasted until 1983.

To meet local demands, record labels such as EMI, Phillips and Decca recorded Singapore bands of the time, including The Quests, The Siglap 5, The Swallows, The Rhythm Boys and The Antartics. The rapid development also prompted recording companies to hire composers and lyricists.

One of the composers who rose to fame was Kassim Masdor, who was mentored by Shaw Brothers' Malay Film Productions composers such as Yusof B, Osman Ahmad and P Ramlee. In 1965, Kassim composed *Dendang Pontianak* (theme song for the film *Pusaka Pontianak*). Sudarmaji wrote the lyrics to the song, which was sung by Ahmad Daud — who also starred in the film and played by The Swallows to the beat of Twist and The Shake. Another notable song from the film *Pusaka Pontianak* was *Dikau Jauh*, a slow rock composition by Kassim with lyrics by Yusnor Ef (Kassim's friend who was also mentored by P Ramlee). Both hit songs were recorded on vinyl by Parlophone Records.

In the same year, Kassim composed *Gelisah*, a slow rock number with lyrics by Yusnor and sung by Ahmad Jais. The song became a hit that year, a testament to the dynamic partnership between Kassim and Yusnor that started in 1959 with the song *Kasih Sepanjang Masa* (sung by Fazidah Joned) and lasted well into the late 1970s.

Oh Fatimah (1966), sung by A Ramlie, became one of the iconic songs of Pop Yeh Yeh. Its melody and lyrics were produced by Salamah Basiron (@Hanimasra, 1944–2008), who was believed to have composed more than 100 songs and highly sought after by recording artists of the time. Growing up on Bussorah Street,

she learnt to play the piano from the renowned composer Zubir. Some of her popular songs were: Kasih Tak Sudah (sung by A Ramlie), Kenangan Mengusik Jiwa (A Ramlie), Lambaian Desa (A Ramlie), Siti Haida (Jeffry Din), Ciptaan Abadi (Jeffry Din), Setahun Tak Jumpa Sesaat Tak Lupa (Zam Zam), Bibir Mesra Jiwa Parah (Zam Zam), Di Stesen Keretapi (Ida Basiron) and Sejak Pisahnya Manisku (Sharifah Mona).

Salamah also lent her voice to some of her own compositions. Accompanied by local band The Twilights, she sang *Oh Pelangi*, *Belaian Sayang*, *Album Sukma* and *Lukisan Persembahanku*. It goes without saying that many Pop Yeh Yeh artists became popular with Salamah's compositions and lyrics.



YUSNOR EF: A renowned lyricist.

MIA (MOHAMED ISMAIL ABDULLAH): Former deejay and journalist who has penned lyrics for 30 songs.

S ATAN: Composer, songwriter and winner of the Creative Hearts award.

Pop Yeh Yeh reached its pinnacle in 1967 with the release of *A Go Go '67*, a film by Malay Film Productions and directed by Omar Rojik. The film featured 12 bands: Siti Zaiton/The Hornets, M Hatta/D'4Ever, Nadar/The Zarak, S Mariam/The Rhythm Boys, Wan Intan/The Mods, M Noor/The Night Shadows, A Romzi/The Hooks, Normah Zainal/Blue Beats, Sanisah Huri/Terwellos, M Ishak/The Young Lovers, M Fadzil and Orchid Abdullah/Les Coasters and S Jibeng/Dendang Perindu.

All songs in the film were composed and arranged by Yusof and Kassim, with lyrics by Nordin. It was also the year Shaw Brothers' Malay Film Productions put up the shutters, so it was left to surviving production house Cathay-Keris Studio to continue featuring Pop Yeh Yeh songs in its films and it did so till 1973.

A fun fact worth mentioning is how part-time presenter MIA (Mohamed Ismail Abdullah, b. 1945) coined the term *kugiran*, a contraction of *kumpulan gitar rock* (upbeat guitar band), on his music chart radio programme, *Penyanyi Pujaan Minggu Ini*, on RTS between 1965 and 1971. The show was aired live for an hour every Sunday. It was highly-anticipated by listeners in Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, and Riau, and was considered to be the life of the Pop Yeh Yeh era. MIA wrote the lyrics to 50 songs for artists including Ahmad Jais, Fatimah M Amin and Kamaliah Latiff.

Days of pop and cover music (1972–1977)

Ismail Haron

He did not consider himself a Pop Yeh Yeh artist because he gravitated towards soul music, which was pioneered by American artist, James Brown. In the late 1960s, Ismail recorded several albums with local bands, The Vigilantes and The Guys. He wrote the lyrics and sang the cover version to songs by Tom Jones, such as *Senyuman Terakhir* and *Delailah*, earning him the moniker Tom Jones of Singapore.

Ismail composed and wrote the lyrics for most of the songs he sang. He debuted his solo album, *Kehilangan Cinta*, in 1970 and subsequently released *Ismail & Maria* (1972), *Ilham Pujangga* (1972), *Antara Pujangga & Insan Biasa* (1973), *Sutra Mulia* (1974), *Hulurkan Tangan* (1975) and *Potret Sindiran* (1975).

Several songs containing lyrics by Ismail, *Ilham Pujangga, Hey Hey Sunny, Insan Mulia, Hulurkan Tangan* and *Apa Khabar Sayang*, became popular. To date, the evergreen *Ilham Pujangga* is considered his trademark composition – its tune a blend of modern and traditional. The song is filled with Malay values and ideals, and touching words of advice.



Ilham Pujangga (A Muse's Inspiration)

Ilham dari pujangga (Inspiration of a muse) Berdiam diri bukan ertinya kau kalah (Silence doesn't mean defeat) Biar cercaan sekali datang menimpa (Let there be insults) Sudahlah memang adat di dunia (It's just the way of the world) Bersuaralah kamu pada perkara berguna (Voice out when it matters)

(Background voice by Cikgu Zaharah Salleh) Ya, anak muda tidak kerana tergelincir kakinya, tetapi matinya anak muda itu ialah kerana tergelincir lidahnya. Berdiam dirilah kamu kepada perkara yang bukan-bukan. Bersuaralah kamu kepada perkara yang memberi kebaikan. (Yes, the slip of tongue, and not the feet, can spell the end of youth. Remain silent on what's of no use. Speak up on what's of benefit.)

Berikanlah tenaga (Give your energy) Untuk nusa dan negara (For the nation) lni zaman kemajuan (This is the time of progress) Jangan kita ketinggalan (Don't get left out) Kasih sesama manusia (Love your fellow man) Apa di atas sayangkan diri anda (On top of love for yourself) Pandang yang satu kepada yang ramai sayang (Look to love from one for all) Pandang yang ramai kepada yang satu (Look to love from all for one)



ISMAIL HARON: Dubbed Tom Jones of Singapore for singing the star's cover songs, such as Senyuman Terakhir and Delailah.

ART FAZIL: Formed the group Rausyanfikir in 1992 with Mohd Esham Jamil and Mohd Khair Mohd Yassin.

(Background voice)

Usahlah ditanya apakah bakti negara untuk kamu (Don't ask what your country can do for you) Tetapi tanyalah apakah bakti kamu untuk negara (But ask what you can do for your country) Berjasalah kamu untuk keharmonian negara (Serve for your nation's harmony)

Ismail: Kau katakan pada aku sekarang, puan, apakah pendapat kau atas kewajiban muda-mudi? (Tell me now, ma'am, what's your take on the role of youth?)

Background voice: Pembela, harapan dan tiang negara, bangsa dan negara. (Defenders, hope, and foundation of nation and race.)

Ismail: Bagaimanakah cara yang patut aku tunjukkan kewajiban ini? (How do I play this role?)



TAUFIK BATISAH: Attained fame after winning the 2004 Singapore Idol.



RAMLI SARIP: Papa Rock was the lead singer of Sweet Charity.

ZUBIR ABDULLAH: Composer, singer, producer, music manager and traditional Malay music advocate.

Background voice: Kau mempunyai akal, bukan? Tepuklah dada, tanya selera. (You have your mind, so just ask yourself.)

Teguhkanlah hatimu (Strengthen your will) Pertahankan ibu pertiwi (Defend your motherland) Jauhkanlah dirimu (Distance yourself) Dari perkara yang merugi (From what's detrimental)

Maaf mudi dan muda (Sorry, youth) Kususun jari sepuluh (Forgive me) Aku bukanlah seorang pujangga (I'm no muse) Ismail also wrote the lyrics for his duet albums with Anita Sarawak between 1972 and 1976: *Rahsiamu Rahsiaku, Janji Tetap Janji, Gabus Tarbus, Asmara* and *Menunggu Nasi Minyak*.

But in 1972, his song from the album *Ismail & Maria* was slammed by local Malay organisations for its violent content. *Dendamku Kerana Maria*, a cover of Tony Christie's *I Did What I Did For Maria*, was about a husband being sent to the gallows after avenging his wife's death. There were those who defended Ismail, pointing out that violent content was all over TV.

Ismail left for Australia in 1977 and returned only in 2003. His first performance since his return was with singer Sharifah Aini at the Singapore Expo Concert Hall in May that year, where scores of fans jostled for photos with him. Ismail continued to perform in Singapore and Malaysia from 2003 to 2011 and planned to retire after his show in July 2012. Sadly, he died at his sister's home on 9 April 2012. He was 66.

Dynamic collaboration

Following the cessation of Malay Film Productions at Jalan Ampas, Kassim (1938–2014) was wooed by recording company EMI to be its producer, composer and songwriter. During his time at EMI between 1969 and 1974, he produced about 60 albums and acted as the company's talent scout for new singers.

Kassim had a hand in shaping the Malay music world of the 1960s and 1970s, often reaping high record sales. Together with his songwriter friend, Yusnor (Mohd Noor Mohd Yusofe, b. 1938), the dynamic duo helped propel singers such as Ahmad Daud, Kartina Dahari, Rafeah Buang, Ahmad Jais, Sharifah Aini, Sanisah Huri and J Mizan to fame.

In 1974, Kassim, Yusnor and Hoover Records owner, Teo, formed Senada Records. With Yusnor moving to Senada records, EMI's Malay music director Daisy Devan recruited photojournalist Kamali Hudi (1952–2013) to be its recording assistant. Kamali wrote the lyrics to about 120 songs and had his compositions sung by the likes J Mizan, DJ Dave, Uji Rashid, Julie Remie (talent-spotted by Kamali himself) and Sudirman Haji Arshad.

The Quest guitarist Reggie Verghese (1944–2015) replaced Kassim as the recording producer for Malay songs and was assisted by Ismail. Then up-and-coming musician S Atan (Hashim Said, b. 1949) took on the role of composer and music arranger for new talents such as Halil Chik, Julie, Rina Rahman, Trio Manja, and *nasyid* (Islamic chant) group al-Hidayah. He has composed about 1,000 songs since the 1970s and was in 2008 awarded the Music Authors' Copyright Protection's Nadi Cipta award in Kuala Lumpur.

Kassim poached Sanisah to leave EMI and join him at Senada Records. The artists who did their recordings at Senada Records included Rafeah Buang, A Ramlie and wife Maria Bachok, Rahimah Rahim and Roslan Yus. Yusnor, who was also a full-time teacher, managed the publicity for Senada Records. He roped in poet Haron Abdul Majid (Noor Yusman Abdul Majid, 1950– 2008) as lyricist. Under his Yusnor's mentorship, Haron wrote his maiden lyrics for Ho Eh Oh, sung by Rahimah. He wrote for almost 1,000 songs, which were sung by the likes of Sudirman, Black Dog Bone, Anita, DJ Dave, Sharifah Aini and Rina. Haron, who attended Serangoon Malay School and Sang Nila Utama Secondary School, started writing poems and short stories in 1965. He was also a co-founder of the poetry group Gelorasa in the early 1970s.

Between 1974 and early 1980s, Senada Records was badly hit by piracy, forcing it to cease operations following Teo's death. Kassim then moved on to the Malay film industry in Malaysia and composed theme songs for films, winning several awards in the 1980s.

Yusnor, who penned the lyrics to 250 songs, immersed himself in grassroots activities. He became the founder and president of Perkamus (Society of Singers, Musicians and Professionals of the Malay Industry in Singapore) and founder and director of Compass (Composers and Authors Society of Singapore). He wrote scripts for TV dramas and films and even became the manager of the Singapore artists' football team. In 1984, he wrote the lyrics for Sweet Charity's Ada Kerja Ada Gaji from their album Batu.

Pop and rock (1977-1989)

This era was marked by the emergence of records by local bands.

Black Dog Bone

As the Pop Yeh Yeh era came to an end, so did the offers for local bands to record Malay songs. But in 1977, Izzar Masrom, Masron Ali, James Chai, Michael Heng, Jatt Ali and Hamid Ahmad of Black Dog Bone entered the music scene with their debut. The band featured instruments such as the flute and trumpet in their music, which took after the style of the American band Earth, Wind & Fire.

The album *Sindir-Sindir Sayang*, whose lyrics were largely written by Haron, was well-received. The following year, Black Dog Bone (BDB) released their second vinyl with hit songs such as *Gadis Ayu*, *Geram* and *Hatiku Luka* (cover) — their lyrics written by Haron. BDB subsequently recorded other albums but went on the decline in 1980 after lead guitarist Izzar quit the band to become a fulltime record label entrepreneur. They lasted till 1983; the year drummer and lead singer Jatt released his first solo album, *Merpati Putih*. BDB's success got the attention of other recording companies which then propelled other bands to fame.

Sweet Charity (1969-1985)

The record label WEA Records offered Sweet Charity their first recording in 1979 with the help of A Husaini Ajmain as producer. Gravitating towards the type of rock music that was pioneered by English band Deep Purple, Sweet Charity's debut album was the first in Singapore to contain Malay rock songs. Made up of lead singer Ramli Sarip, lead guitarist Rosli Mohalim, bass guitarist Syed Hassan Al-Attas, drummer Rahman Sarbani and vocalist/ keyboardist Ahmad Jaafar, the band's album comprised the songs Teratai, Bayang-Bayang (cover), Tak Seperti Mu, Bingung, Seniman Di Rantau and Hujan.

Released on the back of the hit debut album was *Pelarian*, with Husaini and S Milda as lyricists. The songs *Pelarian* (composed by Milda), *Tahun 2000* and *Siti Aloyah* of the second album became popular. A *joget* (uptempo traditional Malay dance) number was also included to appeal to a wider audience. Husaini and Milda also wrote the lyrics for the band's third album, *Sejuta Wajah*.

Rosli was the anchor for the fourth album, *Penunggu*, having arranged many of its songs. In 1983, singer Othman Hamzah (b. 1962) wrote and composed the song *Batu*, which became the title for Sweet Charity's fifth album. The album, *Berita Gempa*, released in 1985, was the band's last.

Ramli Sarip (Papa Rock)

His namesake solo album, released in 1985, contained songs *Jikalau Berkasih* and *Panah Beracun*, which became hits. The following year, Ramli produced and recorded his second album *Bukan Kerana Nama*. Despite being occupied with producing an album for the band Lovehunters in 1987, Ramli released his third album, *Perjalanan Hidup*.

In 1988, he produced Ella's debut album *Pengemis Cinta*. Ramli also contributed a few songs and had a hand in the music arrangement for Malaysia's queen of rock. Hartinah Ahmad (b. 1955) was roped in to write the lyrics to Ramli's composition *Pengemis Cinta*.

Ten years later, Ramli was awarded the prestigious Anugerah Seni Cemerlang Compass. He was dubbed Papa Rock when he was at the peak of his career, commemorating it with 45 Years of Rock concerts in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore in 2014. Ramli also earned the title Datuk when he was awarded the state honours of Melaka in conjunction with the state governor Mohd Khalil Yaakob's 71st birthday.

Between 1988 and 2015, Ramli produced 13 albums including Istilah (1988), Warisan (1989), Ihsan (1990), Rentak Hidup (1991), Lagu Zaman (1992 with Khatijah Ibrahim and S M Salim), Ziarah Seni (1994), Syair Timur (1997), Ramli Sarip Alive (1999), Kalam Kasturi (2002) and Mutiara Zaman (2012). The album Lagu Zaman featured traditional Malay music which, together with his spiritual songs, showcased a talent that transcended rock music.

The Flybaits

Having witnessed the success of Black Dog Bone and Sweet Charity, the record label Polygram in 1980 convinced The Flybaits to cut their debut album. The band comprised Gerry Lachika, Eddie Marzuki, Ahmad Osman, Alfredo Valenquez, Horace Hutapea and Jeffrey Tan, who had a full-time job at a nightclub.

Not only could the band members play music, but they could also sing, dance and crack jokes during their performances. The Flybaits' first album contained humorous cover songs such as *Telatah Kanak-Kanak, Gelagat Anak Muda* and *Bergurau Senda*. But the song that made them famous was *Kenangan Lalu* (composed and written by M Nasir). The debut album turned out to be a bestseller, earning the band Polygram's Golden Disc.

In 1983, lead guitarist Eddie (Ismail Marzuki, b. 1952) quit the band due to health reasons and was replaced by Bani Farouk, the former lead guitarist of Gingerbread. Eddie did the music arrangements for The Flybaits' fourth album in 1984 and produced albums for Rozie Rahim, Rausyanfikir and Alfredo. The bass player quit The Flybaits in 1984 to focus on his solo album. He was replaced by Kaz Kazan, son of renowned composer Kassim.

Gingerbread

The band sold more than 20,000 copies of their debut album, which was recorded in 1982, thanks to the song *Ku Cari Damai Di Hati*. Ann Hussein, a TV talent show winner in 1980, sang and played the piano alongside drummer Shahul Hamid, singer and bass guitarist Moses Vadham, keyboardist Gavin Cardoza and lead guitarist Evans Barnabas. Some of Gingerbread's more popular songs were *Satria Bangsa, Kau Ku Rindukan, Bukan Kerana Dendam* dan *Mat Jiwa-Jiwa*. The band's lyricists included Jant Johary, Haron and Rahman Rahim.

Rock bands of 1980s

Kingdom In Rock

The contemporary of Sweet Charity produced a number of albums in the early 1980s. Two of their more popular songs were *Aku Cinta Padamu* (composed by Kingdom, lyrics by Husaini) and *Harga Diri Lagu* (composed by Nin Md Taib, lyrics by Haron).

The Unwanted

This band produced three albums: *Pelangi* (1981), *Terpedaya* (1983) and *Masih Ada Rindu* (1986). German band Dark Sky did a cover of *Masih Ada Rindu* — in Malay. The Unwanted lead singer Hanafi Warren retired from the band and released a solo album in 1987. He released a second album, *Siapa Aku*, which was fitted with 10 songs, one of them *Tragedi Di Rusila*.

Rusty Blade

The popular rock band since Sweet Charity disbanded in 1985 released their first EP, *786 Ikrar Perwira*, in 1985. Rusty Blade comprised singer Yantzen, guitarists Khalid Mubin and Mamat, bassist Razak and drummer Zan. For their second album, which was produced by Razzi M, contained the song *Pertama dan Terakhir*, co-written by Razzi and Yantzen. Yantzen also composed and wrote *Penantian*.

Lovehunters

The band founded in 1987 had Yazid Abu Bakar, Moliano Rasmadi and Saharudin Abdul Jalil as members. Their first album Sehari Dalam Sehidup (1987) was produced by Ramli and some of their hit songs were *Kuukir Namamu* by Moliano, *Berpindah* *Minda* (melody and lyrics by Mohd Khair Mohd Yassin) and *Sambutlah Kasih* (melody and lyrics by Nabila). Lovehunters also recorded *Angel In The Night* (1994), a song in English by exmember Iskandar Ismail.

Helter Skelter

The band that made its first recording in 1987 with Life Records rose to fame with their own compositions *Tiada Lagi Airmata* and *Melissa*, both lyrics written by Azman Omar.

Rockers

Five local youths formed this speed metal band, which was popular throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Their debut album, released in 1988, recorded high sales of 25,000 copies. Rockers' more popular songs included *Memori, Kekejaman, Harakah, Rayuan Syaitan, Dua Insan Bercinta, Bunga Bangsa* and *Musnah Harapan*. Almost all of their recordings were produced by Razzi.

Music groups of 1990s

Rausyanfikir

Meaning thinkers in Persian, Rausyanfikir were formed in 1992 by three pre-university friends, Art Fazil, Mohd Khair Mohd Yasin and Esham Jamil. Art and Khair made their name in the Malay music scene for their compositions for artists such as Ramli Sarip, Ella, and Khatijah, and the bands, Lefthanded and Lovehunters. Esham was a poet with the Indra Kirana group.

Eddie was the producer for Rausyanfikir's first album, which was recorded in 1992. One the back of the success of the first album, Rausyanfikir produced the second album in late 1993 and released it in 1994. The second album included the songs *Dhikir Fikir Fikir*, *Pesta Perut* and *Ali Malas* and sold 50,000 copies, breaking into the Malaysian market.

At the height of their popularity, Esham was afflicted with an unknown illness that paralysed him till his death in November 1997, after which Rausyanfikir disbanded — Art and Khair felt Esham was irreplaceable. Art and Khair reunited in 2012 and released the album *Rentak Hati*.

Nuradee

Ethnic rhythms, poetic lyrics and melodious voices were the trademark of brothers Rashid and Mohd Noor Abdullah, who recorded their first album *Tekad* in 1992. Nuradee penetrated the Malaysian market with their songs for which they composed and wrote lyrics. Their popular songs included *Diam, Pasrah* and *Gurindam Pusaka*. The lyrics of *Tekad* was a poem by Mohamed Latiff Mohamed.

Teacher's Pet

The band founded in 1991 by Maman and Ady Cradle expanded to include musicians Salleh and Jaybon while recording their first album in 1994. In the album *Eh... Keras Tu* produced by Warner Music, Teacher's Pet had Shahnazron as their producer. All the songs in the first album were composed by Maman, Ady, and Jaybon who later formed his own namesake band.

Composers and songwriters of 1980s

Singapore's music scene continued to thrive after the nation's independence, producing talented composers and lyricists albeit a number eventually taking their craft to Kuala Lumpur.

Ahmad Husaini Ajmain (1952–2013)

The record producer and songwriter popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s was instrumental to the fame of artists such as Othman Hamzah, Salimah Mahmood, Hasnah Haron and Mahani Mohamed, and bands like Sweet Charity, Split Times and Kingdom In Rock. His compositions containing his own lyrics included *Asmara* (Sweet Charity), *Aku Cinta Padamu* (Kingdom In Rock) and *Musliha, Rintihan Hati* and *Zaharah Anak Cik Maimon*, which were sung by Othman.

Ishar Masrom (@ Razzi M b. 1947)

Izzar quit Black Dog Bone as the lead guitarist and leader in 1981 to become a record producer and musician under the name Razzi M. Among the artists he worked with were Aziz Ahmad, Jatt, Flora Santos, Wan Razak, Rusty Blade and Rockers.

Adnan Maswan (1947-1992)

The RTS/SBC radio deejay presenting the Ada-Ada Saja or Mau Rok! programmes in the 1970s and 1980s was a member of the band Impian Bateks in the 1960s. Sweet Charity lead guitarist Rosli Mohalim shared that Adnan was also a composer and songwriter under the pen name S Milda whose lyrics graced Sweet Charity's albums such as *Pelarian* (also composed by Adnan), *Di Tahun 2000, Siti Aloyah* and *Seri Hari Raya*. Adnan wrote Jangan Keliru for Kingdom In Rock, Belum Cuba Belum Tahu, Hey Kasih and Gembira Bersama Di Hari Raya for Othman Hamzah, Setelah Keciwa for Salimah and Hari Raya Mulia for Norazia Ali.

M Nasir (b. 1957)

Singapore's most prolific Malay composer and songwriter was awarded the title Dato' by the Sultan of Pahang and an honorary doctorate from Universiti Utara Malaysia. Born Mohamed Nasir Mohamed, the graduate of Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) started off as a painter before breaking into the music scene in the late 1970s.

In 1978, Nasir was invited by his friend Wan Ibrahim Wan Embong, a producer with the record company Polygram, to pen the lyrics for the debut album of the band Alleycats. The following year, Alleycats' *Senandung Semalam* became a hit but his first solo album, *Untuk Pencinta Seni* under the name Mohamed M N, did not do as well. Nasir then produced two songs for Sweet Charity's debut album.

He became increasingly known with the ballad *Kenangan Lalu* from The Flybaits' debut album in 1980, which was recorded in Tagalog for the Filipino market the following year. That same year, Nasir formed the group Kembara with Sweet Charity's former guitarist A Ali and S Sahlan, producer of numerous poetic songs.

By 1986, Kembara had produced 65 songs by M Nasir, Ali and S Amin Shahab, such as the popular *Hati Emas* (song and lyrics by Nasir), *Kiambang* (song by Ali and lyrics by Amin), *Gerhana* (song and lyrics by Nasir), *Sekuntum Bunga Plastik* (song by Ali and lyrics by Amin) and *Ayahku Dan Angkasawan* (song by Sahlan and lyrics by Amin). Nasir married Ideal Sisters member Junainah Johari (1962–1998) and they moved to Malaysia in 1983. He became famous on the back of his talent in singing, composing, acting and film directing. Together with his entrepreneurial wife, he founded a recording company, Luncai Emas, which has grown in prominence in the Malaysian creative industry. Following Junainah's death, Nasir married Marlia Musa in 2000.

Since 1990, Nasir has been lauded as *sifu* for mentoring singers, bands such as Search, Alleycats and Wings, and *nasyid* group Al-Jawaher. With a treasure trove of 2,000 songs, he is considered the most influential composer on both sides of the Causeway.

Eunosasah (Eunos Asah, b. 1946)

He started writing in the late 1960s and was a poet with the local group Gelorasa. The part-time entertainment journalist was also an artist promoter and coordinator for the record company Joes Entertainment, and executive producer for Mega Record. The poetic lyrics he wrote were recorded by Nasir, Sharifah Aini, Endang S Taurina, Ramli, Zaleha Hamid, The Flybaits, Jatt, Hatan and Al-Jawaher. One of his most famous lyrics with a spiritual touch was for the song *Kepadamu Kekasih* (composed by Nasir).

Loloq (Rosli Khamis, 1958–2008)

He started writing lyrics after meeting Nasir in 1987 and they often collaborated in producing evergreen music. Loloq was a voracious reader, from literature to science fiction, and it showed in his lyrics, which spanned a wide range of topics. He would weave old adages into modern music like what he did with *Seloka Jegela Melayu* from Nasir's 1988 album.

Sia-sialah bahasa yang indah (No use is beautiful prose) Tanpa berbudi pekerti sejati (Without true manners) Tamsilkan ia (Make this a lesson) Ibarat yang mudah (That is elementary) Dari seloka jegela Melayu (From the musing of a jester) Semoga berjaya (May we succeed) Since his appointment as Luncai Emas lyricist in 1990, Loloq has produced over 500 lyrics for songs such as *Di Ambang Wati* (Wings), *Nur Nilam Sari* (Awie & Search), *Laila Namamu Teratas* (Search), *Gemuruh* (Search & Wings), *Mentera Semerah Padi* (Nasir), *Kita Peng-Yu* (XPDC), *Ratu Sanubari* (Saleem) and *Aladdin* 'Gosok' (Spider). In 2007, he was awarded the Anugerah Khas at the Planet Music Awards in Singapore for his outstanding contribution to the music industry. Loloq died of brain haemorrhage on 30 January 2008 after his return from umrah.

Zainol Ali (b. 1964)

The media-shy composer and writer had a hand in creating popular songs for Alleycats, Al-Jawaher, Search, Hattan, Headwinds and Helter Skelter in the 1980s and 1990s. The song *Tiada Maaf Bagimu* was testament to his talent, earning him third place at the SBC songwriting contest in the early 1980s. He also had a song that was recorded by a local recording company after it was sung by SBC Talentime winner Rozianah Baharudin.

Zainol honed his talent as a lyricist in his friendship with Nasir, who was a young composer in the early 1980s. He granted Singapore's Malay daily *Berita Harian* (28 May 1989) an interview to set the record straight after he was told by Nasir that someone had tried to impersonate him. Drawing his inspiration from watching the people around him, Zainol would detour on his way home after his work at PUB building. He ditched the direct route and would instead take a bus to Bedok Bus Interchange before taking the double-decker No. 7 to his home in Holland Drive. This was how he got inspired to write.

His evergreen songs included Nota Terakhir, Gadis Jalanan and Sekiranya Kutahu by Alleycats, Cacat Di Dalam by Al-Jawaher; Balada Muzik Jalanan by Search and Kita Serupa by Headwinds.

Hartinah Ahmad (b. 1955)

The TV drama scriptwriter became Salamah's successor and was highly sought after by Pop Yeh Yeh artists. Among the more than 100 lyrics she penned were for the albums of Ramli, Ella, Lovehunters, Shima, Jay Jay, Lefthanded, Jamal Abdillah, Nash, Khatijah, Sweet Charity and Romzie. Her lyrics for *Nyanyian Tanjung Sepi* (1999) was awarded the Hadiah Persuratan.

Art Fazil (b. 1967)

Fazil Sultan started composing in 1987, for Ramli's latest album, after which he composed songs for Ella, Khatijah, Lefthanded and Lovehunters. His English solo album in 1993 featured *Sometimes When I Feel Blue*, which topped the chart for several weeks. In 1995, Art was awarded the Anugerah Persuratan by the Malay Language Council, Singapore (MBMS) for his lyrics in *Ali Malas* from Rausyanfikir's second album. His song *Dhikr Fikir Fikir* bagged the Anugerah Compass and became the top royalties-earning Malay song of 1995.

Art performed in London while he was studying there between 1995 and 2008. While on a brief trip back to Singapore in 2000, he recorded *Nur*, which bagged him the Album Terbaik Singapura, Penyanyi Solo Terbaik Singapura and Artist Terbaik Nusantara awards at MediaCorp's Anugerah Planet Muzik.

He released his next album, *Syair Melayu*, in the form of a CD, in 2009. In 2013, Art released *Rilek Brader*, a light-hearted single filled with advice, which resonated well with the youth. In conjunction with SG50, Art curated exhibitions including *Ole-Ole Temasek* at the National Museum of Singapore.

Mohd Khair Mohd Yasin (@Khayas)

As an active member of Young Poets Group (Kupuja) in the early 1980s, Khair contributed to Sanggar Sastera, a column in Singapore's Malay daily *Berita Harian*. His early compositions included the song *Doa* from Ramli's 1988 album *Istilah* and *Payung Cinta* (produced by Ramli) from Ruhil's album *Kawan*. His composition *Temasya Desa Gemalai*, sung by Ramli, was a hit in Singapore and Malaysia and had been performed by Lovehunters, Khatijah, Ella and Jay Jay.

Zubir Abdullah

The traditional music teacher at the National Institute of Education and Nanyang Technological University carved his name as a composer, singer and music producer. He produced several solo albums such as *Perpaduan, Meniti Warisan, Jiwa Jati* and *Budi* (winner of Perkamus' Album Terbaik award). Zubir was also awarded the Anugerah Persuratan by MBMS for his lyrics to the song *Zapin Telok Blangah*.

Azmeer (Mohd Azhar Abu Bakar, b. 1966)

The debut solo album *Kenangan Lalu* propelled the poetic songwriter Azmeer to fame in 1990. His popular compositions included *Cinta Adam Dan Hawa* by Misha Omar, *Merawat Luka* by Liza Hanim, *Purnama Merindu* by Siti Nurhaliza and *Menadah Gerimis* by Ziana Zain.

New millennium

Singapore continued to produce talented composers and writers in the new millennium. Here are some of the outstanding ones.

T:zi (Ahmad Tarmizi Mohamed Moehtar, b. 1979)

After winning a songwriting contest organised by Perkamus, T:zi was in 2001 hired by a recording company in Malaysia to record his debut album *Wasilah*. A couple of years later, he started Hazelbayu Studios, which produced an album for the Malaysian singer Imaya. Together with Khair and Isa Kamari, T:zi formed Silfisir and recorded spiritual songs.

Taufik Batisah (b. 1981)

The winner of the first Singapore Idol in 2004 recorded his first English album, *Blessings*, the following year and wrote his own lyrics to *Close 2 You* of the album. His first Malay single, *Usah Lepaskan*, was in collaboration with Imran Ajmain and it topped the RIA 89.7 chart for 1 1 consecutive weeks. The song was awarded the Anugerah Lagu Melayu Tempatan Terbaik by Compass and the Anugerah Lagu Paling Popular and Lagu Terbaik Di Singapura at the Anugerah Planet Muzik 2007. His other song *Sesuatu Janji* topped the chart for four consecutive weeks in 2006.

Taufik collaborated with Imran for the lyrics to Seribu Tahun and Hady Mirza in 2011 for Kenangan Di Hari Raya. He wrote and composed Aku Bersahaja for Indonesian singer Rossa's album in 2011. The song bagged awards such as the Anugerah Kolaborasi Terbaik at the Anugerah Planet Musik 2012.

In 2013, Taufik was awarded the Anugerah Harapan Sri Temasek for his involvement in music. The following year, he released the album *Fique*, which featured *Awak Kat Mane*, his composition that attracted a large audience for its Internet-slang lyrics. Taufik went on to record more English and Malay albums.

Hady Mirza (b. 1980)

The Singapore Idol champion in 2006 was voted Asian Idol champion in the following year. Also in 2007, Hady wrote the song *Merpati*, which won the Anugerah Lagu Paling Popular in Singapore by Anugerah Planet Muzik. He also wrote and composed the song *Angkasa* from the album *Sang Penyanyi* (2010). In 2012, Ku *Tetapkan Menunggu* was named Lagu Terbaik by Anugerah Planet Muzik.

Imran Ajmain (b. 1981)

The talented singer, who is the son of producer and composer of the 1980s, Husaini, cut his teeth in composing with the single *Seribu Tahun* (2006). His songs *Selamat Ulang Tahun Sayang* and *Dikalung Kasihan* were among the most requested on local airwaves. Imran's compositions have made their way to TV as the theme song or background music in Malaysian dramas.

Didicazli Cindy Ismail (b. 1983)

The son of Al-Jawaher's Siti Rosminah Jaafar, Didicazli started out as a singer under Nasir's mentorship. The lyricist composed the hit songs *Rela Setia, Seribu Kenangan* and *Biarpun Rindu* for the album *Diari Cinta*. He had composed *Sejuta Madah*, which was from the same album, for his wedding in 2014.

Muhamad Haramain Osman (b. 1987)

Lead singer Haramain from The Lion Story became popular with his composition *Matahari*, which was sung by Sezairi Sezali. His other composition, *Lagu Teman*, was nominated for the Lagu Terbaik Singapura at Anugerah Planet Muzik in 2011. He sang the duet with Zahidah.

Aqmal N (Noorhaqmal Mohamed Noor, b. 1984)

He started out as a literature and dikir barat advocate but grew in prominence as a singer, lyricist and composer through his song *Warkah Cinta Dunia* (2009).

Aspiration

Can Singapore continue to produce Malay music talents? This chapter has barely scratched the surface of the Malay music scene but one thing is clear — there's no dearth of new talents in post-independence Singapore albeit local talents having to move to Kuala Lumpur to eke out a living.

Let's keep hoping that our Malay music talents can spread their wings further, even beyond the Malay Archipelago. Despite its small size, Singapore is teeming with talents, including writers and composers in the Malay community.
...one thing is clear — there's no dearth of new talents in post-independence Singapore albeit local talents having to move to Kuala Lumpur to eke out a living. Let's keep hoping that our Malay music talents can spread their wings further, even beyond the Malay Archipelago. Despite its small size, Singapore is teeming with talents, including writers and composers in the Malay community.

Lyrics-gilded Malay Literature in Singapore



Hartinah Ahmad

Lyrics have been significant to the growth of Singapore Malay literature since its documentation in the 1920s.

By definition, lyrics refer to the arrangement of words set to the melody of a song. With an ever-expanding arrangement, Malay lyrics range from traditional poetry to the burst of words in rap (originated from the African American community). Unlike in poetry, lyrics need to be sung in a melody with typical repetition in the chorus.

Lyrics are usually written to fit the mood of the music or the message the composer wishes to convey while poetry is crafted solely to convey the poet's message. But poetry becomes lyrics when it can be sung with music. Other than their literary values, lyrics also reflect a community's cultural values, with their embedded messages and play on words — from children's and religious songs to love and patriotic songs, and even commercial jingles. Lyrics are influential because music, be it instrumental or otherwise, is everywhere and is readily available on electronic media through the airwaves or Internet.

The writing of lyrics in Singapore has grown since Sang Nila Utama's arrival in the early 13th century, as recorded in the Malay

Annals. Malay music has benefitted from the community's interaction with other races, experiencing the emergence of new genres such as *dondang sayang* from the Peranakan Chinese, *zapin* from the Arabs and *keroncong* from the Portuguese adding variety to the traditional Malay melodies of *inang*, *joget* and *masri*.

Modern music

Singapore was the hub for Malay intellectuals in the fields of writing, film and music between 1850 and 1960. Renowned lyricist Kamali Hudi (1950– 2013) said the first modern Malay song, believed to be recorded on an HMV record in the early 1930s, was *Nyonya Pakai Bunga*, sung by Peranakan Chinese man Dolly. Here's an excerpt of the lyrics:

Nyonya pakai bunga (A nyonya wearing flowers) Bunga cantik warnanya (Blooms of beautiful hues) Dari jauh harum baunya (Its scent wafting far) Nyonya yang pakai bunga (A nyonya wearing flowers)



AHMAD JAAFAR: A famous composer. Among his compositions is Bunga Tanjung.

Bangsawan, or traditional Malay opera (1900–1930s), and the Malay film industry (1932-1971) that kick-started with *Laila Majnun,* gave rise to numerous songs encompassing a range of lyrics — from advice to lament — sung with melodies ranging from traditional to foreign-influenced such as cha-cha, rhumba or tango.

The film industry pioneered Malay music tinged with hints of Western and Hindi music elements, popularising lyrics centring on names ("Azizah" written, composed and sung by P Ramlee),

> flowers ("Bunga Tanjung" composed by Ahmad Jaafar), food, history, places, jobs ("Akulah Penjual Roti" sung by Jasni Ahmad and "Singapura Waktu Malam" sung by Saloma in *Labu Labi*, 1962) and even social issues such as poverty ("Manusia Miskin Kaya", 1953) and alcoholism ("Pak Itam" sung by R Azmi).

> The industry also gave rise composers and lyricists such as Zubir Said (composer-lyricist of the national anthem "Majulah Singapura"), Yusof B, Osman Ahmad, P Ramlee (dubbed "Father of modern Malay songs"), Ahmad Jaafar and Wandly Yazid. Singapore's Malay music industry thrived till the early 1980s, when recording companies such as EMI and WEA moved to Kuala Lumpur, taking with them Malay composers and singers such as M Nasir (born in Singapore in 1957) and S Atan (Hashim Said, born in 1949 in Singapore).

This brief article will discuss three lyricists

from three different eras: Wanchu (active from 1948 to the 1970s), Ismail Haron (active from the 1970s to early 1980s) and Ramli Sarip (active since the 1980s).



LYRICS BY WANCHU: Popular singers who once sang lyrics by Wanchu included (from left: Nona Asia, Ismail Kasim and Momo Latiff.)

Famous singers who sang Wanchu's lyrics included Saloma, Nona Asiah, Ismail Kasim, Zahara Agus, Jamaliah Sharif, T Ahmad, Jasni, S Hamid, Lena, Normadiah, Momo Latiff, Rokiah Wandah, Sharifah Noor, R Ismail, Ahmad Daud, M Bakri, Orkid Abdullah, Abdullah Chik, Rosiah Chik and Rafeah Buang...

Wanchu — lyricist of four eras

Muhamad Said Mohamad, popularly known as Wanchu in the Malay music world, was born in Geylang on 18 February 1933 and died in 2001.

Since the mid-1950s, his talent in writing lyrics was sought after by recording companies such as HMV. Records were at the time made from stone alloy and were fragile. According to Wanchu,

he wrote more than 200 pieces of lyrics for famous composers/songwriters including Wandly (1925–2005), Omar Bagushair (b. 1927) and his brother Hussein, and Zubir.

Famous singers who sang his lyrics included Saloma, Nona Asiah, Ismail Kasim, Zahara Agus, Jamaliah Sharif, T Ahmad, Jasni, S Hamid, Lena, Normadiah, Momo Latiff, Rokiah Wandah, Sharifah Noor, R Ismail, Ahmad Daud, M Bakri, Orkid Abdullah, Abdullah Chik, Rosiah Chik and Rafeah Buang. Indonesian singer Ernie Djohan and her younger sister Liesda also used his lyrics in their songs when they recorded with Megawati Orkestra, led by Wandly Yazid, in October 1963 for Fajar Records in Singapore.

WANCHU: More than 200 of his lyrics were used by famous composers, including Pak Zubir Said.

Wanchu was the lyricist for the songs of

Cathay-Keris Malay films such as *Hang Jebat* with its soundtrack and songs "Che Sulong", "Makan Sirih" and "Gambus Melayu", "Udang Di Sebalik Batu", "Ikan Emas", "Ayer Mata Duyung", "Panglima Besi" and "Play Boy". The song "Cik Mamat" composed by Zubir for the eponymous film starring Wahid Satay featured humorous lyrics that reflected Wanchu's wit.

He also wrote the lyrics for Saloma's debut duet with S Hamid in the 1950s, "Jika Tak Jumpa", which was composed by Omar and her other song, "Burung Pungguk", which was composed by his brother Hussein. Malay artists at the time would make LP (up to eight songs) and EP (up to four songs) recordings with the likes of Fajar Records, Sony Music, EMI, Warner Music and Life Records. Patriotic songs with lyrics by Wanchu included "Singapura Negara Maju" (1966, sung by Rosiah and Sulaiman Idrus), "Tetap Setia" and the evergreen "Jasa Perwira" sung by Normadiah. Wanchu was evidently aware of sensitive current affairs such as politics and could easily highlight the perspective and lifestyle of the Malays in his lyrics.

Singapore was a music emporium where "East meets West". When Hindi films became popular in the 1970s, Wanchu was tasked with writing lyrics for songs such as "Semenjak Kita Bertemu"

> (adapted from "Humse Na Poocho"). His lyrics to other popular songs of the decade included "Terimalah Salamku" sung by Halil Chik, "Dara Ayu" and "Seroja" sung by Eddy Ahmad, and "Hidup Dan Kenyataan" sung by Rina Rahman and composed by S Atan.

> The name "Wanchu" lost its popularity despite a "retro revival" in which new singers gave old songs a fresh take — an inevitable outcome as the names of lyricists and composers were often omitted from CD sleeves and mentions by presenters or deejays on radio.

Lyricists of 1960-1980

The 1960s and 1980s saw the rise of prolific lyricists such as S Sudarmadji (1923–1989), Yusnor Ef (b. 1938), Salamah

Basiron (1942–2008), Haron Abdul Majid (1950–2008), Kamali Hudi (1950–2013), A Ramlie (1948–2001), A Romzi (b.1948), Eunos Asah (b.1946) and Adnan Maswan (1947–1993). The 1960s was also dubbed the era of Pop Yeh Yeh, a music genre made famous by music charts programme *Penyanyi Pujaan Minggu Ini*, hosted by MIA (Mohd Ismail Abdullah, b.1946).

The language style of lyrics in the 1960s was still refined despite Western influences such as rock 'n' roll followed by heavy metal, as evident in songs such as "Oh Fatimah" sung by A Ramlie, *Siti Haida* sung by Jeffridin, "Suzana" sung by M Osman (also considered a pioneering Pop Yeh Yeh song,), "Normah" sung by Adnan Othman and "Zunika" sung by A Romzi from the band The Hooks (lyrics by Yusnor Ef). Ismail Haron (1946–2012) was a legendary artist of the 1970s and early 1980s. Dubbed "Tom Jones of Singapore" because of his vocal prowess, the mentor to M Nasir and Ramli Sarip also composed and wrote lyrics for a number of songs including Malay covers of foreign songs. Among his well-known philosophical lyrics were "Ilham Pujangga", "Hulurkan Tangan" (1974), "Lahirmu Berbau Kasturi", "Insan Mulia", "Ku Tak Minta Lahir Ke Dunia" and "Tolong Damaikan".

Here's an excerpt from "Ilham Pujangga":

Ilham dari pujangga (Inspiration of the muse) Berdiam diri bukan ertinya kau salah (Silence does not mean you're in the wrong) Biar cercaan sekali datang menimpa (Let the taunting rage on) Sudahlah memang adat di dunia (It's the way of life) Bersuaralah kamu pada perkara berguna (Speak up for what matters) Itulah sifat orang bijaksana (That's the manner of the wise)

When adapting Western songs, Ismail did not take the literal approach but introduced new delicate and heartfelt lyrics



Eunos Asah and the late Haron Abdul Majid, among the lyricists who popularised the Malay music world in the 1960–1980.

such as in the songs "Ku Tak Ingin Bercinta Lagi", "Kerana Maria" and "Delaila". His lyrics, for both original compositions or covers of foreign songs, have stood the test of time.

Lyricists of 1980–1999

Ramli Sarip, Bakri Johari, Mohd Khair Mohd Yasin, Art Fazil, Hartinah Ahmad, Mohd Esham Jamil and Suhamie Roa were among lyricists of the 1980s and 1990s. The move by the Malay Language Council, Singapore to introduce the category of song lyrics in the Malay Literary Awards was a commendable recognition. Winning lyrics included "Nyanyian Tanjung Sepi" by Hartinah Ahmad (1993) and "Dikir Fikir" by Ramli Sarip (1999). The awards were a source of motivation for the lyricists, creating popular songs with excellent lyrics such as "Orang Kota" by Art

Fazil (1987).

Here's an excerpt of Ramli's "Tajam" (1985):

Tajam tajam matanya melihat sebuah dosa (Sharp are the eyes witnessing a misdeed) Tajam tajam lidahnya mencemuh dan menghina (Sharp is the tongue that scorns) Tajam tajam telinganya mendengar segala fitnah (Sharp are the ears that hears slanders) Tajam tajam sindirannya bagaikan membelah dunia

bagaikan membelah dunia (Sharp is sarcasm, enough to split the world)

Ramli, who became popular

with the band Sweet Charity and subsequently went solo, has been writing lyrics since 1969. He produced excellent lyrics weighing in on social issues, such as "Dadah Merbahaya" (1987), "Nyanyian Serambi", "Warisan Alam", "Lagu Zaman" (duet with S M Salim) and spiritual songs including "Kau Yang Satu", "Iqra'" and "Tangan-Tangan Amal". His lyrics on love included that between man and his Creator as seen in songs such as "Doa Buat Kekasih" (1987), "Kasih Tak Kesampaian" and "Istilah Bercinta", entertainment that's heavily infused with Eastern and philosophical values. Ramli (who is also called Papa Rock) proved that music and lyrics could still help cleanse thought and conduct.

Lyrical mastery was also evident in songs such as "Senandung Penghayal" by visually-impaired writer Suhaimie (1997), "Seketika Sendirian" by Esham (1999), "Revolusi" by Rausyanfikir and Eunos's "Kepadamu Kekasih" and "Pak Kaduk Pak Pandir". Khair wrote "Temasya Desa Gemalai" (1991), "Skrunya Dah Longgar", "Berpindah Minda", "Pesta Perut" and "Dondang" (1990).

Lyrics of the new millennium

Between 1850 and 1960, Singapore was the hub for Malay intellectuals, from printing to film, but lost this role to Kuala Lumpur following its independence in 1965. The small recording industry that was populated by big recording companies such as EMI, Sony and Warner Music maintained its spot only up to the early 1980s.

The exodus of music professionals left a dent in Singapore's Malay music industry to the extent that there has not been a Hari Raya song written since 1989. But the local music industry still thrives with the emergence of new talents such as Taufik Batisah, Hady Mirza and Sezairi. The Singapore Idol winners also compose songs and write lyrics. Taufik wrote the lyrics and composed the rap "Awak Kat Mana", which became a hit in Singapore, Malaysia and Riau but has yet to make it big in Malaysia like M Nasir and Ramli.

Projek Rentak, organised by MediaCorp Ria and Composers and Authors Society of Singapore (Compass), is an annual competition that allows new talents to shine. Although about 150 participants take part each year, with most of them choosing the theme of love, it is a challenge to find 10 entries that meet the requirements or standard. The omission of the song lyrics category in the Literary Awards after 2001 could have dampened writers' enthusiasm. This decision should be relooked. English as the nation's lingua franca could have also affected talent development in Malay music composition and lyrics writing within the local market which is much smaller than Malaysia and Indonesia.

Let's hope that the Asean Economic Community will breathe new life into the music industry with the easing of the flow of intellectual property including music and lyrics. May it give rise to a new generation of composers and lyricists whose works are excellent, rich with Eastern and philosophical values, and can be prided as a product of the Singapore Malay literary journey.

Notes:

- This article was adapted from a working paper presented at Seminar Serumpun at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, on 11 December 2013.
- 2. For further elaboration on the history of Malay printing, refer to Hadijah Rahmat, 2011: 103–123
- 3. See Mohamed Latiff Mohamed, 2011.

Reference:

Yusnor Ef. 2011. Muzik Melayu Sejak 1940-an. Malaysia: YKNA Network.



Part 4 Those Who Anchor

They do not only provide enlightenment through sermons, but also apply their mastery of languages to publish books and articles, and create artistic works that include poetry to spread important messages to the people. This is the work done by the local asatizah or religious teachers. While they are spreading the word of God, they contribute — unknowingly — to the world of writings.

Sumbangan Asatizah dalam Persuratan Melayu



Mohd Jakfar Hj Embek

This article is presently not available in English.

Karya persuratan dilahirkan sebagai wadah yang amat berharga dan berpengaruh dalam membentuk pemikiran masyarakat menerusi ketajaman garapan tulisan pengarangnya. Dalam mengukur kemajuan persuratan, Syed Hussein Alatas berpandangan, "sejauh mana ia dapat menjentik akal manusia yang sihat dengan menyuburkan nilai-nilai rasionalisme dan intelektualisme melalui garapan tema-tema penting secara kritis, dan diterokai dengan bahasa yang jelas dan mendalam".¹ Namun jika sekadar untuk menjentik akal dengan nilai-nilai rasionalisme dan intelektualisme, tetapi tidak melonjak sama nilai akhlak dan keluhuran budi serta mengangkat darjat kemuliaan manusia di sisi Tuhan merupakan satu kepincangan. Asatizah atau ulama walaupun agak terasing daripada kebanyakan wacana bahasa dan persuratan Melayu tempatan,

amat berpengaruh dalam menyuntik nilai tauhid, akhlak dan syariat Islam. Mereka ibarat "obor ummah" dalam pencerahan ilmu, intelektual dan kerohanian dalam kehidupan umat melalui wadah persuratan Melayu di Singapura.

Makalah ini adalah satu usaha meneliti sumbangan kelompok asatizah dan ulama dalam bidang persuratan Melayu di Singapura sebelum dan selepas merdeka. Meskipun kadar peratusan karya mereka dalam bentuk penulisan masih lagi amat rendah, namun itu tidak bermakna sumbangan persunulisan biasanya memerlukan disiplin diri, pengurusan masa, pembacaan dan bahan idea intelektual aras tinggi. Terutama dalam bentuk penerbitan buku, rencana di akhbar, majalah dan penterjemahan.

Persuratan adalah sebahagian daripada ketinggian peradaban budaya sesuatu bangsa. Perubahan suasana peradaban dunia sejak abad ke-7 dengan kebangkitan Islam sebagai kuasa baru dunia menggantikan tamadun Rom, Parsi, Cina dan India, telah mempengaruhi pandangan alam Melayu. Minda mitos dan khayalan dewa-dewi amat mempengaruhi pemikiran bangsa Melayu pada suatu ketika dahulu. Transformasi keagamaan dengan datangnya Islam merubah minda mitos kepada fakta dan ilmu pengetahuan,



ALLAHYARHAM USTAZ SYED ABDILLAH AHMAD ALJUFRI: Sumbangan ulama dan asatizah seperti beliau dapat dilihat melalui madah puisi, teks khutbah Jumaat, buku, rencana akhbar, majalah dan terjemahan.

Walaupun rantau Melayu sering disifatkan sebagai tempat pertembungan rebutan kuasa perdagangan dan kebudayaan daripada luar, namun secara dalamannya masyarakat Melayu di alam Melayu sebenarnya sudah ke hadapan dalam ilmu pelayaran dan kelautan hingga dapat merantau keluar daripada rantau asal mereka. Singapura walaupun sebuah

serta khayalan berubah ke-

pada minda mencari kebenaran berteraskan pada ilmu

wahvu.

pulau kecil, telah sekian lama menjadi hab laluan emas bagi aktiviti perdagangan,

ratan mereka tidak penting. Hanya dalam banyak wacana dan perbincangan bahasa dan persuratan Melayu di Singapura lazimnya kelompok asatizah ini agak terasing daripada kelompok dominan yang terdiri daripada guru-guru bahasa dan wartawan Melayu. Lantaran itu bahan penulisan mereka sama ada puisi, karya novel, rencana pendek dan penulisan buku agak tenggelam. Sering juga mereka sendiri menyepi daripada kebanyakan wacana dan perbincangan bahasa dan persuratan Melayu.

Ini memberi tanggapan bahawa kelompok asatizah hanya jaguh dalam bidang lisan, tetapi terkebelakang dalam penulisan. Pe-

persuratan, perfileman dan keagamaan yang mewujudkan senario yang mempengaruhi sudut budaya dan bahasa sama ada dari dalam dunia Melayu sendiri mahupun di luar rantau ini.

Pendeta Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad menyinggung proses ini melalui tulisan rencana akhbar Berita Harian bertarikh 8 Januari 2000 dengan tajuk "Perubahan Adat Dimuafakat, Asal Selaras Ajaran Agama". Proses permuafakatan dalam adat sosial dan bahasa Melayu di mana adat disejajar dengan syariat Islam merupakan pensejajaran secara lembut tanpa kekerasan. Inilah yang memberi kesan pengkayaan intelektual dan adab dalam peradaban ilmu dan persuratan di alam Melayu.

Anjuran reformasi (islah) dan arus kemodenan pada akhir tahun 1920-an dalam banyak hal telah mengakibatkan fahaman sinkretisme dan aliran tauhid wahdatul wujud ditentang hebat, sehingga membawa semangat dan pemikiran baru kepada alam Melayu (Azhar, 2013: 2). Ini mempercepat usaha permodenan yang berpaksi pada ilmu dan daya intelektual di rantau ini.

Persuratan atau Sastera Melayu?

Sebelum membicarakan tentang sumbangan asatizah atau ulama (sering juga disebut golongan agamawan) dalam persuratan Melayu, elok ditinjau perbahasan berkaitan definisi sastera atau persuratan itu sendiri. Ia bakal mencorak matlamat terakhir yang hendak dicapai oleh seseorang asatizah melalui karya intelektual mereka. Sebagai seorang asatizah dan ulama, sudah tentu matlamat akhir daripada apa juga karya penulisan dan pengucapan lisan mereka adalah untuk mengembalikan kemuliaan insan (*human dignity*) dan 'ubudiyah' pada Tuhan.

Saya cenderung pada penggunaan istilah persuratan kerana ia lebih hampir dengan ajuan dakwah. Istilah 'risalah' merangkumi semua bentuk penulisan bidang hukum, budaya, adat istiadat, pemikiran dan panduan keagamaan dalam tradisi keintelektualan Islam. Maka dengan itu pandangan Dr Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, Pendeta Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, Affandi Hassan dan Mohd Zariat Abdul Rani, akan banyak menjadi nukilan bagi rujukan saya dalam hal ini.

Kamus Dewan Bahasa² mentakrifkan istilah persuratan sebagai "perihal tulis-menulis, kepustakaan, kesusasteraan, perpustakaan". Kesusasteraan pula merujuk pada aktiviti "penulisan dalam bentuk prosa atau puisi yang mempunyai ciri-ciri keistimewaan tertentu". Buat beberapa lama pemikiran kolonial dan sekular dikatakan telah banyak mempengaruhi pemikiran sasterawan Melayu sekular, dengan slogan usang seperti sastera untuk seni dan sastera untuk masyarakat. Penggunaan istilah sastera itu sendiri diperdebatkan kerana membawa maksud picisan yang lebih bertujuan untuk "bercerita dan menyeronokkan pembaca, daripada menggesa berfikir dan faham ilmu penuh adab pada aras tinggi."³

Sekian lama wujud semacam dikotomi perbezaan antara polar

pemikiran sastera Melayu dan sastera Islam. Penobatan Munsyi Abdullah sebagai bapa kesusasteraan Melayu moden telah disifatkan oleh Profesor Syed Naquib Al Attas sebagai sesuatu yang disengajakan oleh penjajah British dan para pengkagumnya (Mohd Zariat, 2006).

Beliau bahkan menobatkan Hamzah Fansuri, atas alasan hidup 200 tahun lebih awal daripada Abdullah, dan kerana pemikiran Hamzah mewakili idea aras tinggi melalui bahasa falsafah, metafizik dan teologi. Abdullah pula banyak menggunakan bahasa idea penjajah yang sekadar menerapkan idea bersifat rasional, saintifik dan kebangsaan, tetapi gersang daripada roh tauhid, metafizik dan nilai falsafah ilmu. Pada tahun 1972, Prof Syed Naguib al Attas dikatakan telah membuat kejutan minda dengan memberi pentakrifan semula pada sastera Melayu yang berpaksi pada aqidah tauhid dengan memasukkan unsur nilai akhlak dan syariat Islam. Afandi Hassan pula menggunakan istilah 'persuratan baru' yang meliputi perkara di atas.⁴ Penggunaan istilah 'baru' bukan merujuk pada pengenalan konsep baru, tetapi bermaksud membawa pengertian baru dengan memasukkan unsur tauhid dan pandangan alam Islam padanya.

Dalam berbicara tentang tradisi kalam asatizah dan ulama, sumbangan mereka dapat terlihat melalui bentuk madah puisi mereka, teks khutbah jumaat, doa munajat dan zikir, penulisan rencana, skrip drama radio dan penerbitan buku. Dalam zaman teknologi canggih kini bahkan ada sebahagian asatizah yang telah menggunakan wahana media sosial baru seperti facebook dan blog bagi menulis cetusan persuratan mereka yang dikongsi kepada masyarakat secara terbuka. Antara asatizah yang rajin berinteraksi berkarya melalui wahana baru media sosial adalah seperti Sohibu Somaha Mufti, Dr Fatris Bakaram, Ustaz Mohamad Yusri Yubhi Md Yusuf, Ustaz Mohamad Haniff Hassan dan lain-lain. Terdapat juga asatizah seperti Ustaz Abd Manaf Rahmat dan Tuan Mufti sendiri yang terkenal dengan sudut minda puitis, namun sayangnya karya mereka hanya dapat dibaca melalui wahana yang agak terhad, sama ada melalui majlis tertentu atau majalah terbitan masjid atau pertubuhan yang dianggotainya.

Paradigma Sistem Dalam Bentuk Sumbangan Asatizah

Paradigma Sistem merujuk pada gaya berfikir yang menyeluruh sebagai satu sistem dan bukan berpetak. Dan bersandarkan model



DR MOHD FATRIS BAKARAM

Dalam menganalisa bahasa puisi asatizah, saya sempat melihat beberapa genta rasa beberapa asatizah melalui facebook dan blog yang mereka miliki. Antara mereka yang menarik ditelusuri dalam penelitian ini adalah tidak lain daripada kehalusan jiwa rasa mengguna pakai aras bahasa peringkat emosi dan spiritual berbentuk puisi oleh Sohibu Somaha Dr Mohd Fatris Bakaram melalui Facebook beliau. Sebagai contoh adalah dua buah puisi pertama berkaitan "Si Buta Tidak Sabar Memimpin" dan kedua berkaitan "Si Ambin Usang"... pemikiran sistem Fazrul Ismail⁵ dalam bukunya *Master P.I.E.S.*⁶ saya dapat menganalisa sumbangan asatizah dalam kerangka gambaran berikut; P – merujuk pada koleksi fizikal dan bilangan buku yang terbit, I – merujuk pada bahan harta intelektual dan gagasan ilmu, E – merujuk pada aspek jaringan pembaca dan penakatan emosi dan budaya budi luhur dan akhlak, S – merujuk pada aspek membawa kepada ajuan kepada ketakwaan dan iman pada Allah. Secara umumnya klasifikasi komponen sistem bentuk sumbangannya adalah sebagai berikut:

Klasifikasi Sistem	Bentuk Sumbangan
ρ	 Khazanah bilangan buku teks dan nota-nota pembelajaran dan pengajaran di surau, masjid dan institusi pendidikan. Koleksi perpustakaan persendirian dan institusi. Manuskrip asal tulisan tangan penulis – Jawi dan Rumi Bilangan naskhah penerbitan dan penterjemahan – Arab, Jawi dan Rumi.
1	 Bahan milik intelektual (IP) sama ada melalui karangan puisi, cerpen dan penulisan buku dan rencana. Pencerahan idea dan pemikiran baru yang dilontarkan oleh pemikir-pemikir Islam. Membersih semula kalimah bahasa daripada unsur dan tasawwur khurafat, syirik dan dongengan (mitos). Beberapa kalimah seperti "sembahyang" yang bermaksud sembah sang dewata dalam maksud Sanskrit, penggunaan perkataan "hamba" dan bukan "patek yang hina" (yang bermaksud anjing yang hina) bagi istilah bahasa istana.
E	 Menakat budaya dan budi leluhur berteras kelslaman daripada unsur seks, erotik, mitos dan sifat terkeji (mazlumah) individu. Menggalak amal soleh dan kerja-kerja kebaikan (al falah) dan mencegah akhlak yang merosakkan (al fasad). Menambah baik hubungan individu, keprihatinan sosial dan persoalan kemanusiaan sejagat.
5	 Memurni semula akidah yang lurus, Menanam rasa jatidiri dan kemuliaan (izzah) pada Islam. Melurus dan menjelas tasawwur (worldview) Islam yang syumul. Meningkat perjalanan kerohanian individu dan masyarakat melalui doa, zikir, wirid, nazam dan amalan bacaan Quran.

Maka dengan itu dalam meninjau sudut sumbangan para asatizah, ia tidak seharusnya dinilai sekadar dari sudut fizikal sahaja (P); iaitu sudut berapa banyak buku yang telah diterbitkan sahaja, tetapi mengetepikan hakikat bahawa wujud beberapa elemen sumber lain yang amat berkait rapat dalam penerbitan sesebuah persuratan tersebut.

Bentuk Sumbangan Persuratan: Bibliografi Penulisan Asatizah

Satu usaha menyelidik dan menyenarai Bibliografi 100 Tahun Penulisan Asatizah Singapura: 1914 - 2014 telah dilakukan oleh Puan Hajah Sundusia Rosdi, mantan pustakawan kanan, Lembaga Perpustakaan Negara, dan kini memberi khidmat sebagai konsultan bagi Maktabah Rujukan Syed Ahmad Semait di Persatuan Ulama dan Guru-Guru Agama Islam Singapura (Pergas). Tahun 1914 dipilih kerana sejauh ini ia merupakan tahun terawal terjumpa terbitan sebuah buku karangan Kyai Haji Fadhlullah Suhaimi berjudul Pengetahuan Tauhid diterbitkan di Kahirah terbitan Al Ittihad

Beliau telah mengumpulkan kirakira 800 tajuk persuratan yang dikarang oleh sekitar 89 orang asatizah tempatan. Tentunya koleksi bibliografi tersebut bukan merupakan satu proses yang mudah, tetapi ia akan memper-



BUKU UNTUK BACAAN: Banyak lagi yang perlu dilakukan untuk melestari penulisan asatizah sebagai sumbangan bermakna kepada persuratan Melayu di sini.

mudah mereka yang bakal membuat penelitian kajian selanjutnya. Permasalahan yang terlihat dalam penyusunan bibliografi adalah ada antara karya penulis yang telah hilang atau tidak terdapat proses katalog penerbitan yang jelas. Namun pada Ogos 2014, Pergas telah menerbitkan koleksi khas bibliograf¹⁷ penulisan 12 asatizah terpilih sempena pelancaran pameran "Jejak Tokoh Agama Islam Singapura" di Perpustakaan Negara Singapura. Dalam terbitan bibliografi tersebut tercatit tokoh-tokoh seperti Ustaz Abu Bakar Hashim, Profesor Ahmad Ibrahim, Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji Mohamad, Kyai Ahmad Zohri Mutamim, Moulavi Babu Sahib, Ustaz Embek Ali, Ustaz Mohamed Ibrahim bin Mohamed Kassin, Kiyai Muhammad Fadhlullah Suhaimi, Ustaz Mohamed Sanusi Mahmood, Ustaz Osman Jantan, Ustaz Syed Abdillah Ahmad Aljufri dan Ustaz Syed Ahmad Mohamed Semait. Mereka semua telah menyumbang dalam pencerahan pengetahuan Islam sama ada melalui karya rencana di akhbar *Utusan Melayu* atau *Berita*

> Harian di Singapura. Terdapat juga bentuk nota pengajian yang dinamakan "muzakiraat" oleh Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji Mohamad yang kemudiannya disusun semula menjadi sebuah buku menarik bernama Tazkirah Untuk Orang Mengaji⁸ yang disunting bersama oleh Dr. Zulkifli Haji Mohd Yusoff, Dr. Noor Naemah Abdul Rahman dan Dr. Mohd Asmadi Yakob.

> Walaupun bibliografi tersebut mungkin tidak sehebat bibliografi oleh Muhammad ibn Ishq ibn Al Nadim (meninggal tahun 995), ia amat penting khususnya bagi pengkajian selanjutnya tentang persuratan Islam dalam bahasa Melayu di Singapura. Dalam persuratan Islam, bibliografi karangan Muhammad ibn Ishq ibn Al Nadim disebut sebagai pengkajian awal menyenaraikan katalog dan indeks semua senarai persuratan Islam

dalam bahasa Arab yang dikarang sama ada oleh orang Arab sendiri mahupun yang bukan pengarang Arab.

Penulisan Sajak

Bahasa puisi disifatkan sebagai bahasa yang keluar daripada aras emosi hati pengarang dengan pemilihan kata yang banyak mempunyai kesamaan pertalian bunyinya.[°] la menggambarkan kebijakan dan kehalusan jiwa seseorang dalam mengeluarkan rasa hatinya kepada para pendengar.

Sekarang ini telah mula muncul beberapa anak lepasan madrasah yang bakal menjadi ustaz dan ustazah dan kumpulan asatizah generasi muda yang juga prolifik dalam bidang sajak. Nama-nama baru seperti Aufa Muhammad Sidqee Salleh Hoddin, Abdul Rauf Maskhazin, Farishah Salleh, Nurul Huda Khamsani, Majidah Khamsani, Nurul Izzah Khamsani dan Mohd Noor Deros adalah antara asatizah muda generasi bawah usia 35 tahun yang sering menghantar bahan sajak mereka sama ada ke *Berita Harian* atau ke majalah *Ar Risalah* yang diterbitkan oleh Pergas.

Dalam menganalisa bahasa puisi asatizah, saya telah sempat melihat beberapa genta rasa beberapa asatizah melalui Facebook dan blog yang mereka miliki. Antara yang menarik ditelusuri ialah puisi yang dihasilkan oleh Sohibu Somaha Dr Mohd Fatris Bakaram melalui Facebook beliau. Dua contoh puisi beliau ialah *Si Buta Tidak Sabar Memimpin* dan *Si Ambin Usang*;

Si Buta Tidak Sabar Dipimpin

Semakin hari semakin lucu dunia ini apabila si buta tidak sabar dipimpin lalu mengorak langkah sendiri menerobos belantara berbekal parang tajam berbisa memancung kiri dan kanan merata sambil menengking memarahi yang celik kerana menyangka yang celik itu lebih buta dari dia yang sebenarnya buta Lalu ada di antara kita bersorak menyokong dia berdekah-dekah menepuk tangan gembira melihat si buta terus terperosok dalam semak gelitanya

Kelihatan Dr Mohd Fatris mampu mengungkap dengan bahasa yang amat halus, tetapi cukup mendalam maksudnya walaupun secara bersembang dalam Facebook. Beliau disifatkan sebagai seorang mufti yang amat rapat dan senang bergaul dengan masyarakat terutama kalangan kelompok aktivis masjid-masjid tempatan. Aspek pembangunan modal insan merupakan fokus beliau dalam kebanyakan pesanan beliau. Pada 24 September, beliau menulis: "Tidak semua peninggalan semalam adalah kebanggaan warisan yang perlu dinafaskan kembali setelah terkubur dalam timbusan keinsafan. Penyegaran bahasa tidak cukup dengan sekadar memperbetulkan penuturan kalimatnya mahupun menghalusi nahunya. Ia perlu bermula dengan meluhurkan budi penuturnya. Kerana bahasa adalah cerminan apa yang ada di dalam jiwa dan minda".

Sajaknya pada 13 Ogos menarik perhatian saya kerana ia menyingkap nostalgia lama beliau membesar ketika di kampung Lorong Sarhad, Pasir Panjang.

Di redup teduh pohon sukun itu si ambin usang setia menunggu rayuan nyaring ayam jantan sahut menyahut mengusap iman tuannya mengajaknya bertasbih menghampar tekad sebelum mentari menyapa assolatu khairun minannaum, assolatu khairun minannaum Di redup teduh pohon sukun itu si ambin usang tersenyum berpangku meriba manja hilai tawa anak-anak yang menabur langkah kelilingnya saling kejar-mengejar setelah penat duduk berhenti disambung lagi dengan sembunyi-sembunyi ada tikanya khusyuk melontar guli membingit suasana hingga mentari meninggi Di redup teduh pohon sukun itu si ambin usang menadah syahdu kelembutan suara dan sentuhan ibu-ibu nasi hangat berkuah bening bercecah kicap ikan selar goreng disuap bukan hanya ke mulut anak masing-masing kerana anak dia anak kita juga anak kita juga anak semua Di redup teduh pohon sukun itu si amben usang bersapa bayu mentari petang menanti saat berundur di hujung ufuk berlabuh pula kaum lelaki melepas lelah menceritakan gerak dunia yang usianya tua tapi mimpinya remaja tentang manusia dengan esoknya tentang kampung ini bila akhirnya sehingga tenggelam mentari si amben usang ditinggal lagi

menanti berulangnya pagi Di redup teduh pohon sukun itu si amben usang adalah warga dan keluarga yang telah pergi mengisi ruang sejarah namun mungkin di kota batu kita hari ini yang sekian lama kita buntu mencari azimat dan jampi penyatu hati mungkin amben usang itu perlu dijemput kembali menyemai kuntum menghampar hambal bersulam harum menghembus nafas kampung pada tembok-tembok batu yang kaku Si amben usang masih menunggu

Sebenarnya jika membelek majalah *Al Risalah*, di dalamnya terdapat beberapa buah rencana dan juga koleksi sajak yang dikarang oleh beberapa asatizah lain seperti Ustaz Abd Manaf Rahmat, Ustaz Salim Mohd Yusof, Ustazah Nurul Izzah Khamsani dan Ustaz Muhd Noor Deros.

Ustaz Abd Manaf Rahmat yang sekarang menjawat sebagai Pengurus Dakwah di Masjid An Nur, agak tidak asing di kalangan warga asatizah kerana sudut minda puitisnya. Beliau sering diminta untuk mendeklamasi sajak dalam acara yang dianjurkan sama ada oleh Muis mahupun oleh Pergas sendiri. Antara sajak beliau yang membicarakan tentang peranan suci para asatizah bertajuk "Pencerah Ummah" berbunyi;

Pencerah Ummah

Nur Ilahi memecah sarwajagat Belahan buana rasai nikmat Ada penghuni langsung tak hormat Hidup dikerat-kerat hilang martabat Kehendak sesuka menurut syahwat Aturan syariat dileteri menghambat

Di celah-celah nur terpancar syakhsiyah Pewaris risalah nubuwwah Kurnia karamah anugerah Allah Menyebar dakwah bersalut hikmah Dihujani perit derita tetap gagah Jiwa pasrah teguh istiqamah Melaju fisabilillah bersenjata makrifah Menapak perjalanan ke taman-taman jannah Bidadari menanti bersanding Sang Pencerah

Sang Pencerah Kalbumu mengindah sulaman tasbih Merangkul cinta Sang Kekasih Menyelam gelombang jiwa melurus ibadah Merendah diri berbudi indah Melangkah hemah berhujjah petah Menggenggam kuat mardhatillah Menyatu diri dalam makam mahmudah Sang Pencerah Bijaksana lagi budiman Rela membela kebenaran Tidak mengharap imbalan Walau jeriji besi menjadi teman Membakar kebatilan menghangus kejahatan Yang merata di daratan dan lautan Sampai ke Hari Penghabisan

Sang Pencerah

Perjuanganmu merampung panggilan jihad Membumi kalimat suci sampai ke liang lahad Memenuhi tanggungjawab dan amanat Tidak mengenal penat dan rehat Memerangi akal bejat Mengangkat maruah meninggi martabat Membentuk ummah hamba yang taat

Sang Pencerah Hikmahmu menyelubungi samudera fikrah Melahirkan insan bermaruah Atas amalmu yang penuh barakah Limpahan kurnia Allah melimpah ruah Alam menyambut gembira dengan zikrullah

Sajak tersebut telah dideklamasi oleh beliau sendiri pada pelancaran buku *Obor Ummah: Jejak Tokoh Islam Di Singapura* anjuran Pergas pada 16 Julai 2011 di Auditorium Muis. Ada ramai lagi kalangan warga asatizah yang punya sudut aspirasi seninya tersendiri melalui karya sajak-sajak mereka, tetapi tidak terkumpul dalam sebuah koleksi penerbitan.

Ustaz Salim bin Mohd Yusof pula sebagai salah seorang kaunselor berpengalaman 20 tahun bertugas di Penjara Changi pernah menyuarakan rasa hatinya melalui sajaknya mengguna pakai bahasa seorang bapa kepada anak-anak didiknya (ditujukan kepada warga bekas pesalah penjara yang dibimbingnya), walaupun kalangan mereka ada yang telah menampakkan keadaan nafsu ketagihan pada dadah semula dalam sajak *Keluhan Seorang Ayah*"¹⁰ dengan nadanya;

Keluhan Seorang Ayah

Dicelah celah kerutan dahi Tersirat satu harapan Tinggi Melangit Setiap kali keringat jatuh ke bumi Hati dan jiwa seakan digegar Wahai anakku Seandainya kau tahu Manusia bisa goyah tanpa makanan Bisa lemah tanpa minuman Namun cinta dan harapan seorang ayah Tak kenal erti kelaparan Tak rapuh dek kedahagaan Ingatlah... Hidupmu pernah mendung Pernah lalui taufan dan badai Kini mentari kembali bersinar Membawa bersamanya titik titik harapan. Apakah kau mulai lupa Tujuan kau berada di sini Pernahkah kau terfikir Kaulah penyeri harapan Penyejuk impian Kaulah penawar duka Wahai anakku Bagaimana mungkin aku mengukur semangatmu Yang hangat tak semestinya membakar Yang sejuk tak semestinya membeku Yang malap tak semestinya lemah Yang terang tak semestinya bertenaga Kubelai di depan, di belakang rasa tersisih Kusanjung di kanan, di kiri rasa diketepi Oh Tuhan.. Susahnya mencari keadilan Bukit salju yang gagah menjenguk tasik

Dengan penuh kemegahan Akan jatuh jua pabila tiba masanya Ketika musim panas kembali menjelma Terhumbanlah salju ke dalam tasik Oh anakku Jangan kau kira aku tak tahu Dalam tawamu ada tangisan Dalam tangismu ada persoalan...

Pada perenggan terakhir beliau (menisbahkan dirinya sebagai seorang bapa) menyatakan tentang cabaran untuk mengekalkan mereka agar tidak bentan semula. Pergolakan dalaman dan luaran kalangan bekas penagih amat serius, dan seringkali mereka gagal dalam pengendalian emosi dan jiwa mereka sendiri, hingga mengakibatkan kebentanan ketagihan semula pada dadah.

Penulisan Rencana di Warta, Majalah dan Akhbar

Antara asatizah yang amat prolifik dan tergolong yang terawal dalam penulisan makalah di majalah dan akhbar pada era selepas merdeka adalah seperti Ustaz Osman Jantan, Sulaiman Jasman (Jeem), Embek Ali dan beberapa orang lainnya. Sulaiman Jeem walaupun lebih dikenali sebagai seorang wartawan, aktivis kemasyarakatan dan kesenian, namun tidak ramai mengetahui bahawa beliau juga adalah lulusan jurusan agama daripada Madrasah Aljunied AHslamiah. Beliau lebih banyak mengajar kalangan anggota keluarganya daripada di masjid atau madrasah.

Mengenai Ustaz Osman Jantan, Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad mengingati beliau sebagai seorang yang punya bakat dalam penulisan sejak beliau mengajar di madrasah lagi. Beliau adalah antara beberapa asatizah yang diterima masuk dalam skim Teachers Under Other Scheme (TUOS) oleh Kementerian Pelajaran Singapura pada tahun 1958. Beliau juga kemudian aktif dalam Asas' 50, KGMS dan juga Pergas.

Melalui badan-badan tersebutlah beliau banyak menghasilkan karya-karya berbentuk sajak, rencana-rencana pendek bertema sejarah, akhlak dan panduan fardu ain bermula daripada penulisan warta (newsletter) untuk edaran dalaman badan tersebut. Apabila Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura ditubuhkan pada tahun 1968, Ustaz Osman Jantan memegang tiga jawatan Setiausaha dalam Jawatankuasa Fatwa, Penerangan dan Pendidikan. Sebagai Setiausaha Jawatankuasa Penerangan Muis,¹¹ beliau juga adalah Ketua Pengarang majalah Fajar Islam.

Berkaitan Sulaiman Jasman¹² (nama penanya Jeem) pula beliau banyak menulis rencana-rencana pendek untuk pembaca pada setiap hari Jumaat. Beberapa siri koleksi rencana pendek beliau telah diterbitkan semula dalam bentuk sebuah buku yang berjudul *Jejak-Jejak Suci.* Buku tersebut kini telah sampai kepada siri yang ke-2, menggambarkan iltizam kuat beliau berkarya selama lebih 18 tahun dalam dunia penulisan rencana pendek berbentuk keislaman.

Beliau pernah bertugas sebagai seorang wartawan di penerbitan *Qalam* Singapura (1951-1954) dan kemudian di akhbar *Berita Harian* Singapura (1960-1982). Sejak 1983 beliau bertugas sebagai pegawai perhubungan Jamiyah sehingga 2013. Awal dari itu beliau telah menerajui beberapa buah persatuan, umpamanya sebagai Presiden Sriwana selama 12 tahun, Setiausaha Agung Lembaga Tetap Kongres selama tiga tahun, dan Presiden serta Setiausaha Persatuan Wartawan Melayu Singapura selama 20 tahun. Tema penulisan beliau banyak berkisar pada aspek budaya, seni dan sejarah Islam.

Pergas mula menerbitkan majalahnya sendiri pada Januari 1997 dengan nama terbitan Ar Risalah. Ia diterbitkan empat bulan sekali dan kini sudah mencapai edisi terbitan yang ke-14. Majalah Ar Risalah banyak memberi ruang kepada karya kalangan asatizah dan mahasiswa pengajian Islam sama ada dalam bentuk rencana pendek, memoir perjalanan, ulasan buku mahupun sajak.

Penerbitan Akhbar Tabloid "Jaridah"

Memperkatakan tentang penulisan asatizah melalui akhbar agak tidak lengkap jika tidak disentuh tentang usahasama beberapa orang asatizah tempatan seperti Ustaz Syed Nasir Alsagoff, usahawan Muhammad Fadzil Burhan, mantan wartawan Sdr Norman Suratman dan Sdr Jeman Sulaiman dalam usaha penerbitan akhbar tabloid triwulanan, bernama *Jaridah*¹³ bermula sekitar Januari 2004. Matlamat awalnya adalah sebagai saluran pembacaan alternatif dalam memuat rencana bersifat Islami untuk masyarakat umum oleh beberapa asatizah tempatan. Selain memuatkan rencana bersifat Islami daripada beberapa asatizah, ia turut memuatkan berita-berita daripada masjid tempatan. Strategi pemasarannya untuk menarik pembaca daripada pasaran pengunjung masjid masih amat terhad. Walaupun ia menampilkan beberapa asatizah popular seperti Ustaz Mohamad Hasbi Hassan dan Ustaz Pasuni Maulan sebagai anggota panel penasihatnya, namun ternyata akhbar berkenaan masih tidak dapat bertahan lama setelah dalam pengeluaran di pasaran secara percuma sekitar dua tahun. Masalah pengurusan kos operasi dan kelemahan dalam pengawalan kewangan merupakan antara sebab akhbar tersebut akhirnya terpaksa berkubur.

Penerbitan Buku

Dalam bidang penerbitan buku, yang terawal dapat dikesan ialah oleh Kiyai Muhammad Fadhlullah Suhaimi atas tajuk Kitab Pelajaran Tauhid (1914) terbitan Syarikat al Ittihad, Kahirah. Kemudian disusuli dengan buku berkaitan Sirah Rasul berjudul Kitab Tarikh Islam: Pada Menyatakan Perjalanan Sayyidul Anam (1918). Buku kecil ini diterbitkan di Jawa dalam tulisan Rumi di Jakarta, dan kemudian diterbitkan semula oleh Percetakan Ahmadiyah, Singapura pada tahun 1960 ia diterbitkan sekali lagi dalam tuilisan Jawi oleh Matba'ah al Ahmadiyah Singapura. Minda persuratan Kiyai Muhammad Fadhlullah¹⁴ merupakan satu perkara yang perlu dikagumi kerana dari tahun seawal 1914 (itu yang dapat dikesan setakat ini) hingga tahun 1963 sejumlah 27 buah tajuk terbitan buku-buku kecil telah dapat diterbitkan sama ada untuk keperluan buku teks pelajaran di madrasah kendalian beliau, mahupun untuk panduan umum masyarakat tidak termasuk sekitar 135 buah tajuk rencana di akhbar-akhbar tempatan ketika itu seperti Utusan Melayu, Melayu Raya, Warta Malaya dan Bintang Malaya.

Pada era awal tahun 1960-an, terdapat beberapa asatizah yang menerbitkan buku-buku penulisan mereka. Namun ada antaranya yang tidak lagi tersimpan oleh waris mereka. Antara tahun 1957 – 1969 terdapat beberapa orang asatizah yang menulis dan menerbitkan buku mereka seperti Kyai Ahmad Zohri Mutamim dengan bukunya *As Syafiyat Pada Menerangkan Empat Puluh Ayat* (Jawi), *Sinar Budi* (1960), *Namusi Pada Menyatakan Surah Kejadian Manusia* (1963). Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji Mohamad menerbitkan buku pertama beliau berjudul *Mari Sembahyang Lelaki/ Perempuan* (1960) dan *Benih Agama Bagi Kegunaan Sekolah Melayu* (1960). Pada era tahun 1970-an apabila lahirnya Pustaka Nasional kian ramai asatizah lain yang menerbitkan buku-buku mereka seperti Ustaz Sanusi Mahmood dengan buku beliau berjudul Mengenai Islam dan Hubungannya dengan Sains dan Teknologi (1975), Ustaz Osman Jantan dengan buku beliau Pedoman Ringkas Berumah Tangga (1974).

Bahkan kalangan ustazah, terdapat Ustazah Khamsiah Ahmad yang telah menerbitkan buku tunggal beliau berjudul *Wanita Islam* (1981) terbitan Pustaka Nasional.¹⁵ Beliau merupakan satu-satunya kalangan ustazah yang prolifik dalam bidang penulisan sama ada rencana, skrip drama atau pun sajak. Beliau pernah bekerja di *Utusan Melayu* (Singapura) pada tahun 1948, dan kemudian memegang jawatan sebagai Mudirah Madrasah As Sagoff Al Islamiah pada tahun 1960.

Pada tahun 2007, Pergas mengorak langkah dalam bidang penerbitan melalui usaha kerjasamanya dengan syarikat Pustaka Nasional dengan jenamanya, Siri Terbitan Pergas-Pustaka Nasional (STP-PN). Beberapa buku penulisan asatizah dalam Siri Terbitan Pergas & Pustaka Nasional (STP-PN) kini telah mempunyai tiga buah judul: *Menunggak Nilai Melurus Faham* (2007), koleksi rencana di *Berita Harian* dan *Berita Minggu* oleh Ustaz Mohd Jakfar Embek, terjemahan *Fiqh Minoriti Muslim* (2008) oleh Ustaz Muhammad Haniff Hassan dan *40 Hadis Seruan Nabi s.a.w Kepada Umatnya* (2011) oleh Ustaz Mustaza Bahri. Manakala terbitan oleh Pergas sendiri adalah seperti *Buku Panduan Pernikahan dan Perceraian Singapura* (2006) dan *Kesederhanaan Dalam Islam, Dalam Konteks Masyarakat Islam Singapura* (2003).

Kini dengan kemudahan prasarana percetakan dan teknologi penerbitan yang baik kian ramai asatizah yang telah menerbitkan buku-buku mereka, sama ada melalui penerbit tempatan seperti Pustaka Nasional atau melalui penerbit di Malaysia seperti Pustaka Islamiah Sdn Bhd, Telaga Biru Sdn Bhd dan Pustaka Salam Sdn Bhd.

Ada juga antara buku ini yang menembusi pasaran di Malaysia seperti kitab tafsir oleh Ustaz Ahmad Sonhadji Mohamad yakni *Al Abrul Athir* (1961,1980, 1981) dan buku *Pelik Tetapi Benar Dalam Solat* (2005) dan *Travelog Seorang Dai*' (2009) keduanya oleh Ustaz Abdul Rahman Mohamed terbitan Telaga Biru Sdn Bhd.

Jurnal Dakwah

Selain daripada penerbitan buku, Pergas juga telah menerbitkan siri jurnal ilmiahnya, *Jurnal Dakwah*. Semenjak daripada keluaran edisi pertama (2010), ia telah memuatkan sumbangan karya rencana akademik daripada sekitar 12 orang asatizah tempatan seperti Dr Muhammad Firdaus Yahya, Ustaz Mohd Jakfar Embek, Ustaz Mohammad Yusri Yubhi Md Yusuff, Ustaz Mohammad Hasbi Hassan, Ustaz Abdussalam Muhd Ekhsan, Ustaz Ahmad Qadri Mohamed Sidek dan Ustazah Sakinah Saptu. Hampir semua rencana akademik tersebut merupakan sebahagian daripada penulisan akademik peringkat sarjana muda dan sarjana. Selain itu, Pergas juga ada mengumpulkan naskhah koleksi penulisan tesis asatizah tempatan di peringkat sarjana muda dan Ph.D yang kini mencecah sekitar 25 buah tajuk tesis.

Penulisan Blog dan Facebook

Penulisan melalui blog dan media sosial lain merupakan satu bentuk persuratan yang biasanya memuatkan karya berbentuk panduan penulis dan rencana pendek sama ada pada perkara berkaitan sejarah, isu sosial, pendidikan atau keagamaan. Ia merupakan satu bentuk persuratan baru yang kian gemar digunakan kerana selain percuma, ia juga mempunyai jangkauan yang lebih luas. Kini ada beberapa orang asatizah yang telah menggunakan persuratan alam maya melalui tulisan di blog mereka sendiri seperti Ustaz Mohamed Yusri Yubhi, Ustaz Muhammad Haniff Hassan dan Ustaz Saiful Rahman.¹⁶ Ustaz Muhammad Haniff Hassan dan Ustaz Saiful Rahman menggunakan pendekatan dwibahasa bagi menarik pelbagai bangsa membaca blog mereka.

Ustaz Mohamed Yusri Yubhi sebagai seorang kaunselor berpengalaman banyak menulis bentuk persuratan berkaitan kehidupan kekeluargaan dan nilai dalam kehidupan, dalam blog beliau, abahyasir.com. Selain itu beliau ada juga memberi beberapa panduan dalam hal berkaitan isu-isu semasa daripada sudut perspektif Islam, dengan yang lunak.

Umpamanya berkaitan isu LGBT atau Pinkdot pada 23 Mei 2014 beliau menulis "...Ada cara lain untuk kita membantu teman/saudara/masyarakat yang LGBT ini, membuang dan menyingkirkan mereka bukan caranya. Tetapi merestui amalan mereka juga bukanlah tindakan yang tepat. Berdamping dan berdoa, serta sokongan moral yang berterusan untuk mereka kembali ke pangkal jalan jualah merupakan langkah yang patut kita usahakan bagi membantu mereka insaf."¹⁷

Ustaz Dr Muhammad Haniff Hassan sebagai seorang ustaz, penyelidik zamil dan pakar dalam bidang anti pengganasan pula memang tidak asing dalam memberi banyak persuratan ilmiah berkaitan isu kesederhanaan dalam Islam, kajian terorisme keagamaan, Islam seragam dan Islam pelbagai, serta tafsir kontemporari. Ustaz Muhammad Hanif juga seorang ustaz penulis blog yang prolifik dengan mengumpulkan koleksi pandangan beliau melalui blog beliau haniff.sg yang kini baru melalui proses pembaikan pulih semula yang ditulis dalam bahasa Melayu.

Kesimpulan

Walaupun sudut bilangan kumpulan asatizah yang rajin dan punya disiplin menulis masih amat terbatas, jika dibandingkan dengan mereka yang banyak berceramah dan berkuliah, namun kesan persuratannya pada masyarakat amat besar pengaruhnya. Tema dan genre penulisan mereka kebanyakannya mewakili jenis genre penulisan yang bersifat serius dan ilmiah daripada bersifat karya kreatif. Ia mewarnai sebuah legasi sadaqah ilmu yang bermanfaat kerana masyarakat masih menggunakan buku dan kitab karangan mereka dalam kuliah dan teks pengajian di madrasah, masjid dan pertubuhan Islam tempatan.

Namun banyak lagi yang perlu dilakukan oleh Pergas, syarikatsyarikat penerbitan bahkan kumpulan peminat membaca dan pengkaji sendiri bagi turut sama melestari penulisan asatizah sebagai sumbangan bermakna kepada persuratan Melayu baru di Singapura. Kerumitan yang senantiasa berlaku dalam membuat pengkajian dan mendokumentasi semula sejarah persuratan Islam di Singapura adalah dalam pencarian dan penelitian bahan kerana tiadanya satu badan Islam yang memberi fokus khas dan serius dalam pengumpulan khazanah berharga ini. Warga asatizah atau Pergas sendiri sebagai badan yang memperjuang agenda kepimpinan agama perlu meluaskan bidang kerjasamanya merangkumi pakar dan kumpulan penggerak persuratan dan bahasa lainnya. Ini akan membantu warga asatizah dalam memperkasa lagi ruang lingkaran pengaruhnya melepasi bidang retorika lisan (ceramah dan kuliah) kepada sumbangan penulisan persuratan Melayu di Singapura.

Nota Hujung

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² Md Nor Hj Abd Ghani, ketua Penyusun, 2010. Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

³ Mohd Zariat Abdul Rani, 2007. "Ke Mana Hala Tuju Sastera Melayu?," dalam Jurnal *Pemikir*, terbitan Utusan Karya Sdn Bhd, Kumpulan Utusan, Malaysia, Bil 50, Okt-Dis.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Fazrul Ismail, 2011. Pemikiran Sistemik. Kuala Lumpur: Must Read Sdn Bhd.

⁶ Fazrul Ismail, 2012. Master PIES, *Lonjakan Potensi Diri*. Batu Caves, Selangor: PTS Millenia Sdn Bhd.

⁷ Sundusia Rosdi, penyusun, 2014. Footprints of Muslim Scholar's Heritage in Singapore: A Selected Bibliography (1914-2014). Singapura: Pergas.

⁸ Zulkifli Hj Mohd Yusoff, Noor Naemah Abdul Rahman, Mohd Asmadi Yakob, penyunting bersama, 2004. *Tazkirah untuk Orang Mengaji*. (Shah Alam: Mahli Training & Intel Multimedia and Publication.

9 Md Nor Hj Abd Ghani, Ibid.,

¹⁰ Ustaz Salim Md Yusoff, 2009. "Keluhan Seorang Ayah," dalam Majalah Ar Risalah, Isu Nombor 4, Jul-Sept.

¹¹ Fajar Islam, Majalah Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura, Bil 1, Sept. 1970.

¹² Sulaiman Jasman, 2008. Jejak-Jejak Suci 2. Singapura: Penerbitan Wisma.

¹³ Sulaiman Jasman, 2007. Jaridah: Tabloid Triwulan , Januari.

¹⁴ Ni'mah bt Hj Ismail Umar, 1994. Fadhlullah Suhaimi, Tesis M.A.Litt di Universiti Edinburg, 1994. Lihat juga Ni'mah bt Hj Ismail Umar, 1998. Fadhlullah Suhaimi, disusun oleh Mustaffa Suhaimi. Selangor: Progressive Publishing House Sdn Bhd.

¹⁵ Antara syarikat penerbitan era tahun 1950-1970-an yang banyak memberi peluang bagi asatizah menerbitkan buku-buku mereka adalah Al-Ahmadiah Press, Pustaka Nasional Pte Ltd, Toko Haji Hashim dan Darul Andalus.

¹⁶ Mohammed Nasir Ahmad, Berita Minggu, 14 Sep 2008.

17 Mohamed Yusri Yubhi, "PinkdotSG/LGBT," http://abahyasir.com/page/2/ (diakses pada 23 Mei 2014).

Syed Abdullah al-Edrus and Majalah Qalam,

Custodians of Singapore's Jawi Heritage



Muhammad Syukri Rosli

Introduction

A language is only as great as its history, philosophy, literature and the people who speak it. Going deeper, a great language will show a possession of great meanings in painting a true and accurate description of life. The major languages of the world display characteristics that shed light on the construct of society.

Quran and Islamisation of language

The Quran, as the book of Allah the Almighty, has reshaped the Arabic language in its use to cast the truth and has introduced

terms that were unknown before the advent of Islam. It defines "Allah" as the unparallelled one and only Creator, ¹ and bestows equal purity on "al-Islam" as the religion named by Him and imparted by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) under His guidance.²

The teachings of the Prophet were spread by his companions and followers who had travelled to as far as China and sowed the seeds of civilisational greatness. The fruit of their



AL-QURAN: The Holy Book has greatly influenced the Arabic language.

The Islamisation of language is not exclusive to Arabic and the key characteristics of an Islamised language³ are:

- Key Islamic terms and critical thought that are holistically connected and meaningful, and reflective of the human mindframe with regard to the truth and existence that are based on the Quran and teachings of Islam, and
- A principal Islamic vocabulary like the one used in the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), an absorption resulting from sharing the same sphere and associated definitions.

Upon examination, the languages in the Islamic language family — Arabic, Persian, Ottoman-Turkish, Malay and Urdu — are found to be using similar letters in writing. The Malay language has been written using the Jawi alphabet since more than 700 years ago.⁴

Language and Jawi

As glyph and script, Jawi has served well in unifying

labour was nourished by scholars who, through language and literature, helped sweeten history with the tradition of writing major dictionaries, study of grammar and creation of stories and poetry. the Muslim communities in the Malay world, giving rise to a Malay-Muslim civilisation with a shared foundation in Islam. The Arabic alphabet has been meticulously adapted into the Malay language, with some Jawi letters created from a combination of Arabic letters to suit the phonetics.⁵

Jawi	Root Arabic letters	Justification
ک (ga)	ك + ج	Ga takes on the form of and sounds similar to ^ය (<i>kaf</i>) The dot on ^と (ga) is taken from で (jim)
E (cha)	ج + ت	Cha takes on the form of and sounds similar to € (jim) The additional two dots on € (cha) are taken from ゴ (ta)
ໍ ບ (nya)	ن + ي	Nya takes on the form of and sounds similar to i (<i>noon</i>) The additional two dots on i (<i>nya</i>) are taken from <i>g</i> (<i>ya</i>) The form is not to be confused with i (<i>ta</i>)
č (nga)	غ + ن + ڬ	Nga takes on the form of and sounds similar to を (ghayn) The additional two dots on を (nga) are taken from さ (noon) and さ (ga)
ف (pa)	ف + ب	Pa takes on the form of ف (fa) instead of ب (ba), as in Persian and Urdu Jawi, because the Malay phonetic takes after the way Hadhrami Arabs give the letter p an accented f sound The dot in ف (fa) is taken from ب (ba) and placed above the glyph Two dots are added to ف (fa) in forming ف (pa) to avoid confusion with ق (qaf)

Although the spelling of Malay words in Jawi has undergone several changes and has its own unique system,⁶ they do not apply to key terminologies where forms and meanings remain the same. For example, Islamic terms from the Quranic Arabic such as Allah, Prophet, Companion, Knowledge, Justice, Islam, People, World and Hereafter. They retain the original form, spelling and meaning until today. The retention and enhancement of the existing key terms have resulted in the creation of Malay-Jawi literature that is pure, be it in books, poetry or prose. Apart from the Terengganu Inscription Stone, the discovery of the oldest known Malay manuscript as documented in the translation of '*Aqa'id al-Nasafi*⁷ is proof that the terms were catalysts in the rise of the great Malay civilisation. Eminent Malay literary figures Hamzah Fansuri, Nur al-Din al-Raniri and Raja Ali Haji also penned their words of wisdom from their understanding of the terminologies in the history of the Malay-Muslim civilisation.

The role of Jawi in shedding light on the Quran and the teachings of Islam through Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his followers can be summarised as:

- 1. A medium for the complex discussion on divinity and religion,
- 2. A reference for the vast world of philosophy and metaphysics,
- 3. A vocabulary for various fields of knowledge and local wisdom,
- 4. A language of East-West commerce, and
- 5. A catalyst for the unification of races and collective awareness that transcends race and ethnicity.

Majalah Qalam as promoter of Jawi Heritage

Singapore's position as the pre-WWII literary hub was supported by the emergence of Malay newspapers and magazines such as Majalah Qalam, which was published during the turning point in the history of Jawi. It was founded by Syed Abdullah Abdul Hamid Al-Edrus⁸, an important Malay literary figure of the 1950s and 1960s, the dawn of independence for Indonesia and Malaya.

magazine reached as far as Sabah, Sarawak and Patani. Majalah Qalam made its debut in July or August 1950 and ended with its 228th edition in October 1969.

Majalah Qalam's operations were based in Singapore before moving to Kuala Lumpur in 1967. The rise and fall of Majalah Qalam was reflected in this quote by the chief editor:

"The printing of Majalah Qalam in February 1948 was based on the belief in our own strengths and efforts while leaving the

> outcome to Allah. We provide a service to shape the community to the best we can, with Qalam Press abiding by Allah's command: 'You must always strive and search Allah's Earth for sustenance after you've performed your prayers.' So, with the changes and opportunities, books on hot issues published during the time were well-received, with sales hitting 5,000 copies in just three weeks."

> In September 1950, with a loan from a couple of people and the resources on hand, printing began with a cheap machine made in Hong Kong and a paper cutter. In the early days, the Qalam Press owner would work from 7.30am to 10pm or 11pm, taking breaks only to eat and pray. Praise be to God, courage, resolve and frugality brought success to the company and it grew. Unfortunately, Qalam Press could not stay ahead of competition

after it stopped producing its own content on top of taking on commissioned work.¹⁰

Steps were taken to recoup losses and convert Qalam Press back to sole proprietorship. With proper management, cost-cutting measures in place and the owner himself working long hours on end, the company slowly recovered. But it was not enough for Qalam Press to stay afloat — it folded.

Syed Abdullah steered Singapore's Malay publishing industry via Qalam Press at 256 Geylang Road, leading the publication, printing and distribution of books, magazines and newspapers. Based on the membership registry of Ikhwan al-Muslimin⁹ in Majalah Qalam, it appears the distribution and reach of the

the Jawi script



PRESERVING THE HERITAGE: A publication written in

Majalah Qalam, founded and selfmanaged by Abdullah, had served well as a medium for the Malay language in Jawi script for 19 years. The magazine folded after his death on 20 October 1969 but remains to be a reference and popular historical resource among researchers.

Essence of Majalah Qalam

The monthly publication had its own agenda, at times regarded as an alternative look at the history of Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. Sharp criticisms in its *Kopi Pahit* (Bitter Coffee) column reflected the boldness of its editor Abdullah, who went by pseudonyms such as Cemeti al-Farouk, Ahmad Lutfi, Asyraf Wajidi and Ustazah.

At its peak, *Majalah Qalam* was popular among the academics and serious readers because of its articles by famous thinkers such as Mohamad Natsir, Abu Bakar ash-Shiddiquey, Isa Anshari, Abdullah Basmeh, Za'ba, Hamka, Zulkifli Muhammad, Dr Burhanuddinal-Helmy, Mushfa' and Uthman Kalam.

The magazine would also feature rare images and now-extinct cultural practices such as the large-scale, annual observance of the Prophet's birthday at Jalan Besar Stadium. Other historical events covered by *Majalah Qalam* included:

- 1. The Maria Hertogh riots (1950–1951), accompanied by pictures and criticisms against the British colony,
- 2. The implementation of Islamic family and civil law in Malaya–Singapore (1950–1955),
- 3. Indonesia's internal political conflict (1950–1955),
- 4. Malaya's independence (1956–1959),
- The development of the Malay language post-independence and the establishment of the Institute of Language and Literature (1950–1965),
- 6. Reactions to and debates over Communist ideology (1955– 1965), and
- 7. The establishment of Malaysia and its new government (1963–1969).

Conclusion

Majalah Qalam, founded and self-managed by Abdullah, had served well as a medium for the Malay language in Jawi script for 19 years. The magazine folded after his death on 20 October 1969 but remains to be a reference and popular historical resource among researchers. In Singapore's Malay literary world, *Majalah Qalam* occupies its own special place in the library of Malay history — as the last successor of the Malays' original script, from its first issue to the last.

Endnotes

- 1 Sura al-Ikhlas: 1–5.
- 2 Sura al-Najm: 3–4.
- 3 For further references that explain the classification of a language as an Islamic language, please see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1999, 10.
- 4 Calculated from the date of the erection of Batu Bersurat Terengganu in 1303AD. See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1984.
- 5 See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1971 and 2011.
- 6 See Hashim Musa, 2006.
- 7 See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, 1988.

- 8 His full biography was written by Talib Samat, 2004.
- 9 The membership registry was summarised in a table by Yamamoto Hiroyuki, 2013.
- 10 "Dari Hal Kita", Majalah Qalam, vol. 68, March 1956, 3–4.

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Part 5 Those Who Sustain

Malay language and writings have developed and nourished through the Malay community's own determined efforts as well as those by relevant institutions.

This is where the Malay Language Council, Singapore and the National Library Board play key roles as advocates of the use of Malay language and literature, in addition to being keepers of the literary heritage by homegrown writers that serve as sources for future generations.



Tajudin Jaffar

Malay Language Council, Singapore The Community's Pacesetter and Voice

Introduction

Since the 1950s, language-related decisions in Singapore have taken into account the impact they would have on the different cultures, religions and languages of the population. Malay is the national language and also an official language apart from Mandarin, Tamil and English. But "in relation to language planning in Singapore, there is no institution dedicated to developing Malay or other languages." (Sidek, 1994: 16)

Institute of National Language and Culture

Although no official institution was set up for Malay-language planning, the government established the Institute of National Language and Culture in 1960 to publish literary works, the Malay terms for official government positions and Malay textbooks, cultivate the learning of the national language, and organise the Malay Language Month. It also conducted activities to promote the use of the national language until 1968.

Malay Language Spelling Committee

In 1965, the Ministry of Culture set up the National Language Spelling Committee for Malay writings. The Melindo spelling system (Indonesian Malay), which formed the basis of the Malay spelling in Singapore, was modified in 1977 when Singapore switched to *ejaan baku* (standard spelling), a spelling system adopted by Malaysia and Indonesia in 1972. The new spelling system was implemented in schools and media.

The Malay Language Spelling Committee, chaired by Wan Hussin Zoohri, was established in 1981 to standardise Malay spelling in Singapore. This committee replaced the one formed in 1965. It was later renamed Malay Language Committee of Singapore in 1983.

Malay Language Committee of Singapore

Established to advance and develop the Malay language, the Malay Language Committee of Singapore has two sub-committees to focus on spelling and terminology. Wan Hussin was replaced by Sidek Saniff in 1986, a year after the Committee sent a delegation (as State Observer) to the Indonesian and Malaysian Language Council Conference where it was renamed Language Council of Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia to include Brunei.

The Malay Language Committee of Singapore 1988 organised the first Malay Language Month in collaboration with local Malay organisations and literary agencies. The Malay Language Month was previously run by the Permanent Congress Board (Lembaga Tetap Kongres) and Central Council of Malay Cultural Organisations (Majlis Pusat).

Malay Language Council, Singapore

In 1992, the Malay Language Committee of Singapore was instated as the Malay Language Council, Singapore to helm linguistic activities. The Council has been chaired by:

- 1. Sidek Saniff (1992–2000)
- 2. Yatiman Yusof (2000–2008)
- 3. Hawazi Daipi (2008–2012)
- 4. Masagos Zulkifli Masagos Mohd (2012–2015)
- 5. Associate Professor Dr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim (2015 to date)

As the body spearheading the development of the Malay language in Singapore, the Council embodies the vision of making Singapore Malay a standard and dynamic language that its users can be proud of. The vision was shaped by missions conceived in 2009:

Status custodian of the language

As a think tank and custodian of the language, the Malay Language Council, Singapore determines its status, policy and direction of growth. The Council also serves the Singapore government as consultant or advisor in languagerelated matters.

Leader in linguistic activities

The Council is the parent institution with the authority to lead, plan, coordinate and implement research programmes, development, enhancement and promotion of the Malay language, literature and writings.



CULTIVATING INTEREST: Sidek Saniff explaining the use of standard pronunciation to Victoria School students in 1996.

Proponent of language development

The Malay Language Council, Singapore is responsible for promoting the realisation, conception and recognition of the elite and friends of the language and culture as icons of the community.

Since the time the Council was still a Committee, its Malay language preservation and development activities have had monetary support from the government and funds are also shared with local Malay organisations and institutions that organise related activities. The Malay Language Council, Singapore has been under the purview of the Ministry of Culture up to this day, under the renamed Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth.

Language cultivation activities include the Malay Language Month, Literary Awards, Arif Budiman Malay Language Teachers' Award and participation in the Language Council of Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia and Mastera activities.

Malay Language Month

First introduced in Singapore in 1962 and organised by the Institute of National Language and Culture, the National Language Month went on a hiatus after the closure of the Institute in 1969. The Central Council of Malay Cultural Organisations tried to revive it several times in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Council was formed in 1969 by the leaders of the Malay-Muslim community to bring the Malays together through educational, religious, cultural, welfare, social, economic and sporting activities. It organised projects aimed at enhancing the community's educational, economic, cultural and social developments.

The Malay Language Council, Singapore took over the running of the Malay Language Month — which alternated with the Literary Awards — in 1988 in a collaboration with other local bodies. The Malay Language Month since 2012 has been organised yearly on the back of positive response from the community.

Literary Awards

The Literary Awards were introduced in 1993 to recognise the works produced by Singapore writers. Today, the Awards consists of the Literary Prize in eight categories and the Tun Seri Lanang Award, Tun Seri Lanang Posthumous Award and Promising Award. (To read about the Literary Awards in detail, see the chapter Singapore's Literary Awards - A Look at Development, Challenges and Direction by Dr Sa'eda Buang on page xx.)

Tun Seri Lanang Award

The Tun Seri Lanang Award is the highest recognition conferred at a Literary Awards ceremony, awarded to international arts luminaries who are outstanding in the eyes of Singapore's multicultural community. The recipient would be a champion of the arts whose life is devoted to producing works for the growth of the community's intellect. Tun Seri Lanang Award recipients include:

- 1. Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (1993)
- 2. Masuri S N (1995)
- 3. Abdul Ghani Hamid (1997)
- 4. Suratman Markasan (1999)
- 5. Aliman Hassan (2001)
- 6. Mohamed Latiff Mohamed (2003)
- 7. Djamal Tukimin (2007)
- 8. Isa Kamari (2009)
- 9. Hadijah Rahmat (2011)
- 10. Nadiputra (2013)

The Tun Seri Lanang Posthumous Award has been presented to:

- 1. Harun Aminurrashid (1995)
- 2. Mahmud Ahmad (1997)
- 3. Noor SI (1999)
- 4. Suradi Parjo (2001)
- 5. Hamzah Hussien (2007)
- 6. Haron Abdul Majid (2009)

and the Promising Award to:

- 1. Noor Hasnah Adam (2009)
- 2. Muhammad Herwanto Johari (2011)
- 3. Noridah Kamari (2013)

The Promising Award was introduced in 2009 to motivate individuals who champion the local literary scene, such as advocates, activists, under-40 writers, authors whose literary works have impact on the community and those who dedicate their time to sharing their skills and knowledge.

Arif Budiman Malay Language Teachers' Award

The Malay Language Council, Singapore co-organises the Award in 2012 with the Malay Language Learning and Promotion Committee, Malay Language Teachers' Association, and *Berita Harian*, which was getting involved for the first time. The Award recognises the contributions of Malay language teachers in mainstream schools, with up to four teachers awarded each year — Exemplary Category (Primary, Secondary and Pre-University) for teachers who have been in service for over 10 years and Inspirational Category (Primary, Secondary and Pre-University Level) for less than 10 years.

Language Council of Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia

Singapore started attending the Language Council of Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia assemblies in 1985 as an Observer State and has since then participated in regional language discussions. Singapore has yet to officially gain the status of member of the Council due to administrative limitations but in the spirit of regional language development, continues to send delegates and representatives to its events such as the assemblies, language seminars and writing workshops.

Southeast Asian Literature Council (Mastera)

Mastera is a council that plans and monitors the development of Malay/Indonesian literature in the region. Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia are part of the Council that was officialised in 1996 and its events are also joined by representatives from the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Singapore became a member in 2012, collaborating with member countries to develop and expand regional literary works towards becoming a credible citizen of the larger literary world through activities and research. Thailand became the fifth member country in 2014.

The member countries take turns to host the annual meeting and Singapore hosted the 21st Mastera Conference in 2015 in conjunction with the SG50 jubilee celebration. Mastera also presents awards, prizes or commendations to literary figures or works to the national writers nominated by the member countries. Singaporean writers who have been awarded include Noor Hasnah Adam (Mastera Young Litterateur Literary Prize in Indonesia in 2013) and Suratman Markasan (Mastera Luminary Award in Brunei in 2014).

Language standardisation

Standardisation of a language and the pronunciation of its words can be confusing as it undergoes the process of defining features such as spelling, pronunciation, grammar, terms, vocabulary and register.

The spelling system in Singapore was standardised with the establishment of the National Language Spelling Committee in 1983, which also standardised the grammar, terminology, vocabulary and register in phases based on developments at the Mastera assemblies.

The implementation of *baku* (standard Malay) in Singapore started with primary schools in 1993 and secondary schools and preuniversity in 1994. Radio and TV followed suit, using standard pronunciation for official programmes such as news, education, interviews and announcements.

Standard pronunciation is not used by the general public at home or social events. This debunks the community's misconception that "we want to change the Malay language into Bahasa Indonesia" (Ariff, 1992: 10). The discussion to standardise the phonetics was initiated as early as in 1956 at the third Malay Literary and Language Congress in Singapore and Johor Bahru. A symposium was organised in 1992 and a seminar in 1993 to better explain the use of the standard pronunciation in the Malay language.

Development of Malay language a shared responsibility in community

The Malay Language Council, Singapore cannot develop the local language and literature without the support of the Malay community as users of the language. The development of language, literature, arts and culture in Singapore varies with each language and literary activity.

There are countless activities in Singapore that use the Malay language — the Malay Language Month, Literary Awards, and other linguistic and literary activities conducted by various organisations, schools and individuals. This gives us hope that future generations will continue to have the opportunity to participate in activities in which they can use the national language.

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Treasures of National Library Board

Juffri Supa'at

Since time immemorial, the library has been an important institution for research and analytical works. Today, as we navigate the era of a knowledge-based economy, research and analysis are becoming increasingly important. It is thus imperative that library users find the best ways to acquire information and knowledge from the library.

According to Thomas Mann (1998) in *The Oxford Guide to Library Research*, a researcher should have the confidence to use the library effectively and the ability to use the best methods in library research amid the rapid changes in the field of information use and storage. He highlighted that essential materials for research, such as books, journals, newspapers, documents, manuscripts, microfilms, audio-visual materials and bibliographic data, are available in the library.


MALAY COLLECTION: The National Library of Singapore has put together a collection of materials that touches on and covers all aspects of life of the Nusantara Malays.

Knowledge

Singapore's National Library Board (NLB) became a statutory body on 1 September 1995 with the mandate to provide public library services to everyone. NLB's aim is "to provide reliable, accessible and well-connected library services and information service to build a knowledgeable and aware society."

NLB has curated a collection of materials spanning all aspects of life of the Malays in the archipelago, from socioeconomics and politics to culture and religion to language and literature and even law. The institution is responsible for collecting and preserving literary treasures such as historical documents and publications.

NLB's Malay Collection

The Malay Collection, which contains about 15,000 materials, was curated to enhance NLB's role as an excellent reference and research centre that meets the needs of Singaporeans in accessing

information in their mother tongue. Amid rapid globalisation, the materials in this collection feature traditional cultures and values that reflect the socioeconomics, cultures and literature of Singapore.

Amassed since the 1820s, the Malay collection grew in tandem with the development of public libraries in Singapore and started off with most publications being religious materials printed by Singapore Mission Press. Almost all the materials from then have been archived under NLB's Rare Collection.

Efforts to develop the Malay, Chinese and Tamil collections began only around 1960 and expanded with the government-funded purchase of materials from Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. NLB also got a boost from the Lee Foundation in the form of a \$60 million donation.

The Malay Collection, specially curated by the NLB to be a point of reference, touches on the different facets of the community in the archipelago, such as socioeconomics, politics, culture, religion, language, literature and national development. The collection is a part of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library and contains monographs, periodicals, audio-visual materials and microfilms. There are also reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, directories, biographies, bibliographies, yearbooks, maps, indexes and abstracts. Among the interesting materials in this collection are those on literature, language and Islam. Beli", "Ini Syair Potong Gaji" and "Ini Syair Tengku Prabu di Negeri Singapura" give voice to the Malays' outcry over colonialism and aristocracy.

Contemporary

The transition from traditional to modern literature occurred in the early 20th century, mostly after the end of World War II. The

Singapore Pages

The online portal Singapore Pages gives access to condensed information on Singapore's resources including e-books, research guides and related websites.

Literature

The literary collection includes both classic and modern Malay literature covering theory, philosophy, poetry, drama, novels, essays and critiques by writers from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Among the materials is *Hikayat Abdullah* (1849) by gifted writer and pioneer of modern literature, Munshi Abdullah. The autobiography was published by Singapore Mission Press.

Classics

Classics such as *hikayat, syair*, novels, poetry, critiques, comparative literature, biographies and encyclopaedias by writers from Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore can be found in this collection. Among them is *Syair Tantangan Singapura* (1994), compiled by Muhammad Salleh and whose pieces "Syair Dagang Berjual



LEVERAGING ON TECHNOLOGY: The National Library takes full advantage of the widespread use of the internet among today's generation.

establishment of Asas '50 on 6 August 1950 gave local writers the support they needed to champion their causes, be it the call for independence or to educate the public on social issues. Works were no longer written in the old styles and themes often revolved around social issues and injustices.

Alternative novels centering on love, relationship and marriage, and some even containing erotic elements, began to surface. These novels were popular especially among young readers. Among those available at NLB include *Pelayan* (1948) by Ahmad Lutfi, *Tidaklah Saya Datang Kemari* (1952) by Iskandar Muda, *Siapa Sangka* (1958) by MAS and *Di Rumah Ibu Ayam* (1958) by Mahadi.

Singapore was once home to many great writers of the archipelago. Those who made Singapore their space and inspiration to produce their masterpieces included Malaysian National Laureate A Samad Said. He used Singapore as the setting for the novels he wrote in the 1950s and 1960s, such as *Salina*, which centred on the community life in Kampung Kambing post-WWII.

Language

The Malay language and its developments were documented and archived in NLB's collection. Once the lingua franca of the Malay Archipelago, the Malay language was instrumental to the Islamisation of the Malay Peninsula. The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library recognises the significance of the language by preserving its essence, from philosophy and theory to phonology and grammar. The dictionaries Vocabulary of the English and Malay Languages (1896) by Frank Swettenham and Vocabulary of the English, Bugis, and Malay Languages are among the materials in this collection and are accessible online.

Singapore and Southeast Asia

A valuable source of historical research materials, this collection includes works related to history, governance, culture, customs, language and literature. Researchers can also refer to microfilm and microfiche materials, which include even pre-1900 published works, old local newspapers and periodicals.

NewspaperSG

The online source for newspaper articles published in Singapore and Malaya allow users to access materials between 1831 and 2009. There are more than 200 newspaper titles in the microfilm collection on NewspaperSG.

Local sources

The focus of this collection are materials sourced from Singapore and Southeast Asia. It comprises comprehensive materials related to Singapore and its population in a variety of formats, including primary and published resources in various disciplines. It also includes works concerning the Straits Settlements and Malaya when Singapore was part of its political entity.

The collection also contains materials that document important events in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, East Timor, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar in areas such as history, politics and government, culture and customs, flora and fauna and economics.

Once the lingua franca of the Malay Archipelago, the Malay language was instrumental to the Islamisation of the Malay Peninsula. The Lee Kong Chian Reference Library recognises the significance of the language by preserving its essence, from philosophy and theory to phonology and grammar.



PRESERVING THE MALAY LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE: The National Library Board plays an important role in the publication and storage of the collection Malay literary books.

Rare materials and manuscripts

This collection is largely made up of materials printed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, including an extensive range of early newspaper articles in Singapore. It also contains Malay manuscripts in Jawi, dictionaries in Malay and other Southeast Asian languages, directories and almanacs, academic journals, tales of adventure in the Malay Archipelago and Southeast Asia, and translations of Chinese classics into Peranakan Malay.

Singapore Literary Pioneers Gallery

The exhibition at the gallery honoured the contributions and efforts of 30 Singapore pioneer writers including Malay literary giants Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, Suratman Markasan, Abdul Ghani Abdul Hamid, Masuri S N, Mahmud Ahmad, Suradi Parjo, Harun Aminurrashid and Noor S I.

Both their published and unpublished works were put on display, along with their personal artefacts such as typewriters, medals and pens. Other materials linked to the writers were also procured, such as typed scripts of Noor's and Dr Ariff's works, some of which were written for the language and literature columns in various media. The exhibits created room for researchers to study and discover new or fresh perspectives in literature.

National Online Repository of the Arts

NORA is an archive of local literary works such as poetry and drama and can be easily accessed through the NLB website. This effort towards preserving Singapore's literary heritage has collected works by 50 local writers, including the poem "Mengasah Makna" by Masuri, both its raw and completed copies. The collection is useful and valuable to a literary researcher looking to study the creative processes of a writer.

Donors' collection

Donated materials are just as important in enriching NLB's collection, especially handwritten or typed manuscripts and personal correspondences. They provide different perspectives and interpretations of a work or an event of a particular period.

Among the materials found in the NLB donors' collection are those donated by Ghani's and Masuri's families. The collection donated by Masuri's family contains unpublished, handwritten poems and personal notes on the art and literary world. These materials can offer new perspectives on the writer's works.

Potential

Amid the rapid changes in the community, libraries must plan and adapt to remain relevant and continue to lead in the field of reference and research, and as a repository of legacy. It has to make adjustments to meet user expectations in its role as a centre for knowledge.

One way is to collaborate with organisations, institutions or individuals who have the penchant, passion and expertise. This will promote and enrich the field of research and ultimately enhance our heritage. Technology can be leveraged in the effort to provide information quickly and accurately, especially to the tech-savvy younger generation.

Expanding NLB's collection and network of information will also make it easier for users to do referencing work and research, which will incidentally enhance and broaden the boundaries of knowledge.

Conclusion

NLB aims to fulfil its potential as a premier research and reference centre, especially as a knowledge centre of choice with a rich selection of materials on Singapore and Malay heritage. It is an ongoing effort amid challenges and without easy shortcuts but can be alleviated through collaborations and networking with local and foreign organisations and institutions, and researchers who are also library users.

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Part 6 Those Who Channel

The media are crucial channels in the growth of Malay language and literature. The contributions from both print and electronic (radio and TV), specifically through the spaces allocated, allow writers to hone their craft and at the same time, spread important messages to help in the intellectual development of the community.

A Glimpse of Singapore Malay Journalism



Mohd Raman Daud

Singapore was the hub of academia and publishing of the Malay world between 1850 and 1960.

Phase 1

Malay journalism began with the birth of the first newspaper in the Malay world, *Jawi Peranakkan*, in 1876 (ended in 1895). The Jawi newspaper was published every Monday with an original circulation of 250 copies. It was run by a Malay-Indian community that considered itself to be part of the Malay ethnic group and headed by its editor of 12 years, Munsyi Mohamed Said Dada Mohiddin, who hailed from southern India.

According to a study by Professor Ahmat Adam (1994), the community was motivated by the development of a Malay newspaper in Java. *Jawi Peranakkan* was distributed in Malaya, Sumatera and parts of Borneo, and was used as reading material in Singapore's Malay-medium schools that were short on books. It published international news, articles discussing the problems and shortcomings of the Malay community at that time, and letters and *syair* from readers.

Between 1876 and 1941, there were 147 newspapers and magazines produced in the Malay Peninsula and Straits Settlements (Penang, Melaka and Singapore). Most of the publications were concentrated in Singapore (68) and Penang

(36), according to scholar William Roff (Roff, 1972).

The Peranakan Chinese published *The Straits Chinese Herald* (1891) with columns in Malay and *Bintang Timor* (1894) which was written in Peranakan-Chinese Malay.

In 1906, the monthly magazine Al-Imam was published in Singapore, with Shaykh Mohd Tahir Jalaluddin (1869–1956) as its editor and Sayyid Shaykh Ahmad al-Hadi (1867–1934) as deputy. He was later replaced by Abbas Mohd Taha. Al-Imam, considered an Islamic reform magazine influenced by Cairo's This happened in 1939, when Malay-spirited newspaper *Utusan Melayu* emerged. It was published in Jawi and founded by a group of Malay leaders mainly of the Singapore Malay Union, such as Bugis tycoon Ambo Sooloh (1891–1963).

reformist magazine Al-Manar, folded in 1909.

Other magazines that emerged included Neraca (1911–1915), Tunas Melayu (1913) and Al-Islam (1914–1915).

Phase 2

The second phase of Malay journalism was between 1906 and 1916, marked by nationalistic sentiments in *Utusan Melayu*. Started in November 1907, it was helmed by Mohd Eunos Abdullah (1876–1933), considered by Roff as the "father of Malay journalism" (Roff, 1994). Published thrice a week, it later became the only daily with regular distribution throughout the Malay Peninsula and Straits Settlements. *Utusan Melayu* (1907–1918) was not a translated newspaper but the Malay edition of *The Singapore Free Press* (1835–1962). It started off as a paper written in Jawi but eventually switched to the Roman script. Eunos was then approached to become the editor of *Lembaga Melayu* (1914–1931).

As an intellectual, Eunos was a Malay representative on the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements. In defending the interests of the Malays, especially from the impact of the

resettlement of the downtown area and Kallang Basin, he established the Singapore Malay Union and a Malay reserve at the Kampong Melayu settlement in Kaki Bukit.

Malay newspaper publishing in Singapore and Malaya was often seen as being dominated by elite Peranakans of Indian, Chinese and Arab descents. But the Malay voice for independence rose when Onn Jaafar (1895–1962), who later became the *menteri besar* (chief minister) of Johor and founded Umno, took charge of *Warta Malaya* (1930–1941), a newspaper that belonged to the Alsagoff family.

Phase 3

This happened in 1939, when Malay-spirited newspaper Utusan Melayu emerged. It was published in Jawi and founded by a group of Malay leaders mainly of the Singapore Malay Union, such as Bugis tycoon Ambo Sooloh (1891–1963). This is not to be confused with the first Utusan Melayu that was led by Eunos but the name was adopted to honour him as the founder of the Union. The paper was managed by Yusof Ishak (1910–1970) who later became the first President of Singapore (1965–1970).

The presence of *Utusan Melayu* exhilarated the world of Malay journalism. The newspaper had its headquarters on Queens Street before moving to Cecil Street in 1945 and Kuala Lumpur in 1959. Its first editor was Abdul Rahim Kajai (1894–1943), who was revered by his young staff like Abdul Samad Ismail (1924–2008), who hailed him as the "father of Malay journalism".

Utusan Melayu and *Warta Malaya* were suspended during the Japanese Occupation and the void was filled by *Berita Malai*, which was managed by Ishak Haji Muhammad, or better known as Pak Sako. Another publication that emerged was the magazine *Fajar Asia*, led by Zainal Abidin Ahmad (not Za'ba), a Minang

who apparently was also the editor of the magazine *Panji Islam* in Medan. He introduced a standardised spelling system to unify the Malay language used in Malaya and Sumatera, whose people were the target audience of the publication.

After the Japanese Occupation, Utusan Melayu constantly featured leading literary and political figures such as Samad, the youngest editor to ever lead the newspaper, and Othman Wok (1924–2017), who later became a Singapore



EXHILIRATING THE JOURNALISTIC WORLD: The office of Utusan Melayu on Cecil Street Singapore, 1945–1958.

minister. Utusan Melayu also had in its ranks literary figures such as Kamaluddin Muhammad (Keris Mas), Asraf Abdul Wahab, Usman Awang (Tongkat Warrant) and Abdul Wahab Muhammad (Awam il-Sarkam). The newspaper highlighted the role of Asas '50, whose members were part of the reporting pool, and the Malay Literary and Language Congress in Singapore and Malaya.

Phase 4 — Towards Independence

Utusan Melayu became a dominant and pro-independence Malay newspaper post-WWII. It was challenged by the newspaper *Melayu Raya* which demanded the unification of the Malay Archipelago, rallying behind nationalists such as Ibrahim Yaacob of Pahang and Muhammad Yamin of Sumatera. *Melayu Raya* became popular with its coverage of the Natrah case which stoked hatred against colonial power. Natrah was born to a Dutch family and named Maria Hertogh but raised as a Muslim by her Malay foster mother Aminah. Natrah was later claimed by her biological parents who got the support of the Singapore High Court. Natrah-related riots in the late 1950s gave a boost to the circulation of *Melayu Raya*, helmed by acclaimed author Harun Mohd Amin (Harun Aminurrashid, 1907–1986), but it was later banned by the British colonial government.

Utusan Melayu continued to be dominant in Singapore and Malaya but faced stiff competition from *Berita Harian*, which was

launched on 1 July 1957 in Kuala Lumpur (refer to Guntor Mohd Sadali's article on Singapore's *Berita Harian* postindependence). *Utusan Melayu* ceased distribution in 1967 but retained an office on Rochor Road till the late 1980s.

Between 1980 and 1986, two other newspapers were launched in Singapore — *Anika*, a bi-weekly tabloid run by Hussein Jahidin (1933– 2014), a veteran print and broadcast journalist, in the 1980s. It comprised local news, an editor's column,

poems, short stories, literary essays, entertainment news and tales of the extraordinary. The weekly tabloid had a good circulation of 22,000 in 1983 but financial woes drove it to the ground in 1986.

The other Malay tabloid that emerged was *Arena*, led by Mohd Ghazali Ismail, former editor of *Utusan Melayu* in Singapore who later became the Political Secretary for Education and Member of Parliament. Ghazali was also an entrepreneur in the hairstyling industry. *Arena*, which featured sensational stories, lasted less than a year.

There were several magazines in production, including *Majallah Filem* (published by Shaw Brothers), helmed by Othman Abdullah between the 1960s and mid 1970s to popularise films produced and distributed by Shaw. Several children's magazines were also produced in Singapore, such as *Nadim* by Al-Ahmadiyah Press (1987–1989), which tapped on the expertise of a Malay language teacher, Mohamed Naim Daipi. In the early 2000s, EDN Media published the children's magazine *Riang Ria*, which lasted till 2015.

Future

Since the emergence of social media such as Facebook, Malay journalism has also jumped on the citizen journalism bandwagon, a trend that unfortunately carries little credence due to the varying levels of professionalism and difficulty in verifying information. Accredited news outlets, on the other hand, ensure accuracy and credibility in their reports.

Technological advances, the Internet and the proliferation of mobile devices are edging out print media. *Berita Harian* has also gone online with its own news website to keep up with the demand.

Will the quality of journalism be affected? According to observers, including Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, it will depend on the bilingual policy in Singapore, attitude of Singapore Malays and regional interaction among Malay speakers in Southeast Asia (Ariff, 2003).

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Since the emergence of social media such as Facebook, Malay journalism has also jumped on the citizen journalism bandwagon...

Role of Berita Harian Mohd Guntor Sadali in the Development of Malay Literature in Singapore

The birth of *Berita Harian/Berita Minggu* newspapers on 1 July 1957, accompanied by a foreword by then Chief Minister of the Federation of Malaya, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was a momentous event. It put an end to *Utusan Melayu*'s monopoly in the world of Malay journalism in Singapore and Malaya.

Unlike *Utusan Melayu*, which was established by the Malay elites through the Singapore Malay Union, *Berita Harian* was published in romanised Malay in Kuala Lumpur by Straits Times Press, a non-Malay-owned company that also published *The Straits Times*. *Berita Harian* at the time was led by an Englishman Hugh Mabbet and carried translation of news published in *The Straits Times*. Abdul Samad Ismail (1924–2008) took over as editor two years later.

To counter the competition from *Berita Harian*, the Utusan Group started Malay weekly newspaper *Mingguan Malaysia* in romanised Malay in 1964 followed by the publication of its daily *Utusan Malaysia*. When Singapore was part of Malaysia between 1963 and 1965, *Berita Harian* and the newspapers published by the Utusan Group were distributed freely on either sides of the Causeway. But things changed following the 1965 separation. In 1972, for political reasons, the Singapore and Malaysia governments agreed that

only newspapers published in their own countries were allowed to be sold and distributed locally — Utusan Group's newspapers, published in Kuala Lumpur, were no longer allowed to be distributed in Singapore.

The management of the Kuala Lumpur-based *Berita Harian* and The Straits Times had to split and the content had to be different albeit the management on either sides of the Causeway retaining the name *Berita Harian*. The management for the Malaysian side of The Straits Times chose to add the prefix "New" to its name while the Singapore side retained the name The Straits Times.

The moves were made to prevent the interference in each other's affairs, which could affect interracial relations. There were two racial riots in 1964 whose flames were stoked partly by seditious articles in the newspapers.



FIRST ISSUE: The front page of the first issue of Berita Harian that was distributed in Singapore and across the Causeway.

Mustafa recruited a group of young Singapore-born journalists and led the newspaper in building its own identity to distinguish itself from the namesake in Malaysia. *Berita Harian* is still Singapore's sole Malay newspaper, its journey charting the history of Malay journalism in the Republic.

> In 1973, Mustafa was replaced by his deputy Hussein Jahidin who had joined the newspaper in 1972. Hussein was a former *Utusan Melayu* journalist who had worked at Radio and Television Singapore.

Abidin Rasheed. Zainul who was then editor of the financial publication Asia Research, took over as editor of Berita Harian from Hussein in 1976. He helmed the newspaper until 1982, when Yatiman Yusof, a community activist and former teacher, replaced him. The newspaper's leadership changed hands again in 1990, when senior journalist Mohamed Guntor Sadali became editor until October 2012, after which Mohd Saat Abdul Rahman took over his place as news editor.

There was an attempt to create another Malay newspaper in the 1980s but the weekly publication *Anika*, led by Hussein, did not do well and folded several years after its inception.

The separation called for a newspaper to serve the Malay community in a rapidly-developing Singapore. The duty fell on the shoulders of *Berita Harian* and its pioneer editor Mustafa Suhaimi who took the reins in 1969. Its content was managed by journalists Abdul Majid Ismail (brother of Kuala Lumpur editorin-chief Samad), Magiar Simen and Sulaiman Jeem.

In the early days, *Berita Harian* had its fair share of challenges. In 1976, its editor Hussein and his deputy Nahar Azmi Mahmud were detained under the Internal Security Act for suspected communist activities. Several journalists in Malaysia were also detained for the same allegations.



BERITA HARIAN SINGAPURA: Berita Harian was distributed exclusively in Singapore post-independence.

Their incarceration shocked the newsrooms in Singapore. It threw the leaderless *Berita Harian* into a state of uncertainty, with Guntor shouldering the responsibility of overseeing the running of the newspaper. Zainul was then brought in to lead the newspaper, putting it back on track and reviving its staff morale.

Community and national issues

Berita Harian's philosophy has always been to inform, entertain and educate its readers, just like the other papers in The Straits Times Press Group (renamed Singapore Press Holdings in 1984). The Group's newspapers do not merely inform and entertain readers, but also make it a point to infuse elements of education in their content in their bid to give mass media a positive and constructive role amid Singapore's development. The role *Berita Harian* played in the community was crucial in the 1970s and 1980s, when the Malay-Muslims in Singapore struggled amid the nation's rapid development as it strove to overcome the aftershocks of the separation and lay the foundation for its future. The newspaper's primary focus was to ensure that the Malay community did not feel marginalised and that the Malays had a place in the nation's development.

Berita Harian fulfilled this role with utmost care, especially around issues of national concern that appeared to be conflicting with the interests of the Malay-Muslim community. A balance had to be struck between national interests and interests of the community to prevent misconceptions and negative impact. An example of such issues was the demolition of places of worship, including mosques, to make way for urban development such as housing, public infrastructure and commercial buildings. In tackling sensitive issues, Berita Harian provides accurate and comprehensive explanations behind every move to ensure an understanding by the audience.

The much-needed development for the nation was a sensitive issue for the Malay-Muslim community, with some parties feeling disgruntled by what was viewed as an insensitive move by the government to bulldoze mosques. So, *Berita Harian* had to step in to put the issue in the right perspective, explaining why it had to be done and pointing out that mosques were not the only places of worship affected by the development.

In 1975, the government approved the establishment of the Mosque Building Fund which collected 50 cents from each working Muslim per month via the Central Provident Fund. Once again, *Berita Harian* stepped up and explained how the unique system would benefit the Muslim community. The Fund has seen more than 30 modern mosques built in housing estates, bringing a variety of facilities including weekend madrasah classes to the community. There was also the issue of prayer calls from mosques five times a day. The local Malay-Muslim community felt that the government was encroaching on the practice of Islam in its proposal to direct the speakers towards the mosque compound instead of outwards. But the move was necessary to avoid causing disturbance to the general multiracial and multireligious residents, especially at dawn. A compromise was reached after extensive discussions the Malay radio station would air the prayer calls.

In tackling sensitive issues, *Berita Harian* provides accurate and comprehensive explanations behind every move to ensure an understanding by the audience. It emphasises on the need for tolerance and compromise to maintain harmony and support national development, and that the same is expected across all races. For example, the Chinese community could no longer set off fireworks during *Chap Goh Mei* and they had to keep the burning of joss offerings during Hungry Ghost Festival to designated spaces.

These issues, which may not seem too crucial today, meant a lot to the communities in the past. Without proper handling, they could have caused misunderstandings and tension between the communities or between the community and the government. *Berita Harian*, in its role as a mass medium, acted as a mediator to ensure harmony and tolerance in the Malay-Muslim community a tall order at the time in the wake of racial riots (the Nadra protest in 1950 and 1964 riots between the Malays and Chinese).

Another delicate issue in the community was the involvement of Malays in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), triggered by a statement by a Singapore minister in the mid-1980s that insinuated a doubt in loyalty. It stung the Malay community, which had always regarded itself as indigenous, but situations cooled after a dialogue between then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew (1959–1990), his cabinet ministers and leaders of Malay-Muslim organisations.

Each time an issue that could implicate the Malay-Muslim community was raised, *Berita Harian* and the rest of the media in Singapore would address it impartially. This included the aftereffects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States and the arrests of members of the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network the following year.

Racial and religious harmony is of utmost importance in Singapore and it takes all parties to work together to maintain it. The collaboration between the government and the media has fostered a dynamic and positive relationship in which *Berita Harian* becomes a "human resource platform" for its ability to understand and communicate related issues to the community.

This ability earned four *Berita Harian* journalists seats in the ruling People's Action Party and the cabinet — Mohamed Maidin Packer Mohamed, Yatiman Yusof and Hawazi Daipi as Senior Parliamentary Secretaries and Zainul as Senior Minister of State. There were community-specific issues that called for direct involvement of *Berita Harian* as the sole Malay newspaper in Singapore. In the mid-1970s, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) issued a pronouncement that forbade cornea donation, eliciting objection from Professor Dr Syed Hussein Alatas, head of the Department of Malay Studies at the University of Singapore (now National University of Singapore). He expressed his opinion in *Berita Harian* and it started a debate with MUIS that went on for several weeks.

Such calm and rational discourse was unprecedented in the Malay community here. Although the debate over cornea donation did not reach a decisive conclusion, it enriched the knowledge of the community, especially *Berita Harian* readers. It also set a precedence on how disagreements should be tackled.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, there were religious, cultural, charitable and arts bodies such as the Central Council of Malay Cultural Organisations Singapore, Singapore Malay Teachers' Union, Jamiyah, Perwanit, Persatuan Seni, Asas '50, Sriwana, Perdaus, Pertapis, Malay Youth Literary Association and Persatuan Kebajikan Sekawan Desa. Reports on these organisations and their activities strengthened the bond between the community and *Berita Harian*, which served as a platform for the Malay-Muslim organisations.

Nurturing the language

Literary repository

As a vernacular newspaper, *Berita Harian* played an instrumental role in the growth of Malay language and literature. Since its inception, the newspaper dedicated a page of its weekend issue *Berita Minggu* to showcase literary works in the forms of short stories, poems or essays by writers of all ages and experiences. Young writers from Grup Gelorasa (founded in 1971), Pass (1972), Kupuja (1981) and Kamus (1989), used *Berita Harian* as a platform to hone their writing. This made the newspaper a catalyst for the growth of Malay language and literature amid the limited number of linguistic and literary platforms in Singapore. It did not go unnoticed by the Literary Prize Committee and Malay Language Council, Singapore, which recognised *Berita Harian*'s role in promoting literary works.

Bilingual policy

While *Berita Harian* strives to encourage the use of and love for the Malay language, the government's bilingual policy was a cause for concern for the community that the mother tongue would be neglected. Parents were already choosing to send their children to English schools as security for their future, affecting the enrolment to vernacular schools which eventually shut down. Only a few Chinese-medium schools remain open under the Special Assistance School Plan. The impact of the policy on the use of the Malay language at home was also inevitable. The Singapore Population Census 1990, 2000 and 2010 showed an upward trend in the number of Malay families speaking English at home and reading English newspapers instead of *Berita Harian*. This posed a challenge for the newspaper in staying relevant to the younger readers.

The language used in *Berita Harian* has always been easy enough to be understood even by students. At the same time, its content takes into account the changing taste of the readers. The weekly section *Coretan Remaja* was created in 1991 to encourage the youth to be creative. It attracted contributions from students from Secondary 3 and above, growing till Kelab Coretan Remaja was formed in 1994. The club organised activities that were beneficial to both students and teachers alike.

Berita Harian is invested in maintaining the delicate balance between print and digital editions. The newspaper is a source of credible information but although the print edition is packed with articles, the digital platform needs to be filled with the latest news. This is where the challenge lies — the newsroom does not have only one deadline each day in putting out the print edition, but every minute of the day to keep its readers well-informed online.

Berita Harian also reached out to primary school pupils. In 2006, Kelab Obor was formed and in 2010, weekly tabloid *GenG & i3* (i-cube) for primary and secondary school students was published to accompany the main newspaper every Monday. Student subscribers qualified to join Kelab Obor, which organised activities aimed at promoting creativity, enriching knowledge and sharpening thoughts.

In September 2014, English-Malay free newspaper *Cilik Cerdik*, sponsored by Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism, was launched to reach out to 5,000 preschoolers. It joined the list of *Berita Harian*'s initiatives to cultivate the Malay community's interest in its mother tongue. In the long run, the initiatives would create a generation of Malays highly proficient in spoken and written Malay, sustaining the growth of Malay writings in Singapore.

Terminology and spelling

Content and delivery are not the only focus for *Berita Harian* in its bid to stay relevant, but also terminology and spelling. In the early 1970s, when the Malay Language Councils of Indonesia and Malaysia decided to conform to the *Ejaan Melindo* spelling system, Singapore was caught in a dilemma. But the Ministry of Culture's Spelling Committee subsequently decided to follow suit, so Singapore schools and *Berita Harian* adopted the new spelling system. This trickled down to readers and the larger Malay community.

The standardisation of spelling was challenging at first, with changes that caused confusion and bewilderment, especially with the borrowing of English words. For example, the word "club" was initially adapted into *klub* but was over time changed to *klab* and then *kelab*. The same happened to the word "television", from *talivisyen* to *television* and eventually *televisyen*.

Members of the public were not the only ones grappling with the spelling system — even *Berita Harian* journalists were confused before the situation stabilised when Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur published a guide to the new spelling. Journalists were also constantly learning new terms that had to be created to keep up with Singapore's rapid development, such as the term to describe the replacement of public bus conductors by automated fare machines.

The English term used to describe the switch from bus conductors to machines was "OMO", the acronym for one-man operation. The Malay equivalents ranged from *bas kendalian sendiri* (selfoperated bus) to *bas kendalian seorang* (one-man-operated bus) to *bas tanpa konduktor* (bus without conductor). But they were all unsuitable and *Berita Harian* eventually adopted the term *bas tabung* (moneybox bus), which was coined by the womenfolk.

The newspaper would also consult the doyen of language and literature, Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, who had coined numerous terms including *kolong flat* (void deck). He was also the first to use the term *kofihaus*, a distinction from *kedai kopi* (coffee shop), in a short story in *Berita Minggu*.

Dr Ariff lent his expertise to *Berita Harian* staff at workshops and in discussions to identify errors in grammar and terminology. This initiative was started in the 1960s and 1970s, when Mahmud Ahmad (1907–1976), a language and culture expert, would send to the newsroom copies of published articles with terminology, spelling and grammar errors marked out.

Future challenges

Throughout history, *Berita Harian* has faced challenges that called for early and quick actions. It needs to be aware of the changing tastes of readers and media trends to remain relevant. By 2000, the circulation hit 60,000 for *Berita Harian* and 70,000 for *Berita Minggu* — accounting for about 70 per cent of the Malay community.

In the age of the Internet, *Berita Harian* went online with cyBerita and now has a digital wing, BH Digital. Rapid advances in technology has triggered a widespread use of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, changing the landscape of newspaper publishing. Newsrooms around the world struggle with print as mobile technology demands news to be quickly delivered, complete with moving visuals — and free. *Berita Harian* is invested in maintaining the delicate balance between print and digital editions. The newspaper is a source of credible information but although the print edition is packed with articles, the digital platform needs to be filled with the latest news. This is where the challenge lies — the newsroom does not have only one deadline each day in putting out the print edition, but every minute of the day to keep its readers well-informed online.



Bermula dengan Coretan Remaja, sebuah ruangan khas di akhbar *Berita Harian*, yang mengisi karya kreatif para remaja, terbitlah Kelab Coretan Remaja atau KCR yang mengumpulkan remaja-remaja di Singapura dengan tujuan mengembangkan lagi bakat kreatif mereka, khususnya dalam bidang penulisan.

KCR ditubuhkan secara rasmi pada 9 April 1994 sempena majlis perjumpaan Hari Raya Aidilfitri yang diadakan untuk kumpulan remaja yang sering menyumbangkan karya mereka, sama ada cerpen, sajak, esei, pandangan mahupun lukisan kartun, ke ruangan Coretan Remaja yang telah diadakan sejak 1991. Ia merupakan sebuah kelab yang bertujuan menggalakkan lagi kumpulan remaja berbakat itu bergiat aktif dalam bidang yang mereka minati, menggalak bakat pengurusan dan kepimpinan dalam diri mereka melalui kegiatan-kegiatan yang dianjurkan, di samping menaikkan nama *Berita Harian* sebagai wadah penting bagi golongan remaja untuk berekspresi.

Remaja-remaja lelaki dan perempuan, yang masih menuntut atau sudah bekerja, berusia antara 15 hingga lewat 20-

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an tahun, diberi peluang menyertai kelab ini yang bernaung di bawah *Berita Harian* yang memberikan sokongan dana dan panduan.

Apabila permohonan menyertainya dibuka, sekitar 100 remaja memberi sambutan. Antara kegiatan pertama dan utama yang dianjurkan KCR ialah pertandingan bahas tahunan antara sekolah menengah dan madrasah, bermula pada 1996, dengan kerjasama Lembaga Pengamanah Masjid Sultan yang menyediakan penggunaan auditoriumnya. Jawatankuasa bahas menguruskan pertandingan dan ahli-ahli kelab lain membuat liputan keputusan bahas yang diterbitkan dalam ruangan Coretan Remaja setiap minggu.

Aktiviti lain termasuk ceramah motivasi merangkumi bimbingan belajar dan kerjaya serta ceramah dan forum penulisan kreatif seperti 'Forum Diskusi Puisi' yang diadakan pada September 1995 di bawah bimbingan Sasterawan Negara Malaysia, Encik A. Samad Said. Banyak lawatan sambil belajar juga diaturkan termasuk ke Pusat Islam di Kuala Lumpur, Perkampungan Bosnia di Serdang, Taman Negara Endau-Rompin di Johor dan rumah anak yatim di Batam. Dalam semua lawatan itu, anggota berkongsi pengalaman melalui penulisan mereka di ruangan Coretan Remaja.

KCR juga aktif melibatkan diri dalam Bulan Bahasa dengan mengadakan peraduan menulis cerpen sempena bulan tersebut. Ia juga telah menerbitkan dua buku karya remaja â antologi sajak, Manik-Manik

Hijau yang diterbitkan pada 1995 dan antologi cerpen Bingkisan pada 1999. Remaja yang meminati bidang lukisan seperti lukisan komik dan karikatur mendapat suntikan semangat melalui bengkel lukisan yang diadakan dengan kerjasama Angkatan Pelukis Aneka Daya (Apad). Hasil minat mendalam, Unit Grafik (Lukisan) KCR telah menerbitkan dua buku lukisan kartun mereka sendiri, 'Gelak Khas' pada 2002 dan 'Gelak Khas 2' pada 2004.

Dalam pada itu, beberapa perubahan telah dilakukan bagi meluaskan jaringan remaja yang dapat didekati akhbar ini. Justeru, seawal sekitar 1998, dalam usaha mendekati golongan remaja



MENYEMAI MINAT SEJAK MUDA: Para peserta salah satu kegiatan yang dianjurkan Kelab Coretan Remaja.

yang ranggi dan tertarik dengan budaya pop, halaman info-R telah turut diperkenalkan di *Berita Harian* seiring kewujudan ruangan Coretan Remaja dan KCR. Wartawan muda akhbar ini menjadi penggerak ruangan ini dengan kerjasama yang turut terjalin dengan stesen radio MediaCorp dan Ria 89.7FM menerusi program seminggu sekali di bawah bimbingan wartawan Haryani Ismail.

Kemudian pada 2004, ruangan Coretan Remaja dan info-R disatukan menjadi ruangan e-Remaja. Satu majlis pelancaran yang padat dengan peraduan sajak, mencari harta karun, kuiz am dan bahas diadakan di Auditorium Masjid Sultan sebagai usaha menyatukan pelajar yang menjadi penyumbang ruangan ini mahu-



DAPAT SAMBUTAN: Kegiatan anjuran Kelab Coretan Remaja sering mendapat sambutan hangat daripada pelajar-pelajar sekolah.

pun yang mengikutinya bagi mendapatkan bahan berita tentang perkembangan belia. Dua tahun selepas itu, Kelab Obor pula ditubuhkan dan menggantikan e-Remaja dalam usaha akhbar ini ke sekolah-sekolah bagi mengendalikan kursus kewartawanan. Bermula dengan ruangan seminggu sekali, hasil maklum balas para guru, akhbar pelajar i3 (sekolah menengah) dan Gen-G (sekolah rendah) pula diterbitkan pada 2008 khusus buat langganan pelajar di sekolah-sekolah setempat.

Namun, di peringkat awal, bagi KCR, sepanjang 10 tahun pembentukannya, ia telah mencapai banyak matlamatnya, antaranya, menyemarakkan dunia penulisan Melayu di Singapura dan menyuburkan minat dan bakat remaja dalam karya kreatif.

Ramai anggota masih bergiat dalam bidang yang mereka minati dan berkembang maju dalam kerjaya yang dipilih seperti kewartawanan, undang-undang dan pendidikan. Antara mereka termasuklah wartawan Haryani Ismail dan Chairul Fahmy Hussaini, peguam Guy Ghazali dan Rahayu Mahzam, guru Suhaila Mansor, Mazli Said dan Sulastri Kusen dan kartunis Mohd Idham Mokaron, selain beberapa lagi yang telah banyak memberikan sumbangan tenaga dan masa kepada KCR seperti Hamzah Osman, Mohd Thamrin Kamsan, Iwan Dharman Yusha, Mohd Salleh Abu Bakar dan Allahyarhamha Earyani Kasmin.



Ramai anggota masih bergiat dalam bidang yang mereka minati dan berkembang maju dalam kerjaya yang dipilih seperti kewartawanan, undang-undang dan pendidikan...



SALING BERTUKAR PANDANGAN: Para pendukung Kelab Coretan Remaja berbincang hangat mengenai kegiatan yang hendak dianjurkan.

Persuratan Melayu Gelombar Radio

Hashim Yusof

Persuratan Melayu turut mekar lewat gelombang radio Singapura iaitu media elektronik yang pertama di negara ini. Radio Singapura merupakan perkhidmatan radio setempat yang dilancarkan pada 1936. Siarannya dihentikan ketika Perang Dunia Kedua (Juga disebut Pendudukan Jepun, 1942-1945) dan digantikan dengan Radio Syonan To (Drew O. McDaniel: 1994).

Sesudah perang, Radio Singapura kembali ke udara dengan cogan katanya 'Radio Sumber Informasi, Pendidikan dan Hiburan'. Masa siaran Radio Singapura bahagian Melayu (RSM) bermula hanya beberapa jam sehari kemudian menjadi 24 jam sehari sejak 1977. Pada 1963, siaran televisyen diperkenalkan di Singapura serentak dengan radio. Jabatan Penyiaran diubah namanya menjadi Radio dan Televisyen Singapura (RTS). Pada 1984, RTS diubah menjadi badan berkanun, Perbadanan Penyiaran Singapura (SBC).

This article is presently not available in English.

Berdepan dengan saingan hebat daripada kemunculan stesenstesen radio serantau dan demi menarik pendengar, terutama generasi muda dan penaja, SBC telah melancarkan pula stesen-stesen muzik radio yang baru, termasuk RIA 89.7 FM mulai 1 Disember 1990 (untuk melengkap WARNA). SBC kemudian diswastakan pada 1994, muncullah MediaCorp Singapura yang mengembangkan sayap termasuk media cetak seperti akhbar percuma, *Today*. Sejak 1990-an WARNA 94.2FM dan RIA ditonjolkan secara komersial lewat road show (pertunjukan jalanan) yang sekali gus mempopularkan para pengacara atau DJ-nya. WARNA mempunyai jumlah pendengar yang lebih matang dan meluas sehingga sejauh Australia berbanding RIA yang diikuti anak-anak muda Melayu di Singapura, Johor dan kepulauan Riau.

Wadah Persuratan

Sejak 1940-an, RSM menampung wadah persuratan lewat pelbagai rancangan seperti ceramah, drama, kuiz, bahas, budaya, puisi, sukan, lagu dan nyanyian. Ramai tokoh bahasa dan persuratan terdiri daripada penulis dan guru yang kebanyakannya lulusan Maktab Perguruan Sultan Idris (SITC) di Tanjung Malim, wartawan akhbar dan majalah, memberi sumbangan dan karya mereka kepada stesen ini. Penyertaan mereka menjadi inspirasi kepada para penulis baru termasuk yang berpendidikan Inggeris untuk berkarya. Antara aktivis persuratan Melayu yang terlibat di RSM termasuklah Usman Awang (nama penanya Tongkat Warant), A Samad Said, Abdul Wahab bin Muhamad (Awami il-Sarkam) Harun Mohamad Amin (Harun Aminurashid), Mahmud Ahmad, Masuri Salikun (Masuri S.N.) dan Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (MAS). RSM pernah bekerjasama dengan para pensyarah Jabatan Pengajian Melayu Universiti Singapura (dulu dikenali sebagai Universiti Malaya). Para mahasiswanya seperti Yatiman Yusof (mantan guru, wartawan dan anggota Parlimen) berpeluang mengendalikan rancangan 'Suara Mahasiswa' pada awal dekad 1970-an.

Pakar Bahasa

RSM pernah memanfaatkan bakti tokoh bahasa terkenal, Pendeta Dr Za'ba (Zainal Abidin Ahmad 1895-1973) yang pernah bertugas dalam awal 1940-an sehingga pada zaman Pendudukan Jepun. Beliau pernah menyarankan istilah 'tetuang udara' bagi perkataan 'radio'.

Wartawan terkemuka, Othman Kalam (1903-1955) juga pernah

berkhidmat dengan Radio Singapura Melayu pada tahun 1941 sehingga menjadi Pemangku Ketua RSM pada 1951. Beliau terkenal dengan panggilan 'Pakcik Othman' lewat rancangan kanakkanaknya. Rumahnya di nombor 10 Bussorah Street digelar 10 Downing Street (sempena kediaman Perdana Menteri British di London) kerana di sini sering berhimpun para cendekiawan Melayu ketika itu (A Ghani Hamid dan Sulaiman Jeem: 1997).

Cikgu Yusof Adil atau lebih terkenal sebagai Buyong Adil (1907-1976) mantan pensyarah di SITC dan aktivis siasah di Perak, telah dihantar bertugas di Singapura sebagai ketua Unit Siaran ke Sekolah Melayu Seluruh Malaya (Semenanjung Tanah Melayu) dan Singapura pada akhir dekad 1950-an dan awal 1960-an. Cikgu Buyong merupakan nara sumber kepada para pegawai dan penerbit Melayu di Radio Singapura Melayu di bawah penyeliaan Cik Zahrah Za'ba (anak Pendeta Dr Za'ba) yang mengetuai RSM dari 1958 hingga 1973.

RSM bertuah kerana mendapat khidmat Cik Zahrah Za'ba (1921-1988), wanita pertama menjadi guru pelatih di SITC, serta penerbit sejumlah rancangan termasuk yang terkenal Keluarga Si Comel. Beliau mengetuai RSM sejak 1958 hingga 1974. Suaminya, Adnan Isa, juga penerbit radio. Cikgu Buyong juga menulis dan menerbitkan rancangan sejarah, *Gubahan Kisah Sejarah*, serta menerbit dan menjadi jurukuiz rancangan *Menduga Akal*. Rakan seperjuangan dan kemudian menjadi besan Cikgu Buyong, Budayawan Cikgu Mahmud Ahmad (1906-1976) telah menulis banyak skrip ceramah radio mengenai budaya yang telah dibukukan – *Kebudayaan Sa pintas Lalu* (1964).

Seorang lagi tokoh penyiar ialah Ramli Abdul Hadi (1930-1985) yang juga penggerak Lembaga Bahasa Melayu, Pertubuhan Kebudayaan Melayu dan Lembaga Tetap Kongres. Selain mengetuai Unit Berita Melayu, beliau gigih menulis siri drama saduran daripada kisah dari Timur Tengah, *Seribu Satu Malam*. Malah beliau bertindak selaku pencerita siri ini yang dibintangi pelakon radio wanita yang terkenal, Faridah Hanim Hasbullah (1943-2012) sebagai Syahrizat. Siri terbitan Hashim Yusof itu ditaja oleh syarikat Tonik Cap Gajah.

Rahman Yusof dan Ahmad Tarmidzi merupakan juruhebah radio bersuara stereofonik yang diserap bersama beberapa pegawai muda lain untuk mengendalikan berita televisyen pada awal 1960-an.

Rancangan Agama

Rancangan agama di radio juga diminati ramai dengan penampilan Ustaz Haji Daud Ali (1919-1989) dalam menjawab kemusykilan agama sehingga beliau digelar 'Mufti Radio'. Turut dikenali ramai di radio dalam rancangan agama ialah Ustaz Syed Abdillah bin Ahmad Al-Jufri (1938-2003) yang juga seorang guru, pernah bertugas di Jabatan Pendidikan Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura dan mudir Madrasah Aljunied serta penulis sejumlah buku.

Rancangan agama di radio turut dijayakan ahli tafsir Quran, Ustaz Ahmad Sonhaji Mohamad (1922-2010), yang merintis ruangan *Tafsir Quran* sejak 1960. Makalah tafsir 30 juznya yang diusahakan selama 25 tahun telah dibukukan dengan judul *'Abrul Athir'* (Menerusi Gelombang Udara). Sehingga kini, kalangan asatizah lulusan Universiti Al-Azhar, Mesir, dan negara-negara Arab atau rantau ini, masih lagi diundang menyertai rancangan agama di radio.

Jenis Rancangan

Umumnya, terdapat tiga proses bagi penyiaran radio. Pertama, menyiapkan bahan siaran berdasarkan bidang dan tema yang berpandukan ilmu dan kepakaran warga setempat, termasuk pengkaji dan penerbit radio atau luar negara. Kedua, bahan tadi diproses menjadi skrip radio untuk disampaikan oleh para pengacara atau sekumpulan juruhebah. Ketiga, memanfaatkan teknologi penyiaran radio yang kian canggih dengan kesan bunyi dan sebagainya agar dapat dinikmati pendengar.

Umumnya, 60 peratus siaran RSM berunsurkan muzik tradisional dan popular, selebihnya berupa maklumat semasa seperti berita dalam dan luar negara, rancangan bimbingan seperti undangundang dan kesihatan, bahasa dan persuratan, agama, rancangan wanita, rancangan belia, rancangan kanak-kanak, rancangan warga tua dan sukan. Antara rancangan muzik RSM yang terkenal ialah *Penyanyi Pujaan Minggu Ini* (1966-1971) yang turut menyuburkan genre muzik Pop Yeh Yeh – kelolaan pengacara sambilan, penyair dan kemudian wartawan, MIA (Mohamed Ismail Abdullah, 1946 -).

Kini jarang kedengaran lagu tradisional di RSM. Padahal dua dekad lalu, lagu-lagu Melayu Asli, keroncong, Dondang Sayang, Joget, Ghazal dan irama Gambus sering disiarkan pada sebelah malam sekurang-kurangnya sekali seminggu. Aspek ini wajar ditimbangkan demi memelihari kelestarian kebudayaan Melayu.

Rancangan Malar Segar

Drama paling disukai pendengar radio di banyak negara. *Pentas Radio* sepanjang 60 minit dan *Sandiwara* 30 minit telah lama disiarkan di RSM sejak 1950-an. Ertinya, ribuan skrip drama telah dihasilkan sejak zaman para penulis perintis seperti Ismail Abdul Kadir, Kalam Hamidi, Rahman B., Othman Hj Zainudin, Rahman Abu, Alias Hussaini, Jah Lelawati, Ramli Ahmad, Othman Abdulah, Jymy Asmara, Megat Ramli, Onn Abd Rahman antara 1950an sehingga 1960-an. Kemudian muncul pula generasi kedua penulis skrip drama radio termasuk Maznah Hj Abd Hamid, Bahari Rajib, M. Saffri A. Manaf, Habsah Hassan dan Kamariah Awang dalam 1970-an dan 1980-an.

Untuk menambah bilangan penulis dan skrip bermutu, RSM telah mengadakan bengkel penulisan skrip drama radio dari masa ke masa. Cerpen yang memenangi sayembara anjuran Kementerian Kebudayaan dan badan setempat telah dipadankan untuk dijadikan skrip drama radio. Misalnya, skrip drama pentas Indonesia yang terkenal, *Sangkar Madu*, karya Bachtiar Siagian pernah diubahsuai untuk siaran radio. Penyiar Zain Mahmood pernah memadankan karya William Shakespeare untuk drama radio.

Skrip drama pentas *Wak Cantuk* oleh A. Ghani Hamid dan skrip Usman Awang, *Uda dan Dara*, telah dipadankan untuk drama radio oleh Mohd Fuad Salim, seorang sasterawan dan pegawai di Bilik Berita Bahagian Melayu. Begitu juga drama karya Agatha Christie, *Witness For Prosecution*. Terdapat juga drama yang menimbulkan tengkarah seperti karya Rahman B., *Ketuhanan*, dalam dekad 1960-an.

Pantun masih popular di gelombang radio, terutama dalam lagu tradisional seperti Dondang Sayang dan Joget. Kekuatan lagu Dondang Sayang tidak pada iramanya yang hanya diulang-ulang, tetapi pada seni katanya yang berbentuk pantun. Begitu juga dalam lagu Joget dan Ronggeng. Keunikan pantun ialah ia boleh dijual dalam bentuk soalan atau teka-teki dan dijawab atau dibeli. Kalau ada orang menjual pantun tetapi tidak dijawab, maka akan pincanglah majlis hiburan itu. Radio pernah menyiarkan pantun dalam siri muzik joget, dondang sayang dan ronggeng dengan iringan muzik pimpinan Pak Malim Osman. Rancangan ini juga



WARNA dan RIA dan TV12 (yang kemudian dikenali sebagai SURIA) mula menggunakan sebutan baku dalam pertengahan 1990-an melalui kerjasama Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura yang mendapatkan bantuan kepakaran Encik Ismail Hj. Dahaman, pegawai kanan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malaysia dan bahasawan setempat Hj Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (kini Pendeta Dr). popular dalam kalangan masyarakat Peranakan Cina di Singapura dan Melaka. Baba Gwee dan anak buahnya dari Persatuan Gunung Sayang adalah antara para peminat dondang sayang dan yang turut memberi sumbangan kepada RSM pada awal 1950-an sehingga lewat 1960-an.

Rancangan Pantun Di Udara kelolaan Mohamed Ashik cukup

RSM juga mengadakan Pesta Puisi iaitu deklamasi sajak para penyair setempat di Padang Esplanade, Kebun Bunga, Pantai Changi, Taman East Coast atau di tempat awam pada hujung minggu. Malah pesta ini pernah diserikan para Ahli Parlimen Melayu termasuki Yatiman Yusof dan Sidek Saniff. Peserta belia didapati ghairah apabila dipelawa membuat persembahan yang mendapat sambutan hangat.

popular untuk setiap peringkat umur sehingga diminati sejauh Malaysia, Indonesia dan Australia. Mentelah beliau spontan membeli atau menjawab sebarang pantun lucu, teka-teki atau usik-mengusik yang disumbangkan pendengar secara menelefon atau ketika rancanaan dibawa ke luar studio. Pada setiap musim raya, para penyiar WARNA 94.2FM dan rakan sejawat mereka dari Radio Brunei Darusalam berbalas pantun dalam siaran lansung dari Singapura dan Brunei. Rancangan ini juga sering dinanti-nantikkan para pendengar kedua-dua negara.



DISAYANGI PEMINAT: Pelakon seperti S. Sahlan yang menempa nama di radio, kemudian di TV, mempunyai ramai peminat di sini.

Bangsawan dalam bentuk persembahan pentas telah pupus di rantau ini. Bangsawan dipercayai bermula dalam akhir abad ke-19 Masihi – dirintis oleh Wayang Parsi yang tiba di Pulau Pinang pada 1876. Namun ia diambil alih oleh peniaga Jawi Peranakan bernama Mamak Pusi dan dikenali sebagai Pusi Indera Bangsawan of Penang pada 1884. Kononnya, persembahan wayang ini diberi gelar 'bangsawan' oleh seorang kerabat diraja Kedah bernama Tengku Kudin.

Puisi dan Lagu – Rancangan ini menarik ramai belia dan pelajar menengah. RSM telah menyiarkannya dalam pelbagai judul seperti Balada Syahdu, Puisirama dan Dendang Kepayang. Puisi karya penyair setempat yang dibacakan lewat gelombang udara telah memperluas tebaran apresiasi puisi tanahair kita. Sajak penyair veteran tempatan juga dipaparkan dengan harapan mencetuskan minat dan menjadi pendorong daya cipta para penulis baru.

Rancangan Senandung Seloka yang skripnya ditulis penyair Noor S.I. (nama sebanar Ibrahim Hj Omar, 1933-1990) dalam 1970-an, berisi rampaian sajak, pantun, peribahasa, gurindam dan seloka. Dialog berpuisi disulami lagu dalam rancangan ini dijayakan oleh Rafeah Buang, Kartina Dahari dan M. Ismail dengan iringan violin Julai Tan. Satu episod rancangan ini pernah dipersembahkan di Panggung Negara. Dari Pulau Pinang, Puisi Indera Bangsawan mendapat tempahan di Singapura dan mencetuskan kelahiran kumpulan lain seperti The Star Opera dan Dean Tijah Opera. Sesudah tamat Perang Dunia Kedua, bangsawan alah oleh filem dan kian pudar. Demi menghidupkan tradisi bangsawan ke RSM, penerbit kanan radio ketika itu, Yusof Ahmad, telah menerbitkan *Bangsawan Di Udara* – siaran setiap minggu sejak 1957 dan ia diteruskan hingga ke dekad awal 1990-an.

Rancangan bangsawan RSM terkenal di rantau ini. Setiap rakaman rancangan disalin untuk siaran Radio Brunei Darussalam dalam rangka perjanjian kerjasama penyiaran antara Brunei-Singapura. Memandangkan bangsawan mengisahkan perihal rajaraja, maka istiadat dan laras bahasa istana digunakan seperti bunyi nafiri dan istilah-istilah seperti beradu (tidur), santap (makan) dan sebagainya. Di radio, imaginasi pendengar terhadap bangsawan dapat diserlahkan menerusi kesan bunyi dan skrip yang terkawal. Seyogia, bangsawan dalam bentuk asal tidak menggunakan skrip tetapi sinopsis atau ringkasan cerita. Ceritanya bersifat watak hitam putih – protagonis akhirnya berjaya selepas menempuh pelbagai ujian dengki, kezaliman dan peperangan atau baik dibalas baik dan sebaliknya.

Pada awalnya, banyak skrip bangsawan di RSM dihasilkan oleh para pelakon/penguasaha bangsawan yang asal seperti Khairudin Tairu, Ahmad Nisfu, Sharif Medan, Dollah Sarawak dan Ahmad Sabri. Para pelakonnya pula terdiri dari S. Kadarisman, Daud dan adiknya Ripin Khairudin (kedua-duanya dari keluarga Khairudin) Jaafar Haris, Rahimah Simen, Mashita, Jah Lelawati, Mahmood Harahap dan Uda Umar. Antara peminat dan pengkaji bangsawan ialah Abdul Hamid Ahmad (1926-2011) yang pernah menjadi wartawan sambilan *Utusan Melayu* dan akhirnya menjadi pelakon bangsawan di radio, penulis skripnya dan menubuhkan Sri Anggerik Bangsawan pada 1986. Beliau menghasilkan puluhan skrip bangsawan di radio.

RSM juga terlibat mengadakan pementasan bangsawan di Pang-

gung Victoria selama lima kali dalam dekad 1980-an dengan cerita-cerita Puteri Gunung Ledang, Puteri Nilam Cahaya, Jula Juli Bintang Tiga, Daeng Perkasa dan Celorong Celoreng dengan kerjasama badan drama mapan, Sriwana.

Radio WARNA wajar menimbangkan usaha mewujudkan semula bangsawan di udara sebagai langkah pelestarian budaya.

Rancangan Bahasa

RSM turut terlibat dalam menyokong Dasar Dwibahasa pemerintah dengan rancangan dwibahasa, Inggeris-Melayu kelolaan Asmah Laili. Selain itu, terdapat rancangan seperti *Mustika Bahasa, Pustaka Bahasa, Nuansa Bahasa, Rayuan Budiman* dan temu ramah para tokoh bahasa dan persuratan setempat dan serantau. Penerbit Inon Salleh telah menampilkan bahasawan Malaysia Professor Asmah Hj Omar, Dr Awang Sariyan (Pengarah Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malaysia) dan Dr Tenas Effendy dari Riau. Inon Salleh pernah membuat liputan Kongres Bahasa Melayu Antarabangsa di Beijing China.

Sehingga kini, didapati masih ada lagi segelintir juruhebah yang kekok nahu dan sebutan Bahasa Baku. Yang memprihatinkan ialah terdapat campur aduk bahasa Melayu dan Inggeris kerana tersasul atau sikap ambil mudah dari mencari istilah Melayu yang sesuai. Sebutan Baku iaitu menyebut sebagaimana dieja atau fonemik. Di RSM, sebutan ini telah dirintis oleh Ramli Abdul Hadi selaku Ketua Bilik Berita RSM pada tahun 1963. Beliau mendapat sokongan Pengarah Jabatan Siaran Singapura Encik John Duclos. Tiga pembaca iaitu Nahar Azmi Mahmud, Mohd Fuad Salim dan Ibrahim Hashim telah ditugaskan membaca berita radio dengan sebutan baku. Namun terdapat reaksi berbeza dari pendengar. Usaha itu kemudian dihentikan.

Sebutan baku timbul lagi pada 1990-an selepas usul Jawatankuasa Bahasa Melayu Singapura yang kemudian dikenali sebagai Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura (1992) diterima pemerintah. VVAR-NA dan RIA dan TV12 (yang kemudian dikenali sebagai SURIA) mula menggunakan sebutan baku dalam pertengahan 1990-an. Ia dapat dijalankan dengan mulus melalui kerjasama Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura yang mendapatkan bantuan kepakaran Encik Ismail Hj. Dahaman, pegawai kanan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malaysia dan bahasawan setempat Hj Muhammad Arif Ahmad (kini Pendeta Dr).

Sebutan baku bukanlah perkara baru di Singapura. Ia sudah digunakan oleh ramai pensyarah agama dalam siaran radio, dalam dialog filem Melayu terbitan tempatan sejak tahun 1940an, bacaan sajak dan nyanyian. Persembahan radio kian bersifat interaktif sejak munculnya internet dan telefon bijak. Hal ini menimbulkan cabaran untuk memelihara mutu bahasa Melayu. Umumnya pengacara RSM, khususnya juruhebah wanita dari RIA, didapati lebih selesa menutur sebutan baku, tetapi masih ada lagi segelintir yang kekok. Yang memprihatinkan ialah terdapat campur aduk bahasa Melayu dan Inggeris, mungkin kerana tersasul atau sikap ambil mudah dari mencari istilah Melayu yang sesuai.

Disiplin atau patuh kepada bahasa ibunda sendiri dalam kalangan para penyiar adalah penting. Sewaktu membuat rakaman temuramah, pengacara boleh membantu dengan memberikan istilah atau membetulkan bahasa agar hasil wawancara lebih kemas dan elok didengar apabila disiarkan.

Memandangkan banyak rancangan tajaan, maka amat perlu jurucakap penaja dilatih berbahasa Melayu yang betul. Seyogia, rancangan RSM kian didengar lewat internet sejauh Amerika Syarikat atau di pelosok dunia yang terpencil. Oleh itu, isi dan mutu penyampaian termasuk penggunaan bahasa dan sebutan baku amat perlu diberikan perhatian serius dalam rangka meningkatkan tahap profesionalisme pengacara dari segi ilmu dan kefasihan berbahasa dan tentulah pengurusan stesen radio. Misalnya bagi rancangan muzik, pengacara wajar menyertakan bukan saja nama lagu dan penyanyi, bahkan juga nama penulis lirik dan penggubahnya serta konteks lagu itu dihasilkan. Ini akan memberikan nilai tambah kepada pendengar.

Seyogia, dengan persaingan daripada pelbagai stesen radio berbahasa Melayu dari rantau ini, RSM (WARNA dan RIA) perlu memastikan mutu siarannya terus terpelihara.

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Reliving 50 Years of Children's TV in Singapore



A study by the University of Michigan found that TV is among the earliest media known to children, before books, newspapers, magazines, radio and computers. This is especially evident in developed countries.

Amanah Mustafi

Even a one-year-old child, who has yet to speak or read, would have watched TV - a familiarity incidental to the placement of the medium, which is usually in the living room, where the child spends most of his or her waking hours. And it is no surprise that

children, with their natural curiosity, are attracted to TV as it provides varied and relatable audiovisual stimulation.

A child's attention span is usually five minutes, after which the child would focus on something else. But auditory

elements can retain the child's attention, making audiovisual indispensable in keeping the child glued to the TV programme. In fact, excessive exposure may even result in the child being more engaged with the TV than with family members!

Days of RTS (1963-1980)

Children in Singapore first got acquainted with TV in 1963, when it launched with two channels: Channel 5 for English and Malay programmes, and Channel 8 for Chinese and Tamil. News and current affairs were the only programmes in the early days of Malay TV. It was only in 1966 that dramas and entertainment programmes, such as *Pak Awang Temberang* and *Kalung Senandung*, were introduced.

One of the first Malay programmes for children was *Teropong Si Mamat*, which featured stories seen through the binoculars of a boy named Mamat. Mohamad Yatim Halimi, who played Mamat, had been talent-spotted when he featured in the radio show *Si Comel*, a programme produced by Zahrah Za'ba, who ran the Malay broadcasting department of Radio Singapore from 1958 to 1974. *Teropong Si Mamat*, produced by Siti Khadijah Sahil, is still mentioned by adults when reminiscing about children's programmes of that era.

Come 1971, Intan, Oh... Intan made its debut on TV. The programme was aired in black and white on Channel 5, from 1971 to 1973. Bearing a different concept, it was presented by Zaharah Salleh, who played a mother figure to a group of children aged five to six. She still remembers her part in the opening song of the kindergarten-level programme that taught the alphabet, numbers, colours and general knowledge.

According to its producer, Katijah Eskom, lack of manpower was a big challenge. She had to write the concept and script, search for talents and songs, train the actors and oversee the studio filming. But the biggest challenge was the content curation as the children had unique needs, interests and abilities, forcing the producers to be quick on their feet and to see things from a child's perspective.

RTS also aired a more vibrant show, *Suara Adik-Adik*, which featured child actors who were talented in storytelling, dancing, singing and playing musical instruments. The programme was a hit at the time when talent-scouting companies were a rarity. Thanks to *Suara Adik-Adik*, Indra Shahril Ismail and his older sister Nora, both children of famous singer Nona Asiah, got to showcase their talent in playing musical instruments. The programme became a source of motivation for children at the time to hone their talents in their pursuit of intellectual and emotional development.

In the 1970s, Dr Bahri Rajib composed numerous songs for children's programmes, such as "Cawan" to introduce the letter C, "Dua Mata" to teach parts of the body, and "Datuk Saya" which centred on love for the family. Dr Bahri shared that his educational songs would be sung by a child and repeated by others throughout the show, with the aim to help children remember the lessons behind the songs through familiarisation.

In *Warna-Warni*, which was aired every Sunday at 10am on Channel 5 throughout 1976, musician Eddy Noor Ali would sing as he played the guitar. Producer Khamaliah Salleh had paired him with Junainah Jumari, who played host to three actors: seven-yearold Mohamad Sawifi, three-year-old Djohan Abd Rahman (better known as Bobo) and six-year-old Kamarulzaman Shamsudin.

Junainah, who was 19 years old and identified herself as Kak Jun, would chat with the three child actors in the show that was recorded in Studio 4. *Warna-Warni*, which focused on social issues in its interactions, was so popular that "Kak Jun" became a household name.

In the 1970s, it was common for children's programmes to be aired in series of 13, 30-minute episodes. The shows included *Timang Tinggi-Tinggi, Manis-Manis Manja, Kanak-Kanak, Comel* and *Taman Kanak-Kanak*. They were produced by Khamaliah, Mockram Kassim, Suhaimi Jais and the late Othman Mohd Noor. They collaborated with part-time scriptwriters such as Zaharah, Bahri, Fatimah Gaus and Misrudin Anwar (who also hosted a children's show).

In the early days of broadcasting, children's shows were largely interactive, with the children in the studio joining the hosts in various activities, such as singing, dancing, playing musical instruments and art and craft, including drawing and origami.



MAT YOYO: The popular children's programme, which debuted in 1982, is still popular to this day.

Producers subsequently explored storytelling techniques and introduced live reading of a storybook to encourage children to pick up reading. Not only did the children gain in learning the moral values and lessons from the stories, but they also got to widen their vocabulary. The technique was then taken a step further by delivering the live reading in the form of songs sung by the show presenter Fatimah and accompanied by Dr Bahri on the guitar.

Of course there were shortcomings in TV production in the 1970s, even for children's shows. In a young nation that was still developing, budget, skills and equipment were sorely lacking and filming was restricted to the studios. But with grit and creativity, the quality of TV programmes improved progressively on the back of viewers' feedback. At the same time, children's programmes prompted a more organised search for and development of young talents in Singapore.

Days of SBC

At the end of 1980, RTS was turned into a statutory body and renamed Singapore Broadcasting Corporation (SBC). With it came changes to TV production, such as expanding filming to outside of studios. TV producers had the luxury of filming at locations favoured by children, such as the zoo, playgrounds and parks. Manpower was also better utilised — staff was divided according to genre, enabling the specialisation of skills and improving the efficacy of production.

In 1981, Sabariah Ramilan was appointed as researcher for the Entertainment Unit and Amanah Mustafi, the Drama Unit. They also served the Children's Unit which had yet to have its own researcher. The Malay Children's Unit had two producers, Khamaliah and Rohayaton Rohani. They initiated a mass audition to scout for new talents. Out of the hundreds of children who turned up, only a handful were shortlisted to undergo SBC's acting, singing and dancing workshops, run by Nona and other trainers, in preparation for new programmes.

Among the successful children's programmes were *Cuba-Cuba*, which focused on handicrafts for children, and *Lima Sekawan*, a drama-infotainment that followed its five singer-actors — Khairudin Samsudin, Hashim Jaafar, Rahilah Hasan, Salmiah Mohd Nasir and Siti Alawiyah Sawifi — on educational trips to places of interest in Singapore. Another successful programme was *Tok Selampit*, a narrative act of Malay folklore.

Mat Yoyo

This iconic children's programme from the 1980s rode the wave of success into the new millennium. *Mat Yoyo*, which had a hand in shaping the mindset, lifestyle and socio-culture of children of the era, was largely the brainchild of its producer Khamaliah. It was produced by Rohayaton, with the help of assistant producer Othman and scriptwriter Mohd Raman Daud.

Banking on the Malay community's soft spot for cats, *Mat Yoyo* featured Yoyo, a male cat acted by Dino Alfian A Rashid, and Yaya, a female cat acted by Seriwani A Razak. They had a guardian, Pak Mat. Mat Sentul, whose real name is Abdul Raship Yahya and who was born in 1933, was the actor and director of the Mat film series by Cathay-Keris Studio.

For 50 years, children's TV programmes have showcased the different aspects of modern living and heritage that are in tandem with the development of language, culture, literature, values and tradition.



TRADISI IBUNDA: One of the children's programmes that was in support of the development of the Malay language and culture.

Mat Yoyo debuted in February 1983 and the pilot episode was enlivened by a theme music by M Nasir and songs by Eddie. The show, which was produced by Khamaliah and Rohayaton, was aired at 10am every Sunday.

Singapore's receptiveness to the life-changing information explosion at the time did not go unnoticed by the broadcasting body. TV played a big role in the spread of information since it was before the age of the Internet. On the back of a strong programme research team and improved resources, *Mat Yoyo* hit the screens and became wildly popular even among non-Malay viewers.

Mat Yoyo's success was extraordinary given its focus on children's thought processes, desires and interests, which was a tough formula to implement with these to bear in mind:

- each segment should not exceed five minutes
- content should entertain and pique children's curiosity
- presentation had to be lively
- it had to be colourful
- there had to be captivating auditory elements such as music

The instant success also meant that viewers, be it the children or their parents, had higher expectations of *Mat Yoyo*. This turned up the heat on the production team, whose producers and researchers had to double up as scriptwriters. They could not let up since a good script was the foundation of any production and there was a lack of part-time scriptwriters.

In 1984, *Mat Yoyo* became the first Malay TV programme to have bagged an Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) award. That year, Yaya represented the SBC contingent at the National Day Parade.

Although it was common for children's shows to be cancelled after the second season, *Mat Yoyo* was still going strong after three years. It was then renamed *Aksi Mat Yoyo* and its content finetuned. The revamped series had two special segments: *Kuiz Bahasa*, a language quiz in which guests from primary schools had to form words related to the given proverbs, and *Kebun Ajaib*, a game in which two mixed teams of adults and children competed in physical challenges to win prizes. There was adult participation because parents were also loyal *Mat Yoyo* fans.

SBC's Malay Children's TV Unit eventually had a full-time writer, Hasnah Ani, who wrote the scripts for the ever-expanding *Mat Yoyo* family. When Pak Mat and Yoyo were absent, their spots were filled in by Zakir A Hamid and Bobo as presenters. And to inject more merriment, the producers added two more cats to the show: Yon, played by Hartini Ismail, and Yan, played by Nursurya Khairi. This new iteration, which also had Rilla Melati and Rahilah Hassan as co-presenters, lasted till 1987. In the following season, yet another cat, named Yayat, was added to the cast.

Aksi Mat Yoyo, which had become an icon and continued to be popular, had scores of fans requesting for the filming to be taken beyond the studio and closer to them. In 1988, *Aksi Mat Yoyo* was shot at the Marine Parade Public Library. The traditional games segment was made permanent for the out-of-studio series and two new characters were introduced: Semut Biru, played by Raydza Abdul Rahman, and Ayam Jantan, played by Ahmad Stokin.

The *Mat Yoyo* series was updated each season in order to remain relevant and to keep up with the changing needs of children. In 1989, the series was renamed *Kelab Mat Yoyo* and it expanded to include Del the talking computer and Bel the talking robot. The characters were introduced to expose children to technological advancements and the increasing use of computers in daily life.

Kelab Mat Yoyo in 1990 introduced *Kuiz Kira Kilat*, a Maths quiz with two competing teams, and invited 10 MENDAKI Award winners to share self-empowerment tips and hopefully ignite the drive to succeed in the viewers.

Outside of Singapore, *Mat Yoyo* was also popular in Johor and Batam. In 1991, Johor royalties and delegates, led by Tunku Mariam, watched a recording of *Aksi Mat Yoyo* at Studio A. In 1992, the show went even further, having been filmed in Terengganu and Langkawi.
With a slight tweak of its name to *Temasya Aksi Mat Yoyo*, the show got on the road and explored several constituencies — Marine Parade, Bedok Reservoir, Bedok South and Ulu Pandan — in a collaboration with *Taman Bacaan* (Singapore Malay Youth Library Association). The show also had an outdoor shoot at the Singapore Zoo.

In 1993, a carnival was held in Sentosa to celebrate *Mat Yoyo's* 10th anniversary. As many as 26,000 viewers flocked to Sentosa to catch the show, which was hosted by Pak Mat, Zakir, Bobo, Faisal Ishak, Mohamad Sawifi, Rilla, Rahilah, Suryanti Salim, Dino Alfian, Sriwani A Razak, Caca, Pipin and Raydza. The series aired for two more years following its 10th birthday.

In 2012, MediaCorp Suria's then senior vice-president Suhaimi Jais proposed that *Mat Yoyo* be revived with a wider reach. For the first time, the show would be produced in four languages: Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil. The proposal was lauded by the Media Development Authority, which saw it as a noble effort towards racial cohesiveness. *Mat Yoyo* was produced for four channels based on a concept authored by Wan Firzaleenazah Wan Ahmad.

From the time of RTS to MediaCorp, the children's programmes have always had a clear vision: to entertain, educate and showcase young talents. In building a national identity, children's programmes are crucial to instilling life philosophies or values in the young. As its coordinator, executive producer Azizah Malik faced the challenge of having to meet the needs of each ethnic group without compromising the essence of *Mat Yoyo*. The new series, *Mat Yoyo* — *The New Generation*, was aired on Suria (Malay), Okto (English), Channel 8 (Mandarin) and Vasantham (Tamil). It was well-received and the series was renewed for a second season in 2013.

Days of Suria

On 30 January 2000, a TV channel dedicated to the Malay community was launched. Suria started airing from 3pm to midnight, signalling the need for more content to fill up the airtime. Hence a higher budget was allocated to the production of local programmes — from drama and entertainment to information and current affairs as well as children's programmes.

With the launch of Suria, the frequency of children's programmes for the Malay community was increased from just once a week. The programmes also became more varied in their direction, concept, approach and format. They covered a larger range of genres, such as drama, info-education, games, talent shows, quizzes as well as uplifting and motivational content.

Learning a language

One of the emphases in Suria's TV programming for children is on the mastery of language. This is because the majority of Malay children studied Malay as a second language and there had been a decline in the use of the mother tongue at home as well as in the community (refer to Census of Population 2000 and 2010). The decline in Malay language proficiency among children made such content more crucial. The media, including TV, had to play an active role in improving children's use of the mother tongue.

In 2009, Eaglevision tabled *Cepat Tepat*, which centred on language learning through formal quizzes, to the Malay Language Learning and Promotion Committee under the Ministry of Education. The concept by Amanah was well-received by the committee and the programme was given the green light to be aired on Suria. With the assistance of language master Mohd Naim Daipi (1950–2015), Cepat Tepat was broadcast and involved primary schools that were offering Malay as mother tongue across the four zones in Singapore. Cepat Tepat went on for three seasons.

DV Studio also produced *Tahu Nahu*, a programme centred on learning the language, in 2007. Targeted at primary school pupils, the show featured three children who were actively learning spelling, grammar and other aspects of the language from their teacher, Cikgu Bedah. The Singapore Malay Teachers' Union (Kesatuan Guru-Guru Melayu Singapura) was the programme consultant.

In 2008, the company owned by actor and film director Jack Neo produced *Pantas Pintas*. The programme showcasing quizzes centred on nature, culture, arts and language targeted at secondary school students.

Cultivating an interest in literature

Since its infancy, children's programmes have been spliced with literature. For instance, folktales featuring animals, myths and legends from books and print media have been adapted for TV shows.

According to Ruhaya Md Ali and Sohaimi A Aziz (2013), a child's psychology is influenced by two factors: parenting and the cultural heritage conveyed in literary works. The researchers stress on the importance of creating literature for children in stimulating a child's emotional development.

Literature in children's TV programmes is conveyed through storytelling, discussion and acting (drama). Children favour storytelling, which goes beyond teaching morals and values. Children who listen to stories can be motivated to recreate the stories in their minds and make connections between logic and creative elements. This makes storytelling a positive influence on a child's intellectual, social and emotional development.

Storytelling complemented by visuals and acting are highly entertaining, making them a staple in children's TV. Bigger budgets and modern technology help make storytelling more captivating in visual media. For instance, in *Datuk Harimau* produced by Mohd Yusof Ismail, actors in animal costumes added colour to the stories that were adapted from children's books. According to its part-time writer, Nik Fatimah Ismail, it was imperative that the vocabulary used in the storytelling was suitable and could be easily understood by children. The 1980 show featured comedian Samad Ayob as Datuk Harimau, and child actors such as Mohamad and Fatimah Sawifi, Deena Aziz, Kamarulzaman, Zakir and Gamar A Aziz.

Imaginative children's literature can stimulate creative thinking when they are imbued with constructive elements of good conduct, positive values, cultural heritage and tradition in developing the child's personality and identity. *Tok Selampit* was the epitome of literature-driven shows for children. Aired in 1986, it featured Zulkassim Daud (1947–2011) as Tok Selampit, the storyteller who lovingly narrated folktales steeped in the philosophy, values and harmony of the Malay community.

Supporting Tok Selampit's narration were dramas — adaptations from Hikayat Si Miskin, Hikayat Panji Semirang, Kisah Sang Nila Utama, Kisah Abu Nawas, Badang and Malim Kundang — acted by 20 children from SBC's TV acting workshops. The show, which took over the Mat Yoyo time slot after it ended its run, was featured in national newspapers Berita Harian and The Straits Times on 18 February 1986. Hasnah and Amanah wrote the script for Tok Selampit.

Children's TV added a feather in its cap in 1993 when *Manis Manis Idul Adha* won the merit award at the New York Festivals World's Best TV & Films.

Suria once aired 13 episodes of Almari Ajaib, which focused on Malay folktales such as Mahsuri, Tun Fatimah, Si Luncai, Hang Tuah, Puteri Gunung Ledang and Bawang Merah Bawang Putih.

Because Almari Ajaib was produced for Gen Y or millennials — unlike Tok Selampit, which was more heritage in nature the show was given a modern touch even though it featured Malay stories of the past. Adopting the concept of a time tunnel, Almari Ajaib followed the adventures of three friends who found themselves transported to the past while they were ransacking a run-down wardrobe belonging to a grandmother. The three friends met children from the past and found themselves in the thick of ancient upheavals.

Almari Ajaib was intended to bring history and heritage closer to the younger generation. The show was filled with informative morsels of history, such as the game of *tarik upih* (a race in which children pulled their friends sitting on palm leaves), catching fish with nets and traps, water transportation and the role of rivers, which gave a glimpse of the village life of the Malays in the past. Directed by Azroy Sultan and Johari A Aziz, *Almari Ajaib* was aired on Suria in 2008.

Eaglevision MediaCorp in 2008 produced *Ulat Buku* in its effort to help children widen their horizon, by featuring children's literature from around the world. For example, one of the stories was from China, about an emperor and a bulbul, highlighting the importance of responsible pet ownership. *Ulat Buku* was entertaining, especially with its costumes and sets which represented foreign cultures and traditions. Hartinah Ahmad, the late Habsah Karim, Keatar HM and Asnida Daud were among the writers for the 13-episode programme that was recorded at MediaCorp studios.

Najip Ali's company Music and Movement also produced *Cerita Kita*, a show with elements of cultural heritage and traditions. It featured stories such as Badang, Singapore's strongman of ancient times, and Sang Kancil, the witty mouse deer. Woven into this show were values of the Malay cultural heritage aimed at shaping the minds of children of the cyber age. This fully-animated programme aired on Suria in 2006.

Children's drama

Dramas that centre on children are just as important in developing the hearts and minds of the younger generation. They act as reflections through which children and adults alike can understand and analyse issues such as family, school, peers and money. In early 2000, MediaCorp televised children's drama Jejari Hidup, Cili Padi (two seasons), K14 and Putih Hitam on Suria. In conjunction with Children's Day and Hari Raya, Suria aired special children's dramas such as SAM, Buli Baik and Songkok Haji Agil. The dramas were largely based on characters from primary and secondary schools.

Private production houses, too, got on board, producing children's dramas such as *Khayalan*, *Kelas Detention*, *OMG* and *Nama Saya Kasim Selamat*. There were also children's TV dramas with specific focus: *Bubble Boys* by Papahan, which touched on the problems of childhood obesity, and *Goalie*, which featured children with rare illnesses.

Children's dramas were well-received for the children's earnest and amusing acting — gaffes and all — in portraying the trials and tribulations of growing up.

Genres

Music and Movement produced Uddyn, a 26-episode animation for children — a breakthrough for the local TV industry. Uddyn was runner-up for Best Children's Programme at the Asian Television Awards.

There were also efforts to mix different genres in a show. *Safari*, for example, combined real-life human characters with 3D graphics. It was a refreshing way of presenting serious issues such as the balancing of the natural ecosystem.

Suria also produced special-interest programmes, such as *Aspirasi Inspirasi*, which aimed to be motivational to children aged six to 12 in overcoming challenges and pursuing success. Eaglevision's *Matematik Ekspres* focused on teaching maths to upper-primary pupils. Right Angle produced *S.M.S. (Sains-Matematik-Senang)* to guide primary school pupils in science and maths.

Two-pronged approach

The birth of children's TV has benefitted both viewers and actors. This was crucial in the 1970s, when workshops, enrichment classes and artistic activities for children were unheard of. Involvement in TV programmes also gives children the chance to uncover and hone their talents, which could have been overlooked at school. Rilla is a good example — she got acquainted with the broadcasting world before she started going to school. At the age of two, she could already sing the song "Mama" flawlessly, marking the start of her involvement in TV.

The actress and infotainment host revealed that it was through TV that she learnt how to read and write, and acquired traits such as discipline, competitiveness, communication and management. The broadcasting station was her first school and continued to be her "university".

It was the same for Khairudin, Faisal, Shahrin Azhar, Wan Haiz and Raydza, who are still active in the creative industry in their roles as directors, producers, writers and TV programme curators. Armed with their experience from early involvement in TV, they now play their part in ensuring the continuity of the local TV industry and the creative world at large.

Conclusion

Since the days of RTS, children's TV programmes have had a clear objective: to educate, entertain and develop. Programmes ranged from being outright educational to entertaining with hidden lessons.

The objective of developing young minds echoes that of the broadcasting station and complements the national education system. TV leverages audiovisuals in educating its audience, allowing something as abstract as philosophy or values to be conveyed clearly and realistically. It can leave a positive impact on a child when complemented by guidance from parents, guardians and teachers in teaching the child to discern the difference between fact and fiction.

For 50 years, Malay children's TV programmes have showcased a multitude of subjects, both heritage and current, that support the development of the Malay language, culture, literature, values and traditions. They have also brought to the screen scenes from the past that are unfamiliar to the current generation. With its wide range of subject matters, constructive objectives and profound influence, it cannot be denied that children's TV programmes form a worthy repository that is instrumental to the development of a child's mind, attitude, personality and skills. This is why the programmes deserve the best in planning and execution.

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Interviewees

Dr Bahri Rajib, writer, host and composer of children's programmes in the 1970s. Katijah Eskom, TV producer (1971–1973) Khamaliah Salleh, TV producer (1974–2006) Rilla Melati Bahri, Director Mini Monsters Ltd, producer, host and actor Junainah Jumari, host *Warna-Warni* and actor Cikgu Zaharah Salleh, host and part-time scriptwriter Fatimah Arpah, assistant TV producer(1974–1996) Aishah Din, assistant TV producer (1971–1999) Hasnah Ani, TV scriptwriter (1984–1994) Mohamad bin Sawifi, actor and host 1970s–1980s Misrudin Anwar, part-time scriptwriter Ishak Alias, teacher Parents of Mohd Yatim Halimi Wan Mohamed Haiz Salleh, Assistant Programming Manager, Mediacorp Suria



Part 7 Those Who Pioneer

A person will be spurred to improve and intensify their endeavours if others show appreciation for their efforts. This also can encourage others to contribute. This is among the goals of various initiatives taken to acknowledge, through various ways, the endeavour to create literary works in Singapore.

Hadiah Sastera dan Anugerah Persuratan Singapura:



Dr Sa'eda Buang

Menyingkap Perkembangan, Cabaran dan Hala Tuju

This article is presently not available in English.

Pengenalan

Hadiah Sastera, yang terbentuk pada 12 Oktober 1975 dan kini disebut sebagai Anugerah Persuratan, merupakan hasil daripada suara golongan penulis yang ingin melihat penerusan dunia penulisan berbahasa Melayu yang berkualiti di Singapura, terutama setelah melalui pelbagai cabaran bagi usaha penglahiran karyakarya sastera. Anugerah Persuratan menggantikan Hadiah Sastera pada 1993 dan sejak itu, ia merupakan kegiatan dwitahunan anjuran Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura. Menurut Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura, ¹ Anugerah Persuratan dilaksanakan untuk mencapai empat objektif utama, yakni 1) memberi pengiktirafan kepada para penulis yang telah menghasilkan karya yang bermutu dan bernilai; 2) untuk meningkatkan dan memupuk perkembangan penulisan dalam kalangan penulis berbahasa Melayu; 3) menggalakkan penerbitan karya yang bermutu; dan 4) memasyarakatkan bidang persuratan di Singapura.

Objektif-objektif yang disebutkan tadi terbina setelah alam persuratan di Singapura melalui beberapa perubahan yang dipengaruhi oleh faktor perkembangan sosio-ekonomi dan budaya di Singapura, dan daripada denyut nadi golongan penulis dan masyarakat Melayu itu sendiri. Selanjutnya, untuk lebih memahami arah dan harapan Anugerah Persuratan, latar belakang terbinanya Hadiah Sastera dan Anugerah Persuratan akan disentuh untuk memberi konteks sosio-politik dan budaya masyarakat umum dan golongan penulis pada masa awal penubuhannya. Latar ini juga membuktikan kegigihan golongan penulis membina dan melaksanakan misi mereka melalui satu badan penganugerahan di tahap negara. Polemik dan perbezaan pandangan yang berlaku di sekitar Hadiah Sastera/Anugerah Persuratan akan disentuh sebagai di antara faktor utama yang turut mempengaruhi arah dan harapan Anugerah Persuratan hari ini. Dalam usaha membuat renungan, makalah ini juga akan menggunakan sosiologi penganugerahan sebagai pendekatan untuk memahami polemik dan permasalahan yang timbul di sekitar Hadiah Sastera/Anugerah Persuratan.

Latar Kemunculan Penganugerahan

Kesan Kemerdekaan 1957

Para pengkaji sastera menyebut Singapura sebagai pusat persuratan yang dinamis pada era sebelum dan menjelang kemerdekaan Malaysia (dulunya Malaya) dan Singapura.² Keris Mas (1979, 52) sebagai contoh menyatakan: "Sesungguhnya jika orang mengikuti perkembangan kesusasteraan Melayu, maka Singapura haruslah ditempuh. Dan perkembangan sastera Melayu selepas Perang Dunia Kedua tidak dapat disusuli dengan sempurna jika Singapura tidak dilalui."

Kesusasteraan Melayu yang berkembang di Singapura pada era tersebut malangnya mula menunjukkan tanda-tanda yang membimbangkan. Ini berlaku apabila ramai para penulis kreatif yang prolifik seperti Keris Mas, Wijaya Mala, Tongkat Warrant dan Awam il-Serkam kembali ke Malaya sejurus tercapainya kemerdekaan di negara tersebut setelah penulis-penulis ini menyemai benih penulisan melalui penubuhan ASAS '50 di Singapura. Bilangan penulis dan pengasas ASAS '50 yang tinggal dan masih giat menulis di Singapura pada masa itu seperti Masuri S.N., Mahmud Ahmad dan Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (MAS) boleh dikira dengan jari. Kesan perpindahan para penulis mapan dan badan-badan bahasa dan penerbitan ke Kuala Lumpur ke atas dunia penulisan berbahasa Melayu amat ketara di Singapura. Hal ini merupakan cabaran bagi para pencinta sastera dan bahasa tanah air.

Fokus Negara yang Sedang Membangun: Penakatan Ekonomi

Seperkara lagi, perpisahan dengan Malaysia dan semenjak mencapai kemerdekaan pada 1965, Singapura memberi fokus utama kepada dasar penakatan ekonomi melalui sektor perindustrian dan pendidikan demi memastikan penakatan warga dan negara yang baru merdeka dan membangun. Yang demikian, tumpuan terhadap isu pekerjaan dan pengangguran, buta huruf, menghapuskan saki-baki hasutan komunis dan komplot subversif, isu perumahan dan penyediaan sektor kesihatan bagi rakyat mengambil tempat utama negara dan masyarakat. Golongan penulis tidak terkecuali untuk terheret sama dalam isu-isu semasa yang menjadi perhatian negara dan masyarakat. Yang lebih jelas, menulis sebagai satu kerjaya tetap semakin sukar dilakukan di negara industri yang berfokus pada penakatan ekonomi. Lebih-lebih lagi apabila kedudukan bahasa Melayu sebagai Bahasa Kebangsaan dan bahasa pengantar instruksi tergugat dengan wujudnya polisi dwibahasa yang diperkenalkan di sekolah-sekolah pada 1966. Polisi ini menunjang kepentingan bahasa Inggeris dan pendidikan Inggeris.

Penutupan sekolah-sekolah Melayu pada tahun 1980-an merupakan satu lagi perubahan besar yang harus dihadapi oleh masyarakat Melayu. Penutupan tersebut bermakna turut berkurangnya lowongan untuk mempelajari kesusasteraan Melayu di sekolahsekolah. Sistem pendidikan pada fasa itu dipandu oleh kepentingan penakatan (survival-driven) yang mendorong rakyat membuat pertimbangan-pertimbangan pendidikan dan sosio-ekonomi yang pragmatik dan realistik. Kesan perkembangan tersebut terhadap sastera dan penulisan dalam bahasa Melayu membimbangkan golongan penulis yang semakin menguncup bilangannya.

Kesedaran dan Kebimbangan Para Penulis: Perkampungan Sastera

Atas kesedaran bahawa nasib sastera dan persuratan Melayu terletak di tangan anak watan, maka usaha merancakkan kembali dunia penulisan Melayu cuba digerakkan oleh para penulis, dan Asas '50 mengambil peranan yang aktif dalam usaha ke arah tersebut. Nasib persuratan Melayu dibahaskan melalui Perkampungan Sastera kelolaan Asas '50 pada 4 dan 5 Ogos 1973 di Khemah Percutian Tanah Merah Besar yang bertemakan "Hendak meninjau sejauh mana perkembangan sastera berbahasa Melayu dan bagaimana hendak mengekal dan menyuburkan dalam masyarakat berbilang kaum, khususnya di Singapura" (Asas '50 1973; Berita Harian 3 Ogos 1973).³

Perkampungan ini dihadiri oleh lebih 200 para penulis, pengamat dan simpatisan dunia sastera Singapura yang datang dari Johor, Perak, Selangor, Sabah, Indonesia, Brunei dan Singapura (Berita Harian 16 Jun 1973; 3 Ogos 1973). Acara ini juga disokong oleh *Berita Harian*, Pustaka Nasional, Kampong Glam Radio Company, Pustaka Melayu Press dan Dewan Perniagaan Melayu Singapura. Menurut Pendeta Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, kesedaran tentang betapa gentingnya menghadapi cabaran dalam dunia penulisan menjadi satu unsur yang menyatukan para penulis yang datang dari pelbagai pertubuhan di perkampungan tersebut.⁴

Salah satu usulan para penulis semasa Perkampungan tersebut ialah mengadakan penganugerahan ke atas penulis atau karya demi menggalak penulisan kreatif yang lebih dinamis dan berkekalan di Singapura. Usulan sedemikian disebut sekali lagi semasa mesyuarat agung Asas'50 pada Ahad, 24 Februari 1974 (Berita Harian 26 Februari 1974). Satu kertas saran telah dibuat oleh anggota Asas '50, Mamat Samat yang kemudiannya dikaji oleh Masuri S.N. dan jawatankuasanya (Suradi Parjo 1991, 135). Perlu disebutkan di sini bahawa beberapa acara pemberian hadiah untuk karya-karya sastera yang dianggap baik sudah dilakukan oleh beberapa badan secara bersendirian, seperti Hadiah Sastera 4PM yang dilancarkan sejak 1966, dan Sayembara Sastera oleh Asas '50 pada 1973 (*Berita Minggu* 22 Jul 1973, dalam Suradi Parjo 1991, 133). Namun, penganugerahan yang berskala besar dan yang melibatkan kerjasama semua badan bahasa dan persuratan dianggap akan dapat meninggalkan kesan yang lebih hebat pada perkembangan persuratan di Singapura.

Hadiah Sastera

Akhirnya, satu Jawatankuasa Bersama Hadiah Sastera (JBHS) ad hoc yang diketuai oleh Ketua Satu Asas '50 Muhammad Ariff Ahmad dibentuk pada 7 Julai 1974, hasil persetujuan dan sokongan sebelas pertubuhan, kumpulan penulis dan syarikat (Berita Harian 8 Julai 1974). Pertemuan untuk mewujudkan JBHS ini dihadiri oleh Asas '50, Angkatan Pelukis Aneka Daya (Apad), Angkatan Belia Singapura, Majlis Pusat Pertubuhan-pertubuhan Budaya Melayu Singapura (atau Majlis Pusat), Persatuan Wartawan Melayu Singapura, Persatuan Wanita dan Teruna (Perwanit), Persatuan Kebudayaan Melayu, Persatuan Persuratan Pemuda Pemudi Melayu (4PM), Persatuan Pelajar-pelajar Agama Dewasa Singapura (Perdaus), Jabatan Budaya Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu, Pustaka Nasional, Persatuan Fotografi Melayu Singapura, Kesatuan Guruguru Melayu Singapura (KGMS), Syarikat Guru-guru Melayu Singapura, Persatuan Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Guru-guru Agama Singapura (Pergas), Himpunan Belia Singapura, Badan Pelajaran Agama Radin Mas dan Majalah Filem (Suradi Parjo 1991, 136). Bersama, badan-badan ini melahirkan matlamat-matlamat Hadiah Sastera:

- Memperkembang dan menyuburkan bahasa dan kesusasteraan Melayu
- 2. Menggalakkan lahirnya cipta sastera yang bernilai
- 3. Menggiatkan penerbitan dan pembacaan
- 4. Memberi galakan dan penghargaan kepada penulispenulis setempat.

Persatuan 4PM, APAD, Persatuan Wartawan Melayu Singapura dan Asas '50 bersetuju menghantar wakil-wakil mereka untuk menganggotai jawatankuasa tersebut (*Berita Harian* 9 Julai 1974; 9 Ogos 1974). JBHS ini dipengerusikan oleh Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, dan Suradi Parjo sebagai Setiausaha. Shafawi Ahmad bertindak sebagai ketua bahagian pengumpulan karya yang juga bertanggungjawab melantik juri pengadil, dan Syed Ahmad Semait pula sebagai ketua Jabatan Kewangan yang berfungsi mengumpulkan dana yang cukup bagi penganugerahan (Suradi Parjo 1991, 136).



ANUGERAH TUN SERI LANANG: Nadiputra (bersongkok) menerima anugerah Tun Seri Lanang pada 2013 daripada Encik Tan Chuan Jin (ketika itu Pemangku Menteri Tenaga Kerja). Berdiri di kiri sekali ialah Allahyarham Mohamed Naim Daipi

Untuk memastikan kejayaan Hadiah Sastera, Asas '50 telah juga mengadakan pertemuan pada 21 Julai 1974 dengan para cendekiawan dari pusat-pusat pengajian tinggi, 9 anggota parlimen Melayu dan anggota masyarakat untuk membincangkan perkara tersebut (*Berita Harian 7 &* 15 Julai 1974; *Berita Harian* 4 Ogos 1974). Usaha-usaha ini dilakukan agar tujuan mengadakan Hadiah Sastera tercapai, yakni untuk "menggalak para penulis Singapura, baik yang baru atau lama, menghasilkan karyakarya yang benar-benar bermutu" (Berita Harian 5 Ogos 1974).

Hadiah Sastera mula memberi penganugerahan pada 1975 bagi karya-karya yang dihasilkan pada 1973 dan 1974. Karya-karya daripada empat genre sastera dinilai, yakni sajak, cerpen, esei dan drama (sila lihat Lampiran 1 bagi taburan bilangan karya yang dinilai dari 1975 hingga 2013). Para juri yang dilantik bagi penganugerahan buat julung kalinya itu terdiri daripada pakar-pakar dan aktivis sastera dan bahasa seperti Hussein Jahidin, Subohi Mohd Yatim, Suratman Markasan, Kasmadi Haji Nasir, Dr. Liaw Yock Fang, Dr. Slamet Mulyana, pensyarah di Jabatan Sejarah, Universiti Nanyang dan mantan Pengarah, Dewan Bahasa dan Kebudayaan Singapura; Nongtjik Gani, dan Bani Buang (*Berita Harian* 19 Oktober 1975). Penerima Hadiah Sastera 1975 ialah Mohamed Latiff Mohamed bagi genre sajak, dan Masuri S.N. untuk esei (lihat Lampiran 2 untuk senarai penerima Hadiah Sastera, 1975-2013). Hadiah Penghargaan bagi bidang cerpen diberikan kepada Mohd Fuad Salim bagi cerpen "Ke mana hati hendak kubawa". Namun, tiada penerima anugerah bagi genre drama kerana tiada karya drama yang dianggap mampu untuk dijulang sebagai bermutu. Jelaslah, bahawa sejak awal penubuhannya, Hadiah Sastera sudah menggunakan kriteria penilaian yang ketat bagi memastikan pemilihan karya yang bermutu tinggi. Acara Hadiah Sastera yang pertama diadakan di Dewan Lee Kong Chian, Penang Lane (Berita Harian 12 Oktober 1975). Selepas 1975, Hadiah Sastera selanjutnya berlaku setiap dua tahun sebagai tanda "penghargaan masyarakat terhadap penulis" (Berita Harian 10 Julai 1977) dan juga buat karya-karya yang diterbitkan di akhbar dan majalah seperti cerpen, sajak, dan esei, dan juga novel dan skrip drama yang terbit sepanjang dua tahun sebelum tahun penganugerahan.

Pembubaran dan Pertukaran Jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera

Sepanjang sejarah perkembangannya, pengelola dan Jawatankuasa Bersama Hadiah Sastera (JBHS) beberapa kali bertukar tangan disebabkan kekurangan sokongan tenaga dan dana daripada badan-badan kerabat JBHS, dan salah faham tentang isu pengurusan (*Berita Harian* 16 Mei 1976; 2 April 1977). Sejurus

penganugerahan kali pertama terlaksana, JBHS 1975 dibubarkan pada 26 Mac 1977 (Berita Harian 1 dan 2 Apr 1977) dan digantikan pula oleh Jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera (IHS) pada Jun 1977 yang tetap dipengerusikan oleh Muhammad Ariff Ahmad dan Suradi Parjo sebagai Setiausaha, di bawah penyelarasan Majlis Pusat dan didokong oleh Asas '50, Perwanit, 4PM, KGMS dan Persatuan Wartawan Melayu Singapura (Berita Harian 1 April 1977). Pada 1981, Hadiah Sastera dipengerusikan pula oleh Suratman Markasan dan diselenggarakan oleh Jawatankuasa Bahasa dan Sastera, Majlis Pusat. Majlis Pusat mengambil alih tampuk pengurusan setelah pengerusi, setiausaha dan ketua pengumpulan karya jawatankuasa yang lalu meletakkan jawatan (Berita Harian 27 September 1981). Suratman Markasan dan Majlis Pusat terus menerajui Hadiah Sastera selama lima musim, yakni tahun-tahun penganugerahan 1977, 1979, 1981, 1983 dan 1985/86. Bagi tahun penganugerahan 1983, dua orang penilai dari Malaysia diundang, yakni Muhammad Hassan Ali bagi kategori cerpen, dan Dharmawijaya bagi kategori sajak (Berita Harian 16 Disember 1983). Namun, selepas penganugerahan 1986, Hadiah Sastera menyepi selama tujuh tahun.

Anugerah Persuratan

Selepas penyepian Hadiah Sastera selama tujuh tahun, timbul fenomena yang ketara dalam perkembangan penganugerahan karya di Singapura yang mula dihidupkan kembali pada 1992. Penyertaan pemimpin politik Melayu dalam penyelenggaraan badan penganugerahan amat ketara apabila Hadiah Sastera diambil alih oleh Jawatankuasa Bahasa Melayu Singapura (JBMS) di bawah naungan Kementerian Kebudayaan (sekarang Kementerian Penerangan, Perhubungan dan Kesenian), dengan dipengerusikan oleh Sidek Saniff yang juga merupakan Menteri Negara (Pendidikan) pada tahun tersebut.

Hadiah Sastera dihidupkan kembali pada 1992 dan diberi nama Anugerah Persuratan. Sebuah Jawatankuasa Anugerah Persuratan dibentuk dan dipengerusikan oleh Yatiman Yusof, Setiausaha Parlimen (Ehwal Luar). Dengan dana daripada pemerintah yang lebih lumayan dan sistem sokongan pentadbiran yang lebih tersusun, penganugerahan diperluaskan bukan sahaja ke atas karya tetapi juga ke atas individu sasterawan. Hadiah Sayembara Persuratan yang bernilai \$1,000 (hadiah pertama), \$750 (hadiah kedua), dan \$500 (hadiah ketiga) diperkenalkan untuk menggalakkan penulis-penulis muda mencalonkan karya-karya yang belum diterbitkan (*The Straits Times* 20 Feb 1993). Penganugerahan ke atas sasterawan seperti Anugerah Tun Sri Lanang (bernilai \$5,000) dan Anumerta Tun Seri Lanang (bernilai \$2,000) diperkenalkan. Geran bernilai \$5,000 bagi mengkaji ketokohan, keiltizaman, sumbangan, pemikiran, dan alam penulisan tokoh Tun Seri Lanang dan Anumerta Tun Seri Lanang dibentuk, dan genre lirik lagu, skrip drama radio, drama televisyen dan skrip teater diperkenalkan untuk penganugerahan.

Pada 1995, Hadiah Sayembara Persuratan ditiadakan selepas hanya sekali berlangsung. Anugerah Harapan (bernilai \$3,000) diperkenalkan pada 2009 untuk menggalakkan penulis-penulis muda (berumur kurang 40 tahun) yang berbakat agar terus aktif. Empat kategori baharu ditambah untuk Anugerah Persuratan, yakni novel remaja, antologi sajak atau cerpen, karya bukan fiksyen dan esei. Kriteria pemilihan karya-karya juga diuar-uarkan melalui media secara meluas. Setiap anugerah bagi bahagian eceran (cerpen, sajak, drama, esei) menerima \$1,000, manakala Anugerah Persuratan bagi bahagian buku setiap genre menerima \$3,000.

Pada tahun penganugerahan 1999, dua kategori baharu diperkenalkan, iaitu sajak dan cerpen yang ditulis oleh remaja sendiri (berusia antara 13 hingga 21 tahun). Dengan adanya ruangan Cerpen Remaja Berita Harian, remaja punya peluang menerbitkan karya-karya mereka dan yang demikian, berpeluang dinilaikan untuk Anugerah Persuratan. Usaha mengundang pencalonan skrip filem pendek (short film) pertama kali dibuat pada 2013 demi mengikuti arus perfileman yang semakin rancak di Singapura.

Penggemblengan tenaga pemimpin politik, penulis dan pencinta bahasa dan sastera Melayu berterusan melalui Anugerah Persuratan terutama apabila hal-hal penilaian masih berlaku secara demokratis dan melalui musyawarah dalam kalangan para juri yang dilantik yang terdiri daripada para penulis sendiri yang kebanyakannya terdiri daripada pemenang Anugerah Tun Seri Lanang, karyawan dan para akademik. Impian pemerintah sejak 1989 untuk melahirkan Singapura sebagai Kota Renaisans pada 2000⁵ mengukuhkan lagi sokongan politik untuk memajukan seni dan sastera melalui pelbagai cara, termasuk Anugerah Persuratan. Namun demikian, perkembangan Hadiah Sastera bukanlah mudah pada tahun-tahun awal penubuhannya. Selain daripada cabaran dalaman seperti isu dana dan sokongan padu badanbadan kerabat, Hadiah Sastera terpaksa berhadapan dengan kritikan masyarakat.



DIKURNIA ANUGERAH: Encik Peter Augustine Goh (kiri) menerima anugerah bagi kategori sajak dan drama daripada Encik Yatiman Yusoff, Pengerusi Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura pada 2007.

...Bagi fasa selanjutnya, kajian rinci harus dilakukan untuk mengukur sejauh mana Anugerah Persuratan sudah mencapai objektif-objektifnya agar peranannya dalam perkembangan dunia persuratan di Singapura dapat dipertajam lagi.



TERIMA ANUGERAH: Profesor Madya Hadijah Rahmat menerima Anugerah Tun Seri Lanang daripada Menteri Bertanggungjawab bagi Ehwal Masyrakat Islam, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim sambil diperhatikan oleh Pengerusi Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura, Encik Masagos Zulkifli Masagos Mohamad.

Cabaran-cabaran Hadiah Sastera

Kurang Keyakinan Aktivis dan Pengamat Sastera

Sebelum Perkampungan Sastera diadakan tetapi ura-uranya sudah diketahui umum, sudah terdengar pandangan-pandangan di kalangan penulis dan aktivis sastera yang kurang yakin akan kesungguhan Asas '50 dan rakan-rakannya untuk melestarikan sastera di Singapura melalui penyatuan pelbagai badan-badan Melayu. Pelbagai keraguan dinyatakan melalui ruang akhbar, seperti "Ke manakah penulis-penulis mahu dibawa?" (Berita Harian 4 Ogos 1973). Malahan, pengarang akhbar turut mempersoalkan arah tujuan Perkampungan Sastera melalui pojok "Apakah hasilnya selepas ini?" (Berita Minggu 5 Ogos 1973). Kritikan juga dibuat setelah Jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera dibentuk melalui esei "Memberikan hadiah sastera lebih senang daripada memperjuangkan penulis" (Berita Harian 12 Okt 1975). Namun demikian, suarasuara yang menyokong sama kuat untuk memastikan terhasilnya satu penganugerahan yang dapat meningkatkan mutu sastera di Singapura.

Isu Dana

Selain penganugerahan terhadap karya, penulis-penulis Singapura juga pernah mengusulkan agar dibentuk satu badan pengiktirafan karya secara gah sejajar dengan penglahiran Sayembara Roman Dewan Kesenian Jakarta yang mula memberi hadiah bernilai US\$2,000 kepada pemenang pertama novel di Indonesia pada 1974. Menurut Pendeta Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, suara-suara agar pengiktirafan individu sasterawan Singapura ala Anugerah Pejuang Negara yang berprestij dan yang dijalankan di Malaysia juga muncul tetapi usulan ini tidak dapat diteruskan akibat kekurangan dana. Malahan, hadiah bagi para penerima Hadiah Sastera yang mula dijalankan di Singapura pada 1975 merupakan wang tunai \$250 dan sijil. Penerima hadiah penghargaan menerima sijil sahaja (Berita Harian 12 Oktober 1975),⁶ dan buku-buku sumbangan badan-badan penerbitan seperti Pustaka Nasional dan Pustaka Melayu. Dana dapat ditingkatkan sedikit untuk penganugerahan 1977, yakni \$500 bagi Hadiah Sastera dengan sijil, dan Hadiah Penghargaan menjadi \$100 dalam bentuk wang tunai. Pada tahun penganugerahan 1979, nilai hadiahnya sama seperti tahun 1977 (Berita Harian 30 Januari 1980).⁷ Suradi Parjo pula menyebut nilai hadiah Hadiah Sastera 1979 meningkat menjadi \$1,000 dan Hadiah Penghargaan berupa wang tunai \$250 (Suradi Parjo 1991, 138).

Masalah kekurangan dana berlarutan sehingga ke tahun penganugerahan 1986. Majlis penganugerahan 1986 misalnya, terpaksa mengenakan bayaran sebanyak \$30 ke atas setiap undangan dan hadirin yang dijangka berjumlah seramai 300 orang. Masalah kekurangan dana ini telah menyebabkan Mohd Raman Daud, selaku Setiausaha Jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera 1982-83, menyarankan agar satu "Dana Hadiah Sastera" dibentuk untuk menampung masalah ini (*Berita Harian* 25 Mac 1984). Usaha untuk meningkatkan jumlah wang tunai bagi setiap hadiah menjadi \$2,000 juga tidak dapat dilaksanakan sehinggalah pada tahun penganugerahan 1993, setelah Hadiah Sastera diambil alih oleh badan pemerintah. Sebelum itu, rayuan mendapatkan dana telah dibuat oleh Suradi Parjo, Setiausaha Jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera 1975-1979, dengan meminta para penerbit agar turut 'mengongkosi' acara tersebut demi memastikan penghasilan karya yang bermutu tinggi (*Berita Harian* 24 Disember 1979).

Kritikan Terhadap Proses Penganugerahan

Sejak penubuhan awal Hadiah Sastera di Singapura, pendekatan sedemokratik mungkin menjadi teras sistem penilaian yang dijalankan. Kaedah dan kriteria penilaian dibuat secara bermusyawarah, yakni perbincangan bersama oleh para juri dan jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera (Berita Minggu 3 Julai 1977). Namun, seperti nasib badan-badan penganugerahan yang lain, termasuk yang terkenal seperti Nobel dan Pulitzer, suara-suara daripada masyarakat yang mempersoalkan kemurnian sistem dan cara penilaian Hadiah Sastera telah muncul seawal tahun pertama penubuhannya. Contohnya, Djamal Tukimin, seorang penyajak muda pada masa itu mewakili golongan penulis yang meragui kewibawaan Hadiah Sastera, "...Hadiah Sastera itu bakal diumumkan dan saya sudah dapat mencongak siapakah yang bakal menjadi juara" (Berita Minggu 12 Oktober 1975). Apa yang ditimbulkan oleh Djamal ialah isu percanggahan kepentingan (conflict of interest). Pemimpin dan ahli jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera yang terdiri daripada penulis-penulis mapan seperti Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, Masuri S.N. dan Suratman Markasan merupakan penulis yang karya-karyanya turut dicalonkan untuk hadiah tersebut.

Walaupun penulis-penulis mapan ini tidak terlibat sebagai panel juri di mana karya-karya mereka turut dicalonkan, keterlibatan mereka dalam jawatankuasa penganugerahan, dan yang lebih runcing lagi apabila sebahagian mereka diumumkan sebagai pemenang tahun 1975 dan tahun penganugerahan seterusnya, menambah keraguan sebilangan masyarakat akan kemurnian sistem, arah dan tuju Hadiah Sastera (*Berita Harian* 19 Oktober 1975; *Berita Minggu* 24 Julai 1977).

Polemik antara Penulis Muda dan Mapan, dan Media Sebagai Medan

Dalam sejarah perkembangan awalnya, Hadiah Sastera secara tidak langsung telah melahirkan satu jurang yang besar antara golongan penulis muda dan penulis mapan. Jurang tersebut wujud disebabkan pemahaman yang berbeza-beza mengenai konsep atau pendekatan Hadiah Sastera. Di pihak penulis-penulis mapan, yang kebetulan merupakan ahli jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera, Hadiah Sastera bukanlah satu pertandingan tetapi merupakan penghargaan dan pengiktirafan masyarakat ke atas karya-karya yang sudah diterbitkan, dibaca ramai dan baik mutunya (*Berita Harian* 5 Ogos 1974; 23 Dis 1979; 8 Mac 1993).⁸ Yang demikian, karya-karya yang sama ada ditulis oleh penulis muda atau mapan boleh dicalonkan untuk penganugerahan tersebut.

Pendekatan ini dianggap sebagai suatu yang kurang adil dan tidak realistik dari kacamata penulis-penulis muda disebabkan bilangan akhbar dan majalah yang memuatkan karya-karya yang dipilih untuk penganugerahan amatlah terhad. Lebih buruk lagi, menurut andaian penulis-penulis muda, apabila akhbar dan majalah dikuasai oleh karya-karya golongan penulis mapan. Lebih dari itu, akhbar tunggal Berita Harian/Minggu, terutama ruangan Taman Seni, merupakan medan yang turut diselar oleh golongan penulis muda yang beranggapan bahawa akhbar tersebut bersikap berat sebelah dan mementingkan populariti penulis mapan untuk melariskan penjualan. Oleh kerana sikap akhbar yang sedemikian, menurut tanggapan penulis-penulis muda, maka karyakarya penulis muda jarang-jarang mendapat tempat. Akibatnya, tiada pencalonan bagi karya-karya penulis muda dan ini membuatkan karya penulis-penulis mapan sering terkedepan untuk Hadiah Sastera.

Jurang antara dua golongan penulis ini memuncak sehingga timbul laungan agar "Mas, Masuri, Noor S.I. dan Mahmud Ahmad diseru henti menulis"⁹ (*Berita Minggu* 17 Feb 1975) dan esei "Penulis-penulis veteran halangi bakat-bakat muda" (Berita Harian 16 Feb 1975). Seruan-seruan ini dibuat oleh penulis Izmas agar penulis-penulis mapan berhenti menulis karya-karya kreatif, dan sekali gus, berhenti menguasai medan media yang terhad, lalu memberi peluang kepada penulis-penulis muda menerbitkan karya-karya yang berkemungkinan besar dicalonkan untuk menerima anugerah. Oleh kerana penulis mapan mempunyai pengalaman menulis yang luas, mereka dikatakan lebih sesuai menulis rencana dan kritikan sastera. Seruan ini mendapat sokongan daripada beberapa penyumbang di akhbar yang sama.

Merenung impak laungan sedemikian, kerugian ke atas dunia persuratan akan berlaku sekiranya para penulis mapan berhenti menulis. Sedang Singapura berusaha untuk bangun kembali menguasai bidang persuratan setelah melalui era perpindahan para penulis ke Malaysia, laungan sedemikian kurang cermat dan merugikan. Yang harus diubah ialah cara atau sistem penilaian Hadiah Sastera dijalankan dan bukan menghalang daya kreatif penulis mapan yang semakin menguncup bilangannya. Dunia persuratan Singapura memerlukan gabungan tenaga semua golongan penulis, pemikir dan pemerhati sastera yang ingin merancakkan kembali dunia penulisan berbahasa Melayu di negara yang baru membangun. Inilah juga suara hati dan semangat yang ditonjolkan oleh pengasas Gelorasa, Djamal Tukimin, sebagai membidas penulisan Izmas yang dianggap dangkal dan kurang kajian, "Penglibatan yang total dari keempat-empat penulis veteran ini dalam perlumbaan melahirkan karya-karya kreatif bersama-sama golongan muda sepanjang 1970-an ini sangat penting dan masih diharapkan oleh kami yang muda-muda. Kalau ada sesiapa yang patut keluar jauh dari medan penulisan kita di sini, maka tiada orang yang lebih patut selain daripada penulis Izmas sendiri. Kehadirannya membahayakan taman sastera kita." (Berita Harian 24 Februari 1975).

Isu Pengurusan

Kelemahan-kelemahan dalam hal pengurusan penganugerahan juga dikritik oleh masyarakat. Kelemahan-kelemahan ini dikatakan timbul kerana anggota jawatankuasa itu sendiri kurang mampu untuk melaksanakan tugas dengan baik. Dengan tajuk "Idealkah Hadiah Sastera hari ini? – JBHS perlu singkirkan kelemahan2 dan curiga yang wujud" tulisan A. Ghani Nasir dalam ruangan "Fokus" akhbar Berita Minggu, menyelar penubuhan Jawatankuasa Bersama Hadiah Sastera 1975 yang terdiri daripada 19 pertubuhan yang dikatakan belum jelas pendirian dan minat mereka terhadap sastera dan perjuangan tanah air, dan kerana itu penglibatan serius pertubuhan-pertubuhan ini dalam mesyuarat Hadiah Sastera tidak terbukti disebabkan sering tidak hadir. Penubuhan Jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera 1977 yang terdiri daripada 4 pertubuhan utama, yakni Asas '50, KGMS, Persatuan Wartawan Melayu dan 4PM dialu-alukan. Namun, penulis A. Ghani Nasir meragui kesedaran beberapa pertubuhan terhadap sastera, kerana menurutnya pertubuhan itu lebih terserlah di bidang pendidikan dan kegiatan belia. Menurut beliau, "Apa yang perlu ialah bagi mereka yang telah pun diberikan tugas dan tanggungjawab berat duduk dalam jawatankuasa tersebut menyoal diri mereka sendiri sama ada mereka benar-benar mahu memajukan dan menyokong pemberian hadiah sastera ataupun mereka duduk kerana sudah dipilih oleh pertubuhan-pertubuhan mereka sebagai wakil. Ini adalah demi kepentingan JHS sendiri dalam usaha melancarkan jentera pentadbiran dan agar ia sentiasa mendapat idea-idea baik bagi keperluan masa depan Hadiah Sastera." (*Berita Minggu* Ahad 24 Julai 1977).

Satu lagi amalan pengurusan yang dirasakan kurang sesuai ialah pengumpulan karya-karya kreatif dari majalah sekolah dan buletin persatuan yang terhad golongan pembacanya dan kerana itu dikatakan tidak mewakili suara masyarakat umum. Oleh kerana Hadiah Sastera berkonsepkan penghargaan masyarakat terhadap karya penulis, maka karya-karya yang tidak diterbitkan melalui akhbar dan majalah yang ditatap umum dirasakan tidak harus dicalonkan kerana tidak menepati konsep tersebut.

Isu pengurusan yang berkaitan dengan kelewatan pengumpulan karya-karya juga melanda Hadiah Sastera sejak 1979, dan kerana itu, penilaian karya-karya juga lewat terlaksana. Akibatnya, majlis Hadiah Sastera yang seharusnya berlangsung pada 1985 tidak dapat diadakan kerana masalah sedemikian. Yang demikian, penganugerahan terpaksa ditunda dan disempurnakan pada 26 Julai 1986 di Hotel Mandarin (Berita Harian 4 Mei 1986).

Satu lagi perkara penting yang diutarakan oleh para pemerhati tentang Hadiah Sastera ialah penyimpangan realiti amalan penulis daripada matlamat Hadiah Sastera. Soalan yang ditimbulkan ialah dapatkah Hadiah Sastera menghasilkan karya-karya yang bermutu sedangkan kebanyakan penulis mungkin menulis sebanyak mungkin hanya untuk mendapatkan hadiah? Apa yang membimbangkan masyarakat ialah disebabkan sikap para penulis yang hanya ingin menerbitkan karya demi mendapatkan hadiah maka berlakulah lambakan tulisan-tulisan yang kurang bermutu dalam dunia penulisan Singapura, dan keadaan ini sudah menyimpang daripada hala tuju dan harapan Hadiah Sastera yang mula-mula dibina (Berita Harian 10 Julai 1977). Seorang pemerhati menyarankan agar Hadiah Sastera memikirkan kemungkinan mengadakan sayembara bagi merebut Hadiah Sastera seperti yang dilakukan di Malaysia. Sayembara seperti itu dikatakan telah terbukti kejayaannya kerana dapat menghasilkan karya-karya yang bermutu tinggi. Namun demikian, kos yang tinggi bagi menjalankan sayembara tidak memungkinkan pelaksanaan sedemikian. Hadiah Sastera sebagai satu usaha awal yang sederhana daripada pertubuhan-pertubuhan kecil di Singapura merupakan realiti yang diakui sendiri oleh pengkritik. Di sinilah timbul luahan agar pemerintah memberi sokongan terhadap pergerakan penganugerahan ke atas karya-karya berbahasa Melayu di Singapura (Berita Harian 10 Julai 1977).

Dilihat dari sudut yang lebih positif, polemik dan kritikan-kritikan yang dibuat melalui akhbar merupakan cetusan perasaan masyarakat yang ingin melihat perkembangan sastera yang sihat di Singapura melalui satu sistem penganugerahan yang murni, telus dan berwawasan. Sekali gus, masyarakat bertindak sebagai pemerhati aktif yang ingin memastikan Hadiah Sastera tidak menyimpang daripada arah dan harapan asalnya.

Tidak keterlaluan sekiranya dikatakan bahawa usaha awal penganugerahan terhadap karya dan/atau penulis di Singapura lahir dari 'bawah', daripada rakyat golongan penulis dengan nilai hadiah yang sangat sederhana. Isu dana dan pengurusan begitu genting sehingga Hadiah Sastera terhenti selama tujuh tahun.

Pengemaskinian

Sebagai satu renungan, polemik yang disebutkan membuktikan bagaimana sesuatu objektif yang murni boleh tercemar sekiranya proses untuk mencapai objektif tersebut tidak dilakukan dengan cermat, atau sekiranya pengkritik kurang penghayatan tentang cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi oleh peneraju sesuatu proses. Namun, kekalutan yang berlaku dalam sesuatu proses juga berupaya untuk menjadikan sesuatu objektif itu kelihatannya begitu samar-samar. Hal ini dipelajari dan disedari oleh jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera dan Anugerah Persuratan.

Perlu dicatatkan di sini bahawa untuk mengatasi persoalan-persoalan ini, jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera berusaha menemui para penulis dan orang ramai untuk membincangkan kriteria penilaian dan tatacara penganugerahan yang melibatkan kedudukan penulis-penulis mapan dan karya mereka dalam Hadiah Sastera (*Berita Harian* 11 Mei 1978). Dalam fasa-fasa selanjutnya, jawatankuasa Hadiah Sastera telah berusaha membuat beberapa perubahan bagi memperkemas syarat-syarat yang sedia ada (*Berita Harian* 17 April 1979)¹⁰ dengan menambah hadiah penghargaan Hadiah Sastera (*Berita Harian* 13 Mei 1978); dan pembukuan karya-karya yang dianugerahi Hadiah Sastera sepanjang 1975-1978 (Berita Harian 14 Januari 1980). Karya pemenangpemenang Hadiah Sastera 1975-76 dibukukan dalam Ekspresi, dan Gema Temasik bagi karya-karya yang memenangi Hadiah Sastera 1981-82.

Terkini, Anugerah Persuratan telah merubah beberapa aspek sistem penganugerahan. Pertama, dengan memastikan karya-karya ahli jawatankuasa dan panel penilai tidak dicalonkan atau dinilaikan bagi menjaga ketelusan dan kemurnian sistem tersebut. Dengan itu, isu percanggahan kepentingan (conflict of interests) dapat dielakkan. Kedua, pemilihan panel juri yang terdiri daripada gabungan penulis-penulis mapan dan penerima anugerah Tun Seri Lanang, ahli akademik dalam bidang kesusasteraan/ persuratan yang mewakili pelbagai institusi tinggi, dan karyawan yang pakar dalam bidang persuratan telah dapat memberi keyakinan kepada masyarakat bahawa penilaian tidak dibuat secara sewenang-wenang. Ketiga, pendekatan demokratis diteruskan di mana kriteria penilaian dipersetujui secara musyawarah. Keempat, hal kerahsiaan proses penilaian ditekankan demi mengelakkan berlakunya percanggahan kepentingan. Kelima, karya-karya pemenang dibukukan dalam siri Anugerah Sastera, sejak 1993 hingga 2005. Pembukuan beberapa karya pilihan penerima Hadiah Sastera dan Anugerah Persuratan sebagai buku teks sastera peperiksaan General Certificate of Education Peringkat O¹¹ (bagi sekolah menengah) dan Peringkat A¹² (bagi pra-universiti) merupakan satu pengiktirafan yang tinggi dan berterusan yang diberikan kepada penulis-penulis tempatan dan karya-karya mereka. Keenam, dan terkini, infrastruktur pengurusan Anugerah Sastera semakin diperkukuh dengan adanya sokongan tenaga kerja dan infrastruktur daripada Majlis Seni Kebangsaan (NAC).

Namun, pengemaskinian tidak semestinya dapat menjanjikan terbinanya satu persepsi yang ideal dalam kalangan masyarakat atau penilai sendiri terhadap sistem penganugerahan tersebut. Isu-isu berikut yang merupakan perkara-perkara yang mendapat perhatian umum pada era awal penubuhan Hadiah Sastera masih berlarutan sehingga kini.

Pertandingan atau Penganugerahan?

Perkara yang sering menjadi inti perbahasan atau polemik di sekitar Hadiah Sastera/Anugerah Persuratan ialah pemaknaan atau pendekatan Hadiah Sastera sama ada sebagai 'pertandingan' atau 'penganugerahan'. Pendekatan menjadi kabur apabila para penulis hilang fokus atau memberi perhatian yang berlebihan terhadap 'hadiah' yang boleh diperolehi daripada karya-karya yang dihasilkan. Namun demikian, ini bukanlah fenomena yang unik dalam masyarakat penulis Melayu di Singapura.

Berkaitan dengan hal ini, diutarakan di sini kajian Best, J (2008) mengenai sosiologi penganugerahan yang melihat semakin meluasnya kegiatan memberi anugerah dan hadiah (termasuk hadiah sastera dan persuratan) dalam masyarakat masa kini. Best mendapati bahawa walaupun anugerah membawa nilai yang positif seperti memperkukuh amalan-amalan yang baik, meningkatkan mutu persuratan, dan mengukuhkan rasa kesamaan (*fraternity*), perkaitan penganugerahan dan hadiah sering menimbulkan ketegangan kerana ia menyentuh elemen kemasyhuran, perhatian masyarakat dan martabat.

Malahan, beliau juga mengumpul pandangan-pandangan pengkritik penganugerahan yang mengatakan bahawa amalan penganugerahan ini merupakan satu bentuk masalah sosial (Best 2008, 6) di mana persaingan antara "yang empunya" (badan pemberi hadiah dan panel pengadil) dengan "yang tiada empunya" (calon-calon penerima anugerah) berlaku, dan kedudukan kuasa atau hegemoni sebenarnya berlaku secara wewenang atau tanpa disedari. Pandangan ini sealiran dengan kritikan Bourdieau (dalam Wright, 2009) bahawa penganugerahan melibatkan satu pertentangan budaya, yakni antara 'budaya tinggi' (yang dipunyai oleh penilai/penganugerah) dan 'budaya rendah' (calon/ penerima anugerah) dan hilangnya kuasa autonomi dan sifat neutral anugerah/hadiah tersebut disebabkan adanya pertentangan sedemikian. Satu sudut pandangan yang wajar difikirkan.

Kekaburan pemaknaan anugerah dan perkaitannya dengan kemasyhuran dan martabat mungkin dapat diungkap melalui sajak sinis tulisan Neal Bowers (2001) yang berikut:

The Literary Prize

She made page one of all the newspapers With a posed photo of her on the phone Amid grifters and stock manipulators And the president above the fold, alone In front of a huge American flag.

"Stunned", she said, "to be in such company," Using the art of the implicit brag And showing she had studied modesty But in her heart still felt at home where Talent's jaws unhinge to swallow everything.

Illuminated in the momentary glare Of flashbulbs, she seems connected, gossiping, Though really she smiles at the dial-tone roar While sizing up God, her last competitor.

"Hadiah" atau "Anti-hadiah"?

Anugerah Persuratan 2013 mendapat sorotan yang agak istimewa daripada media dan para penulis disebabkan bilangan karya yang menerima anugerah dianggap paling sedikit dalam sejarah Hadiah Sastera/Anugerah Persuratan di Singapura sejak 1975. Daripada 11 kategori yang dicalonkan, hanya kategori sajak (eceran dan buku) yang mengedepankan penerima Anugerah Persuratan, manakala kategori novel, cerpen (eceran dan buku), drama (eceran dan buku), esei/kritikan (sastera dan bukan sastera), dan buku kajian (sastera dan bukan sastera) hanya berupaya menamakan barisan penerima hadiah penghargaan. Hadiah Penghargaan diberi kepada karya yang hanya memenuhi sebahagian atau beberapa aspek Anugerah Persuratan tetapi secara keseluruhan baik dan membantu dari segi perkembangan sastera dalam bidangnya. Anugerah Persuratan pula diberi kepada karya yang mempunyai ciri-ciri berikut: mutu/penguasaan dari segi penulisan yang tinggi dan berkesan, mendatangkan kesan atau pengaruh yang positif dan membina terhadap pembaca atau khalayaknya, dan memberi sumbangan yang bernilai dan bermakna kepada perkembangan bidang persuratan.

Timbul beberapa persoalan sama ada kurangnya bilangan penganugerahan disebabkan mutu penulisan di Singapura benarbenar berada di tahap yang membimbangkan, atau faktor kriteria penilaian yang terlalu sukar dicapai, atau pun panel penilai mempunyai tradisi penilaian kendiri (self-criticism) yang amat ketat. Timbul juga persoalan sama ada Anugerah Persuratan selama ini hanya berjaya menggalakkan penerbitan karya-karya hanya dari segi bilangan sahaja tetapi kurang berjaya dari segi penghasilan penulisan yang bermutu. Persoalan yang terakhir timbul kerana dibandingkan dengan bilangan pencalonan yang diterima pada tahun 2011, tahun 2013 menerima penambahan bilangan pencalonan yang amat menggalakkan bagi semua kategori kecuali bidang esei/kritikan sastera dan bukan sastera (sila lihat Lampiran 1). Ulasan panel juri Anugerah Persuratan 2013 bagi hampir kesemua genre menyentuh tentang mutu karya yang masih perlu diperbaiki dalam pelbagai aspek penulisan. Secara tersurat dan tersirat, ulasan tersebut menekankan bahawa mutu karya-karya yang dinilaikan belum mencapai tahap yang diingini dan kontang falsafah. Meneliti kembali ulasan-ulasan panel penilaian Hadiah Sastera sejak 1975, hal yang sama juga menjadi kebimbangan penilai. Panel Penilai Hadiah Sastera 1975 misalnya beranggapan bahawa penulis cerpen Singapura masih perlu menguasai teknik penulisan untuk melahirkan hasil yang berkesan. Mereka beranggapan bahawa penulis-penulis cerpen tempatan masih lemah untuk menguasai teknik penulisan sehinggakan cerpencerpen yang dihasilkan tidak memberi kesan yang diharapkan. Menurut mereka, kebanyakan penulis cerpen menggunakan teknik yang lumrah, mendatar dan ada yang terlalu didaktik. Di antara komen juri penilai Hadiah Sastera 1979 (Bahagian Cerpen) pula, "Cerpen-cerpen ini gagal menampakkan pembaharuan atau kesegaran dan ini menyebabkan selesai kita membacanya, kita tidak dapat menemui kesan apa-apa dan...kemungkinan besar sebilangan besar masyarakat tidak akan dapat menghayati cerpen-cerpen tersebut."¹³ Manakala panel juri bahagian drama dan sajak bimbang akan penekanan penulis pada bahasa yang berbunga-bunga tetapi tidak berkesan menyampaikan isi yang tuntas dan pemikiran yang mendalam (Berita Harian 19 Okt 1975). Ulasan-ulasan yang hampir serupa juga diberikan oleh panel juri Hadiah Sastera dan Anugerah Persuratan pada tahun-tahun pelaksanaannya.14

Benarkah kriteria penilaian Anugerah Persuratan begitu ketat dan tidak dapat dicapai oleh para penulis, maka yang demikian, terbuktilah andaian Bourdieau (dalam Wright, 2009) bahawa wujudnya pertentangan budaya, yakni antara 'budaya tinggi' melalui jelmaan kriteria penilaian dan 'budaya rendah' pegangan para penulis? Sengaja diturunkan di sini kriteria penilaian umum Anugerah Persuratan buat renungan pembaca. Sesuatu karya itu dianggap mencapai taraf terbaik jika karya tersebut memiliki beberapa ciri yang berikut: Kekuatan dan kemantapan, keistimewaan dan keunggulan, keaslian subjek, pendalaman dan matang, keseimbangan estetika, nilai-nilai moral, dan inovasi dan kreativiti.¹⁵

Satu kajian yang menarik telah dibuat oleh Wright (2009) mengenai hadiah sastera/persuratan yang telah wujud sejak zaman Yunani hingga ke hari ini. Berdasarkan kajiannya yang banyak berteraskan dokumen-dokumen dan manuskrip Yunani, Wright

mendapati wujudnya sikap atau pemikiran 'pro-hadiah' dan 'antihadiah' dalam setiap penganugerahan. Pemikiran pro-hadiah melihat hadiah sebagai pemangkin penciptaan karya yang lebih tinggi mutunya, dan kerana itu penganugerahan harus dibuat demi mencapai tujuan tersebut. Manakala pemikiran anti-hadiah menganggap bahawa audiens (termasuk golongan penulis) kurang arif dan perlu dididik untuk sampai ke tahap yang dianggap ideal. Oleh yang demikian, pemberian hadiah haruslah dibuat dengan hati-hati kerana hadiah boleh mendatangkan sifat puas hati dan kerana itu, penulis kembali jumud. Sama ada pendekatan sosiologi ini dapat digunakan untuk mengkaji pemikiran tentang penganugerahan di Singapura atau tidak, sekurang-kurangnya pendekatan seperti ini membantu kita membuat renungan secara introspeksi, terutama bagi Anugerah Persuratan yang harus membicarakan tentang hala tuju dan fungsinya dengan masyarakat penulis dan umum dengan lebih kerap dan jelas.

Tuntutan Peluasan Peranan Anugerah Persuratan

Saya ingin menurunkan puisi bertajuk "Anugerah Persuratan 2013" oleh Alang Budiman¹⁶ yang ditulis beberapa jam setelah penganugerahan dilakukan. Kali ini, pemerhatian pencinta seni bukan sahaja kepada ada atau tidaknya penerima anugerah, tetapi lebih jauh daripada itu. Tuntutan terhadap peranan penganugerahan, khususnya Anugerah Persuratan, sudah semakin meluas dan diminta agar bersesuaian dengan keadaan masyarakat Melayu semasa dan permasalahannya. Sajak tersebut meminta semua penulis, penggiat sastera dan pencinta sastera tanah air membuat renungan yang mendalam tentang pengertian Anugerah Persuratan dan persoalan sama ada Anugerah Persuratan meninggalkan kesan bukan sahaja dalam bidang bahasa dan persuratan, tetapi juga pada isu-isu yang dihadapi masyarakat, masa depan dan kemajuan menyeluruh masyarakat Melayu di Singapura.

Anugerah Persuratan 2013

tepuk sorak gemuruh mengisi Dewan meraikan kemenangan karya sastera satu persatu dibilang, mantap hebat kupasan dan ceriteranya dicanang... penyair dialu, sasterawan dinobat hadiah disambut, meleret senyuman habis majlis usai acara Dewan sepi... sejauh mana kemenangan tiap satu karya yang dibilang-bilang... merakyatkan sastera mematangkan akalfikir mendewasakan si akil baligh melerai persoalan anak zaman tentang penyisihan tentang hambatan tentang hadangan tentang keadilan, tentang kemajuan... yang kempas kempis oi penyair! dengar tidak... suara dan laungan demokrasi gemanya... meritokrasi keduanya lurus condong sebelah... oi penulis besar! jangan sibuk karang-karang kerana nama, kerana anugerah tak seberapa... yang seminit bersinar sesaat kemudian penuh habuk... oi sang pujangga! jangan dibiarkan cengengmu menyerlah melolong puisi cinta! ketololan harus dimusnahkan sastera tidak harus lagi gemalai... randai! Alang Budiman 3 Oktober 2013, Khamis 27 Zulkaedah 1434H 10:09:44 hours

Kesimpulan

Hadiah Sastera/Anugerah Persuratan telah melalui era yang panjang yang penuh dengan polemik dan cabaran sejak penubuhan jawatankuasanya pada 1974. Berteraskan harapan masyarakat dan objektif yang murni, yakni mengiktiraf karya-karya yang bermutu demi pelestarian dunia persuratan Melayu di Singapura, Hadiah Sastera/Anugerah Persuratan terus dilaksanakan oleh pencinta sastera sehingga kini dengan berbekalkan kekuatan semangat cintakan bahasa dan sastera dan nilai pengorbanan yang tinggi dari setiap penggerak entiti penganugerahan tersebut. Terkini, sokongan pemerintah dari segi dana dan prasarana pentadbiran mengukuhkan lagi Anugerah Persuratan. Sebagai bahan renungan, makalah ini telah mengutarakan isu-isu, persoalan dan beberapa kajian yang bertugas membedah sejarah Hadiah Sastera dengan menggunakan kacamata yang berbeza. Bagi fasa selanjutnya, kajian rinci harus dilakukan untuk mengukur sejauh mana Anugerah Persuratan sudah mencapai objektif-objektif penubuhannya agar peranan Anugerah Persuratan dalam perkembangan dunia persuratan di Singapura dapat dipertajam lagi dan masih lagi relevan dengan perkembangan masyarakat dan dunia.

Penghargaan

Penulis ingin merakamkan penghargaan yang tidak terhingga akan sumbangan besar Pendeta Dr. Muhammad Ariff Ahmad dalam penghasilan makalah ini. Dalam keadaan kesihatan yang agak rapuh, beliau masih sudi diwawancara pada 2 Dis 2013, dan meminjamkan album gambar dan beberapa keratan akhbar yang tidak ternilai harganya. Semoga Allah membalas budi baik Pendeta dengan anugerah yang melimpah-ruah. Amin.Namun demikian, segala kesilapan dan kedaifan yang terdapat dalam kertas kerja ini adalah hasil pemikiran dan tulisan penulis sendiri.

Nota hujung

¹ Sila lihat http://mbms.sg/anugerah/anugerah-persuratan/ap2011/sidangmedia-anugerah-persuratan-2011/?lang=en, diakses pada 14 Nov 2013.

 $^{\rm 2}$ Sila lihat A. Samad Ismail 1993, Li Chuan Siu 1986, Keris Mas 1979, Sa'eda Buang 2013.

³ Sila lihat *Perkembangan Kesusasteraan Melayu Singapura PASCA 1965* di http://asas50.com/direktori-penulis-melayu-singapura/pengisian/perkembangan-kesusateraan-melayu-singapura-pasca-1965/, diakses pada 14 Nov 2013.

⁴ Wawancara dengan Pendeta Dr. Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (mantan Ketua Satu, ASAS '50 sepanjang 1994-2001) pada 14 Nov 2013.

⁵ Pemerintah Singapura telah melakarkan pelan membina Kota Renaisans dalam beberapa fasa. Sila rujuk Renaissance City Plan III di http://www.nac.gov.sg/ docs/resources/renaissance-city-report-3-{rcp3}.pdf, diakses pada 17 Nov 2013.

⁶ Suradi Parjo menyebut \$50 baucar buku untuk Hadiah Penghargaan 1991, 137.

⁷ Suradi Parjo dalam eseinya bertajuk "Pentingya anugerah terus ditingkatkan" menyebut \$500 bagi hadiah sastera dan penerima hadiah sagu hati mendapat \$250 baucar buku bagi penganugerahan 1975. Hadiah Sastera 1977 dapat meningkatkan nilai hadiah sastera kepada \$1,000 dan \$250 wang tunai untuk hadiah sagu hati. Lihat *Berita Harian*, 25 Mac 1984, 5.

⁸ Wawancara bersama Pendeta Muhammad Ariff Ahmad pada 2 Dis 2013. Lihat juga "Anugerah' bukan pertandingan", *Berita Harian*, 8 Mac 1993, http://newspapers.nl.sg/Digitised/Article/beritaharian19930308-1.2.11.1.aspx, diakses pada 16 Nov 2013.

[°] "Mas, Masuri, Noor S.I. dan Mahmud Ahmad diseru henti menulis" merupakan tajuk esei yang ditulis oleh Izmas (*Berita Minggu*, 17 Februari 1975).

¹⁰ Sila lihat laporan "Hadiah Sastera: Syarat baru", *Berita Harian* 17 April 1979 di http://newspapers.nl.sg/Digitised/Article/beritaharian19790417-1.2.15. aspx, diakses pada 16 Nov 2013.

¹¹ Lihat Suradi Sipan 2013.

¹² Lihat Sa'eda Buang 2013.

¹³ Laporan Panel Hadiah Sastera 1979/80, Bahagian Cerpen. Lihat Hadijah Rahmat 1998, 130.

¹⁴ Sila baca ulasan-ulasan juri dalam Buku Cenderamata Anugerah Persuratan 2007, 2009, 2011 dan 2013 oleh Mohd Naim Daipi et. al., Singapura: Majlis Bahasa Melayu Singapura.

¹⁵ Lihat kriteria umum penilaian, http://mbms.sg/assets/files/2011/ap/Pengumuman%20Media%20-%20Sidang%20Media%20Anugerah%20Persuratan%20 2011.pdf, diakses pada 28 Disember 2013.

¹⁶ Sajak ditulis oleh Alang Budiman (nama sebenar Chairul Fahmy) pada 3 Oktober 2013, jam 10:09:44. Sila rujuk https://chairulfahmy.wordpress. com/2013/10/03/anugerah-persuratan-2013/, diakses pada 28 Disember 2013.

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LAMPIRAN 1

Taburan Karya Yang Dinilai Mengikut Tahun Penganugerahan Hadiah Sastera dan Anugerah Persuratan, 1975-2013

Tahun/ Kategori	1975	1977	1979	1981	1983	1985	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	Jumlah
Cerpen	67	103	114	114	135	122	106	101	112	99	92	93	94	111	123	126	147	1,859
Cerpen (Buku)		•	•	BD	•	•	•	3	0	0	11	2	7	10	10	3	3	49
Cerpen Remaja				BD				8	0	27	46	29	30		Ditiac	lakan		140
Sajak	202	205	643	516	665	271	201	275	177	212	209	202	225	300	243	203	433	5,482
Sajak (Buku)		1	1	B	iD	1	1		0	0	4	3	9	6	7	6	3	38
Sajak Remaja				В	D					81	109	85	45		Ditiac	lakan		320
Novel	0	1	6	0	2	1	1	1	3	0	1	27	4	6	7	2	10	72
Novel Kanak-kanak				BD				8	1	0	1	0	0		Ditiad	akan	•	10
Drama Teater	2	0	10	15	17	13	7	4	5	8	2	3	0	4	50	5	12	107
Drama Radio			B	SD			33	25	67	13	16	16	7	34	50	20	14	270
Drama TV			В	D			5	6	0	0	13	2	4	23	50	7	30	115
Drama (Buku)			В	D			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	3	8
Esei	6	109	169	113	94	13						-	-			-		504
Esei Sastera			•	•			62	76	68	39	38	16	20	200	67	167	58	728
Esei Bukan Sastera			В	D			2	57	0	0	0	12	303	409	100	167	32	998
Lirik Lagu	BD 74			53	85	121	102	32	76		Ditiad	akan	•	543				
Buku Sastera	BD			0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	5				
Buku Bukan Sastera	BD			4	4	0	5	9	9	5	0	3	4	43				
Jumlah	277	718	942	758	913	420	491	621	525	600	649	531	833	1,111	607	545	750	11,291

Sumber: Buku-buku Hadiah Sastera dan Anugerah Persuratan, Berita Harian Nota: BD – Belum Diperkenalkan

LAMPIRAN 2

SENARAI PENERIMA HADIAH SASTERA/A	NUGERAH PERSURATAN, 1975-2013

	1975						
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan					
Sajak	 Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Bangsaku di hari lahirku" 	 Noryusman Abd Majid – "Perawan dan seekor burung dara bersama senja" 					
Cerpen	Tiada	 Mohd Fuad Salim – "Ke mana hati hendak kubawa" 					
Esei	• Masuri SN – "Pengakuan dan penglahiran"	 Masuri S.N. – "Sekitar penyair dan puisi moden" Muhammad Ariff Ahmad – "Banyak sajak berkias ibarat" Muhammad Ariff Ahmad – "lain tersurat lain pula tersirat" 					
Drama	Tiada	Tiada					

	1977					
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan				
Sajak	Mohd Taha Jamil – "Pendakian"	Tiada				
Cerpen	 Mohd Fuad Salim – "Mary Ann aku sayang padamu" 	Tiada				
Esei	Tiada	 Yatiman Yusof – "Penjernihan dalam dunia kriti- kan di Singapura" Masuri S.N. – "Penyair tidak pernah puas hati dengan pilihan dalam karyanya" 				
Drama	Tiada	Tiada				
Novel	Tiada	Muhammad Ariff Ahmad – Mail mahu kawin				

	1979					
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan				
Sajak	 Suraidi Sipan – "Nyanyi puisi" Abdul Samad Salimin (Asmin) – "Nyamuk" Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Api" 	 Yusoff Rahman – "Apartment" Masuri S.N. – "Malam pertama" Suraidi Sipan – "Balada lewat senja" 				
Cerpen	• Jamal Ismail – "Yang"	Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Mondok"				
Esei	Tiada	 Masuri S.N. – "Puisi mutakhir kita tak bicara apa-apa" Mohamed Naim Daipi – "Sastera unsur agama: ke mana arah kita?" Noor Hidayat – "Keindahan dalam puisi" 				
Drama	Tiada	Tiada				
Novel	Tiada	Mohamed Naim Daipi – Tumpas				

1981					
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan			
Sajak	 Asmin – "Udara" Masuri S.N. – "Begitulah kata-kata" 	 Mohd Taha Jamil – "Penyakit itu adalah kita" Suratman Markasan – "Jalan permulaan" Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Pelangi" 			
Cerpen	Tiada	• Ismail Sarkawi – "Menanti hari pembalasan"			
Esei	 Mohamed Naim Daipi (Muhammad Nazali) – "Bahasa dan sastera: ke mana yang kita tuju?" 	Tiada			
Drama	Tiada	 Abdul Ghani Hamid – "Desa ini hatiku" Sapiee Ahmad Razaly – "Kembara" Nadiputra – "Awang Kerambit" 			
Novel	Tiada	Tiada			

	1983					
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan				
Sajak	Tiada	 Suraidi Sipan – "Kejujuran adalah daun-daun kering" Mohd Taha Jamil – "Air mata kering sudah" Sarifah Yatiman – "Arca diri" Radin Zaduan – "Sejenak bertafakur" Rasiah Halil – "Pengertian" 				
Cerpen	Tiada	 Jamal Ismail – "Hikayat Hang Kulup" Peter Augustine Goh – "Musim pennyedaran II" Basiran Hj Hamzah – "Kini" 				
Esei	 Sapiee Ahmad Razaly – "Peranan sastera menggalakkan kebenaran" 	 Mohamed Naim Daipi – "Mengesan kegiatan kreativiti sastera mutakhir" 				
Drama	 Nadiputra – "Puncak" 	 Jumali Kasmadi – "Mei Ling" Mohd Raman Daud – "Bicara" 				
Novel	Tiada	Tiada				

	1985					
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan				
Sajak	• Hadijah Rahmat — "Di tengah alam"	 Hadijah Rahmat – "Sebutir Norsehan Awang – "Esok kita di mana" Isa Kamari – "Mawar" Rasiah Halil – "Senja" Sapiee Ahmad Razaly – "Titis-titis tinta" Mohamed Subir – "Kesangsian" Abdul Samad Salimin – "Sebuah pondok tua" Sheikah Abu Bakar – "Kehidupan" Sarifah Yatiman – "Peralihan musim" 				
Cerpen	Tiada	 Iswardy – "Otak" Mohd Fuad Salim – "Ibu kupohonkan syurga untukmu" 				
Esei	Tiada	 Sapiee Ahmad Razaly – "Sangkaan kabur yang perlukan penjelasan" 				
Drama	Tiada	 Nadiputra – "Alang-alang" Jamal Ismail – "Seperti kata saya" 				
Novel	Tiada	• Jamal Ismail – Songsang				

	1993	
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan
Sajak	• Johar Buang — "MRT"	 Rasiah Halil – "Transit" Djamal Tukimin – "Pada suatu hari di Padang Karbala" Isa Kamari – "Padang rumput"
Cerpen	Tiada	 Ahmad Afandi Jamari – "Mans Gila" Suratman Makasan – "Rumah" Ismail Wardi – "Lubang"
Esei	 Djamal Tukimin – "Potret perempuan – citra dan proses kreatif sang penyair" 	 Isa Kamari – "Ulasan antologi Titis Tinta (Yatiman Yusof) – "Menggunakan kata untuk hidang persoalan hidup" Sharifah Maznah Syed Omar – "Ulasan antologi Titian Perjalanan (Peter Augustine Goh) dunia penuh kejahilan jadi sorotan" Rasiah Halil – "Nurani insan dan sang seniman" Hadijah Rahmat – "Apa peranan penulis wanita"
Drama Pentas	Hameed Ismail – "Anjing untuk diplomat"	• Sabri Buang – "1/2 Jalan Merah"
Drama TV	Tiada	 Yusof Marwi – "Orang rumah" M. Safri A. Manaf – "Mak mertuaku sayang" Peter Augustine Goh – "Ombak cinta pantai kasih"
Drama Radio	Tiada	 M. Safri A Manaf - "Hati seorang ibu" Samsudin Said – "Hijrah" Patimah Jaludin – "Dilema gadis Masturah"
Novel	Tiada	• Iswardy — Menjejak arus
Lirik lagu	• Hartinah Ahmad – "Nyanyian Tanjung sepi"	 Mohd Esham Jamil – "Melody untuk ibu" Zubir Abdullah – "Kusesali diri" Fazal Rahman – "Alhamdulillah" Art Fazil – "Ghazal 2020"
Say	embara Sastera (untuk remaja) Pemenang	Hadiah Sagu hati
Sajak	Tiada	 Alinah Ali, "Kosong" Azman Osman, "Telah tiada lagi" Mohd Rafi Abu Bakar, "Bendera" Osman Adon, "Pesanan untuk diri"
Cerpen	Pertama – Saedah Saad, "Si malang jalang" Kedua – Rohman Munasip, "Dari stesen ke stesen" Ketiga – Tiada	• A. Jaafar Munasip, "Menam Kwa Noi"
Esei	Tiada	Tiada

1995				
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan		
Sajak	Tiada	 Ahmad Mohd Tahir – "Teja" A Kadir Pandi – "Waktu" Isa Kamari – "Tasik rindu" Johar Buang – "Demi waktu" Mohd Ali Bajuri – "Catatan seorang tamu" Rasiah Halil – "Doa" 		
Cerpen	• Saedah Saad – "Igauan siang hari"	 Rohman Munasip – "Masjid sempurna" Ahmad Jaafar Munasip – "Igau 12:30 pagi" Ridhwan Anwar – "1859" 		
Esei/kritikan sastera	 Masuri S.N. –"Siapakah manusia bergelar penyair" 	 Isa Kamari – "Ulasan potret isteri yang hilang" Rasiah Halil – "Sastera Melayu dan nilai sejagat" Mohd Arshad Ami – "Budaya dalam saga keluarga" 		
Esei/Rencana	 Berita Minggu – "Anak-anak gadis Melayu jadi gangster" 	 Zaid Hamzah – "Cabaran pemimpin Melayu dekad depan" Mohd Raman Daud – "Melayu baru tidak dibayangkan mitos" 		
Drama Pentas	Tiada	 Hameed Ismail – "Singkap" Aidlin Mosbit – "Kosovo" 		
Drama TV	Tiada	 Hafiza Talib – "Merpati terbang tinggi" Peter Augustine Goh – "Bulan tak bermadu" 		
Drama Radio	Tiada	 M .Safri A. Manaf – "Mencari jalan keluar" Rosmala – "Kerana cinta dan kasihku" 		
Novel	Tiada	Tiada		
Cerpen (buku)	Tiada	• Suratman Markasan – Potret isteri yang hilang		
Buku Bukan Sastera	Tiada	• Muhammad Ariff Ahmad – Bicara tentang adat dan tradisi		
Lirik lagu	 Mohd Esham Jamil – "Dan perjalanan yang masih" 	• Art Fazil – "Ali Mim Alif Lam Sin"		
Novel Remaja/kanak- kanak	Tiada	 Mohd Rafi Abu Bakar- Nazri Aswandi Maimunah Kemat – Gadis leukemia Noralaseken Nor – Pelangi masih indah 		

	1997				
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan			
Sajak	 Nurul-Ain Haji Kudsi – "Sudahkah terbeli harga diri seorang isteri" 	 Mohd Taha Jamil – "Hatinya seorang perempuan" Nor M.H. – "Bicara mata" Daud Yusof – "Lepaskanlah" Haron Yunos – "Aku merenung pelangi pagi" Rasiah Halil – "Hujan" Asmin – "Tikus" 			
Cerpen	 Basiran Haji Hamzah – "Suatu perjalanan, sebuah peta, sebuku roti" Isa Kamari – "Pertemuan" 	 Iswardy – "Mati" Saedah Saad – "Anak bumi" Wan Jumaiah Mohd Jubri – "Penawar rindu" 			
Esei/kritikan sastera	Tiada	 Masuri .S.N. – "Penulisan dan tanggungjawab kesusasteraan" Isa Kamari – "Danau sukma gelora jiwa penyajak" Rasiah Halil – "Suatu pencarian: kajian ringkas penulis-penullis minoriti Amerika" 			
Esei/Rencana	Tiada	Tiada			
Drama Pentas	Tiada	• Alin Aidli Mosbit – "Tiga dara terbang ke bulan"			
Drama TV	Tiada	Tiada			
Drama Radio	Tiada	 Hafizah Talib – "Gerimis semalam" Peter Augustine Goh – "Gelombang kasih" 			
Novel	Tiada	 Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – Batas Langit Suratman Markasan – Di bumi mana 			
Buku Sastera/Fiksyen	• Masuri S.N. – Mimpi panjang seorang penyair	• Rasiah Halil – Sungai dan lautan			
Buku Bukan Sastera	Tiada	Tiada			
Lirik lagu	Tiada	 Haron Abdul Majid – "Hadiah perkahwinan" Eunosasah – "Salam kukirim di pagi raya" Baharom Paiman – "Mengejar impian" Zukiman Rasam – "Anugerah" 			
Novel Remaja/kanak- kanak	Tiada	• Peter Augustine Goh – Menerjah musim			

	1999	
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan
Sajak	• Rasiah Halil – "Peristiwa"	 Johar Buang – "Tujuhpuluhribu hijab" Hartinah Ahmad – "Ziarah seni" Alinah Ali – "Tanyalah" Hadari As'at – "Subuh" Rohman Munasip – "Potret diri seorang penyair" Sabariah Sapung – "Sandiwara"
Cerpen	• Ismail Wardi – "Lembu"	 Basiran Haji Hamzah – "Anak ketam" Rosmala – "Abang Long" Nurulashikin Jamain – "Kepulangan" Peter Augustine Goh – "Sepotong mimpi, sebuah daerah dan seekor burung"
Esei/kritikan sastera	 Suratman Markasan – "Kesusasteraan Melayu dalam negara kosmopolitan" 	 Peter Augustine Goh – "Ulasan novel Batas Langit" Rasiah Halil – "Renungan awal tahun: 1977"
Esei/Rencana	Tiada	Tiada
Drama Pentas	Tiada	Tiada
Drama TV	Hamed Ismail - "Antara pasrah dan fitrah"	Tiada
Drama Radio	Tiada	• M. Safri A. Manaf – "Mencari damai di hati"
Novel	Tiada	Tiada
Cerpen (buku)	Tiada	Tiada
Buku Bukan Sastera	Tiada	Tiada
Lirik lagu	• A. Harris Sumardi - "Teman"	Tiada
Novel Remaja/kanak- kanak	Tiada	Tiada
Cerpen Remaja	Tiada	 Ainun Harun – "Projek X" Mohd Naguib Ngadnan – "Satu perjalanan" Sheikh Anwarul Mohd Shariff – "Sepuluh sen"
Sajak Remaja	 Noridah Kamari – "Sayangnya aku seorang manusia" 	 Mardiana Mohd Isa – "Canggih" Zakiah Muhamad – "Mutiara"

2001		
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan
Sajak	• Rasiah Halil – "Dalang: Episod tiga"	 Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Kutulis puisi ini" Peter Augustine Goh – "Jangan II" Norulashikin Jamain – "Pelarian" Noritah Mohd Hassim – "Kembalilah lagi"
Cerpen	 Maya – "Kembalilah mama" Rohman Munasip – "Suatu ketika" 	 Basiran Haji Hamzah – "Dalam lif" Alang Budiman – "Di sini bukan satu noktah" Lut Ali – "Di saat melangkah pulang"
Esei/kritikan sastera	 Isa Kamari –"Milik siapa bumi yang satu ini" 	 Rasiah Halil – "Perkembangan cerpen Melayu mutakhir Singapura" Mohd Raman Daud – "Perkembangan puisi mutakhir Singapura"
Drama Pentas	Tiada	• M. Safri A. Manaf – "Terminal terakhir"
Drama TV	• Hartinah Ahmad – "Antara dua rindu"	 Haron Abdulmajid – "Selagi ada kasih" Hartinah Ahmad – "Meniti merah bara"
Drama Radio	Tiada	• M. Safri A. Manaf – "Tiada lagi air mata"
Novel	Tiada	Tiada
Sajak (buku)	Tiada	 Djamal Tukimin – Betapa pun nyanyian rindunya si anak Geylang Serai Johar Buang – Tujuh puluh ribu hijab
Cerpen (buku)	• Ismail Wardi – Senandung orang lama	 A. Wahab Hj Hamzah – Igau Masuri S.N. – Di luar dugaan Suratman Markasan – Kembali kepada Al-Quran
Buku Bukan Sastera	• Dr Hadijah Rahmat – Antara dua kota	 Dr Kamsiah Abdullah – Sikap, penguasaan dan penggunaan bahasa Melayu di Singapura
Lirik lagu	Tiada	 A. Rauf dan Zoul – "Di antara kita" Zaidi Nandir – "Cenderawasih (visi II)
Novel Remaja/kanak- kanak	Tiada	• Peter Augustine Goh – Tertangkapnya raja tupai
Cerpen (Remaja)	• Noor Hasnah Adam — "Naluri"	 Mazlee Muharram – "Dialog antara dua insan" Siti Hajilah Adam – "Kemelut" Rozanna Khalid – "Harta" Djohan Abdul Rahman – "Salah siapa?"
Sajak (Remaja)	Tiada	 Nur Alisa Abdul Samad – "Anak-anak Ambon" Noridah Kamari – "Prejudis" Hafidah Mahat – "Jati diri" Mohd Hafiz Kusairi – "Senandung Sufi" Zuwainah Md Kamalutheen – "Kembara"

2003		
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan
Sajak	 Sa'eda Buang – "Pustakaku dalam remang senja" 	 Kamarulzaman Hashim – "Di Selat Bosphorus" Rohman Munasip – "Kalau cuaca malam panas membara" Norulashikin Jamain – "Kejujuran"
Cerpen	Tiada	 Ismail Sarkawi – "Bendera" Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Menggelongsor" Noor Hasnah Adam – "Ini cengkerang kita" Issuandi – "Menantu" Peter Augustine Goh – "Tembok"
Esei/kritikan sastera	Tiada	 Haji Johar Buang – "Reformasi sufistik dalam sastera Melayu" Rasiah Halil – "Nilai komersil sastera" Djamal Tukimin – "Islam dan puisi: satu pencarian jati diri (pengenalan ringkas)" Siti Khalidah Mohd Jamil – "Teknologi maklumat dalam pengajaran sastera"
Esei bukan sastera	Tiada	 Mohamed Pitchay Gani bin Mohamed Abdul Aziz – "Menilai cara kita menterjemah" Mohamed Pitchay Gani bin Mohamed Abdul Aziz – "IT, jika tidak dikawal, boleh jadi parasite dalam masyarakat" Muhammad Haniff Hassan – "Amalan kita perlu berfokus ke luar" Kasmadi Haji Nasir – "Islam dan Barat: mengapa berlaku konflik?"
Drama Pentas	Tiada	Tiada
Drama TV	Tiada	Tiada
Drama Radio	Tiada	Tiada
Novel	Tiada	 Isa Kamari - "Menara" Sabri Buang - "Jeda"
Sajak (buku)	 Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Bagiku sepilah sudah" 	Mohamad Gani bin Ahmad – "Zuriat"
Cerpen (buku)	Tiada	 Mohamad Gani bin Ahmad – Sujud A Wahab Hamzah – "Tuhan masih sayang"
Buku Bukan Sastera/ fiksyen	Tiada	 Dr Abbas Mohd Shariff – "Budaya dan falsafah orang Melayu"
Lirik lagu	• Zubir Abdullah – "Menikmati kesejahteraan"	 Herman Mohd Khamis – "Dikir waris" Siti Hana Satipan – "Wadah cinta"
Novel Remaja/kanak- kanak	Tiada	Tiada
Cerpen (Remaja)	• Norzaidah Suparman – "Wijil"	 Fadhilah Muhammad – "Apa ada pada nama?" Guy Ghazali – "Bee Ngung" Mohd Zulfadli Mohd Rashid – "Segulung harapan" Mohd Hafiz Kusairi – "Wali metropolitan"
Sajak (Remaja)	• Noridah Kamari – "Platonik"	 M. Eznillah – "Irsyad" Guy Ghazali – "Hanya atma jenuh sudah" Mohamed Haikal Fansuri Mohd Latiff – "Berkabung"

2005		
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan
Sajak	• Johar Buang - "Kidung cinta"	 Basiran Hamzah – "Lima ekor anak kucing" Sa'eda Buang – "Malang, senda dan citra" Masuri S.N. – "Siapakah yang dapat menewaskan?" Suratman Markasan – "Bahasaku adalah bangsaku"
Cerpen	 Sa'eda Buang – "Ke puncak pun tidak" 	 Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Mahasiswa' Peter Augustine Goh – "Air mata kasih seorang haji" Suratman Markasan – "Siapa yang gila"
Esei/kritikan sastera	Tiada	 Isa Kamari – "Kita terperangkap pada kegemilangan semalam"
Esei Bahasa	 Mohamed Pitchay Gani bin Mohamed Abdul Aziz – "Keterampilan bahasa Melayu merentasi zaman dan disiplin" 	 Mohamad Ali Hanafiah – "Pantun: cerminan tasawwur masyarakat Melayu" Muhammad Ariff Ahmad – "Keterampilan bahasa lambang keunggulan jati diri" Mohamed Pitchay Gani bin Mohamed Abdul Aziz – "Polemik pragmatik bahasa Melayu Singapura: antara dinamik dan cemar"
Esei Masyarakat	 Maarof Salleh – "Bukan semua yang ditiru dari budaya lain itu buruk" 	 Feisal Abdul Rahman – "Era poshumanisme: cabaran bagi Muslim" Helmilina Muhd Som – "Ciri ideal jati diri Melayu" Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied – "Kaji karya P. Ramlee" Muhd Nadim Adam – "Melayu masih teraba cari identiti"
Drama Pentas	Tiada	Tiada
Drama TV	• M. Saffri A. Manaf – "Hilang"	 M. Saffri A. Manaf – "Bunga raya kembang pagi" M. Saffri A. Manaf – "Terminal terakhir"
Drama Radio	• M. Saffri A. Manaf – "Menghitung hari"	• Peter Augustine Goh – "Kasih masih berbunga"
Novel	Tiada	Tiada
Sajak (buku)	• Suratman Markasan – Puisi luka & puisi duka	 Masuri S.N. – Suasana senja A. Ghani Hamid – Ombak terbang tinggi
Cerpen (buku)	 Mohamed Latiff Mohamed – "Nostalgia yang hilang" 	 Wan Jumaiah Mohd Jubri – Penawar rindu Peter Augustin Goh – Rahsia sebuah kasih sayang Abdullah Osman – Seni dan sengsara
Buku Bukan Sastera/ fiksyen	Tiada	 Dr Abbas Mohd Shariff – Adab orang Melayu Dr Abbas Mohd Shariff – Pendidikan: Suatu panduan praktis Muhammad Ariff Ahmad – Mari berpantun (suatu petunjuk)

2005		
Kategori	Hadiah Sastera	Hadiah Penghargaan
Buku Suntingan	 Mohamed Pitchay Gani bin Mohamed Abdul Aziz – Pertemuan sasterawan Nusantara xii: sastera Melayu warisan jati diri dan jagat 	 Dr Hadijah Rahmat, Dewani Abas & Azhar Ibrahim Alwee – Citra Minda
Lirik lagu	• Karmin – "Umbara"	 Hamed Ismail – "K14" Jaliboy – "Mencari"
Novel Remaja/kanak- kanak	Tiada	Tiada
Cerpen (Remaja)	Tiada	 Norzaidah Suparman – "Wajah" Nurhayati Nasir – "Sumayyah" M. Farehan Hussein – "Kembali ke pangkal jalan" Noraini Mohamed Yusope – "Air mata ibu, air mata kami" Nurlinda Othman – "Nuraniku sayang"
Sajak (Remaja)	 Nurul Ameerah Abdul Latiff – "Bahasa mata seorang perempuan" 	 Mohd Hafiz Kusairi – "Basrah" Zuraidah Mohd Ariff – "Bapa Palestin" Nirwana Jainal – "Remaja"

2007	
Kategori Anugerah Persuratan	
Sajak	 Peter Augustine Goh – "Balada merdeka" Noridah Kamari – "Hyena" Johar Buang – "Kebun langit"
Cerpen	 Attiyah Mohd Said – "Dalam keasingan" Helmilina M Som – "Akar" Maarof Salleh – "E-mel D@ari Sungei Nil"
Esei/kritikan sastera	 Anuar Othman – "Bolehkah kita lahirkan sasterawan seperti Naguin Mahfouz?" Ali Hanafiah Abdullah – "CORT thinking programme dalam pendidikan: bahan sastera sebagai wahana" Roslie Buang Sidek – "Karya Suratman boleh dijadikan kayu ukur menilai kejayaan penulis"
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera	 Syed Farid Alatas – "Atasi pengganasan dengan pembangunan politik" Hussin Mutalib – "Silap tu, Tuan" Maarof Salleh – "Tsunami, insan dan Tuhan"
Drama Pentas	• Isa Kamari - "Pintu"
Drama TV	Hamed Ismail – "Masih ada bintang di Turkey"
Drama Radio	Peter Augustine Goh – "Sebelum jalan kembali"
Novel	• Hamzah Basiron – <i>Aylan</i>
Sajak (buku)	• Johar Buang – Perahu Melayu di lautan Khulzum: koleksi terbaik puisi-puisi kerohanian
Cerpen (buku)	Ishak Latiff – Saga: antologi cerpen Ishak Latiff
Drama (buku)	M. Saffri A. Manaf – Penglipur lara: drama dalam dialog
Esei/kritikan Sastera (buku)	• Rohman Munasip – <i>Bicara</i>
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera (buku)	Tiada
Kajian Sastera	 M. Pitchay Gani Mohamed Abdul Aziz (penyunting) – Dari gerhana ke puncak purnama: biografi Asas '50 55 tahun dalam persuratan
Kajian Bukan Sastera	• Hadijah Rahmat – Kilat senja: sejarah sosial dan budaya kampung-kampung di Singapura

	2009	
Kategori	Anugerah Persuratan	
Sajak	 Abdul Kadir Pandi – "Menjaring mentari hidupku" Johar Buang – "Berkebun di tanah Rumi" Peter Augustine Goh – "Menyarung makna mesra" Kamariah Buang – "Anak tetangga Kelantan Lane" Noridah Kamari – "Tanda tangan" 	
Cerpen	 Ahmad Jaafar Munasip – "Jago" Zaleha Isnin – "Rembulan Merah" Hamed Ismail – "Pak Long" Zuwainah Mohd – "Warna cinta" Rohayah Mohd Lani – "Hikayat" 	
Esei/kritikan sastera	 Rasiah Halil – "Nilai penulis berdasarkan karya bukan kerjaya" Suratman Markasan – "Anjakan tema dan pemikiran yang dibawakan penyair besar Asas '50 Masuri S.N. di dalam puisi-puisinya" Hadijah Rahmat – "Masuri SN dari jendela Arif Budiman dan pembinaan rumah manusia" 	
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera	 Maarof Salleh – "Bahasa, songkok dan agama Islam" Nur Fitri bte Mohd Syafiran – "Di sebalik permainan tradisional" Othman Salam – "Membentukkepala keretapi masyarakat" Muhammad Haniff Hassan - "Fatwa jihad perlu serasi dengan masa" 	
Drama Pentas	Norlin Haron – "Kristal"	
Drama TV	Hamed Ismail – "Syawal kembali"	
Drama Radio	 Rosmala – "Ada rahsia antara kami" M. Saffri A. Manaf – "Cahaya di hujung senja" 	
Novel	Tiada	
Sajak (buku)	Peter Augustine Goh – Cetusan kalbu seorang penyair	
Cerpen (buku)	Noor Hasnah Adam – Kelerai: cerpen-cerpen Noor Hasnah Adam	
Drama (buku)	Tiada	
Esei/kritikan Sastera (buku)	Tiada	
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera (buku)	Tiada	
Kajian Sastera	Tiada	
Kajian Bukan Sastera	Paitoon Masmintra Chaiyanara – Kepelbagaian teori fonologi	

	2011	
Kategori	Anugerah Persuratan	
Sajak	 Rasiah Halil – "Suara-suara" Hidayat Hamzah – "Membilang hela-hela" 	
Cerpen	 Hidayat Hamzah – "Nabil dan Nivit" Peter Augustine Goh – "Cermin ajaib" Ismail Wardi – "Cermin" 	
Esei/kritikan sastera	 Rosli Sidik – "Peliharalah pantun" Anuar Othman – "Penulisan bukan kerja cuba-cuba" Rasiah Halil – "Layakkah penulis-penulis Melayu terima Hadiah Nobel?" 	
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera	 Sophiandy Sopali – "Pengajian Melayu perlu pembaharuan" Art Fazil – "Bahasa lambing identiti bangsa" Othman Salam – "Pengajaran dari lumba kolek orang kampong" 	
Drama Pentas	Tiada	
Drama TV	• Amanah Mustafi – "Kalimah terakhir"	
Drama Radio	 Rohman Munasip – "Titik pertemuan" 	
Novel	Tiada	
Sajak (buku)	• Johar Buang – Sampai di singgahsana cinta	
Cerpen (buku)	Yazid Hussein – Satu macam penyakit	
Drama (buku)	Tiada	
Esei/kritikan Sastera (buku)	Tiada	
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera (buku)	Tiada	
Kajian Sastera	Tiada	
Kajian Bukan Sastera	Tiada	
2013		
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Kategori	Anugerah Persuratan	Hadiah Penghargaan
Sajak	 Mohamed Naguib Ngadnan – "Kita yang dijilat gincu peluru" 	 Hamed Ismail – "Malam dan seorang lelaki seperti kamu"
Cerpen	Tiada	 Peter Augustine Goh – "Nama saya Orang Utan" Yazid Hussein – "Teratak" Cempaka Aizim – "Bicara rumah kedai"
Esei/kritikan sastera	Tiada	Tiada
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera	Tiada	 Noridah Kamari – "Pengkelanaan kumpulan bangsawan berdasarkan pengalaman Shariff Medan: satu penelitian ringkas
Drama Pentas	Tiada	Tiada
Drama TV	Tiada	Amanah Mustafi - "Terbelenggu"
Drama Radio	Tiada	• M. Saffri A. Manaf – "Pura Cindra Gemala"
Novel	Tiada	• Yazid Hussein – Dongeng utopia kisah Cek Yah
Sajak (buku)	• Johar Buang — <i>Pasar diri</i>	Tiada
Cerpen (buku)	Tiada	• Ahmad Jaafar Munasip – Jago
Drama (buku)	Tiada	• Hafiza Talib – Goresan Emosi
Esei/kritikan Sastera (buku)	Tiada	Tiada
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera (buku)	Tiada	Tiada
Kajian Sastera	Tiada	 Yazid Hussein – Penulis penyusun kalimat, pembaca pentafsir amanat, sama-sama meraih
Esei/kritikan Bukan Sastera (buku)	Tiada	Tiada



Muhd Andi Mohd Zulkepli Wise Words of Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad on Malay Language and Literature

"This reflection is an excerpt of the writer's interview with the late literary giant, Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, at his Nemesu Avenue residence on Wednesday, 4 March 2015, at about 4.30pm."



A GLOBAL LANGUAGE: Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad hopes that the Malay language will become a global language in the future.

From stories to literature

When I was in school, literature was not offered as a subject. We read old books and learnt their storylines, storytelling techniques and impact. The subject was known as *Pelajaran Hikayat* (Study of Stories), and it was taught at the Sultan Idris Training College that was established in 1922.

The eminent educator Za'ba initiated a new wave of thinking among the Malays when he introduced the term *persuratan* (literature), which encompasses the writing of notes, letters, formal letters, agreements and other types of writing. Hence, the subject was renamed *Pelajaran Persuratan* (Study of Literature). After we were taught *persuratan* at the College, we had to learn the translation of books. Through this, we learned new ways of thinking. For example, I was asked to read the books *Pulau Karang* and *Mengelilingi Dunia Dalam 80 Hari*, which were categorised as literature.¹ And with literature came translation and the study of translation itself.

Za'ba had translated a Shakespeare play in which there were two characters, one who was fair-skinned and the other who was darkskinned.² He had translated this poem: Siapa kata belimbing tak hitam, (Says who the starfruit isn't black,) Sudahlah hitam, kelat pulak; (Not only is it black, but also tart) Siapa kata keling tak hitam, (Says who Indians aren't black,) Dahlah hitam, berkilat pulak. (Not only are they black, but also shiny.)

Za'ba displayed mastery in translation as he weaved in influences from his own values and culture. Most translations omit this. Za'ba's work is an example of what I call literature.

From literature to literary studies

I have always leaned towards using the word "sastera" because it studies a wide spectrum of works — from old and new literature to prose and poetry, and even poetic prose. But looking at it linguistically, the word "sastera" has roots in a Sanskrit word that refers to "huruf" (letter of the alphabet) or "aksara" (character). Letters of the alphabet that have been arranged are known as sastera.

Sastera refers to words by a person that is written, spoken or read. The prefix "su-", meaning beautiful, was added to sastera by the Javanese. It is not literature if it is not beautiful or devoid of melody, form and appearance. I believe 80 per cent of Malay literature is *sastera*.

The word "literature" was not readily accepted in the beginning. When we formed Asas '50 (Angkatan Sasterawan 1950), it took less than two weeks for people to find issues with the word. I had used two new words for the organisation's name — "angkatan" and "sastera". I chose "angkatan" to replace commonly-used words such as persatuan (union), persekutuan (federation) and himpunan (assembly).

Growth of Singapore Malay literature between 1965 and 2015

It is evident that there were changes in the appearance, form and characteristics of literary works to what they are now.

Before Asas '50, more than 90 per cent of literary works such as short stories, poems, critiques and reviews, were published in newspapers. In the 1930s, people started writing books and it did not matter if the content had not been published in the newspaper. Anyone could write a book at the time because resources were abundant and publishing was cheap. Newspaper articles today have a style different from that of a literary work but this is not saying that journalistic writing is not literature and vice versa.

Many organisations and publications have emerged in the last 50 years but there are two developments that we should note: the establishment of Asas '50 and activities by the Malay language congress.

Asas '50 was formed to support literature, boosting the overall growth of poetry and prose, and expanding beyond the obvious *syair* to include the subtle *seloka* in daily life. For example, the common phrase "*pagi petang siang malam*, *hati terang senang faham*" is a *seloka*, used by many without realising its literary value.

Masuri S N said *sajak* was originally called "*sanjak*" and that it was like *pantun* or *syair*, a painting of words, but he eventually insisted that *puisi* was different from *sanjak*. Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana said *syair moden* is a modern form of the *syair* without losing its essence.

The development of literature in Singapore has also been influenced by political changes but the Malay language congress remains its cornerstone. The first three congresses were held in Singapore and the following three in Malaysia.

Advice from the Wise: Do not be a parrot

We still see plenty of short stories and poems but have we attained something higher? No, there is still more that we can do.

There is also the issue of response from the community. I applaud our progress with Bulan Bahasa but our progress is just like Hari Raya and I hope it doesn't stop there. I want everyone to truly appreciate and enjoy the language itself. A language user would know what is being conveyed, its true meaning, unlike a perched parrot that merely repeats what it has heard without any understanding.

There have been discussions about *seloka* with some parties saying that it's merely a humorous form of entertainment but the "humour" has not been put to good use, and this is something we need to discuss and understand.

I applaud our progress with Bulan Bahasa but our progress is just like Hari Raya and I hope it doesn't stop there. I want everyone to truly appreciate and enjoy the language itself. A language user would know what is being conveyed, its true meaning, unlike a perched parrot that merely repeats what it has heard without any understanding.

MAS's hope for language and future generation

I hope that the Malays, especially those of rank and position, are not ashamed to speak in Malay. I hope the Malay language will become one of the world's major languages and used by the United Nations.

I hope the Malay language will be on a par with other languages. There should be a regional language. We already have Mastera (Majlis Sastera Asia Tenggara, a regional language organisation formed to plan and monitor the development of language and literature in Malay and Bahasa Indonesia in Southeast Asia) but there needs to be support. Insya'Allah, it is not impossible.

Endnotes

- These were translated books published by Pejabat Karang:Mengarang from 1929–1957 in the Malay Home Library Series. A total of 64 books were published. Among them, Pulau Karang translated by Yazid Ahmad from the book Coral Island; and Mengelilingi Dunia dalam 80 Hari (Around the World in 80 Days) by Jules Vernes, translated by Kuddus Muhammad.
- 2. Za'ba translated two Shakespeare books (*Lamb's Tales*) in the Malay Home Library Series, *Cherita-Cherita Duka Shakespeare* and *Cherita-Cherita Suka Shakespeare*



Juffri Supa'at

Tun Seri Lanang Luminaries



Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (1993)

The first recipient of the Tun Seri Lanang Award was better known by his pseudonym MAS. An esteemed figure who has been dubbed the "walking encyclopaedia" of Malay language, literature and culture, Dr Muhammad Ariff has authored more than 60 books including fiction, educational books, children's books and school textbooks. He also wrote for the print media in Singapore and Malaysia, and drama and documentary scripts for TV and radio.



Masuri S N (1995)

The prolific writer has produced more than 1,000 poems and pioneered the reform of Malay literature, specifically *sajak* or modern poetry. His early poems "Bunga Ros" and "Ros Kupuja" were published in *Berita Malai*, a daily during the Japanese Occupation, and the poems he wrote after the war were published in magazines such as *Kencana* and *Utusan Zaman*. Masuri was a sensitive poet who was easily affected by the happenings around him.



Abdul Ghani Hamid (1997)

Having contributed to the arts and literature in Singapore since his school days, Ghani has written hundreds of poems, short stories and articles in both Malay and English. He is also a painter and has participated in more than 60 exhibitions since 1950. He formed the Association of Artists of Various Resources with the tagline *Secita Mencipta* (Together We Create) in 1962 and created the comic strip *Mat Dalang* which was published in Malay magazines and *Berita Minggu*. Ghani went by the pen name Lazuardi.



Suratman Markasan (1999)

The poet and author of short stories and novels has also written papers on literature, language and cultural arts in Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Suratman, who has received numerous awards for his involvement in the literary field, believes literature is a form of devotion. Through his works, he highlights the harsh realities of life to bring the society's attention to matters that need to be tackled.





Aliman Hassan (2001)

Better known by his pen name Lela Kencana, the cultural arts practitioner also wrote poems, novels, essays on language and culture, and radio and TV shows. Among his works that featured human stories and antics are Novel Empat, Sekadar Pengisi Ruang: Bicara Peribahasa, Pantun Pusaka and Puisi Semasa.

Mohamed Latiff Mohamed (2003)

Best known for his poetry, Latiff began writing poems, short stories, essays, dramas and novels in 1966. His works often featured stories of Malays striving to escape social issues, such as in *Kota Air Mata, Batas Langit, Dalam Keasingan, Danau Sukma* and *Bangsaku Di Hari Lahirku*. He sees writers as witnesses of historical turbulence with a duty to uphold the truth, especially for the oppressed.





Djamal Tukimin (2007)

The poet, novelist and essayist has a penchant for writing theatre/drama critiques that led him to conduct research on the history of the development of post-war Malay theatre up to the 1980s. Among his notable works are *Arus Teater Singapura* (essays on Singapore theatre), *Puisi-puisi Muhajir*, *Betapa Pun Begitu Nyanyian Rindunya Si Anak Geylang Serai* and *Betapa Pun Begitu*, *Pada Hari Berkah Ini Cinta Masih Tersisa*.

Isa Kamari (2009)

The prolific writer has authored poems, novels, short stories, literary essays and theatre plays. His debut novel *Satu Bumi*, which centred on love, survival and political struggle against the backdrop of history, became a hit and was used as a literary source in secondary schools. Isa's literary involvement transcends genres and media, and his works have been adapted into TV shows, dramas and songs.





Dr Hadijah Rahmat (2011)

An instrumental contributor to the development of literature through her poetry and the study of Malay literary legacy, Dr Hadijah's documentation of the history of Istana Kampong Glam and villages in Singapore are among her notable works. She holds dear Malay literature, both classical and modern, and studies it tirelessly. Dr Hadijah lectured on Mastera (2001) in a comparative literature series organised by the Institute of Language and Literature. Her works include Kumpulan Puisi Di Tengah Alam, Kurnia Alam, theatre script Munsyi, Sastera, Manusia Melayu Baru and children's books Burung Kenek-Kenek and Kasih Ibu.

Nadiputra (2013)

Almahdi Al-Haj Ibrahim, better known as Nadiputra, is a writer, director, publisher and actor. The respectable figure in theatre has written about 200 plays for theatre, radio and TV. His plays, which often confront social issues, beliefs and human behaviour, include *Puncak*, *Malaikat*, *Selimut Putih*, *Vanda Miss Joaquim* and *Masjid Bersalib*. Nadiputra has been active with National Theatre Club Drama Workshop, Sriwana and Teater Nadi.



Tun Seri Lanang Posthumous Award Recipients

Harun Aminurrashid (1995)

Harun Mohd Amin has also written under the pen names Har, Gustam Negara, Atma Jiwa and Si Ketuit. Harun wrote historical novels and books on knowledge, language and culture. From his travel experiences and memories, he wrote adventure stories such as *Melihat Matahari Tengah Malam*, *Mengembara Ke Andalusia* and *Meninjau Ke Negeri Sham*. Harun was also awarded the Certificate of Merit from the Dictionary of International Biography, London in 1968 for his services and outstanding contribution in writing Malay historical novel.





Mahmud Ahmad (1997)

Recognised as a linguist, culturalist and litterateur, Mahmud was a writer and educator devoted to serving the Malay community in Malaya and Singapore. He began writing poems and articles in 1925 and became the editor of the magazines *Mastika* and *Hiburan* in 1946 and 1947. In 1929, his work *Percubaan Kasih* was serialised in the magazine *Cherita*. Mahmud was a prolific author of short stories, poems and radio plays in the post-war years. He wrote for *Medan Sastera*, a bi-monthly magazine headed by Harun Aminurrashid, while working at Malaysia Press. Mahmud also managed the magazine *Temasik*.

Noor S I (1999)

Ismail Omar, a pioneer of the art of *sajak kabur* (noir poetry), wrote drama scripts, essays and critiques. The prolific poet had his works featured in anthologies such as *Bingkisan Angkatan Baru* (1956), *Puisi Baharu Melayu* (1961), *Himpunan Sajak* (1969), *Titian Zaman* (1979) and *Orang Bertiga* (1980). Noor S I began writing when he was 18 years old and had his first poem published in the magazine *Samudera*. He was experimental and innovative and his cryptic poems earned him both criticism and compliments.





Suradi Parjo (2001)

In 1948, Suradi started writing as a final-year student at the Sultan Idris Training College in Tanjung Malim, Perak. He contributed to the Malay language, literature and culture through his poems, short stories, essays, novels, schoolbooks and books on proverbs. Suradi did not get paid for his first book *Keris Sempena Riau* despite it being adapted into a film. He also had to self-fund the publishing of his works. This however did not dampen his drive to champion Singapore Malay literature.

Hamzah Hussein (2007)

Hamzah Abdul Majid Hussain was known for his concept of "seni untuk seni" (art for art) in the early 1950s. He began writing short detective stories for the magazine Dunia Filem Melayu under the British rule and went on to write for magazines and newspapers including Utusan Zaman and Mastika. Hamzah was the driving force of the silver screen during the golden age of the Malay film industry. His creative genius was evident in his novels and screenplays such as Rumah Itu Dunia Aku and Gurindam Jiwa.





Haron Abdul Majid (2009)

Noor Yusman Abdul Majid began writing poetry, short stories, drama and essays in the 1970s. He was fond of writing symbolic poetry and his song lyrics set him apart in the literary world, having produced over 800 lyrics for songs sung by popular bands like Carefree and Black Dog Bone and songstress Sharifah Aini.

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http://www.nlb.gov.sg/exhibitions/literarypioneers/writers/malay/_quotes/index.php



Part 8 That Which Is Implicit

Every name in this country has its own origin and history. Many names of Malay origins are inscribed in Malay literary works and understanding the literary creations of native writers helps us to understand the development of thought in the Malay community itself. Issues faced by the community are often highlighted by writers in various forms of writings. What were the literary paradigm of our writers, especially in the postindependence era?

History of Singapore and Its Places



Based on Malay Literature (Part 1: Pre-1819)

Dr Imran Tajudeen

There has been a growing interest in Singapore's pre-colonial history, which has been recognised to be deserving of inclusion in the school curriculum. This partly arose from the publication of National Archives Singapore's *Singapore: A 700-Year History* (Kwa, Heng and Tan 2009). In 2015, an exhibition of the same name and a website documenting Singapore's pre-1819 history were launched to mark the nation's jubilee, or SG50.

In fact, Singapore's precolonial history has received the attention of Western colonial researchers since the 1930s. The early history was also documented in *Singapore: 150* Years by Malaysian historian Mubin Sheppard in 1969 to mark the anniversary of Singapore's "founding" by Raffles in 1819. The special publication was republished in 1973 and reprinted in 1982 and 1984.

However, the history of this early period subsequently took a back seat in the postindependence era and reThe basis for the name "Singapura" is still poorly understood because its meaning has not been properly contextualised against the Buddhist kingdoms in the region. "Singapura" has to be studied against the backdrop of the rivalry between the Malay and Javanese Buddhist kingdoms of the 14th century.

emerged only later. Since the 1980s, the documentation of Singapore history has expanded to include the people's or social history perspective of its diverse communities beyond focusing only on the perspective of colonial authorities or governance.

This article will be presented from two perspectives: pre-colonial history (pre-1819) as gleaned from Malay [traditional] literature and the urban Malay community from the colonial period till the 1960s as recorded in 19th-century lithographic Malay literature, transitional literature such as *Hikayat Abdullah*, *Syair Dagang Jual Beli* and *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, and modern literature since the 20th century. The discussion will focus on the locations or sites of events and activities.

"Singapura" and history of Malay and Javanese Buddhist kingdoms

The basis for the name "Singapura" is still poorly understood because its meaning has not been properly contextualised against the Buddhist kingdoms in the region. "Singapura" has to be studied against the backdrop of the rivalry between the Malay and Javanese Buddhist kingdoms of the 14th century. The episode in the *Sulalat*

> us-Salatin (hereafter referred to as Sejarah Melayu) concerning an encounter with an animal by Sri Tri Buana and his entourage upon their arrival on the island at Kuala Temasek has been inaccurately represented as a legendary account about the sighting of an actual lion. In fact, however, the background to the key elements in this episode in Sejarah Melayu alludes to several symbols of deeper meaning connected to various aspects of the long history of the Malay Buddhist civilisation spanning the 7th and 14th centuries.

First, the chief who had

recognised that extraordinary creature, was Demang Lebar Daun, said to be the chief of Palembang who had handed over his throne to Sri Tri Buana. The presence of the Javanese title *demang* in this episode indicates that this event took place in Palembang, the erstwhile centre of the ancient Malay Buddhist kingdom Srivijaya (from the 7th to 11th century), after its conquest by Java in the 1280s.

Demang Lebar Daun explained the name *singa* as follows: "So, Sri Tri Buana asked everyone around him (the name of the passing animal) but no one knew. Demang Lebar Daun bowed and said, 'Your Majesty, I have heard a long time ago that a lion bears that appearance. In my humble opinion, it is a lion." (Tun Seri Lanang 2009, 29)



MARITIME NETWORK: From Sungai Kallang to Sungai Seletar, thence sailing across Selat Tebrau to the estuary of Sungai Johor and upstream reaching Sayong Pinang. Map sketched by author.

These guarded words indicate that the strange creature, unidentifiable to all but the head of ancient Palembang, is intended to symbolise former times, as an emblem of a Buddhist sovereign, and thus known only to Demang Lebar Daun in his capacity as Palembang's chief. The lion is symbolic of the sovereignty of a Buddhist king, who is conventionally portrayed as being seated upon the Lion Throne or *sinha-asana*, the Sanskrit term which has survived in the Malay language today in the form *singgahsana*. The chief also performed the *abhiseka*, a Buddhist initiatory rite to crown Sri Tri Buana as the new king.

The roles assigned in the text to Demang Lebar Daun as the bearer of knowledge of the symbol of Buddhist sovereignty from "former times" (*dahulu kala*) and as executor of the *abhiseka* rites are astounding since the knowledge that Palembang was the former site of an ancient Malay Buddhist kingdom called Srivijaya emerged only in the 1920s, having been unearthed by Western scholars such as George Coedes (Coedès and Damais, 1992). Secondly, Sri Tri Buana is said to have materialised atop Siguntang Hill (Bukit Seguntang), revered as a part of the sacred Mahameru mountain of Hindu-Buddhist mythology. The mystical hill in Palembang was documented as being located in the middle of a river that was "Melayu of name" (Tun Seri Lanang 2009, 20), in reference to the Malayu kingdom near present-day Jambi (between the 11th and 13th centuries) that is believed to have assumed the mantle of Srivijaya in the 11th century.

The royal centre of Malayu was later conquered by the Singhasari kingdom of East Java when its king Kertanagara in 1275 decreed the Pamalayu campaign. In 1286, he ordered a replica of the Bodhisattva Amoghapasa statue in Java to be despatched for the conquered land, where it was installed atop a pedestal with an inscription detailing his conquest.

In this inscription, the name of the king of "*bhûmi Mâlayu*" was inscribed as Srimat Tribhuwanaraja Mauli Warmadewa, the full *abhiseka* title held by the descendants of the Malayu king. It was shortened to Sri Tri Buana in *Sejarah Melayu*, retaining its reference to the three worlds, which are the destinations for karmic rebirth in Buddhism.

Sejarah Melayu states that the Melayu River can be reached by travelling down a river named Muara Tatang (Tun Seri Lanang, 2009: 20). There was indeed a river named Tatang in Palembang, which was the site of the discovery in 1920 of an inscription in Old Malay mentioning "Kadatuan Srivijaya", dated AD 683. This similarly astounding correspondence between the sites of actual archaeological discoveries and toponyms mentioned in the Sejarah Melayu reminds us that although the annals contain mythological elements, it still documents certain historical details fairly accurately.

"Temasek" and its Kallang, Seletar and Benua Sayong groups

The name "Temasek" has not been dissected enough. It needs to be understood linguistically so that we can study its relation to Singapore's natural landforms and the locale of its indigenous groups. Grammatically, the infix "em" in the Malay language is archaic and no longer widely used but has remained in selected words such as *jemari*, *temali*, *temurun*, *gemuruh*, *gemilang*, *kemilau* and *kemuning*. When added to its first-syllable consonant, the root word *tasek* (lake) becomes *temasek*, which means *tempat yang bertasek-tasek* or a place full of lakes.

This reflects the original state of Singapore, with an expansive swampy terrain stretching from the lower reaches of Kallang and Geylang River in the south to the river mouths of Seletar and Seranggung (Serangoon) and up to Kaki Bukit. *Ranggung* is a type of swamp-dwelling egret. The vast swampy area is immortalised in the names Paya Lebar (Malay for broad swamp) and Toa Payoh (Hokkien for big swamp, incorporating the Malay term *paya* rendered as "payoh").

The swamp connects two rivers that are closely linked to the Orang Laut (Sea People) community that inhabited the main island of Singapore — Kallang River with its Orang Biduanda Kallang and Seletar River with its Orang Seletar. The term *biduanda* depicts the role of the tribe as messengers or vassals of Kallang. The word Kallang is believed to be derived from the word *galang* (ship girder) while Seletar contains the word *litar*, which means circuit. So, it appears that the Seletar tribe at the Tebrau Strait was an extension of the Kallang tribe towards the Singapore Strait and Kallang Basin.

The co-operation between the two groups appears to explain the route taken in the withdrawal of the last king of Singapore during the Majapahit attack — the king was said to have fled to Muar via Seletar (Tun Seri Lanang, 2009: 57). This brief description needs to be broken down further.

The safest route between Bukit Larangan (Fort Canning Hill) and Muar from sea attack was via the interior route that traverses the large swamps of the Rochor and Kallang rivers, going upstream all the way to the headwaters of Seletar River. The rivers were deep and the Orang Laut groups concerned were subjects who were in a position to render assistance to the ruler.

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TEMASEK LAND OF LAKES: Swampy area in Paya Lebar extending to Toa Payoh between Sungai Kallang with Sungai Seletar. The land area coloured gray indicates saltwater wetlands (mangroves on the coast) and freshwater marshes (peat swamps in the interior). Large lake in the middle of the Sungai Kallang also known as "Kallang Basin". Map sketched by author.

There was another tribe closely connected to the Malay kingdom — the Benua Sayong group who lived in the remote, upper reaches of Johor River. The legendary strongman Badang was said "to have hailed from Benua Sayong, a slave of a Sayong man, constantly commanded by his master to clear the woods" before he went into the service of the king of Singapore. The king ordered Badang to pick up *kuras* wood (*dryobalanops oblongifolia*) from Kuala Sayong and the text records that he travelled downstream towards Johor on his way back. (Tun Seri Lanang, 2009: 36, 38)

When the Melaka Sultanate fell to the Portuguese Empire in 1511, Sayong Pinang became one of the early capital sites upstream of the Johor River before the set up of Johor Lama. In his journey from Seletar to Muar, the king would likely have headed for the Johor River after reaching the mouth of Seletar River, travelling upstream in the company of the Benua Sayong tribe, which had ties with the kingdom of Singapura and were intimately familiar with the jungles of Johor.

Titles of Singapore rulers during Melaka and Johor-Riau sultanates

Malay traditional sources list a number of titles of Singapore rulers under the aegis of Melaka. The *Sejarah Melayu* mentions Seri Bija Diraja as the court official in charge of Singapore. When Hang Tuah was made *laksamana* (naval commander), he was considered to be of equal importance as Seri Bija Diraja and acted as his deputy. "In Seri Bija Diraja's absence, the Laksamana takes over the bearing of the royal sword, presiding from the side gallery *(kelekan)* of the palace." (Tun Seri Lanang, 2009:100–101) Their roles in court protocol seem to have complemented each other. During the royal procession on Hari Raya, for instance, the king on his elephant mount was flanked by Laksamana to his left and Seri Bija Diraja to his right (Tun Seri Lanang, 2009:106).

Seri Bija Diraja, also known as Datuk Bongkok, was said to be "of Melayu (here possibly a reference to 11th-century Jambi) origin, descended from the vomit of a cow" and he "presided over all the palace guards or generals (*hulubalang*)" (Tun Seri Lanang, 2009: 77-78). This suggests his lineage to be from Bat'h, the companion of a prince on Siguntang Hill and who had risen from the froth vomited by the cow the prince had ridden. Bat'h was empowered to recite the *ciri*, or coronation mantra, for the celestially descended kings.

Sejarah Melayu also documented Singapore as a primary naval base port during the era of the Melaka Sultanate. It was said that Sultan Mansur Shah could send a large naval fleet to Majapahit, amounting to "500 large vessels and countless smaller ones, for in this period Singapore was also equipped with 40 three-masted *lancaran*" (Tun Seri Lanang, 2009: 88). The three-masted *lancaran* was a swift vessel and sizable warship.

Meanwhile, *Hikayat Hang Tuah* foregrounds the roles of Singapore and Bentan in the relations between Melaka, Palembang and Majapahit, repeating terms such as "chief (*Batin*) of Singapore's *Orang Laut*", "chieftain (*Penghulu*) of Singapore" and "people of Singapore" on several instances.

First, it was related that a king had descended from the heavens (*keinderaan*) at Siguntang Hill in Palembang at a time when the chiefs and nobles (*orang besar-besar dan orang kaya-kaya*) of Singapore and *negeri* Bentan were without a king, so the people of Bentan and Singapore sent an envoy to Palembang to invite the celestial king to be coronated in the land of Bentan (Raja Ali Haji, 1991:16–17).

The second allusion was when Hang Tuah, the naval commander during the period of the Melaka sultanate, was said to have sailed to Singapore after defeating "enemy vessels" from Siantan and Jemaja—islands in the Natuna Sea between Terengganu and Brunei—that "wanted to plunder the land of Palembang... because Gajah Mada, the prime minister of Majapahit, had ordered the chiefs from the Majapahit tributaries along the rivers to plunder Palembang... [they were] ordered by Patih Gajah Mada to seize [Palembang]" (Raja Ali Haji, 1991: 27-32).

In this anecdote, the chief (*Batin*) of Singapore's Orang Laut met Hang Tuah at the Singapore Strait en route to Bentan. After hearing about what had happened, the Batin of Singapore commanded all the Strait Islanders (*segala sakai*) to assist Hang Tuah and his four equally-renowned friends and they defeated the enemies. The account in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* informs us that at the time of these incidents, the people of Singapore and Bentan were recorded as Strait Islanders (a faction of Orang Laut) known as *sakai* (a term which had no pejorative association) and their chief was given the title *Batin*.

Third, the following chapter tells of the Singapore chieftain's (*Penghulu*) visit in search of Hang Tuah at the shop belonging to the latter's mother in the ward (*kampung*) of the Bendahara (prime minister) in Bentan. He then met the Bendahara to request an audience with the king to inform him of Jemaja's plan to attack Palembang and Siguntang Hill, and the chieftain's plan to drive them away with seven light vessels or *dendang* (Raja Ali Haji, 1991: 32-33).

The objective of the Singapore chieftain (*Penghulu*) in searching for Hang Tuah, who was said to have been at that time away under the tutelage of the Javanese hermit Aria Putera at Pancalusa Hill, was to relay the prime minister's request for Hang Tuah's help to thwart Jemaja's plan. This incident points to the importance of the Singapore chieftain as the royal page or messenger for the king at Bentan and his prime minister.

In the fourth allusion, *Hikayat Hang Tuah* in Chapter 16 names Raja Mambang Negara and Raja Indera Negara as two Orang Laut chiefs (*Penghulu Batin*) of Singapore and Bentan (Raja Ali Haji, 1991: 482). This can be cross-referenced to Captain Cornelius Matelief's 1606 record of Seri Raja Negara as Singapore's harbourmaster or *shahbandar* (Kwa, 1985:121).

William Shellabear's version of *Sejarah Melayu* (1960: 197, 226) also recorded the title Seri Raja Negara for the *Batin* during the reign of Sultan Ala'uddin. *Hikayat Hang Tuah* states that Raja Mambang Negara and Raja Indera Negeri were instrumental in

foiling the attempts by Dong Manila and Dong Cuala, under the command of governor-general of the Philippines and Portuguese ruler, to attack Melaka.

This links the event to the period of the unification of the Portuguese and Spanish empires between 1581 and 1640, and that the attacks were targeted at Johor (Kassim Ahmad, 2008: 460). According to one scholar, *Hikayat Hang Tuah* was written as a parable (*pasemon*), so it is no surprise that the events of the Johor period were portrayed as events of Melaka (Braginsky, 1990).

We note that the National Library Board's online resource History SG may have confused the title of Singapore's ruler in the era of the Melaka Sultanate, listing it as Seri Bija Negara Diraja, possibly a conflation of Seri Bija Diraja and Raja Mambang Negara.

Singapore Strait (Selat), and the titles Raja Negara Selat and Yang Dipertuan Selat

Another title for the ruler of Singapura appeared in the 18th century. *Hikayat Siak*, which documents the perspectives of the Minangkabau people in the Siak region, claims that Raja Kecik had gained the support of the Raja Negara Selat, "King of the Polity of the Strait" who governed the people of the Straits of Singapore and who had purportedly gathered his people and presented them to Raja Kecik of Siak in Bengkalis. This happened prior to Raja Kecik's attack and conquest of Johor in 1718.

Meanwhile the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Precious Gift), on the other hand, features the Bugis' point of view on the political moves in Johor-Riau history, namely the faction that in 1720 was invited to defeat Raja Kecik.

This account states that Raja Ismail of Siak in 1767 had attempted to defeat Johor and settled down in Singapore. "The people of Singapore were ruled ruthlessly, forced to take his side and made to prepare ships and boats." The subsequent clash took place in the waters of Tanah Merah (Barnard, 2001: 339).

The word *selat* in the title of a Singapore ruler seems to have reappeared at the time of the division of the domain of the Johor-Riau Sultanate, when Tengku Long, the elder prince, was crowned as Sultan Hussein in Singapore after his brother's coronation, conducted by the Bugis faction without his knowledge. The Bugis had crowned Sultan Abdul Rahman as the Sultan of Lingga.

The title used for Sultan Hussein in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* was Yang Dipertuan Selat, or "He who is made Lord of the Straits" (Raja Ali Haji, 1991: 200, 344), a new iteration of the title *Raja Negara Selat* which was bequeathed on leaders of the Orang Selat, literally "the People of the Straits", the term for the indigenous groups of Singapore and her offshore islands. Yang Dipertuan Selat may also be read as the counterpart for two other royal titles: Yang Dipertuan Besar (He who is made Great Lord) for the Malay king in Daik, Lingga, and Yang Dipertuan Muda (He who is made Junior Lord) for the Riau-based ruler of Bugis.

Overlooked histories of Malay, Bugis and Teochew plantation pioneers

Prior to Raffles' arrival in 1819, the *Datuk Temenggung* (title of nobility for chief of public security) had in 1812 established a settlement at the mouth of Singapore River, from which he administered the gambier and coconut plantations in the interior. The plantations were a result of the exploration of Chinese gambier farmers, specifically the Teochews, and Malay and Bugis coconut farmers mainly on the east coast. This was documented when Singapore was a British colony but was overlooked subsequently in the writing of post-independence history.

The *Tuhfat al-Nafis* highlights that Daeng Celak, around the 1740s and after the death of Sultan Sulaiman in Riau, became the first to hire Chinese labourers for the plantations owned by the Bugis and Malays in the Johor-Riau Sultanate. The harvest was sold in the port city of Riau, providing a major source of income for the Sultanate in the 18th century (Raja Ali Haji, 1991: 263–264) as recorded in various non-Malay sources (Vos, 1993; Trocki, 2007).

The Riau port attracted Chinese and English merchants and Javanese and Bugis traders — to the ire of the Dutch who wanted a monopoly. In 1784, the Dutch struck Riau, and the Malays and Bugis, including plantation owners, fled the port city. They left behind the Chinese labourers who took over the plantations and started a new life (Raja Ali Haji, 1991: 433; Vos, 1993:184).

Temenggong Abdul Rahman, better known as Daeng Ronggek, moved from the Riau island of Bulang to Singapore around 1811 (Hasan, 1995: 2452). He returned to Riau for a year after the death of Sultan Mahmud Shah II and back to Singapura in early 1813, according to Raffles in his letter dated 13 February 1819 (Bastin, 2014: 58). Daeng Ronggek continued the strategy that was established by Daeng Celak of opening up lands for plantations, contributing to the early 1800s reports by the British of Chinese gambier plantations in the hills around Singapore town and the inlands (Jackson, 1965: 78; Bartley, 1933).

The Bugis, Javanese and Malays had coconut and pineapple plantations on the east coast of Singapura (Earl, 1837: 352-353). For example, the pineapple plantation at Darat Nanas which stretches all the way to the coconut plantation in Tanah Merah Besar (sold to make way for the Changi Prison Complex in the mid-1930s) was owned by Javanese merchant Ali Mohd Noor (according to Khir Johari). His brother was Haji Yusoff "Tali Pinggang" who owned a belt business at the residence called Gedung Kuning (Yellow Mansion) in Kampong Glam. The coconut plantation at Geylang Kelapa, which later became Geylang Serai, was owned by Bugis merchant Fatimah Sulaiman al-Buqis of Melaka (Sweeney, 2005: 200) and inherited by her son-in-law who was from the Alsagoff family (Hanna, 1966: 2-3).

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Pensejarahan Singapura dan Nama-Nama Tempatnya



Dr Imran Tajudeen

Bersumberkan Sastera Melayu (Bahagian 2: Sesudah 1819)

This article is presently not available in English.

Abad ke-19 dan ke-20: Kesinambungan dan Perubahan

Peranan masyarakat Melayu, Jawa, Bugis dan kaum Nusantara lainnya di kota Singapura pada abad ke-19 dan ke-20 menampilkan sejumlah perkembangan yang sebahagiannya berkesinambungan dengan pola lama masyarakat dan ekonomi corak 'negeri', yakni kota-kota pelabuhan yang sekaligus pusat pemerintahan raja-raja Melayu. Kegiatan perladangan yang dijalankan di Singapura di bawah pentadbiran Datuk Temenggung semenjak 1812 sebelum kedatangan Raffles dan yang mula-mula dirintis di Riau di bawah pemerintahan Bugis tahun 1740-an telah dibincangkan dalam rencana awal. Pada masa yang sama terdapat

juga perkembangan yang sama sekali baru.

Dari sudut sastera, karya Melayu rakyat biasa dan suara serta peranan golongan luar istana telah bangkit menjadi sumber utama, bermula abad ke-19 di Singapura. Hal ini terjadi atas dua sebab malah boleh dikatakan Singapura merupakan antara pemangkin utama peralihan ini. Pertama, kuasa raja Melayu atas kota pelabuhan di Singapura sangat terjejas di bawah takluk penjajahan Inggeris dengan undang-undang barunya dan sistem pentadbiran ekonomi dan penataan kota yang telah merombak masyarakat majmuk kota pelabuhan yang dahulu telah wujud berkurun lamanya di bawah naungan kerajaan maritim Nusan-



TUMPUAN PERDAGANGAN: Kawasan di sekitar Sungai Rochor dan Sungai Singapura menjadi seakan pusat perdagangan pada awal abad ke-19.

tara dan menunjang kuasa serta wibawanya.

Kedua, telah bangkit sebuah dunia baru yang digerak oleh percetakan dan pendidikan – awalnya didukung cetak batu (lithography) yang sangat rancak diusahakan di Singapura terutama oleh pelopor berketurunan Jawa, kemudian lewat pendidikan moden, baik Islam alur pembaharu (Islah) mahupun Barat – yang melahirkan bidang kewartawanan dan persuratan Melayu dengan citra yang lebih luas daripada hal ehwal kerabat istana atau soal keagamaan dalam pemahaman yang terhad, terutama melalui media massa sebagai wadah perbincangan dan pemikiran masyarakat.

Pemukiman Perdagangan di Rochor Sebelum 1819

Terdapat dua sumber yang menunjukkan wujudnya sebuah pemukiman pedagang Bugis di Singapura yang mendahului tahun 1819. Pertama, Tuhfat al-Nafis merakamkan bahawa seorang pedagang Bugis bernama Karaeng Candera Puli telah berpindah dari Riau pada tahun 1818 sebelum ketibaan Farquhar di Riau pada bulan April (Raja Ali Haji 1991: 499), namun ke mana be-

> liau berpindah tidak dicatat pula. Beliau sebenarnya adalah suami Hajjah Fatimah dan telah menetap di kawasan yang kemudian menjadi Masjid Hajah Fatimah sekarang yang memang terletak dalam kawasan yang tercatat sebagai 'Bugis Town' dalam peta-peta lama, iaitu Kampung Rochor. Selama hayatnya Karaeng Candera Puli dianggap ketua segala pedagang Bugis di Singapura, dan jandanya kemudian meneruskan kepimpinannya itu.

> Kedua, sumber Cina dari marga Cho iaitu keturunan Cho Ah Chi, tukang kayu dari Pulau Pinang yang mengiringi kapal Indiana yang membawa Raffles buat pertama kalinya ke Singapura, mendakwa bahawa Cho disuruh mendarat da-

hulu di Singapura untuk meninjau keadaan sebelum Raffles mendarat. Cho dikatakan pergi ke Sungai Rochor, bukan ke Sungai Singapura (Chopard 1989: 11; Chua 1981).

Sementara itu sesudah 1819 kawasan sekeliling tembok kota raja atau Istana Kampung Gelam pula dicatat sebagai 'Bugis Town' dalam peta-peta tahun 1820, 1822, 1825, 1827, 1842, dan 1870. Ia merupakan kesinambungan dari pemukiman pedagang Bugis yang telah berpindah dari Riau semenjak 1818. Jadi nam-



GEYLANG SERAI TAHUN 1967: Gambar diambil sewaktu lawatan Perdana Menteri masa itu, Encik Lee Kuan Yew. Gambar koleksi Lembaga Arkib Negara.

paknya kesaksian peta-peta lama, sumber Bugis, dan sumber Cina semua menunjukkan pentiingnya kawasan Sungai Rochor di mana terletaknya pemukiman pedagang Bugis di kawasan sekitar Kota Raja di Kampung Gelam yang telahpun mantap sebelum kedatangan Raffles.

Kota Pelabuhan Pola Lama, Alaf Baru: Antara Nama Kampung dan Nama Jalan

Bugis Town ini kemudian disuruh pindah ke kawasan lebih kecil yang dinamakan 'Bugis Campong' dalam rencana Jackson Plan bertarikh Disember 1822. Perpindahan ini terjadi antara 1825 hingga 1830-an. Kawasan perpindahan ini kemudian menjadi satu-satunya kawasan kota yang mengandungi sebilangan nama jalan dalam bahasa Melayu sebelum nama-nama tersebut diubah menjadi Java Road, Palembang Road, Minto Road dan Sumbawa Road pada pertengahan 1840-an (Imran bin Tajudeen 2005). Tuhfat al-Nafis mencatat adanya seorang Syahbandar Singapura pada zaman awal penjajahan Inggeris di Singapura sewaktu Sultan Hussein masih hidup, yakni sebelum kemangkatannya pada tahun 1835 (Raja Ali Haji 1991: 545). Hal ini mengingatkan kita kepada peranan Singapura pada abad ke-16 sebagai tapak pemukiman Syahbandar bagi perdagangan kerajaan Johor-Riau. Nampaknya Syahbandar ini dikebumikan di Kubur Lama Kampung Gelam kerana terdapat sebuah batu nisan yang mencatat gelar "Orang Kaya Syahbandar".

Hikayat Abdullah (Sweeney 2008:385) pula mencatatkan dakwaan Raffles kepada Sultan Hussein bahawa 'segala bangsa sebelah sini, seperti Bugis, Melayu dan Berunai dan sebagainya itu semuanya terlebih suka berniaga kepada Tuan Sultan daripada berniaga sama orang-orang putih atau Keling atau China.' Sementara itu, Syair Dagang Berjual Beli karangan Tuan Simi di Singapura sekitar 1830-an menyatakan bahawa syair ini dikarang dari pengamatan langsung sang penyair di pabean (istilah Jawa bagi balai cukai kastam) – ia mengeluhkan nasib pedagang Melayu dan Bugis yang ditipu oleh pedagang Cina dan Keling (Tamil) yang disifatkan sebagai ejen atau pengansur barangan orang putih – Inggeris dan Eropah lainnya – dan walaupun dicuba melaporkan masalah mereka, akhirnya mendapati diri mereka diperdaya oleh sistem kepolisian dan pengadilan Inggeris yang pura-pura belaka (Muhammad Haji Salleh 1994).

Kesaksian ini mencatatkan sistem perdagangan yang berlangsung di Singapura yang melibatkan 'agency house' pedagang Inggeris yang menggunakan perantara Cina dan India untuk meraih keuntungan dari hasil-mahsul kepulauan Nusantara yang diperdagangkan ke Singapura. Pedagang Nusantara dibayar dengan candu dari India dan senjata buatan Eropah, manakala barangan hasil bumi Nusantara digunakan untuk membeli teh serta barangan lain dari Cina yang dikehendaki di Eropah.

Hikayat Abdullah (Sweeney 2008: 453) juga mencatatkan perobohan tembok asal Kota Raja di Kampung Gelam oleh Residen John Crawford – 'dengan keras disuruhnya pecahkan tembok Sultan itu' untuk pembinaan jalan, sebab 'betullah jatuh jalan itu di tengah kampung Sultan,' sehingga Kampung Sultan ini terbelah dua – jalan yang dimaksudkan ialah North Bridge Road sekarang, yang kemudian disusuli dengan Victoria Street.

Dunia Cetak Batu di Singapura dan Nama-Nama Tempat Yang Tercatat

Pada abad ke-19 dan awal abad ke-20, Singapura muncul sebagai pusat percetakan dan penyalinan manuskrip bagi pelbagai suku kaum Nusantara. Hal ini boleh dilihat dari nisba nama para penulis dan pencetak, yang mengikut bentuk penyataan nisba nama tempat kelahiran yang digunakan orang Arab namun merujuk kepada tempat-tempat di Nusantara, terutama Jawa. Ian Proudfoot (1993: 31-32) telah menjalankan kajian yang sangat terperinci dalam menyenaraikan karya-karya cetak batu yang dihasilkan di Singapura dan mendapati bahawa pencetak yang paling terkemuka pada lewat abad ke-19 dan yang mencetak jumlah terbesar adalah orang berketurunan Jawa pesisir.

Kolofon karya cetak pengusaha Jawa, Melayu dan bangsa lain yang mencetak dalam bahasa Melayu menunjukkan penggunaan nama jalan yang kadangkala ditukar-ganti dengan nama kampung untuk menyatakan alamat percetakan. Hal yang mengelirukan ini mengingatkan kita akan pernyataan H.T. Haughton (1891: 50) dalam kajiannya dari tahun 1891 bahawa orang Melayu tidak mengenali tempat menggunakan nama lorong atau jalan, tetapi lebih cenderung menggunakan nama kampung, suatu hal yang dianggapnya 'diketahui umum' ('as is well known') waktu itu. Maksud istilah 'kampung' dalam konteks kota tradisional perlu dijelaskan, kerana ia merujuk kepada pembahagian tataruang sosio-morfologi dan digunakan sebagai sinonim untuk istilah Inggeris 'town' dalam peta dan dokumen kolonial (Imran bin Tajudeen 2012: 225-227).

Sumber-sumber persuratan, terutama kolofon buku yang dicetak di Singapura oleh orang Jawa, Melayu, dan suku Nusantara yang lain serta Peranakan India, membolehkan kita memetakan tempattempat yang telah berperanan dalam dunia persuratan komersil melalui percetakan batu. Perincian nama tempat juga menggambarkan sistem kognitif yang menyifatkan tanggapan masyarakat mengenai bentuk atau ciri-ciri penting pada tempat-tempat berkenaan. Maklumat yang boleh didapatkan dari penamaan tempat yang tercatat dalam kolofon-kolofon karya cetak batu sangat kaya sebagai sumber sejarah pemukiman dan tidak dapat diungkap sepenuhnya dalam ruang yang terbatas ini.

Secara ringkas, kawasan Kampung Gelam menjadi tumpuan kegiatan percetakan Nusantara ini, dan terbahagi kepada kawasankawasan berikut: Kawasan Istana Kampung Gelam diberi nama Kampung Dalam, Dalam Kota, Kota Raja atau Kota Lama. Lorong di depan Masjid Sultan (dahulu Sultan Road, kini Bussorah Street) bernama Kampung Ajian/Hajian, negeri Kajian, Dusun Hajian/ Kajian, Dusun Bandar Kajian, dan Kampung Masjid. Kandahar Street bernama Kampung Melayu, Jalan Melayu, Lorong Kampung Dalam dan Tepi Kota. Terdapat juga Kampung Masjid Bahru (Jeddah Street yang mengandungi Masjid Maarof), Kampung Tembaga (Baghdad Street atau nama lamanya Little Cross Street), Kampung Silung, serta Kampung Boyan Lama. Nama kawasan bersebelahan yakni Kampung Rucuh (Rochor) juga tercatat, begitu juga Kampung Sungai Kallang. Selain Kampung Gelam dan Kampung Rucuh/Rochore terdapat nama-nama tempat berikut sebagai ganti nama jalan: Kampung Bangkahulu, Kampung Melaka, Kampung Bugis, Teluk Ayer dan Kereta Ayer, Kampung Susu, Kampung Dobi, Kampung Serani, dan Kampung Hailam.

Kesaksian Memoir Moden

Selain kesaksian Abdullah, memoir beberapa tokoh persuratan

dan kewartawanan Melayu Singapura memberikan kita peluang menyorot perjalanan hidup mereka, untuk menjenguk serba sedikit kawasan atau tempat-tempat yang berperanan dalam perjalanan sejarah masyarakat Melayu, baik umum mahupun khusus berkenaan dunia para aktivis, wartawan serta penggiat dunia persuratan lainnya. Selain itu memoir mereka memberikan gambaran yang cukup langka mengenai masyarakat kota berketurunan Nusantara di Singapura.

Memoir yang paling kaya dengan butiran tentang dunia masyarakat Melayu di Singapura pada pertengahan abad ke-20 adalah karya A. Samad Ismail. Melalui kesaksiannya kita dapati bahawa kehidupan dan kegiatan golongan Melayu-Jawa di kota Singapura nampaknya berlegar di kawasan bandar pelabuhan lama di Gelam-Rochor-Kallang yang disebut tadi. Ayahnya, Haji Ismail, adalah "daripada generasi lama Kesatuan Melayu", yakni Kesatuan Melayu Singapura atau Singapore Malay Union, dan "keluarga ayah[nya] adalah anak Rochore", yang disebut sebagai "asalnya sebuah perkampungan Melayu, merangkumi Minto Road, Palembang Road, Jawa Road dan Jalan Sultan" (A. Samad Ismail 1993: 79).

Samad (1993: 79) juga menceritakan perihal kawasan Kampung Gelam yang kita kenali sekarang, yakni "daerah Masjid Sultan yang termasuk Jalan Pahang, Bussorah Street, Arab Street dan Baghdad Street" yang juga bergelar "Kampung Tembaga" oleh kerana ramainya tukang tembaga di situ. Kawasan ini disifatkan sebagai "perkampungan orang-orang Jawa dan suku lain dari Indonesia" yang kebanyakannya "terdiri daripada peniaga kecil, pekedai dan petukang".

Keluarga besar A. Samad Ismail (1993: 79) semuanya tinggal dan berkarya di kota pelabuhan yang merangkumi Kampung Gelam dan Kampung Rochor. Datuknya sebelah bapa merupakan sheikh haji untuk orang Jawa Banyumas, manakala datuknya sebelah ibu merupakan saudagar permata yang tinggal di Bali Lane, yakni kawasan yang dinamakan Kampung Masjid Baharu merujuk kepada masjid yang didirikan oleh Kyai Fadhlullah Suhaimi yang kebetulan berjiran dengan keluarga datuknya ini. Perlu dicatat di sini bahawa Kyai Fadhlullah juga berasal dari Jawa, tepatnya Wonosobo. Menurut Melan Abdullah (1987:113), Samad dikatakan sangat rapat dengan suami kakak sulongnya, Haji Sam'on bin Haji Dahlan, pemilik kedai di Arab Street yang menjual kopiah, songkok dan capal, yang terkenal di Singapura sebagai pekerja sosial; Selain itu seorang lagi saudaranya, Kamarudin suami kepada kakak iparnya Hasnah, tinggal di No.7 Minto Road – Kamarudin pula mempunyai seorang saudara, Sheikh Sumon, yang merupakan sheikh haji bagi orang Pekan Baru dan Kampar dan tinggal di Bussorah Street dekat Masjid Sultan.

A. Samad Ismail (1993: 78) dibesarkan di Kampung Melayu Jalan Eunos tepatnya di Jalan Yahya. Beliau menyifatkan Kampung Melayu sebelum Perang Dunia Kedua 'sebagai yang terulung sekali – teratur dengan kemudahan air paip, kolam renang, padang bola dan sekolah' jika dibandingkan dengan kampungkampung sezaman lainnya. Arena Wati dalam memoirnya Enda Gulingku (terbitan pertama 1991) pula mencatat kehidupannya di Singapura dan alamat rumahnya yang berpindah-randah. Arena Wati, atau nama sebenar Muhammad Dahlan Abdul Biang / Andi Mohammad Dahlan Andi Buyung, lahir di Jeneponto, Makassar, cucu salah seorang daripada empat pedagang Makassar di mukim Kalumpang yang memiliki padewakang besar untuk berlayar seluruh Nusantara, yakni Abdul Fatah atau Patahu, seorang yang berdarah campuran Makasar dan Melayu Patani. Ayahnya berdagang sampai ke Singapura, dengan padewakang pelari bernama Samalewaya pada tahun 1920-an. Arena Wati menjadi nakhoda pada usia 17 tahun, dan mengendalikan sebuah skuner bernama Sorga Bone yang siap di galangan Kalumpang di tanah Makassar tahun 1939 dan berpangkalan di Cirebon dan Singapura.

Salah satu lawatannya ke Singapura yang terpenting berlaku pada tahun 1945, sejurus setelah ia lucut dari pendudukan Jepun dan pihak British kembali. Beliau mencatat suasana di penghujung pendudukan Jepun tatkala tepian jalan di kota Singapura dikuasai penjaja Cina, dan mencatat bahawa beliau (1991: 125) 'berasa Kampung Jawa [Arab Street], Kampung Kapur dan Geylang sudah ramai.' Beliau (1991: 282, 312) juga mencatat nama 'Pahang Street di Kampung Jawa', dan juga menyebut 'masyarakat Bugis dan Jawa-Melayu semukim Kampung Jawa, Kampung Tembaga dan sepantai Pasir Gembur ini' serta 'para saudagar Jawa-Melayu di wilayah Kampung Jawa' jadi nama 'Kampung Jawa' untuk kawasan Kampung Gelam sekitar Arab Street, 'Kampung Tembaga' bagi sebahagian Baghdad Street dan 'Pasir Gembur' untuk Jalan Sultan masih digunakan. Nama 'Kuala Singapura,' 'Muara Singapura' dan 'beting Kuala Singapura' tempat tambatan perahunya juga dirakamkannya (1991: 118, 170).

Arena Wati (1991: 169-173; 273, 277) tinggal lama di bebera-



Peta tahun 1825 ini menunjukkan beberapa tempat di Singapura termasuk Bugis Town dan Kampung Gelam – Peta ihsan © The British Library Board, IOR/X/3346

pa tempat di Kampung Kapur pada tahun 1940-an dan 1950-an, dan mencatat beberapa alamat seperti Rumah 68 Jalan Besar; sejumlah pondok Bawean seperti Teluk Dalam di No.55 Dickson Road; satu lagi di simpang Perak Street dan Dickson Road; Rumah 66; dan pondok-pondok lain di Upper Weld Road, Dickson Road, Perak Street dan Dunlop Street, antaranya Bawean Pangga. Beliau juga pernah tinggal di Palembang Road. Dari kegiatannya di Teluk Kallang, Arena Wati (1991: 118; 174) mengamati bahawa selain adanya pedagang Bugis yang ramai dengan kapalnya yang banyak, terdapat juga 'wangkang-wangkang Cina yang berlabuh dari Hailam Kongsi hingga ke Rochore dan muara Sungai Kalang' dan juga 'terlalu banyak kapal kayu di laut Rochore dan Tanjung Rhu... [yang] semuanya milik Cina' di samping ramainya 'canting-canting Melayu' di sana. Arena Wati (1991: 129-130; 136) juga mencatat beliau mendengar cerita bahawa sewaktu pendudukan Jepun, orang suku laut, baik Orang Seletar mahupun Orang Kallang yang tinggal di 'beting muara Sungai Kallang', telah 'pernah dipaksa oleh British pindah dari sana, dan ditempatkan di sekitar tasik air masin di Ulu Kallang Basin' dan akhirnya berpindah ke 'Kampung Kucang, Lorong Tiga, Geylang.'

Pemetaan Budaya dan Sejarah Masyarakat dari Sastera Melayu

Penggunaan sumber-sumber Melayu dapat memberikan sudut pandang yang sangat berbeza tentang sejarah Singapura, termasuk sejarah nama tempat dan lokasi pelbagai kegiatan serta perkembangan masyarakat. Namun, sumber-sumber Melayu ini



Peta pada 1839 ini menunjukkan nama-nama kampung dan jalan di kota Singapura. Peta Koleksi Orient Pte. Ltd., ihsan Lembaga Arkib Negara.

masih belum digunakan dengan sepenuhnya dalam pensejarahan masyarakat Melayu setempat, apalagi dalam penulisan sejarah Singapura secara amnya. Nama tempat boleh memberikan kita butiran atau pembayang mengenai sejarah masyarakat Melayu yang kemudiannya boleh diberi penataan melalui pemetaan, agar tempat-tempat bersejarah serta kesan-kesannya di kota Singapura dapat diberikan perhatian serta penghargaan yang sewajarnya.

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Paradigm Shift in Singapore Malay Literature



Dr Azhar Ibrahim Alwee

Malay literature in Singapore has had a long history, often mentioned in literary classics as an ancient city prior to the establishment of the Melaka sultanate. The setting up of British factories in Singapore in 1819, the emergence of Munshi Abdullah and the introduction of printing technology brought about a significant impact on the development of Malay literature.

The city of Singapore became the hub for regional intellectuals and activists of politics, religion, language, literature and the arts, many of whom decided to settle down here. Especially with the establishment of Malay Studies at the University of Malaya in Singapore in 1955, Singapore was the centre of Malay literature, culture, printing and journalism before Malay literary and cultural activities moved to Kuala Lumpur.

Singapore's independence in 1965 ushered in the next phase of Malay literature, a realm essential to discourse and research in understanding the paradigm shift of the Malays in the Republic, specifically in relation to ideas, values, aesthetics and room for involvement.

Apart from the Malay language and Islam, literary culture can also strengthen the community's regional ties with the neighbouring countries in the Malay archipelago. Malay literature is, after all, a cornerstone of the Malay identity in Singapore. Discourse on the paradigm shift in Singapore's Malay literature is integral to the appreciation of literature as a documentation of culture and artistry in the form of poetry and literature.

The school of thought we are going to look at here encompasses perceptions, values and worldviews of Singapore writers and their writing styles. There are times when the writing style upstages the storyline and times when a captivating plot is failed by an underwhelming storytelling. This is why aesthetics cannot be dismissed in analysing the thought that goes into the writing.

This study has found that writers, whether from The Writers' Movement '50 (Asas '50) or beyond, hold true to the idea that literature is to motivate and enlighten the society. Not only is this analysis crucial in mapping out the pattern and extent of our literature, but also for us to cast a critical and empathic eye on it. We know there are viewpoints or mindset in Malay literature that have yet to be raised comprehensively or with due diligence, but it is on the back of this awareness that we try our best to unearth the root of the matter.

There are viewpoints and wisdom that need to be further developed, an effort that calls for careful treatment, especially for writers who are fighting to take literature to greater heights for the community, country and humanity. But this can be done only after we've learnt about the literary landscape and its ideas, which need to be nurtured meticulously.

Literary intellectuals

We need to scrutinise the Malay literature in Singapore because not only can it help us appreciate the masterpieces, but it's also the only realm where thoughts and aesthetics that are expressed in Malay are consistently created and featured in public discussions.

The Malay-educated individuals who have long dominated the Malay literature in Singapore are familiar with literary developments in the Peninsula including Indonesia. But the new breed of writers, who are English-educated and live in the cosmopolitan city of Singapore, are more exposed to Euro-American or Third World literature through formal education and other forms of exposure. They are a generation of Singapore Malays who are as steadfast in their distinct identity as their predecessors were intimate with the spirit of kinship within the Malay archipelago.

In discussing the literary paradigm, we inevitably have to consider the literary intellectuals as a social group, just as there are religious bodies, political elites and professional groups. Malay literary intellectuals, together with cultural advocates and language teachers, form the biggest group to use the Malay language, making them the key factors in the development of the language and literature here.

This group is the backing needed for discourse on Malay literature,



In the hands of Isa Kamari, a more complex presentation of history is crafted, combining historical narratives with social memory and issues. His novels Satu Bumi (1998), Atas Nama Cinta (2006), Memeluk Gerhana (2007), Rawa (2009) and Duka Tuan Bertakhta (2011) are historical novels that "offer alternative

historical narratives based on stories by common individuals or groups... stemming from the conscience of the people who experienced it"
arts and culture. We must also bear in mind that paradigm refers to general ideal types and not a specific school of thought. We must not consider the theme in a piece of work to be an absolute representative of just one thought but one that encompasses the themes found in other works. The stress here is on viewing an ideology as a window to local mindset, culture and art — proof that the appreciation of literature is not detached from the ideas/ ideology in a society.

It is common for writers championing different literary genres to challenge one another's ideas through their own work, making literature an indispensable source to researchers and observers in their pursuit of understanding the mindset of the Malay community in Singapore. There are five critical questions they need to consider in discussing paradigm:

- 1. How much influence do political and socio-economic conditions have on the ideas behind Malay literature?
- 2. How do the Malay writers in Singapore respond to the dominant ideology?
- 3. What are their primary concerns?
- 4. What are the ideas and values that have been omitted?
- 5. What are the roles and contributions of Singapore writers?

Evaluation channel

Every society strives to be peaceful, just, free and respected, with each member being treated with dignity. Contemporary political philosopher Avishai Margalit wrote in his book that the institutions of a decent or civilised society would not humiliate the people under their authority and the citizens would not humiliate one another. These societal goals are examined extensively in literature. Different factors contribute to the shaping of the schools of thought in literature, such as the proposition and problematisation of: the value of man's grit, shortcomings and abilities, and its dignity; the political, economic, cultural and religious facts that affect life; the idea or notion of value, or the lack of it, in a society; and basic issues such as rights, liberty, justice, love, family, peace, security, ethics, social, history, aesthetics, natural and conscience.

Malaysian literary intellectual Kassim Ahmad, who saw writers as the soul and voice of the people, made four positive observations about literature: It provided a true and profound portrayal of human characters through creative means, it raised individual awareness of the community, it united the people in fulfilling their social responsibilities and it motivated them to do good. These drew on a writer's intellectual, moral and spiritual maturity and sensibility, which would come naturally if the writer lived among the common people, empathised with them and be their voice.

Kassim insisted that writers (including critics) had to be aware of ideological oppressions and to spread that awareness to the people. But in order to do this, they would have to shed the idea that they had to be free from politics and ideology, and remain neutral in a political environment built on suppressive ideologies and justified dehumanisation.

The cornerstone of thinking is the sociology of knowledge evaluating a notion in its historical context and against a collective ideology. We are aware that ideas mirror the values and mindset of a group and they are generated by the clash of ideas between groups. The clash is not made explicit but every literary idea is usually wrapped in a universalist, nationalist, Islamist, ethnic and/ or regionalist notion.

In any developing society, regardless of its dominant idea, there is always room for dissenting or undercurrent ideas. As members of a society, writers' reactions to ideas are shaped by their own beliefs, thoughts and experiences. So, the question is why do some ideas evolve and live on while others do not? What makes a piece of work a masterpiece it embodies, as summed up as the doyen of Malay literature, Masuri S N: "It is our duty as writers to cultivate a positive mental agility that is always ready and willing to express critical yet incisive, profound, fresh and constructive views to overcome the chaos and impulse in the pursuit of superficial gratification."

Proposition and opposition

In its interpretation, a notion has to be viewed as part of a larger context instead of a disengaged, independent theme that can be extracted individually. It has to be assessed dialectically for denunciation (dehumanising behaviours and ideas that are unjust, damaging, a violation of rights and an abuse of power) and annunciation (the drive towards improvement, reform and dignity as dictated by sensibility and law to uphold justice, peace and equality). A piece of work should ideally have a good balance of denunciation and annunciation.

In modern Malay literature, proposition and opposition can co-exist — albeit an imbalance — and they both have to be examined for an objective review. Sociologist Lian Kwen Fee had once compared English and Malay writers in Malaya/Singapore to study the influence of history on thought patterns in Malay literature and found the amalgamation of identity in the works by the Malay writers to be the driving force in their engagement with the community.

"The Malay language writers... did not possess the self-confidence of their [English] counterparts as far as their economic future was concerned, first in a colonial and later in an ex-colonial society. They were doubly marginalised: In colonial society which held firmly to a social Darwinist view of the hierarchy of non-white races, the 'native' Malays were considered close to the bottom; in feudal society the boundary between aristocrats and commoners was clearly demarcated. Hence, they were pulled in two directions, one toward a class-consciousness within their community, and the other toward a 'race-consciousness' between communities. The effect was that they wrote with a greater sense of deprivation and uncertainty about their condition. Paradoxically, this created a sense of urgency amongst the Malay literati in formulating and asserting Malay identity."

This observation is integral to the analysis of the development and grit of the literary paradigm, particularly in Singapore.

Dominant ideology

Discourse on Malay literature cannot be disengaged from the political and cultural atmosphere in multiracial and multilingual Singapore. Also to be taken into account are the rapid economic growth, a democracy shaped by the political culture, the voice of a civil society and the acknowledgment of those who got left behind — a category the Malay community falls under.

The dominant ideology influences literature in two manners: It shapes the writers' thoughts and the way they are evaluated — consciously or otherwise — and it affects their rebuttal or reaction to the dominant ideology in the form of criticism or escapism. The degree of criticism varies among writers, with some being upfront while others do it with metaphors and symbols.

The ideology proposed by groups is not always abstract. It can influence how we think, act, imagine and even shape our vision. The social, cultural, political and economic impact on ideology cannot be discounted. Anxiety and awkwardness in literary discussions of ideology is proof that it is unreasonable to politicise the study of literature. This is typical of conservative discourses that insist on keeping literature out of discussions on ideology or politics.

Sociologist Stanley Aronowitz in "Politics and Higher Education in the 1980's" says that ideology is not exclusive to the political arena but something that is experienced through literature, music, painting and social connections, be it from an original creation or a contemporary art form.



Latiff in his novel Batas Langit echoes the uncertainties of the Singapore Malay community who would become citizens of the Republic postindependence amid the outcry of the poor over their precarious existence in the young nation. The novel fleshes out

the trauma and historical anxiety in the Malay community post-independence, giving voice to sentiments that were rarely expressed. Efforts to understand the definition of ideology and the analysis of its effects are crucial. Sociologist Karl Mannheim stresses on the importance of analysing ideologies because they are "interpretations of situations which are not the outcome of concrete experiences but are a kind of distorted knowledge of them, which serves to cover up the real situation and works upon the individual like compulsion". When we identify and assess a particular ideology, we must ascertain the presence, dearth or emptiness of a concept or idea in the realm of a thought because "not only does the absence of a concept reflect the absence of a view, but also the absence of a resolve to tackle life issues".

Progressive thinking in literature can be realised only when writers are fully committed to creating works that are closely connected to their society. We end by quoting Malaysian literary figure Keris Mas: "The problems of writers, past and present, are in refining perceptions, the mind and sensitivities, and getting to know the people and society."

Observation and caution

The room for voicing out is limited by rapid development process, rigorous political order, regulated opportunities and the prohibition of criticism and dissent in the political and social arenas. The oppressive situation becomes even more palpable when religious bodies, trade unions and dailies are controlled and a one-party system remains in power for decades.

But the literary and artistic realm is a relatively "autonomous" arena where political pacification barely exists but neither is it a bastion of opposition. Compared to other domains that have been subdued, the literary realm, including the Malay's, has been an arena for expressing criticism and cynicism towards the dominant ideology. This explains the tendency for writers to pick themes and presentation styles that allude to their criticisms.

It is no surprise if blatant protest literature cannot be found in Singapore, unlike in Indonesia and Malaysia, as literary expressions have to avoid being too instigating or political for public consumption. Issues that get the wide berth include the Malay advantage in the constitution, Malay as the national language, Malays in the military, comparison between Malays and other ethnic groups in economic and education performances, and employment opportunities for the Malays in the economic sector. Discussing these sensitivities is considered chauvinistic, a detrimental label when flagged by the authorities.

This begs the question: Are critical tendencies born out of political scrutiny or suppression? Or is skirting around sensitive topics a sign of political maturity or the lack of political awareness? Do such political and cultural conditions result in writers' tendency to be pessimistic, submissive and unresourceful in their works?

Sociologists Sharifah Maznah and Shaharuddin Maaruf share this common view on post-independence Malay literature in Singapore: "The separation of Singapore from Malaysia and the consequent minority status of the Malays had a great emotional impact on Singapore Malay writers. Generally, the response is one of sadness, bitterness, anger and hurt of being displaced or marginalised politically... The literary writers of the times responded to Malay lag in development and minority status negatively. Instead of instilling hope and optimism through their works, inspiring the Malays to progress, prominent Malay writers mainly expressed pessimism and identity crisis through their works."

This view, though reasonable, has to take into account that nuances hinge on the care put into portraying the current state of affairs — known as illustration, a term coined by Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire for the "process of knowing reality, how reality is made" — even if the analysis is not objective. These nuances differ from complaining and whining, blaming others and lamenting. Constructive nuances are, in my opinion, more frequently expressed — a depiction of reality to demonstrate a particular condition or situation.

Gripe born out of the critical illustration of a condition would eventually turn into pessimism and thwart the process of developing a complete and empowering awareness. Illustrations in literature, in the hands of talented writers, can make a scene come alive and shed light on it against the backdrop of what the society is dealing with. The illustrations, however melancholic and repetitive, aim to impress upon the reader the extent of the problems faced by the community.

It can be said that a pessimistic voice is easier to express than a loud protest but the voices in Singapore literary works are still "under control" and nowhere vehement. Malay writers tend to pick specific themes, restricting their pattern and pace, to avoid standing out in a culture of conformity and self-imposed censorship. But it is impossible for a large number of writers to think and act similarly, unless their response, which may be considered mainstream, is an acceptance of the dominant ideology.

A writer can have more than one line of thought, depending on context and confidence, and it can start off bold, fade off and return strong. For example, the call for literature for the community during the time of Asas '50 intensified thereafter, sprouting more literary genres even as established writers still wrote to create awareness and to channel their social criticisms.

Type and level of response

The context of the times, socio-political background and literary trends have to be factored in when identifying and analysing the mindsets in Singapore Malay literature and it is impossible to provide a definitive list of schools of thought. For the sake of discussing emerging and developing mindsets, I will touch on three types of responses from writers in the context of Singapore politics and culture.

First is the upfront response in which writers use literature as a platform to touch on issues that need to be addressed and to discuss from different standpoints the state of the Malay community in the face of its challenges and problems. The literary works produced often document the lives of the Singapore Malay community and the writers' views and assessments of the phenomenon or issues it faces.

The second type of response is indirect, where literary works feature alternative ideas, ethics or humanitarian and religious views to exhort its audience to become more spiritual, moralistic and ethical, without directly touching on the issues plaguing the society or the structures and systems that serve as as a foundation to the community and country. A striking example of this type of response is the focus on the lamentation of individual misdeed instead of a social misdeed (such as poverty and social neglect due to a structural imbalance of the community).

The third response, which keeps growing, is akin to escapism and viewed as pop culture. It stems from various reasons, among which are the suppression that leads to a lacklustre social awareness and pandering to the market demand for casual writing and entertainment. This type of writing, though commendable, lacks in quality and has a short shelf life. Some works in this category are incomprehensible as they lack a clear social vision or have poor penmanship, regardless of the standard of its prose. They exist just to tell a story but their literary values are questionable. Our focus is on the first two responses, where literary trends (such as left or right leaning, proletariat, cosmopolitan, regional or Islamic) can be identified in a work and they compete (implicitly or explicitly) for attention. Based on the responses by writers towards the current political climate and culture, the mindsets can be grouped into upfront responses to the problems of the Singapore Malay or humanity at large, and indirect responses embedded in the likes of works with nuances of religion, mysticism, family matters or social harmony.

1. Upfront response

This response is flexible or responsive to a situation, dealing with existing problems and challenges albeit varying qualities, standards, trends and degrees of attentiveness among writers. A writer who gives this type of response might have a convergence of thoughts as discussed below. This response can be viewed in three ways:

a. Scrutinising problems and poverty of Malays

Malay issues and social criticism had been discussed extensively in major literary works in Singapore, from which Budi Darma, renowned Indonesian writer and observer of Singapore Malay literature, drew the conclusion that "criticism is the hallmark of Singapore literature". The portrayal of poverty beleaguering the Malay community as so dire that people are willing to do illegal work can be seen in the novel Tak Ada Jalan Keluar (1962) by Suratman Markasan. Celebrated writer Harun Aminurrashid produced Simpang Perinang (1966), which optimistically portrayed a poor Malay family's perseverance in working hard to break out of the poverty cycle. In Minah Joget Moden (1968), Harun wrote empathetically about a dancer, whose profession was considered by the conservative society to be immoral and they refused to understand people like Minah.

There are also works that focus on the issue of moral collapse, such as cohabitation as featured in *Mail Mau Kawin* (1976) and the prevailing social hierarchy in *Syarifah* (1998), both novels by Muhammad Ariff Ahmad. What is more interesting are works that criticise the situation and position of the Malay community, especially post-independence and Singapore's modernisation process.

Suratman in his following poem reflected on the theme of loss, which was also discussed in his novel *Penghulu yang Hilang Segala-galanya* (1998). Once again, this theme pulsated in the poem that told of the loss of the native Hawaiian as a reflection of the experience of the Malays as an indigenous population of the island of Temasek.

Di pulau indah ini (On this beautiful island) Keaslian sudah pudar (Authenticity has faded) Penduduk berbahasa asing (Inhabitants of foreign languages) Tanah milik sudah terjual (Own land has been sold) Di pulau ini (On this island) Pencakar langit orang punya (Skyscrapers belong to others) Ladang nanas begitu luas (Pineapple plantations lay wide) Cuma tempat mengigit jari (A place for regrets)

Kisah pulau indah ini (The tale of this beautiful island) Adalah cerita ulangan (Is nothing new) Tanah airku bersama (My homeland) Yang sudah bertukar rupa (Has transformed) Political conditions and the dominant idea in interpreting Singapore's history, culture and nationalism has edged established writers to use literature to express their viewpoints, either through direct criticism or in the form of satire such as in the short stories by Mohamed Latiff Mohamed, *Mondok* and *Lembu* (2004), and Suratman's futuristic novel *Tiga Lelaki* (2005), in which he explicitly touches on the country's political domination restricting voice and political freedom.

b. Subservient version of history or expression of society's social memory

Literature is also an arena for presenting history at a time when discourse or scholarly literature serves the dominant version of social history and omits the alternative versions. Since independence, writers have leveraged the literary platform through historical novels to instill a nationalist spirit against colonialism and to immortalise the glorious national history of our forefathers. Harun's historical novels *Panglima Awang* (1959), *Anak Panglima Awang* (1961), *Dayangku Fatimah* (1967) and *Peristiwa Laksamana Cheng Ho ka-Melaka* (1969) are prime examples.

The decades after independence saw historical works based on social memory, which were retold verbally, and composed of a mix of facts and myths. We can trace this to the drama *Wak Cantuk*, written in poetic prose by A Ghani Hamid. And in the novella *Desa Ini Hatiku* (2000), Ghani mixed historical events with fiction. Nostalgic poems like *Betatapun Nyanyian Rindunya, si Anak Geylang Serai* (1999) by Djamal Tukimin gave a glimpse into life in a Malay village. In the hands of Isa Kamari, a more complex presentation of history is crafted, combining historical narratives with social memory and issues. His novels *Satu Bumi* (1998), *Atas Nama Cinta* (2006), *Memeluk Gerhana* (2007), *Rawa* (2009) and *Duka Tuan Bertakhta* (2011) are historical novels that "offer alternative historical narratives based on stories by common individuals or groups... stemming from the conscience of the people who experienced it". As a writer, Isa realised that the novel could also "show how aspects of historical consciousness were entwined in other aspects of life", as reflected in his book *Sastera Dan Kesedaran Sejarah: Mengisahkan Kembali Ceritera Singapura*.

We observe that Harun's historical novels are an introduction to the past, set in the context of gaining independence, for readers to learn of the grandeur of the Malays at the time when colonial history had diminished the heart and soul of the community. Isa's historical novel is an attempt to convey an alternative version of history, which differs from the dominant version that is presented as formal and conventional. As mentioned by Abdul Rahman Hanafiah in his book *Mana Sikana* (2003), Singapore Malay writers use their works to talk about tradition, identity and authority for the benefit of the readers.

c. Leveraging intellectualism to give voice to humanity

This trend demonstrates the use of intellectual and ethical expressions to portray the Malay mind and behaviour. It is widely explored by writers such as Rasiah Halil in her short story *Pertemuan* and Sa'eda Buang in *Razi* and *Ke Puncak Pun Tidak*, which pits the life philosophy of striving for individual perfection and happiness against the religious demand for perfect ethics in social piety.

In it, the character of Rafeah is chided by her friend Rosnah for rejecting the "perverse" knowledge taught to her at the university. Rosnah sees the purpose in attaining modern knowledge: "For humanity. Through it, we learn about our ethical shortcomings, the handicaps of our systems. Through these theories, we know where we are lacking as humans who are constantly dissatisfied and its causes. I believe we should use new discoveries to find our way out. Through the theories that you have labelled as deviant, we can identify detrimental events that were triggered by man's unbridled instincts and learn from them. This is how I believe we can benefit from this knowledge. And isn't doing good for the community a religious demand?"

This paradigm adds a touch of intellectualism to literature, through discussions about the community and the creative and critical use of cultural symbols.

Another example is this verse by Dr Hadijah Rahmat, author of the poem *Cerita Rakyat III*:

Kita (We)

Anak-anak Melayu (The Malay people) bukan si Tenggang durhaka (Are neither the rebellious Tenggang) bukan juga si Malim Kundang durjana (Nor the wicked Malim Kundang) Kita mahu mengakhiri seloka (We want to end the jest) Mat Jenin, Pak Pandir, Pak Kaduk dan Lebai Malang (Mat Jenin, Pak Pandir, Pak Kaduk and Lebai Malang) Kita perlu cipta sebuah karya agung seni (We need to create glorious art) Rakaman dan cerminan sebuah perjuangan (Immortalising a struggle) mengorak langkah-langkah cemerlang (Taking outstanding steps) menghapus kesesatan (Stamping out deviance) menangkis latah dan gejala rimba (Stave off uneducated talk and behaviour) dengan kecanggihan ilmu, wahana dan wawasan waja (With the right knowledge, means and vision) dan kentalnya iman dan amal

(With fastidious faith and practice) *Kita pacu tenaga dan rebut keunggulan budi dan cita* (Channel our strengths and fight for excellence in moral and aspiration) *mengukir citra indah bangsa dan manusia* (Etching a beautiful image of race and mankind) *di Panggung jagat raya* (On the grand stage)

Rasiah responded with her poem Yang Baru Melayu (2005):

Kitakah orang Melayu baharu (Are we the new Malay) Yang sering terasa malu (Constantly ashamed) Masyarakat dan warisan (Society and heritage)

Kitakah orang Melayu baharu (Are we the new Malay) Yang mendabik dengan kebendaan (Proud of possessions) Sekaligus bernafas keagamaan (While being religious) Mengisytihar kehebatan (Declaring supremacy) Yang sepuhan dan salutan (Entrenched) Tanpa sedar Makna sebarang kelebihan (Without understanding)

Apakah kita orang Melayu baharu (Are we the new Malay) Atau orang-orang yang baru Melayu (Or people who are newly Malay) Anak-anak Macaulay (Macaulay's people) Berkulit coklat, cerah, sawo matang, (Of brown, fair and tan skin) Bercelaru menghidupi fahaman borjuis (Misinterpreting bourgeois) Aib pada khazanah, warisan, (Disgrace to treasure, heritage) Dan bertingkah dengan minda tertawan? (Behaviour of a defeated mind?)

Renowned poet Masuri also composed poems on humanity, aimed at instilling civility, as seen in his creation *Azam Baru* (1996):

Kehidupan kita sekali ini (We in this life) Bukan bersorak. Kita mulakan (Not cheering but starting) Sekarang tindak dan gerak (Our movements) Bukan berputar-putar melingkari (Not going in circles) Bulatan yang tak putus-putus (A never-ending concentric)

Pemikiran sekarang telah kita bentuk (We have shaped our mind) Menjadi peta perjalanan (To be our map) Untuk mencapai (To attain) Tujuan dan idaman; (Goals and dreams) Setiap kita yang terus mengingini (We who keep yearning) Akan tidak kita lalui lagi; (It'll no longer be the case) Kita sekarang berdiri (We now stand) Meyakini hari muka adalah sari (Confident of the future) Kehidupan dunia berwarna seri (A beautiful life) Kehidupan akhirat kekal mewangi (Afterlife remains rosy)

2. Indirect response

Skirting does not imply a lack in quality but simply the tendency to produce literary works without openly addressing the problems of society openly. Denunciation is not a prominent feature in this style, with a leaning towards proposition and annunciation. This style is rather outdated as a literary involvement in discussing community matters but significant in creating works to document experiences and spiritualism at a personal level.

In this type of response, writers tend to preach, such as the missionary-type works that proclaim themselves to be Islamic literature, Johar Buang's works which are nuanced in Sufism, and works with strong moral appeal or pointing towards moralism as featured in Peter Augustine Goh's short stories. The annunciation of a value and conviction of an idea are clearer in this type of response, whose motive is to produce works that can invigorate the soul and faith amid a modern lifestyle riddled with temptations.

Although there is nothing wrong with the emphasis in this type of response, the content needs to be scrutinised. These works do not intend to talk openly about the condition of the Malay community, the omission often caused by a moral dilemma or opposing Islamic values. Johar, as a Sufi poet, has consistently written poems and short stories nuanced in mysticism, from asceticism and penitence to idolism and occultism. This style of response encompasses Ghani's poems, which are often melancholic observations set against a natural backdrop, as seen in this verse from Antara Penghuni Alam (1965):

Tapi, mengapa senja menghitam (But why is the evening darkening) Melindung tangan-tangan durjana (Protecting the evil hands) Meragut dan mencakar alam, (Strangling and scraping the earth) Dan musnah bumi pusaka? (Destroying the inherited earth) Mereka menoda budi (They stain the character) Menyala pertarungan, (Stoke clashes) Kami dari kumpulan penghuni (We the inhabitants) Melukis perdamaian (Paint a picture of peace)

Lukisan kami mohon cinta (Our painting calls for love) Antara penghuni buana (Among Earth's children)

It is not an exaggeration to say that there are literary works in Singapore that sound soothing and melodious despite their content being fluff or vague.

Singapore spirit and identity

The ability to identify themes centred on awareness and understanding of the issues and challenges faced by society, and the confidence to present them in literature is the product of an involved literary culture and exposure to critical literary discourse and ideas from writers and activists. This is encouraging as literature should not be a mere space-filler but a platform for constructive thoughts to flourish.

A reflection of city life has been a prevalent trend in Singapore Malay literature. It is pegged to the nation's rapid growth, drawing writers to talk about urban folk and literature, and has helped put local writers ahead of their regional peers. But there is still room for the clarity of city or urban literature to be further refined. We have to pay attention to how local writers respond to major changes at a time when Singapore was developing fervently as a city of commerce, industry and habitat.

The urban theme is often featured in major works associated with life and destiny, and as a Singapore trademark. Local Malay literature is a prime example of how the Singapore Malay writers identify themselves. Today, vernacular literature — Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil — is referred to as national literature.

The scholar Kwen Fee once remarked that the Malay community, as natives of the island, was most exemplary in establishing a Singapore identity. Established Malay writers have written extensively about the lives of Singapore Malays, as evident in novels, short stories and poems.

Harun's novel *Simpang Perinang* (1966) is a good example, its main characters moving readers with their struggle amid financial hardship and eliciting awe with their never-say-die attitude. The display of grit symbolised optimism and positivity, and embodied the spirit of a pluralistic society. Such works are the distinct opposites of works laden with racial prejudice and stereotypes, like that by Hadijah.

Still on the theme of poverty, Latiff's novella *Kota Air Mata* (1977) painted Singapore as a city of rapid development whose poor are drowning in tears. The protagonist, Ani, does not have money for school, worries over exam fees, goes home from school on an empty stomach, has a non-conducive home and teachers who say that the poor have only themselves to blame and that the cunning can easily outmanoeuvre the weak.

The novella may have played up pessimism and defeat but it serves as a reminder that poverty is caused by the dominant structure, which is itself a major obstacle to an escape. This makes the sweeping call to simply "embrace progress" delusional. The cynical Latiff wraps up his poem *Kota Kelahiranku* (1976) with this demand:

Kota kelahiranku (My city of birth) Di suatu masa di suatu ketika (Once upon a time) Di saat langit merah jingga (When the sky is orange) Kami akan bangun mengangkat muka (We will rise with upturned faces) Memandang langit terbuka (Facing the open sky) Hari ini mengundang kami menjadi lelaki satria (The day beckons to us knights) Kota ini melarang kami menitiskan air mata (The city forbids us from tearing)

Isa's novel *Menara* (2002) takes on a more contemplative look at life in the city, centring on a talented architect searching for the meaning of life and humanity. The intellectual nuances were clearly developed in this novel, with criticisms expressed delicately and the theme of isolation well-reflected in the way the protagonist overcomes it. City folk may feel confused or disoriented with the deluge of information all around them but that is also how seekers are born, as cited by the protagonist, reflecting on the chaos the educated young find themselves in as they embrace modernity and hold on to traditions at the same time.

"I face different life philosophies for the first time. I delve into the various mindsets, most of which are clashing with and attacking my soul. They cause me to slip on the floor of philosophy, slippery from my negligence in keeping my faith pure. My faith in religion is flimsy and my thoughts chaotic. I no longer know which is fact, which is fiction."

There is also the Singapore Malay voice crying for equal opportunity in the novel: "Because I've been trampled on, my soul awakens to show the society that has ousted me that I can succeed in the face of adversity." Such is the self-value of an individual or a community and Isa sees isolated city folk as people who are afraid of their own shadows.

The Malay identity is insinuated not only in language, religion and culture, but also places in a developed modern city where the community feels at home, where their identity and future can flourish. There are, on the other hand, writers who bemoan the villages lost to urbanisation and names of new towns that sound alien to them. Latiff wrote in *Potret Singapura*: Terbayang Geylang Serai (Geylang Serai comes to mind) dan Kampung Wak Tanjung (Also Kampung Wak Tanjung) menjadi Ang Mo Kio (In place are Ang Mo Kio) Pek Ghee dan Yishun (Teck Ghee and Yishun)

Latiff gets all nostalgic in Di Kota Ini (1980):

Di kota kosmopolitan (In the cosmopolitan city) yang tiada lagi irama dondang sayang (Gone is the melody of dondang sayang) tiada lagi sorak-sorai (Gone are the cheers) mendaulatkan bahasa kebangsaan (Revering the national language)

Latiff in his novel *Batas Langit* echoes the uncertainties of the Singapore Malay community who would become citizens of the Republic post-independence amid the outcry of the poor over their precarious existence in the young nation. The novel fleshes out the trauma and historical anxiety in the Malay community post-independence, giving voice to sentiments that were rarely expressed.

Suratman similarly gave voice to the people's gripe about having to move out of their homes to make way for housing developments.

Aku kehilangan lautku (I lose my sea) Aku kehilangan bukitku (I lose my hill) Aku kehilangan diriku (I lose myself)

Aku tak punya apa lagi (I have nothing left) Sri Lanang dan Nila Utama tinggal nama (Sri Lanang and Nila Utama are now just names) Saudagar peribumi menolak bahasa (Native merchants reject the language) Mengejar Inggeris lambang kemajuan (Chasing English, a symbol of progress) Puisi prosaku kurang dibaca (My prose hardly read) Tak juga sastera dunia (So is world literature)

Singapuraku (My Singapore) aku mengerti sekali (I truly understand) di sini tempatku (This is my place) tapi aku tidak tahu bila (But I don't know when) aku akan menemui segala kehilanganku (Will I find all that I've lost)

What can we deduce from the lament? Does this mean that city life is not conducive for raising a Malay community that can keep up with the times and face challenges with grace and openness? The formation of a Malay psyche is possible as long as we are progressive enough to develop something new, conserve the existing and leave behind the obsolete, as reminded by Masuri: "The pains of today is a measure of reshaping of tradition."

Conclusion

The mapping of trends is based on the dominating paradigm in Singapore Malay literature which continues to flourish. More studies need to be done to discuss the tenor, style and pulse of creative works. If we were to observe the various genres of literature, poetry seems to be more flexible, clearer and broader in helping us surmise the mindsets in Singapore Malay literary culture. But technicalities should also be factored in and see how they have affected the evolution.

For example, an ambiguous narrative technique will only impede the delivery of the message. In their eagerness to craft and apply unique narrative techniques, writers may fail to flesh out their ideas to be substantive. This should be noted in subsequent literary criticism.

There are indeed restraints to developing a strong literary culture to generate thoughts which are complete, critical and creative while striving for excellence and perfection. This would require an extensive study but I can, at this point, mention some roadblocks.

- Tapering idealism the enthusiasm to get involved is no longer clear or in the forefront.
- Diminishing awareness due to political neutrality, positivism in scientific reasoning and a growing sense of exclusion and ambivalence.
- 3. Dogmatism and moralism shaping the writer's views.
- 4. Non-organic or unrealistic thinking with excessive attention to the supernatural and afterlife.
- 5. Language growth held back by failing awareness which in turn impedes concept development.
- 6. Undeveloped literary discourse resulting in non-constructive criticism.
- 7. Market demand for fluff ensnaring even promising writers.

The study of paradigms in literature can contribute to building a progressive literary culture that hinges on sound intellect, achieving highly aesthetical expressions that are clear, and advocating empowerment and humanism. The literary culture itself must continue to morph on the back of the dynamism between contributing factors, context and motivators. Progressive thinking in literature can be realised only when writers are fully committed to creating works that are closely connected to their society. We end by quoting Malaysian literary figure Keris Mas: "The problems of writers, past and present, are in refining perceptions, the mind and sensitivities, and getting to know the people and society."



Part 9 Those Who Support

One uniqueness of this nation's Malay literary world is that it is not limited to just Malay writers. Many non-Malay writers, specifically Chinese, have played a part. They were diligent in their studies to master the Malay language and later contributed in their capacity as lecturers and translators, or through their own writings.

Malay Literature and the Chinese

The interaction between the Chinese and Malay communities in Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia goes back to more than two centuries ago.

During the time of Raffles, the Chinese could be divided into two groups — Peranakan or *singkeh* (Hokkien for new arrival). The Peranakan conversed in Malay and produced its own literature in Malay-Chinese, mostly in the form of *dondang sayang* (traditional poetic art form) and translations of stories of ancient China.



Dr Leo Suryadinata

The *singkeh* used Chinese, usually a dialect, and were not as fluent in Malay. They formed the largest group of immigrants in Singapore and Malaya. In a colony where the population was racially segregated, the *singkeh* and their children lived in their enclaves, so their literary writings were in Chinese. Their interaction with the Malays was so limited that it can be said that the two groups hardly knew each other.

But this started to change after World War II, when the population was gunning for independence. Singapore was still a British colony when Malaya declared its independence in 1957. In 1959, Singapore gained the status of self-governance and its people wanted to be part of an independent Malaya, which did not come as a surprise. The Singapore government, with its People's Action Party (PAP) and other community organisations, supported this call.

Before joining Malaya, the Singapore government and the non-Malay communities had already accepted Malay as the national language. The government even made it compulsory for state officials to master the language after 1959. They had to sit the Malay language exams for Standards 1 to 3 and those who passed were given a pay rise and promotion. This continued till around 1963, when Singapore became part of Malaysia.

大学 診 壇 Eniversity Tribune May, 1969 Peratuan Pehjar? Nanyang University Tribune May, 1969 Peratuan Pehjar? Nanyang University Darga 20 ser. Konperensi Pelajar— Piagam Hak? Pelajar Paba 18th. balan April yang hilo di Ot Toong Ham Hall di University PADA 18th. balan April yang hilo di Ot Toong Ham Hall di University

Markar Age and a subject of a s

A PLATFORM FOR WRITINGS: Mimbar Universiti was published by undergraduates of Nanyang University in 1958 and featured many articles about the Malay language.

Amid the upbeat mood washing over Malaya and Singapore following the independence, rose a "movement" to learn the Malay language. Singapore was a free port and received visitors and immigrants, including Malays and Chinese who came here and enriched the local culture. The immigrants helped to spread the use of the Malay language and introduced Malay literature to the Chinese community in Singapore.

> Prior to Malaya's independence, Singapore was already a cultural hub of the Malay world, with its Malay newspapers and writers. It's also the birthplace of the Writers' Movement '50 (Asas '50) in 1950. A large group of Malay writers had returned to the Peninsular after Malaya gained its independence, giving rise to Kuala Lumpur as a cultural hub.

> Even though literature is not always created in institutions of higher learning, they spurred the development of language and literature. In Singapore, before Malaya's independence, there was the University of Malaya (UM), where the medium of instruction was English. Its Malay Studies Department cohorts were mostly made up of Malay students. In 1955, Nanyang University (Nantah) was established, with Mandarin as its language of instruction.

Role of Nanyang University

Before the establishment of Nantah's Department of Malay Studies, the Department of Modern Languages had been offering Malaylanguage modules since 1958. Its first lecturer was Rashid Manan, the former Consul for the Republic of Indonesia in Singapore and Malaya. He was joined a few months later by Li Chuan Siu (also spelt as Lie Tjwan Sioe), an Indonesian Peranakan-Chinese who was appointed as a lecturer.



BUDAYA: A Malay magazine published by non-Malay writers. The first edition of the magazine was published in April 1960.

At the time, some Chinese youth from Indonesia were enrolling in Nantah, adding to the number of Malay-speaking undergraduates at the university. Senior students such as Lim Huan Boon, Yang Quee Yee, Goh Choo Keng and Tan Ta Sen already understood Malay, either self-taught or through the modules at Nantah. Liauw Kian Djoe, who was from Jakarta and very proficient in Bahasa Indonesia, joined this group after he enrolled in 1959. The Nantah undergraduates studied the Malay language and in turn taught others the language through the classes they formed. The Nanyang University Students' Union (NUSU) published the *University Tribune* in three languages. The Malay edition (in Roman script) launched in December 1958 under the name *Mimbar Universiti*, helmed by Lim Huan Boon, Yang Quee Yee and Goh Choo Keng. Their juniors including Tan Ta Sen and Liauw Kian Djoe took over when the seniors graduated in December 1959.

The *Mimbar Universiti* shared only essential news and editorial with the Chinese or English editions, its other sections curated by its editor. There were articles on Chinese literature and the Malay language by writers such as Nantah lecturers Rashid Manan and Li Chuan Siu, and undergraduates such as Lim Huan Boon and members of the editorial team.

Liauw Kian Djoe, who was a part of the early editorial team, wrote about Chinese writers, short stories, essays on Malay literature and poems for the publication. He was also the de facto editor of the *Mimbar Universiti* after his seniors graduated in December 1959. However, after Liauw graduated in December 1962 and returned to Indonesia, the *Mimbar Universiti* published just one more issue and called it a day. The government subsequently banned NUSU publications including *Mimbar Universiti*, considering their content to be under the influence of left-leaning students.

Nantah students also launched a periodical magazine, *Budaya*, in April 1960. The first issue was edited by Liauw Kian Djoe and published by Tan Ta Sen. Liauw also edited the 1961 and 1962 issues, which were published by Seah Beng Kim, an enthusiast of the Malay language who was not a Nantah student. This was the first Malay language magazine published by non-Malays. The first issue of its editorial remarks read as follows:

"Our purpose is to introduce one another, so that the different races and communities in Malaya can understand and love one another. This is why we include a content that is related to the culture of Malaya, reflecting on the people, literature, language, art, history and education, especially through academic papers."¹



IMPORTANT WORKS: Two important works by Dr Li Chuan Siu on Malay literature.

The Chinese community also founded the Ngee Ann College which had a limited number of departments including the Department of Malay Studies

Budaya, with its essays on literature, education, language and history written by Nantah lecturers, graduates and students had an audience that extended beyond the campus. The essays were reproduced or guoted in the magazine Mastika and Malay newspapers. Unfortunately, Budaya ended with Liauw Kian Djoe's graduation.

What should be highlighted here is the interaction between Nantah students and the Malay community, especially writers. Usman Awang, Masuri S N and Asraf

Wahab were often exchanging views with Nantah students and lecturers. Works by Asas '50 writers — including Usman, Masuri, Asraf, Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (also known as MAS), Keris Mas, A Samad Said and Ahmad Boestamam — were being translated into Chinese for the newspapers and Radio Singapura.

The translated works were well-received and grew in popularity among the Chinese after the government made it compulsory for state officials to learn the national language. A number of books by Malay authors were made compulsory reading and the books were also translated into Chinese to help the candidates prepare for the exams.

Chinese publishers such as World Book Co and Shanghai Book Co not only published monthly magazines in Malay² but also translated books as supplementary materials. Books

such as Ariff's Sarah Pengarang Kechil, Mohd Akhir Leman's novel Bahagia Sa-sudah Derita and Harun Aminurrashid's Darah Kedayan began to appear in Chinese bookstores.

Translators

Malay-to-Chinese translators included Lu Po-yeh³ (Lou Wenmu), Yang Yi (Yang Quee Yee),⁴ Ding Nuo (Chan Maw Woh),⁵ Gu Yi (Liauw Kian Djoe)⁶ and She Sheng (Sia Boon So).⁷ Another prolific translator was Tang Yong (Xie Ruihua), a Nantah graduate from the early 1960s who translated 10 books between 1962 and 1965.8

The great impact of the literary bond between the Chinese and

Malays in Singapore featured in Taufan, a stage play by the famous Chinese playwright Cao Yu and performed by the all-Malay Arts Group (Perkumpulan Seni) in July 1962. The drama was set in China before World War II era and featured a tragedy surrounding a wealthy family. Taufan, directed by the doyen of Malay drama, Bani Buang, was well-received by both the Malay and Chinese communities.⁹

None of the Chinese intellectuals. apart from the Nantah lecturers and Chinese Peranakan, had mastered the Malay language at the time. But there were Nantah graduates — such as Yang Quee Yee, Liaw Yock Fang and Tan Ta Sen – who furthered their studies in Indonesia and became experts in language, history or social sciences.

Yang Quee Yee studied at the University of Indonesia for two years while Liaw Yock Fang and Tan Ta Sen studied there for five years on scholarships from the

Indonesian government and returned to Singapore in 1965 with Sarjana Sastra degree (then it was equivalent to Masters' degree). They were posted to Malay schools and then to Nantah. Liaw Yock



the works produced by Dr Leo Suryadinata.



THE MALAY–CHINESE BRIDGE: Yang Quee Yee has authored many papers on the state of Malay language within the Chinese community, as well as translating many Malay folk tales and papers into Chinese.

Fang moved on to teach at the University of Singapore and stayed on after it merged with Nantah to form the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Nantah's Department of Malay Language was established in 1968 and it was headed by Professor Tjan Tjoe Siem, a graduate of Leiden University and an expert in Javanese and Islamic culture. Professor Slamet Mulyana, an Indonesian linguist and historian, was also invited by Nantah to teach at the Department of History. The Department of Malay Language taught both Malay and non-Malay students, among whom emerged scholars such as Suratman Markasan — linguist, author, poet and recipient of the Tun Seri Lanang Award in 1999. Many Chinese graduates became language teachers at schools and junior colleges.

The Chinese community also founded the Ngee Ann College which had a limited number of departments including the Department of Malay Studies headed by former Nantah lecturer Rashid Manan.

Tan Ta Sen and Liaw Yock Fang at one time also lectured at the College. Students from the Department of Malay Studies at Ngee Ann College generally returned to Malaysia after graduation. Only a few of the graduates lived in Singapore, such as Sia Boon So, who worked at the Chinese newspaper Sin Chew Daily, and Hoo Ling, who found work at the Malay daily Berita Harian. Sia translated a Malay novel and papers on Malay literature while Hoo Ling was not interested in Malay literature.

Although Malay remained the national language of Singapore even after its independence in August 1965, the direction of education changed and English became the lingua franca of the modern world. Interest to learn the Malay language waned, especially in the Singapore Chinese community. This left only a handful of Chinese who continued to study Malay language and literature, mainly the older generation and Nantah students.



RESULTS OF TAN TA SEN'S STUDY: A book about Admiral Zheng Ho (Cheng Ho). This is the thesis that earned Tan Ta Sen his PhD.

we look at the key Chinese individuals who had been involved since 1965, they generally were already active before Singapore became independent and those who left the scene would eventually return. There were some who left Singapore to teach at foreign universities but they still wrote about Malay literature of Singapore and Malaysia. I find their contributions highly meaningful.

The first name I want to mention is Li Chuan Siu (1914–1998) who was still in Nantah (1958–1964) when he began to publish Malay textbooks and translations of works by Chinese authors and articles on Malayan Chinese literature. He had collaborated with Asraf to publish Malay books under Oxford University Press.

Asraf also encouraged Li to translate the Chinese novel *Fusheng Liuji* (Six Records of a Life Adrift) into Malay with the title of *Hidup Bagaikan Mimpi*. It was a

Leading Figures

I am going to list individuals who were involved in Malay language and literature even after Singapore separated from Malaysia. If classic novel centred on a married couple's extraordinary love story. Li later translated Lu Xun's *Changming Deng* (The Lamp of Eternity) into *Lampu Yang Tak Kunjung Padam*. The author was renowned in China and was considered the father of socialist realism. Li Chuan Siu's most significant contribution was his reference books on modern Malay literature, *Ikhtisar Sejarah Kesusasteraan Melayu Baru 1830–1945* (213 pages, Kuala Lumpur: Intermediate Library, 1966) and *Ikhtisar Sejarah Pergerakan Dan Kesusastreraan Melayu Moden 1945–1965* (552 pages, Kuala Lumpur: Intermediate Library, 1967). The latter was popular among researchers and lecturers¹⁰ as it was the first collection of Malay literature spanning 20 years. Li published his books in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

Born in Solo in 1914, Li attended English and Chinese schools in Indonesia and China. He returned to Indonesia to study the Chinese language and Bahasa Indonesia at the University of Indonesia. Interestingly he later focused his attention and research on Bahasa Indonesia and Malay. He earned his Doctoradus (Drs.) degree (a Dutch degree, comparable to an M.A. degree) and opened a centre for Bahasa Indonesia studies. He was invited to lecture at Nantah in 1958.

It was at Nantah that he deepened his knowledge on modern Malay language and literature. In addition to teaching and writing, he also helped the students with their publications by editing the writings for *Mimbar Universiti* and *Budaya*. Li left Nantah in 1964 to become a senior lecturer at the University of Sydney, with his focus still on modern Malay language and literature. He often returned to Nantah and kept in touch with the graduates. Li Chuan Siu died in Australia in 1998.

Nantah students with a keen interest in Malay and Indonesian language and literature included Yang Quee Yee (b. 1931), Tan Ta Sen (b. 1936), Liaw Yock Fang (1936–2016) and Tan Teo Seng who furthered his education at the University of Indonesia after attaining his bachelor's degree. Yang Quee Yee studied at the University of Indonesia for only two years and did not get a full degree, while Tan Ta Sen and Liaw Yock Fang completed their five years for their Bachelor (Sarjana Muda) and Master (Sarjana Sastra) of Literature. Not all four were students of Li Chuan Siu's Malay courses but they followed in his footsteps and pursued further education in Indonesia. After his return to Singapore, Yang Quee Yee became a Nantah lecturer in Malay language for several years. He and his wife Chan Maw Woh spent decades compiling 14 Malay-to-Chinese and Chinese-to-Malay dictionaries, starting with *Kamus Umum Bahasa Melayu* in 1972. They also translated books and articles from Malay to Chinese, their relentless contribution bridging the cultural gap between the Chinese and Malay communities.

Yang wrote about the state of the Malay language in the Chinese community and translated Malay folktales and write-ups into Chinese. The translations were published in Chinese newspapers and later compiled into books such as *Hikayat Abdullah* (1998) and *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah Ke Kelantan* (2000). Yang Quee Yee also wrote about Chinese–Malay literature in Malay, which was published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (2000).

Between 2001 and 2003, Yang was a Guest Author at the National University of Malaysia (UKM) and it published *Memoir Yang Quee Yee: Penyusun Kamus Anak Penoreh* in 2006. UKM in 2007 conferred him an Honorary Doctorate for his contribution to Malay language and literature.

Chan Maw Woh herself in 1959 translated the novel *Nyawa Di Hujung Pedang* by Ahmad Murad Nasaruddin into Chinese — in what could have been a first. She later became the editor of the *Majallah Bahasa Kebangsaan* (1962–1970) about eight years after Lu Po-yeh died. Chan continued to translate writings even when she was working as a journalist with the Chinese newspapers.

The autodidact published numerous books including the translation of the novel *Satu Bumi* (1999)¹¹ by Isa Kamari. She also wrote about Malay writers, her writings later compiled and published in books. Chan was presented with the Literature Friend Award by the Malay Language Council, Singapore in 2001 for introducing Malay language and literature to the Chinese community. She's also a lifelong member of Asas '50. Another leading figure from Yang Quee Yee's generation is Lim Huan Boon (b. 1931), who while in Nantah had compiled a Malay-to-Chinese dictionary (1958) that became the most popular at the time. He also edited a bilingual book, *Malai Sihang Shi* (Malay *Pantun*), which was based on a translation by Zhang Qicheng from China. In 2006, Lim Huan Boon published another bilingual book, *Malai Bandun Sanbai Shou* (300 Malay *Pantun*), reworking and building on the earlier book of 120 *pantun*.

But the most outstanding figure in academia had to be Liaw Yock Fang. He was born in Singapore in 1936 and grew up in Malaysia before returning to the Lion City. The legendary writer was initially interested in English, and entered the Department of Modern Languages with a focus on the English language. But during his study at Nantah, he was attracted to the Malay language and literature. In 1961, he and Tan Ta Sen were awarded the Indonesian government scholarship to study at the University of Indonesia. When he first joined the Indonesian University, Liaw's standard in Malay was still very low.

During his five-year education in Indonesia, Liaw had diligently strengthened his foundation to become an expert on Malay and Indonesian language and literature. He was mentored by Indonesia's prominent literary critic H B Jassin. Liaw's progress was so rapid that he could write a literary criticism in Malay and published the book in 1970; he also succeeded in translating Indonesian poet Chairil Anwar's work into English and got it published in 1974.

Liaw returned to Singapore in 1965 and taught at a Malay school before returning to Nantah, where he wrote about Indonesian literature, and then pursued further education at Leiden University. He published the book *Sejarah Kesusastraan Melayu Klasik* in 1975 and was conferred the Doctor of Philosophy in Malay Studies the following year after successfully defended his PhD dissertation *Undang-Undang Melaka*. Liaw's dissertation *Undang-Undang Melaka* became a major reference book on the subject. Later his *Undang-Undang Melaka* and his other study *Undang-Undang Laut* were incorporated into the Series of Great Works (Siri Karya Agung) that was published in Kuala Lumpur. Liaw's specialty in ancient manuscripts prompted him to expand Sejarah Kesusastraan Melayu Klasik and it remains a reference material for Malay studies at universities in Malaysia, Indonesia and England. The detailed and innovative book, which was done in the style of English Orientalist Richard Winstedt, was also translated into Chinese by the Peking University in Beijing and published in two volumes. The English and Malay versions of the book are published in single volumes.

As the sole expert in classical Malay literature in Singapore and Malaysia, Liaw Yock Fang's authority in the field is widely recognised. He is also considered to be an expert in the Malay language and Bahasa Indonesia, his debate with Asraf on the Malay grammar drew a lot of attention. Liaw in 1985 published *Nahu Bahasa Melayu*, which was well-received in Malaysia and Indonesia. He was also invited to comment on the new book *Tatabahasa Indonesia* and he was quoted in academic publications in Jakarta.

Liaw taught at Nantah, the University of Singapore and NUS for a total of 30 years and many of his students later became experts, lecturers and professors. Hence it was only natural that he compiled Malay textbooks for students and adults, which can still be found in bookstores. He also had a column on Malay language and culture in *Berita Harian*, becoming the only Chinese writer to have done so. His contribution to the development of Malay language and literature in Singapore was acknowledged with a Special Literary Award from the Malay Language Council, Singapore in 2011.

Fellow Nantah graduate Tan Ta Sen returned to Singapore with Liaw in 1965. Tan, too, majored in Indonesian language and literature at the University of Indonesia. He taught at a Malay school in Singapore before joining the Department of Malay Studies at Ngee Ann College and then Nantah. He wrote about Indonesian literature for the magazine *Dewan Sastera* and later led the Southeast Asia programme at Nantah.

In 1978, Tan left Nantah for the business world but returned in 2000 to study Admiral Cheng Ho and pursue a Doctor in Philosophy at the University of Indonesia. He got his PhD in 2009 on his thesis *Cheng Ho dan Penyebaran Islam Di Nusantara,* which was published in three languages.

Liauw Kian Djoe did not return to Singapore immediately after graduating from the History Department of the University of Indonesia. He furthered his studies in Australia and America before he returned to ISEAS as a senior researcher in 1976 and took up Singapore citizenship subsequently. He changed his name to Leo Suryadinata in the late 1960s and still writes in Bahasa Indonesia. His poetry anthology *Jejak Kaki Dan Lagu Hati*, written in Melindo (a portmanteau of Malay and Bahasa Indonesia), was published by Pustaka Nasional in Singapore in 1986.

The former NUS professor was once an examiner for Bahasa Indonesia Standards 1 to 3 at the Civil Service College. He also wrote books in Bahasa Indonesia, one of them *Sastra Peranakan Tionghoa Indonesia*, published in Jakarta in 1996. To commemorate the 600th anniversary of Admiral Cheng Ho's visit to Southeast Asia, Leo in 2005 formed a Cheng Ho panel in Malay and Bahasa Indonesia in the Lion City. All papers were later reviewed and published in a book by the Institute for Research, Education and Information on Economy and Social Affairs (LP3ES) in Jakarta.

Leo also translated into Chinese *Kumpulan Sajak Usman Awang* (2006) and *Kumpulan Sajak Masuri S N* (2012, unpublished) and more recently, *Singapura: Kotaku, Kampung Halamanku*,¹² a collection of bilingual poetry in Malay and Chinese by Singaporean Chinese and Malay poets (together with Associate Professor Hadijah Rahmat).

Fellow Nantah graduate Goh Choo Keng became a journalist and was often associated with Malay writers. After he retired, he translated poetry and short stories from Chinese into Malay, one of his books is entitled *12 Cerpen Xinhua* (2000).

One last person who needs to be mentioned is Peter Agustine Goh (Goh Mey Teck, b. 1953), who was not a Nantah graduate. The Singapore citizen who hailed from Melaka has been writing since 1975 and can be described as an all-rounder. He has written countless short stories, four adult novels including *Seberkas Cahaya Di Jendela Senja* (2002), nine children's novels and scripts for TV and radio. His literary criticisms have won literary prizes from the National Art Council and Singapore Press Holdings.

Conclusion

The Chinese community in Singapore was once upon a time familiar with Malay literature, thanks to Malaysia's newly minted independence and Singapore's intention to join Malaya. Malay was named the national language and given a boost by the government. The establishment of Nantah also made the language's rise to prominence even more encouraging, with students plunging into Malay language and literature.

They started off with translation efforts and were still in the learning phase despite having lecturers and students from Indonesia among them. But over time, Nantah students became experts and started making contributions to Malay language and literature. Language and literature are interdependent, so I pay tribute to those who promoted the teaching of Malay.

How times have changed. In August 1965, Singapore became independent and its education system began to change. Economic development became top priority and English grew in importance, pushing Malay and other mother tongues to take a back seat. The desire to learn mother tongues, including Malay, waned.

Save for an individual or two, the Chinese who are experts in Malay language and literature belong to the older generations. Malay publications by the Chinese community and translation of Malay works into Chinese are close to extinction. I have yet to see the younger generation of the Singapore Chinese coming forward to carry on the legacy within the Malay literary sphere. Hopefully things will be different in the future.



A CHINESE WHO IS A PROLIFIC WRITER IN MALAY: Dr Liaw Yock Fang and his wife at their home.

Endnotes

- 1 "Kata Pengantar", Budaya, Volume 1, December 1960, 2.
- 2 World Bookstore published *Majalah Bahasa Kebangsaan* while Shanghai Bookstore published *Bulanan Bahasa Kebangsaan*, and both magazines lasted for years.
- 3 Among them was a book of translated pantun, namely Malai minzu de shih, 1957. The real name of Lu Poyeh is Li Xuemin (1923–1961), who was born in Perak, worked in Singapore and died in Singapore at a young age. He was previously the editor of the Majalah Bahasa Kebangsaan published by World Book Co.
- 4 Among them was Hendak Membuat Jasa Kepada Tanah Air, 1959.
- 5 Among them was the novel by Ahmad Murad entitled Nyawa di Hujung Pedang, 1959.
- 6 Among them was a collection of poems, 1960.
- 7 Among them was a novel by Ahmad Bostaman entitled Kabus Pagi, 1962.

- 8 Including the anthology of short stories Mekar dan Segar, 1962; the novel Musafir, 1963, and a collection of Usman Awang's poems called Gelombang, 1965.
- 9 Zhou Weijie, "Xing Man Chang Kong", in *Hihe Shiji*, No. 22, Feb–May 2014, 54.
- 10 According to a lecturer at the University of Malaya, he could see the book in almost every lecturer's room at the Malay Studies Department, and many copies were quite worn as they were often read.
- 11 Its Chinese translation entitled Yipian Retu.
- 12 See Leo Suryadinata (editor) and Hadijah Rahmat (co-editor), Singapura: Kotaku, Kampung Halamanku. Publisher: Confucius Institute (CI), Nanyang Technological University, 2015. It was a special issue commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of CI and was launched by the Minister of Education, Heng Swee Kiat on 28 July 2015 at the Marriot Tang Plaza Hotel.

I have yet to see the younger generation of the Singapore Chinese coming forward to carry on the legacy within the Malay literary sphere. Hopefully things will be different in the future.



Part 10 Those Who Bloom

While some of our established writers are entering their silver years, there is a line-up of writers waiting in the wings. With their talents that are constantly honed, they are the successors in the endeavour to expand the world of Malay language and literature in this country. The Singapore Malay literary landscape is also transforming with the emergence of new media. Online communications without face-to-face encounters open more space for collaborations among writers across country borders.



Noridah Kamari

Tracing Singapore Malay Literature's

Journey

Developments in communication technology have had a great impact on literature — the writer's identity, work structure, publishing styles and dissemination channels have changed to suit the new media.

In the 1990s, Malay literature started to leverage new media that could transcend location and time to develop an alternative literary world. Decades have passed since then, and we should examine the digital journey that has triggered new efforts and breathed new life into Singapore Malay literature.

Communicating through cyber literature

Cyber literature¹ refers to literary activities that take place in cyberspace or the Internet, such as publishing and distribution of works, digitisation of books, creating a literary community, and discussing and analysing literature. Unlike the long transition

from Gutenberg's printing press of 1440 to the electronic media of the 20th century, the technological transition from TV to the Internet took only about 30 years.²

The Internet, unlike books, radio and television, offers omnidirectional³ communication efficiently and freely. The absence of physical barriers also paves the way for easy sharing of data and information. A spike in the number of Internet users triggered the rapid growth of cyber literature — Internet World Stats recorded a 528.1 per cent jump in the number of Internet users between 2000 and 2011.

The power of the Internet as an information platform creates a freer and more transparent and interactive world. The five key features⁴ of cyberspace that facilitate the creation of content including literature are:

- A large database due to unlimited storage space
- Information that is searchable using keywords
- 3. Ease of quick updates of information
- 4. Accessibility
- 5. An infrastructure for dissemination and communication with the capability of allowing user feedback



NEW PLATFORM: Cyberspace becomes a new platform for young local writers.

Singapore Malay literature goes online

Malay literature set foot on the Internet in the late 1990s, with poetry leading the way just as it did when Malay literature was transforming from traditional to modern forms in the early 20th century.⁵ The brevity of poetry makes it the perfect genre for

> experimentations. Poetry has successfully morphed into cyber literature by utilising features such as colour, typography and sound. Websites featuring poems by local Malay writers include KampungNet⁶ and AnjungCafe.

> There are website builders that are available for free and allow users, even those with no knowledge of coding or website designing, to create their own websites. Young writers from Kelab Coretan Remaja, an extension of *Berita Harian's* youth literature column under the supervision of journalist Dewani Abbas, had set up a website that is still accessible albeit inactive. There are websites for everything these days and for literature, there are websites on history, members and works such as short stories, *pantun, sajak, madah* and humour.

> Even government bodies have websites for various purposes. Companies such as Pustaka Nasional use their website to introduce and sell literary works. And the Malay Language Council, Singapore uses its site to promote its activities and share its vision and mission.

> The National Library Board gives space for its Singapore Literary Pioneers Gallery where it showcases esteemed local writers including Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, Suratman Markasan, Abdul Ghani Abdul Hamid, Masuri S N, Mahmud Ahmad, Suradi Parjo, Harun Aminurrashid and Noor S I.

Digital publishing enables peerreviewed journals of academic papers to be published without the hindrance of printing and distribution costs.

Angkatan Sasterawan '50, or Asas '50, has a website that features programmes and an online bookshop, leveraging the Internet to extend its audience reach while sharing information, news and works relating to literature with the general public.

Digital publishing enables peer-reviewed journals of academic papers to be published without the hindrance of printing and distribution costs. This has benefitted Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) in Singapore and Malaysia, which have published papers such as *Jurnal E-Utama* by the Division of Language and Culture at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University (NIE/NTU).

Personal websites

There are writers who document their experiences in the local literary scene on their personal websites and the fluidity of cyberspace has allowed easy migration of content. For example, Mohamed Naim Daipi created the website *Saujana* to chronicle his involvement in linguistic and literary activities and to share language exercises with teachers and students. But with the rise of Facebook, which is more interactive, he ported over the content to the social media platform for better reach.

Young author of several novels, Munirah Jaafar, uploads her poems to her website Nirrosette Official, which also features her biography, works and photographs of literary events. Munirah, who goes by the pseudonym Nirrosette, has an online fanbase and uses social media platforms such Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to interact with her readers.

Blogs, as a form of an online diary, became popular among writers as they saw the appeal of the unlimited number of characters and its agility. Young writers and Malay language teachers Zahir Ayub and Nurul Arini Junaidi created a blog to showcase poems written by Singapore Malay poets.

There are still writers who actively update their blogs, such as Rasiah Halil on her Wordpress page *srianggerik* and Isa Kamari on his Blogger page *isa-kamari*. Alang Budiman (Chairul Fahmy Hussaini) started a blog in 2006 but he now shares his literary creations on Facebook. Young writers like Khairool Haque and Chempaka Aizim (Siti Aisyah Mohamed Salim) use their blogs to archive their works, personal reflections and video clips of performances.

Around the mid-2000s, Multiply became a popular platform among young writers as it allowed easier sharing of pictures and works. Writer Noor Hasnah Adam started her own Multiply page but discontinued it in May 2013 and moved to Facebook. She shares pictures and experiences of her studies at the University of Malaya as well as the literary and linguistic activities she had attended.

Interaction on social media

Social media is a platform where writers can interact with fellow writers and readers. Almost every writer today has at least one personal page online, be it a blog, Facebook or website. Facebook remains popular as writers who have grown tired of blogs or personal pages move to the more interactive social media platform where they have better control on their interaction with their audience. Writers groups use Facebook to promote literary events with minimal effort and advertising cost, if any.



PERSONAL WEBSITE: An increasing number of young writers as well as some established ones have their own personal websites in cyberspace.

The Malay literary landscape in Singapore has changed with the presence of new media, creating a space for collaboration among writers without the hindrance of borders. Social media enables quick sharing of information and has benefitted local literary advocates. Cyber literature, with its use of the Internet, is set to continue thriving.

Bebas Melata, a group of 19 Singaporean poets and 48 others from Indonesia and Malaysia, produced four poetry anthologies and a CD of poetic songs between April 2013 and September 2014. Led by writer Rohani Din, the group encouraged the use of Facebook and showed that it was a good platform for crossborder collaborations.

Some writers are more active on Facebook than in print media, and this include poets Shasel (Shaffiq Selamat) and Mibarzo (Mohd Yusoff Abdul Rahman). Shaffiq is a certified translator who posts his English and Malay poems almost daily on Facebook.

Sports journalist and poet Mohd Yusoff Abdul Rahman shares his work on Facebook before printing them for publication. Naim Daipi uses Facebook to share and exchange *pantun* with his fans while Hajis Salim shares his works and sketches. Regional events such as the Pertemuan Penyair Nusantara VI in Singapore, led by Djamal Tukimin and assisted by Ahmir Ahmad, used Facebook to communicate with participants efficiently. *Cita Seni*, an educational and discursive forum on artistic, cultural and intellectual traditions in a collaboration between The Arts House and the Department of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore, also uses Facebook to announce its activities.

Conclusion

The Malay literary landscape in Singapore has changed with the presence of new media, creating a space for collaboration among writers without the hindrance of borders. Social media enables quick sharing of information and has benefitted local literary advocates. Cyber literature, with its use of the Internet, is set to continue thriving.

Endnotes

- Cyber literature is also known as internet literature, online literature, digital literature (though the term is not accurate since literature in the form of CD-Rom can also be called digital), virtual literature and more, but to facilitate discussion in this essay, the term "cyber literature" will be used. The term "cyber" is said to be first introduced by Willian Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer* (1984) where he coined the term "Cyber Space" as a virtual world that is a place of interaction for individuals, objects and thoughts.
- 2 Ding Choo Ming, 2009. *Pengajian di Alam Melayu: Dari Tradisi Manuskrip ke Maklumat Digital*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. p. 268.

3 Ibid.

- 4 These features were outlined by Tony Feldman, An Introduction to Digital Media. New York: Routledge. p. 93.
- 5 New poems or *sajak* have a free and unstructured form unlike traditional poems, such as *sajak, syair* or *gurindam*.
- 6 Kampungnet.com is a Singapore-based website.

<image>

"When I won the Promising Writer Award in 2009, I was deeply moved but worried. I was touched for being awarded, a recognition and proof of my ability in the field of writing. But at the same time, I was worried that I would not be able to bear the responsibilities and hopes of the community to continually be prolific.

"Work always takes precedence over writing, and publishing costs a lot of money. Singapore also lacks the platform for Malay writing — writers have mainly *Berita Harian* for their creative expressions. It would be wonderful if *Berita Harian* could allocate a regular space for Promising Writer and Tun Seri Lanang Award winners. This can cultivate literary criticisms and help our Malay literature flourish.

"As a recipient of the Promising Writer Award, I hope to be given that space and opportunity to write for print media and TV. Writers cannot grow without space and opportunity, and our awards rendered mere rhetorical symbols."

Noor Hasnah Adam, recipient of Promising Writer Award in 2009 Literary Awards by Malay Language Council, Singapore

"Technological innovations in communication have opened up new spaces in literature which writers have leveraged to promote published works and literary events that enliven the local literary landscape. The open nature of social media encourages the sharing of work and collaborations with writers who may be 'known only by name' to many people, and this serves as a boost for the writing community. The author-reader relationship also changes with the reader being present at every stage of the work creation.

"The strength of information technology is both a bane and boon. The key challenge is to use this new technology as a more sophisticated literary medium in which works are more critically digested and accepted to be as good as those in print."

Noridah Kamari, recipient of Promising Writer Award in 2013 Literary Awards by Malay Language Council, Singapore
"To be fair, Singapore actually has a lot of young talents who are passionate about writing but have limited space and opportunities to showcase their work. From my personal experience, I think it would be difficult for someone to begin a career in writing without a network, especially if talent is measured by the ability to produce serious literature, making it tough to break into the Singapore Malay literary scene.

"I hope more publishing bodies will be established in Singapore as I believe the presence of publishers across different genres will invigorate Singapore Malay literature. Otherwise, I hope existing publishers in Singapore will be more open to accepting and publishing the works of young talents. 'Light' work should not be overlooked because it is after all a springboard."

Munirah Jaafar, young author

Advocates on the Future of Malay Literature

Muhd Andi Mohd Zulkepli

orali

"I feel the Malay literary sphere in Singapore is too small and still unfamiliar to many. Although I have seen efforts to encourage the use of and writing in the Malay language, they often involve people from the same group. I hope activities such as writing can reach out to more people in the Malay community including students, especially those from neighbourhood schools instead of just their elite school peers.

"I am not a fan of *sebutan baku* (standard pronunciation). We have been using the Johor-Riau accent for centuries and I am proud of this identity. The implementation of *sebutan baku* has backfired in the form of corrupted spelling of Malay words, such as from '*apa*' to '*aper*' and '*kenapa*' to '*kenaper*'. I don't see the point of it — when I was in school, I could easily distinguish between accent and *baku*.

"I am also against the borrowing of English words when there are Malay equivalents. Why use the word 'atlit' when there's 'olahragawan' and 'mekap' when there's 'solek'? It's too rampant now. I know some parties would argue that it's the evolution of the Malay language but to what end? I'd be devastated if 'wan deh leter lenguij Melayu wil bersaun en kelukatan laik dis'.

"With regard to writing for the stage, I have seen many writers who have turned to writing in English because it draws a larger audience. It is unfortunately a fact of life here. I sincerely hope that for every 10 Malay writers who write for stage theatre in English, at least one will write in Malay."

Anwar Hadi Ramli, theatre advocate



"Lyrics and melodies may be candid but with a voice, they can transcend culture and language. And with a bigger voice, lyrics and melodies can even transcend time. Singapore doyens surely would remember the golden era of the 1940s to the 1960s. Times are different now but the need for self-expression is always present in the people and their voices vary even more widely.

"We still have traditional groups like *dikir barat* but we also have a new generation of pop songwriters. Platforms like *Anugerah Planet Muzik* and *Mega Perdana* are where traditional and modern music co-feature. They also make room for growth in the creation of lyrics and melodies. In 2014, 25 *dikir barat* groups took part in *Mega Perdana*. Today, the radio music charts are dominated by local artists. I am sure there is no shortage in the creation of lyrics and melodies. The voice of Singapore Malays is strong and proud."

Tengku Adil Tengku Bahdar, singer and songwriter

"Mountains are low compared to the hopes of writers, including myself, for Singapore Malay literature. Our main challenge is to produce talented and dynamic successors to wave the flag of our literature, not only in the Malay Archipelago but in the global arena. Writers who dare go against the grain can produce *sui generis* literature of a class of its own. New literature for a new century.

"If our literature remains shackled to themes of the past, it will not appeal and cannot speak in the present, rendering it frigid and stifling. The writers of post-1965 confronted their own challenges and 50 years of independence have passed, bringing new challenges that call for our attention as successors. As the Malay saying goes, 'when the wings break, even the beak can be a crutch'. We should never turn our back on the challenges confronting the Malay literary world in Singapore and press on."

Hassan Hasaa'Ree Ali, young writer



"'Art for the people' has been the motto of Singaporean literary activists for 65 years and continues to be celebrated by local art advocates in bridging the gap between the people and literature. The Malay Language Council, Singapore, along with other organisations, enliven the local Malay literature with activities celebrating literature and writers. The community, through programmes such as *Gig Puisi*, *Malam Puisi Islam* and *Malam Sastera Berita Harian* get to enjoy the progress of local literature and witness the emergence of new writers.

"As a writer still trying to find a footing in the Singapore literary world, such efforts have been encouraging. They created opportunities for me to get acquainted with other local writers and tap their literary knowledge."

Siti Aisyah Mohamed Salim, madrasah teacher, young writer and Language Ambassador 2015



Part 11 That Which Is Etched 2

Singapore Malay language and writings have a long history, beginning as early as the 13th century. The developments and transformations in their milieu resulted in both experiencing much ebb and flow. Nevertheless, language and writings continue to grow and adapt to ensure their vitality to this day.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF SINGAPORE MALAY LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE POST INDEPENDENCE (1965–2015)



HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Singapore separated from Malaysia

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Independence of Singapore Agreement
- Adoption of Malay as national language and one of the official languages of Singapore
- Times of crises due to separation
- Emigration of Asas '50 members to Malaysia

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Stage drama *Sumbangsih* written by Rawan Hiba and directed by Bani Buang
- Panglima Awang by Harun Aminurrashid
- Awan Puteh Collection of poetry works 1944–1951 by Masuri S N

1966

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Establishment of a committee overseeing Romanised Malay spelling, led by Ramli Abdul Hadi

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

- The last celebration of the National Language Month
- National Language Congress inaugurated by President Yusof Ishak and declared closed by Othman Wok, Minister for Social Affairs, at the Singapore Conference Hall
- Permanent Congress Board organises Singapore National Language Congress

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Mengesan Jejak Pelayaran Abdullah Munshi by Harun Aminurrashid

> Bunga Pahit by Masuri S N published in 1967.

1967

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Establishment of Malay Cultural Society

PRODUCTION/ PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Sultan Mahmud Shah by Harun Aminurrashid
- Bunga Pahit by Masuri SN
- Selected Poetry 1957–1960



HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Establishment of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore with the passing of the Administration of Muslim Law Act

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

The Sriwana Drama Festival launched to discover new talents and rejuvenate the Malay arts scene in Singapore

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Simpang Perinang by Harun Aminurrashid

1969

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Dewan Bahasa dan Kebudayaan Melayu dissolved
- Central Council of Malay Cultural Organisations (Majlis Pusat) formed by more than 100 Malay bodies with Mohd Yatim Dohan as president.

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Peristiwa Laksamana Cheng Ho ke Melaka by Harun Aminurrashid

1971

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Majlis Pusat organises a seminar on Malay participation in national development

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Asas '50 forms ties with Asean counterparts
- Establishment of Gelorasa by Djamal Tukimin, MIA and others



Establishment of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore in 1968.



Central Council of Malay Cultural Organisations (Majlis Pusat) formed by more than 100 Malay bodies in 1969.



EXPLORING CYBERSPACE

Abdul Rahman Said (left) explaining ways to extend Malay language and literature reach through the Internet to Masuri S N, Muhammad Ariff Ahmad and Aliman Hassan.

1972

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

• Berita Harian published as a Singapore-only newspaper, led by Mustafa Suhaimi

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- The Malay Spelling Committee formed under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture
- Emergence of a new movement of writers – Gelorasa and Singapore Literature Activists Organisation (PASS) by Mohamed Latiff Mohamed and others

1973

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Literary Village by Asas '50 to support Literary Prize and enliven Malay literary activities in Singapore

PRODUCTION/ PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- *Berita Minggu* becomes a platform to publish local literature works
- Menangkap Perompak Minigang by MAS

1974

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

 Asas '50 presents a paper recommending for a Joint Committee for Hadiah Sastera (LIterary Prize) to be formed

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Ke Mana Hati Hendak Kubawa by Mohd Fuad Salim
- Mana Bulan Mana Bintang by Noor S I

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Poetry Anthology Puncak Sembilan
- Sejarah Kesusasteraan Melayu Klasik by Dr Liaw Yock Fang

1976

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Establishment of Singapore Association of Writers (SAW)
- Asas '50 collaborates with non-Malay writers

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Literature Journal by SAW focusing on the development of Chinese literature. Malay literature translated into Mandarin for the bi-annual journal.
- Mail Mau Kawin by MAS

1977

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- The Singapore Writing published
- Majlis Pusat takes over Literary Prize
- Persatuan Kemuning formed
- Regional Writers' Convention 1 held in Singapore (24–25 December)

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Translation of Malay, Chinese and Tamil literature into English
- Jejak Kembara, a Persatuan Bahasa Melayu, Universiti Singapura (now National University of Singapore) publication, by Rasiah Halil, Hadijah Rahmat and others
- Hancurnya Sindikit Dadah by Mohamed Latiff Mohamed and Mohamed Naim Daipi
- *Tumpas* by Mohamed Naim Daipi
- Kehilangan di Bukit Naga by Peter Augustine Goh

1978

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Seminar Kelas Bimbingan started by Member of Parliament Mansor Sukaimi
- Malay Cultural Seminar by Singapore Malay Teachers' Union and paper by Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad on the shaping of national culture

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Surat Kertas Biru by Noor Hidayat
- Publication of first SAW literary journal in early 1978 that includes two poems by Masuri S N, in Malay and translated into Chinese



Teachers attending a seminar organised by the Singapore Malay Teachers' Union (KGMS) in 1978.

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

The search for new ways of thinking

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Fifth publication of SAW's literary journal in early 1980, which includes a Malay short story by Suratman Markasan, also translated into Chinese
- Orang Bertiga by Noor S I and others

1981

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Congress on Education of Muslim Children by MENDAKI at the Singapore Conference Hall, followed by the establishment of Yayasan MENDAKI a year later

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Malay Language Month organised by Majlis Pusat
- Regional Drama Festival organised by Persatuan Kemuning

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Jalan Permulaan by Suratman Markasan
- Temasek by Asas '50 (edited by Suratman Markasan)
- Gema Temasek by MAS



Professor Syed Hussein Alatas, Head of the Department of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore, presents an award to Sarifah Yatiman at the Anugerah Sastera event in 1983.



Participants at the MENDAKI Congress in 1981 raising their hands in support of the proposed resolution.

1983

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Malay Culture Festival at National Museum, organised by Majlis Pusat
- Establishment of Malay Language Committee led by Senior Parliamentary Secretary (Education) Sidek Saniff
- Literary Prize organised by Majlis Pusat
- Di Tengah Alam by Hadijah Rahmat awarded 1983/84 Literary Prize
- Establishment of Kupuja, youth wing of Asas '50, on 2 Oct 1984

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Melayuku Melayumu by
 Mohamed Latiff Mohamed
- Drama performance of Bicara by Mohd Raman Daud at Victoria Theatre
- Songsang by Jamal Ismail

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Malay Culture Festival II organised by Majlis Pusat
- Singapore Malay Teachers' Union organises a Regional Malay Teachers Meet in Singapore

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Singapore becomes State Observer at Language Council of Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Performance of *Desa Ini Hatiku* written by A Ghani Hamid

1986

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Sri Anggerik Bangsawan formed by Abdul Hamid Ahmad
- Teater Artistik formed

1987

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Tiga Warna Bertemu edited by Suratman Markasan

1988

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Teater Ekamatra formed
- Regional conference for journalists organised by Singapore Malay Journalists Association at RELC

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Malay Language Month relaunched by the Malay Language Committee

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Nota by A Ghani Hamid
- Encong by Nadiputra
- Jejak Bara by Suradi Parjo

1989

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Second MENDAKI Congress
- Teater Kami formed
- Kampung Melayu Geylang Serai opened by Malay Members of Parliament (closed in 2013 to make way for Wisma Geylang Serai)

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Establishment of Kumpulan Angkatan Muda Sastera on 18 March

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Batas Langit by Mohamed Latiff Mohamed
- Selected Poems by Masuri S N
- Subuh Hilang Senja by Suratman Markasan



First launch ceremony of the Language Month in 1988

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

National Convention of Muslim Professionals for the establishment of the Association of Muslim Professionals

Baku Pronunciation Principles

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

Formation of discussion group, Nadwah Sastera

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Tiga Visi: Antologi Tiga Drama by Mohd Raman Daud, A Ghani Hamid and others
- Peribahasa Warisan by Suradi Parjo

1991

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

Regional Writers' Convention 7 held in Singapore

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Dinamika Budaya Gerak Tindak Menjejak 25 Tahun Singapura Merdeka published by Majlis Pusat
- Titis Tinta by Yatiman Yusof

1992

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Malay Language Council, Singapore established, takes over Literary Prize, (renamed Literary Award) and organisation of Malay Language Month
- Symposium on standard pronunciation of Malay words

1993

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

 Implementation of standard pronunciation in primary schools

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Launch of Tun Seri Lanang Award as part of the Literary Award. Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad is first to be awarded.
- Regional conference for writers organised by Asas '50 at RELC
- Seminar on standard pronunciation by Malay Language Council, Singapore

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Sumur Usia by Isa Kamari
- Sekedar Pengisi Ruang: Bicara Peribahasa, Pantun Pusaka dan Puisi Semasa by Aliman Hassan

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of standard pronunciation in secondary schools

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Tiga Lelaki by Suratman Markasan

1995

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Tun Seri Lanang Award conferred to Masuri S N
- Regional language organisation Mastera established on 25 August

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Kita Tidak Bakal Balik by Masuri S N

1996 PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION

OF SELECTED FOLK

Batas Langit by Mohamed Latiff Mohamed wins Literary Award consolation prize, organised by Malay Language Council, Singapore

1997

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Tun Seri Lanang Award conferred to A Ghani Hamid

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Penghulu yang Hilang Segala-galanya by Suratman Markasan
- Aktivis Melayu/Islam di Singapura by Sulaiman Jeem and A Ghani Hamid

1998

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE Satu Bumi by Isa Kamari

1999

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Congress on Malay values (Nilam) organised by Majlis Pusat to establish Dewan Adat

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Tun Seri Lanang Award given to Suratman Markasan

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Betapa pun Nyanyian Rindunya Si Anak Geylang Serai: Sebuah Puisi Panjang by Djamal Tukimin



Implementation of standard pronunciation in secondary schools in 1994.

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

- Dialog Selatan organised by Asas '50 at Sultan Mosque Auditorium
- Singapore reiterates standard pronunciation

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Era of regenerating the voice of Singaporean Malays who grow up with the new education system
- Perikatan Sayembara Daya Cipta (Persada) established together by Asas '50, Pustaka Nasional and Suhaimi Salleh Associates to organise novel writing contests, in which Rohani Din emerges as winner with her work Anugerah Buat Syamsiah

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Rhythms/Irama Antologi Puisi Alaf Singapura by Kirpal Singh, Wong Yoon Yah, Hadijah Rahmat, Masuri S N and others
- Use of new platforms such as blogs/Facebook by Isa Kamari, Noor Hasnah Adam, Alfian Saat and Buana Puitika

2001-2002

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

- Tun Seri Lanang Award given to Aliman Hassan
- Regional Writers' Convention 12 organised by Asas '50 at Mandarin Hotel
- Malay Language Elective Programme held at Bukit Panjang Government High School
- Degree programme with Honours in Malay Language and Literature offered at National Institute of Education

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Selves/Jati Diri The States of Arts in Singapore edited by Kwok Kian Woon, Arun Mahizhnan and T Sasitharan
- Budaya dan Falsafah Orang Melayu by Dr Abbas Mohd Shariff

2003

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Anak Bumi Anthology of Short Stories by Literary Award winners 1993–2000, Volume 1
- Citra Minda Anthology of Essays by Literary Award winners 1993–2000, Volume 2
- Perjalanan MAS: Memoir Muhammad Ariff Ahmad
- Bisik Singapore Malay Drama Anthology by Aidli Alin Mosbit, Alfian Saat and Noor Effendy Ibrahim
- Arus Melayu Singapura by Chan Maw Woh (essays in Mandarin)

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Tun Seri Lanang Award given to Mohamed Latiff Mohamed

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Gelombang Kasih Anthology of Drama Scripts by Literary Award winners 1993–2000, Volume 3
- Prisma Pentas Anthology of Theatre Drama Scripts by Literary Award winners 1993–2000, Volume 4
- Potret Diri Seorang Penyair

 Anthology of Singapore
 Malay Poems by Literary
 Award winners 1993–2000,
 Volume 5
- Adab Orang Melayu by Dr Abbas Mohd Shariff

2005

HISTORICAL EVENT/ SIGNIFICANCE

Malay Language Curriculum and Pedagogy Review Committee formed and chaired by Dr Hadijah Rahmat

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

The 'Arif Budiman' vision introduced in the Malay Language Curriculum Review report

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Petikan Rasa/Extract of Feelings by A Ghani Hamid
- Kilat Senja Sejarah Sosial dan Budaya Kampungkampung di Singapura by Dr Hadijah Rahmat
- Leksikon: Direktori Penulis Melayu Singapura by Dr Mohd Pitchay Gani

2006

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Perikatan Anugerah Muhammad Ariff Ahmad (Penamas) initiated by Asas '50, PGBM, Pergas and Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad's trustee as well as Majlis Pusat to honour young teachers, writers, and religious teachers. Penamas was dissolved to form the MAS Fund/Endowment at Nanyang Technological University (NTU)

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Perahu Melayu di Lautan Khulzum – Collection of spiritual poems by Johar Buang
- Peranan dan Perkembangan Sastera Kanak-kanak by Dr Hadijah Rahmat
- Budaya: Memeluk Akar Menyuluh ke Langit by Dr Kamsiah Abdullah and others



Establishment of the Pendeta Muhammad Ariff Ahmad Endowment Fund (the MAS Fund).

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

- Aksara: The Passage of Malay Scripts Exhibition organised by the National Library Board (NLB) from 18 January to 30 June
- Tun Seri Lanang Award given to Djamal Tukimin

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Benih Budiman Suatu Analisis Sosio-Sejarah Persekolahan di Singapura by Kamsiah Abdullah
- Yang Hilang by Rafaat Hj Hamzah
- Nilam Nilai Melayu Menurut Adat by Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad published by Majlis Pusat

2008

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

- Masuri S N International Seminar – His Works and Contributions organised by Malay Language Council, Singapore and NLB on 26–27 July at NLB
- Malay Literature offered as an elective Combined Humanities programme for GCE O levels

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Sejarah Tidak Pernah Luka Kita yang Berduka – Lanskap Sastera Melayu Singapura Pasca Angkatan 50 by Djamal Tukimin



2009

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Tun Seri Lanang Award given to Isa Kamari

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

Aksara – The Passage of Malay Scripts published by NLB

2010

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Pendidikan Bahasa Melayu di Singapura by Kamsiah Abdullah
- Dari Jendela Zaman Ini Antologi Puisi Malaysia dan Singapura coordinated by Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books, and National Arts Council

Isa Kamari awarded the Tun Seri Lanang Award in 2009.

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Tun Seri Lanang Award given to Dr Hadijah Rahmat

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Sasterawan Melayu di Persada Dunia by Masuri S N
- Bibliografi Sastera Melayu Singapura (1965–2009) compiled by Juffri Supa'at
- Citra Murni Insan Dalam Dunia Pendidikan – Sebuah Feskrip untuk Abbas Mohd Shariff published by National Institute of Education

2012

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Singapore becomes a full member of Mastera

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Sumbangsih MAS Koleksi Puisi Pilihan compiled by Juffri Supa'at
- Ode to Masuri SN by Sa'eda Buang



Signing ceremony to mark Singapore becoming a full member of Mastera in 2021.

2013

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/LITERATURE

Tun Seri Lanang Award given to Nadiputra

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- Kembali ke Akar Melayu, Kembali ke Akar Islam by Suratman Markasan, volume 1-4
- *Kurnia Alam* by Dr Hadijah Rahmat
- Gerimis di Hati best drama script at the Pesta Perdana 11 (television film awards) by Hamed Ismail, Amanah Mustafi, Hartinah Ahmad and Samsudin Said
- Musika Arena Musik Melayu Silam di Malaya by Azlan Mohamed Said
- Batas Langit by Mohamed Latiff Mohamed translated into English



Muhammad Khairool Haque Abdul Kadir wins ASEAN Young Writers Award in 2014.





(Top) Publication of the GPS Series featuring 6 bilingual children's books written by 12 trainee teachers under the guidance of Dr Mukhlis Abu Bakar (left)

DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE/ LITERATURE

- Muhammad Khairool Haque (work: Risalah Ikan Paus) was Singapore's winner for the inaugural ASEAN Young Writers' Award (National Language category)
- Pertemuan Penyair Nusantara 7 (meet of regional poets) organised by Persatuan Kemuning and KAMUS at the Malay Heritage Centre
- Dana MAS Post-graduate Scholarship and Research Grant announced by NTU

PRODUCTION/PUBLICATION OF SELECTED FOLK LITERATURE

- 6 bilingual children's books written by 12 trainee teachers under the guidance of Dr Mukhlis Abu Bakar and published under the NIE/NTU Singapore Trainee Teachers' Series
- Himpunan Makalah Kebudayaan Cina-Melayu by Yang Quee Yee
- Percikan Kembara by Yatiman Yusof
- Bicara Budiman Dr Muhammad Ariff Ahmad by the Malay Language Centre of Singapore

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Part 12 Those Behind the Scene

With knowledge, expertise and rich experience in their respective sphere of writings, they compiled this important and historic book. They are the ones who wrote and edited the articles in the book *Yang Terukir: Malay Language and Literature in Celebration of 50 Years* of Singapore's Independence.

Biodata Editors and authors

*Accurate as of Dec 2015

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A Bouquet of Graciousness Adorned with Gratitude

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