

04

A founder's literary legacy:  
The short stories and radio  
plays of S. Rajaratnam

10

Examining Lim Tze Peng's  
calligraphy after 2006

15

The historical and cultural  
influence of the Singapore  
record industry

40

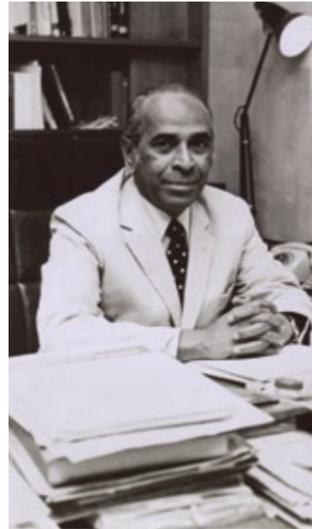
P. Krishnan:  
A literary journey

# biblioasia



NLB | National Library  
Singapore

## FOCUS



04 A founder's literary legacy: The short stories and radio plays of S. Rajaratnam

## FEATURES



10 撕裂与重铸  
读林子平丙戌后之作  
Examining Lim Tze Peng's calligraphy after 2006

15 The historical and cultural influence of the record industry in Singapore, 1903-1975

22 姚紫小说与文学语言研究  
A study of Yao Zi's literary language through his novels

27 Illustrating the future: Southeast Asian ceramic special exhibition catalogues, 1970-2009



34 新加坡华文书业历史简述  
A brief history of the Chinese book industry in Singapore

40 பஞ்சதைதாசன் எனம் இலக்கியவாதி  
P. Krishnan:  
A literary journey

44 Melihat alam melalui mata & hati Abdul Ghani Hamid  
Seeing nature from the eyes and heart of Abdul Ghani Hamid

## BOOKMARKS



03 Director's column

14 National Online Repository of the Arts

46 PictureSG

# Director's Column

To be human is to be creative—to write, to paint and to make music that records our thoughts and dreams. Such artistic endeavours capture the spirit of the times and places in which they were created, transmitting to succeeding generations the hopes and fears of visionaries of the past.

This issue of *BiblioAsia* celebrates the artists among us and their contributions to the rich creative heritage of Singapore.

The lead feature by Irene Ng puts the spotlight on the radio plays of founding father S. Rajaratnam. While he was best known as a politician and statesman, Rajaratnam was also a gifted writer in his early years and produced a number of short stories and radio plays in the 1940s and 1950s. Irene discusses his literary legacy and how his plays outlined his vision of a "Singaporean Singapore" with the ability to transcend racial, cultural and religious divisions.

The art of veteran Singapore painter and calligrapher Lim Tze Peng, whose work graces the cover of this issue, forms the backdrop of our exploration into Singapore's creative heritage. Yeo Mang Tong examines the changes in Lim's painting style after 2006, in particular the shift from "painting what one sees" to "painting from one's heart".

Singapore's rich multicultural literary heritage is further explored through the lives and works of local literary pioneers Yao Zi, P. Krishnan and Abdul Ghani Hamid, who each wrote in their mother tongues.

Sundari Balasubramaniam profiles the prolific Tamil writer P. Krishnan. Regarded as an authority on Tamil grammar and literature, Krishnan is also an artiste who has performed in numerous radio dramas and musicals.

Such versatility is also evident in the work of Malay writer and painter Abdul Ghani Hamid. Juffri Supa'at examines the works of this prolific artist who is known for his writings, poetry as well as his art.

In her article, Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow Low Siew Tin examines the literary language of prolific Chinese author Yao Zi. She notes that the author played a significant role in preserving aspects of Singapore culture through his mastery of the Chinese language, his use of dialect as well as his vivid descriptions of now-vanished Singapore scenes.

This issue also showcases the work of Lee Kong Chian Research Fellows Ross Laird, Zou Lu and Sharon Wong, who explored the National Library's extensive Singapore and Southeast Asian collections as part of their research.

Ross Laird presents a fascinating look at the history of the Singapore music recording industry, which was an important centre of the record industry in the larger Southeast Asian region from the early 1900s to the 1970s.

Zou Lu traces the development of the Chinese book industry in Singapore beginning in the early twentieth century, highlighting the contributions of firms such as The Commercial Press, Chung Hwa Book Company and the Shanghai Book Company.

Sharon Wong examines Southeast Asian ceramic exhibition catalogues produced between 1970 and 2009. As these catalogues form a permanent record of ceramic exhibits drawn together for special exhibitions, they are an invaluable resource for understanding the development of the field during this period.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *BiblioAsia*. Happy reading!

Ms Ngian Lek Choh  
Director, National Library

### Editorial & Production

#### Managing Editors

Joanna Tan,  
Valerie Chew

#### Editorial Support

Cheng Tee Yin,  
Mary Peh,  
Masamah Ahmad,  
Ng Hui Ling,  
Nor-Afidah  
Abd Rahman,  
Vicky Gao

#### Design and Print

Relay Room  
Times Printers

#### Contributors

Irene Ng, Juffri Supa'at, Low Siew Tin,  
Ross Laird, Sharon Wong, Sundari  
Balasubramaniam, Yeo Mang Thong, Zou Lu

#### Please direct all correspondence to:

National Library Board  
100 Victoria Street #14-01  
National Library Building  
Singapore 188064  
Tel: +65 6332 3255  
Fax: +65 6332 3611  
Email: ref@nlb.gov.sg  
Website: www.nlb.gov.sg

BiblioAsia is available online at:  
<http://nl.sg> and <http://libguides.nlb.sg>

©National Library Board  
Printed in Singapore, May 2012  
ISSN 0219-8126 (PRINT)  
ISSN 1793-9968 (ONLINE)  
All rights reserved.

No part of this *BiblioAsia* is published and copyrighted in 2012 by the National Library Board, Singapore for all contents, designs, drawings and photographs printed in the Republic of Singapore.

*BiblioAsia* is published by National Library Board, Singapore with permission from the copyright owner. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, for any reason or by any means, whether re-drawn, enlarged or otherwise altered

including mechanical, photocopy, digital storage and retrieval or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing from both the copyright owner and the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. The text, layout and designs presented in this publication, as well as the publication in its entirety, are protected by the copyright laws of the Republic of Singapore and similar laws in other countries. Commercial production of works based in whole or in part upon the designs, drawings and photographs contained in this publication is strictly forbidden without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

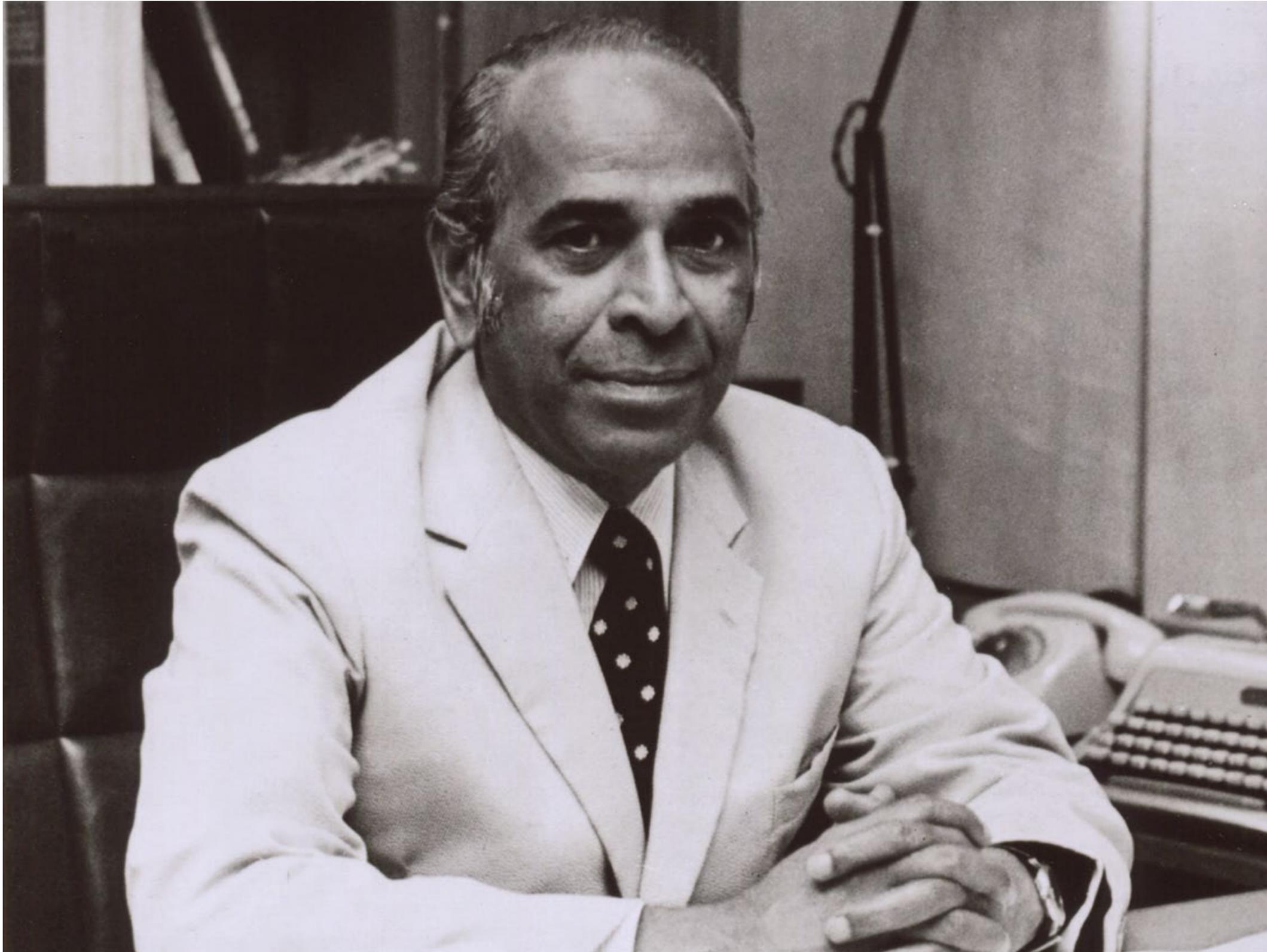
While every effort has been made in the collection, preparation and presentation

of the material in this publication, no responsibility can be taken for how this information is used by the reader, for any change that may occur after publication or for any error or omission on the part of the National Library Board, Singapore. Neither the respective copyrights owners or authors or the publishers accepts responsibility for any loss suffered by any person who acts or refrains from acting on any matter as a result of reliance upon any information contained in this publication.

Scanning, uploading and/or distribution of this publication, or any designs or drawings or photographs contained herein, in whole or part (whether re-drawn, re-photographed or otherwise altered) via the Internet, CD, DVD, E-zine, photocopied hand-outs,

or any other means (whether offered for free or for a fee) without the express written permission from both the copyright owner and the publisher is illegal and punishable by the laws of the Republic of Singapore and similar laws in other countries.

The copyright owner and publisher of this publication appreciate your honesty and integrity and ask that you do not participate in or encourage piracy of copyrighted material. Be sure to purchase (or download) only authorised material. We thank you for your support.



## A Founder's Literary Legacy: The Short Stories and Radio Plays of S. Rajaratnam

Irene Ng

S. Rajaratnam is perhaps best remembered for his visionary role in shaping the national ideology and framing the foreign policy of Singapore as one of its founding leaders charting a yet-unknown future. What is less recognised is the rich literary legacy he left behind. Its creation predates the independence of Singapore in 1965, and even its self-governing status in 1959.

Before there was the politician and ideologue, there was the storyteller and the writer. Indeed, the conception and development of Singapore's national ideology and foreign policy arguably owes much to the imaginative writer and creative thinker in him.

I would like to divide this essay into three parts. First, a brief introduction to his stories and radio plays. Second, the context in which he wrote the stories and plays. Third, an examination of the importance of his literary legacy.

### INTRODUCTION

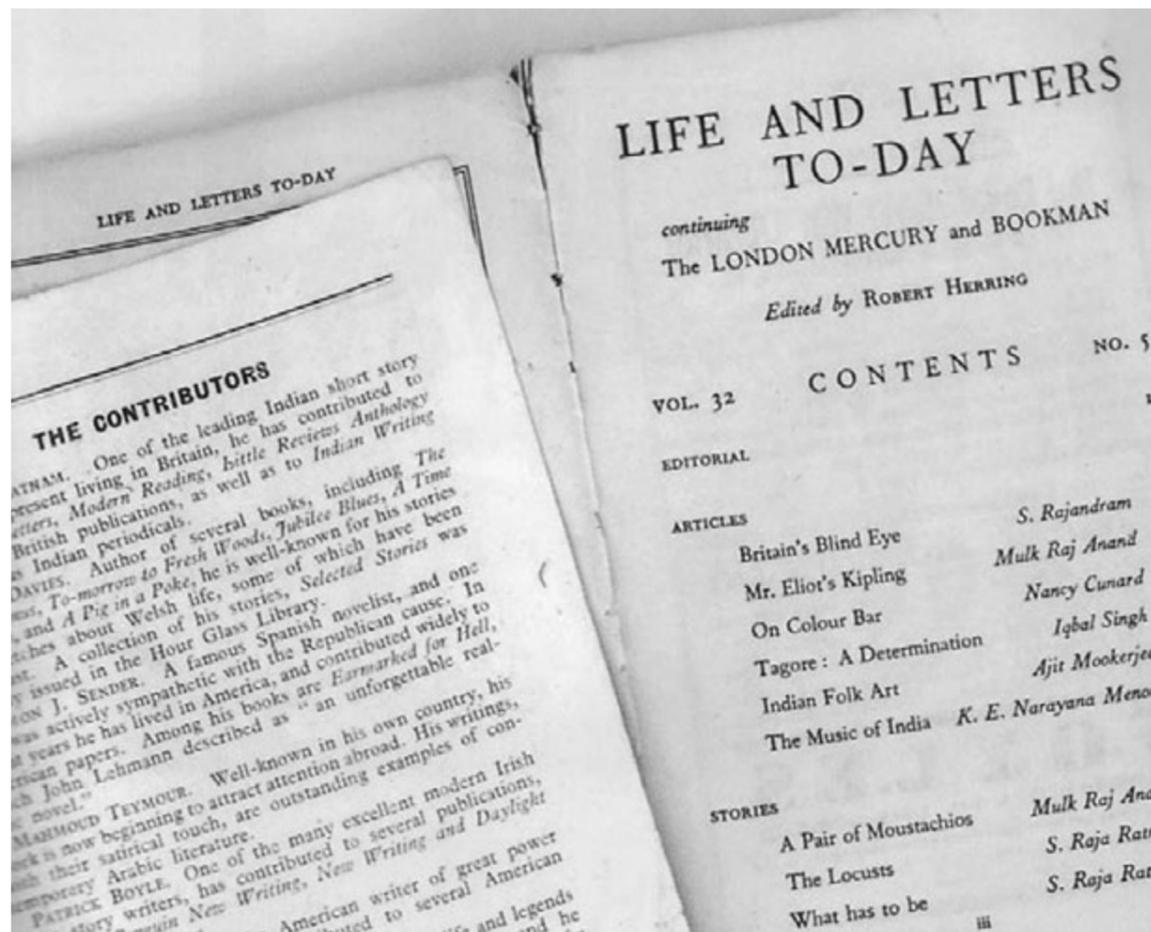
It is important to recognise that Rajaratnam was not just any writer, but a great one, once acclaimed in London—the centre of the English literary scene—where he lived for 12 years from 1935 to 1947. During the bleak years of World War II, when he turned to writing to eke a living, he proved himself to be a writer of uncommon imagination and talent.

His short stories were published in several journals and anthologies in the 1940s, and caught the attention of literary greats E.M. Forster and George Orwell. Forster described Rajaratnam's debut "Famine", published in 1941, as "touching and well-constructed" in one of his radio talks for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Orwell, who would later achieve fame for the political novels *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, was working at the BBC in the early 1940s and invited Rajaratnam to write radio scripts.

By the mid-40s, Rajaratnam was billed "one of the leading Indian short story writers" in some anthologies. His reputation among the literary cognoscenti was sealed when his work appeared alongside those of the literary greats in an international anthology published in 1947. The volume was titled *A World of Great Stories: 115 Stories, The Best of Modern Literature*. The anthology also featured works by Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Scott Fitzgerald, Thomas Wolfe, John Steinbeck and James Joyce, to name a few.

His stories addressed themes of disaster and death, oppression and injustice, and the fears and follies of man, but also coursing through them is the transformative power of the human spirit and of reason. Although most of his stories are set against South Asian and Malayan

One of Singapore's founding leaders, S. Rajaratnam, is today best known for drafting the Singapore Pledge and for being the country's first Foreign Minister. His biographer Irene Ng, who recently edited the collection *The Short Stories and Radio Plays of S. Rajaratnam*, reveals his little-recognised literary side and discusses its importance to Singapore.



Rajaratnam was described as “one of the leading Indian short story writers” in *Modern International Short Stories*, published in 1947 (left). His stories “The Locusts” and “What Has to Be” first appeared in *Life and Letters* in August 1941 (right). (COURTESY OF GRAHAM BERRY AND THE INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES.)

Previous page: Rajaratnam in his office.  
(SOURCE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SINGAPORE.)

backdrops, they are not simply stories of a time or place, but a sophisticated reframing of the forces and ideas that shape the world in which we live. In his stories, we follow the fortunes of characters as they define themselves or are defined by various combinations of their past, the choices they make, and the forces that act upon them. Do characters make their fate or suffer it?

His stories are powerful in their imagination and notable for their literary quality. Some of them, given their universal themes, have travelled beyond the English-speaking world and have been translated into French and German.

But it is at home—Malaya, which at that time included Singapore—that his passion really lay. As one of Singapore's founding leaders in 1965, he drew from his belief in the transformative power of the mind and his past literary experience to imagine a Singaporean Singapore at a time when racial and religious divisions were omnipresent. Defying the evidence before his eyes, he envisioned a nation pulsating as one people. He clothed his vision in prose and gave it shape and shine as the unifying national creed.

One can find its ideological basis in the radio plays that he wrote for broadcast over Radio Malaya in 1957, two years before the People's Action Party came into power in 1959. Then a newspaper journalist and a freelance radio scriptwriter, he animated his ideas through a picaresque group of characters for a six-part drama series *A Nation in the Making*.

They were broadcast over Radio Malaya at a time of political upheaval, when Singapore and the peninsula were grappling with colonialism and agitating for freedom.

They aimed to shape public opinion on urgent issues of the day—in particular, the making of a nation. Prior to the advent of television in Singapore in 1963, radio drama was a popular form of entertainment and education.

He used witty dialogue to engage the listener. But there were life-and-death issues at stake, and a serious decision the people needed to make, at a time of intense political ferment and uncertainty: Should Malaya go the way of racial politics and incompetent populist leadership?

In his radio plays, there is a recurring message that says “we can create the sort of nation that we want”.

This is a discourse of reason, of civil argument and debate, one based on a relationship of trust and faith.

As one of his characters in the radio scripts says: “We must make an act of faith that people can be made to think, that you can appeal to their reason, and that you can bring out the decent and human qualities in them. We must believe in this or perish. If we believe that our people are essentially reasonable and decent, then we can believe that they will understand us when we say that, unless we become a nation, we will destroy ourselves.”

He was fearless in attacking the problems of the day, and used the radio dramas as sources of ethical instruction and political education. Reading them today, his words still seem immediate, powerful and courageous.

Reading the scripts, one is struck by the clarity and conviction with which Rajaratnam laid out the arguments against racial politics and the idea that a nation should be built on a common race, religion or language. He deployed quotes from leading thinkers, such as Ernest Renan and John Stuart Mill, to contend that the vital element that brings a nation to life is a people united by a sense of common history and common destiny—or as he quoted H.A.L. Fisher, “common sufferings, common triumphs, common achievements, common memories and common aspirations”.

In reading his plays, what comes across with unmistakable clarity is his prodigiously imaginative flair. Their recordings, however, have disappeared into thin air. I found their scripts among Rajaratnam's private papers in the course of my research for the biography on him. The biography, titled *The Singapore Lion: A Biography of S. Rajaratnam*, was published in early 2010. The radio scripts are now preserved in the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Library, which houses the S. Rajaratnam Private Archives Collection.

#### CONTEXT

The seven short stories, which I collected in the book *The Short Stories and Radio Plays of S. Rajaratnam*, were written during his transformative years in London.

When he arrived in London to study for his law degree at King's College in 1935, he was aged 20. He came from a sheltered background, raised in the rubber plantations of Seremban by his caste-conscious Jaffna Tamil family. They were devout Hindus.

He was not interested in politics. He had little direction in life.

By the time he left London 12 years later in 1947, he was a changed man—a man with a political vision with strong convictions in



*The Short Stories and Radio Plays of S. Rajaratnam* (2011) is an anthology of Rajaratnam's early literary works. (COURTESY OF EPIGRAM BOOKS.)

justice and equality. He had also found his calling—to be a writer and journalist—and had achieved a measure of literary acclaim.

London was the capital of the English literary and intellectual scene. He was swept up by the moral and political ferment of the times. As the drama of nationalism and the danger of fascism became obvious and urgent to him, he sought out answers. He found himself gravitating towards Marxist and Fabian circles. A budding bibliophile, he listened to people talk books at book launches.

He was close to the radical Indian writers and nationalists in London and had connections with left-wing editors and politicians from various countries.

Then came the war in 1939. And the terror.

The anxious war years in London were a major turning point for him. The unfolding horrors of Nazism, the dehumanising madness of war and the senseless persecutions had shown the overwhelming power of the irrational.

He was assailed with a deep sense of doubt about how to make life count – indeed, how to live – in this time of crisis. During this dark and intense period, as he re-examined his assumptions of life, his roots and identity, he devoted himself to the discipline of deep reflection and to the exercise of the moral imagination.

This imagination is reflected in his short stories. He wrote them in the midst of the Blitz, when bombs rained down almost every night on the capital.

As one of Singapore's founding leaders in 1965, he drew from his belief in the transformative power of the mind and his past literary experience to imagine a Singaporean Singapore at a time when racial and religious divisions were omnipresent.

In his radio plays, there is a recurring message that says “we can create the sort of nation that we want”. This is a discourse of reason, of civil argument and debate, one based on a relationship of trust and faith.

Amidst the rubble and the terror, he wrote to get hold of some kind of truth, to get to grips with the realities of life, to make sense of society and the individuals in it, to discover a vision of society that is worth living for and fighting for.

He used metaphor, humour and irony in his writings to provoke people to think, to find their own answers. He wrote to get across some ideas, to expose some falsehoods, to make people re-examine their deeply-held beliefs and assumptions.

During that uncertain period in London, he was already worrying about the politics back home in Malaya. In the mid-40s, before he returned to Malaya, he was already writing about this in commentaries, analysing the problems facing Malaya, particularly the vexing question of how to integrate the different races into one political community.

These worries received full attention in his radio scripts for Radio Malaya 10 years later, in 1957.

In his radio plays, titled *A Nation in the Making*, he provoked his listeners to think about what ultimately binds a nation together, opened up the explosive issues of race and religion, and appealed to their reason to find answers.

His radio plays deserve greater study for their contribution to the idea of a Malayan nation—at the time, Singapore was part of Malaya—and the contested notions of the beginning of Malayan history. They stand out for their deep insights which pass the test of time.

Through his writings at this seminal stage, one can trace the formation of Rajaratnam's views on fundamental questions at a time of great moral and political confusion. They offer sharp insights into his values and ideals.

The foundation of Singapore is built upon the rock-solid convictions of exceptional men like him.

One of his most important ideas was on Singapore's national identity. He was keen to ensure that the younger generation shared his unhyphenated vision of Singaporean

Singapore, as opposed to a Singapore that is based on separate communal identities. He believed in the ability of Singaporeans to transcend their racial, cultural and religious classifications to create a shared national identity to which they give their primary loyalty. For him, this was an act of will and faith.

#### IMPORTANCE

The themes in his early writings are still relevant today, if not even more relevant.

The transformation of a people from different races and religions, and from different lands, into a united nation is not an easy process. It needs the kind of momentum that comes with moral outrage, conviction and also fear, but it also takes someone to do the hard grind, to focus on the analysis, and provide the factual and ideological ammunition.

Rajaratnam's writings, be they fiction or journalism, make people think. But they would not get things done. They would not solve problems. At the time when Singapore faced a crisis of political leadership, Rajaratnam, Lee Kuan Yew and others with similar convictions stepped forward. They entered politics to build the kind of society they envisioned, and pursued that great aim with a high heart.

I believe that the plays are especially important, as they hold the ideals that underlie what was to be his life-long quest for a Singaporean Singapore, a fair and just society rid of irrational prejudices and intolerance. They hold questions that reverberate through time and that demand an answer: How realistic is this dream of a Singaporean Singapore? How far have we come in realising it?

In Singapore, our brand of multiculturalism is an ongoing experiment. The Singaporean Singapore that founding leaders such as Rajaratnam envisaged for this land of immigrants is one that embraces immigrants



During the book launch of *The Singapore Lion* on 4 February 2010, The Necessary Stage put up an adapted version of Rajaratnam's radio plays from the series *A Nation in the Making*. It was the first time that the plays had been performed on stage. (COURTESY OF THE INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES)

and transforms them into Singaporeans who stand united as one people.

“We the people of Singapore, pledge ourselves as one united people, regardless of race, language or religion”—this line from the Singapore Pledge is a central vision of Rajaratnam's.

In one of his radio plays are less familiar words by Rajaratnam, that still give us pause today. A character in his radio script muses on building a nation based on nationalistic sentiments: “There are good sentiments and bad sentiments. There are emotions like love, compassion, brotherliness which have made men better men and nations better nations. There's the patriotism which can better be described as love of country. There is jingoism and phoney patriotism which is arrogant and full of hatred. But a good nationalist wants his country to be admired by other countries.”

Rajaratnam was a good nationalist. In spite of the many disappointments and the torrent of abuse that came his way, he was also an optimist. He believed in a Singaporean Singapore and was unflinching in reminding us that we should be doing better when we failed to live up to the ideals in the National Pledge.

It is to be Singapore's lasting fortune that Rajaratnam chose to use his imaginative talent and creative skills to build up the nation, laying the foundation for the ideals that will always be crucial to our quest for a Singaporean Singapore.

Singapore was also fortunate that Rajaratnam, who was born in Ceylon, raised in Seremban and spent 12

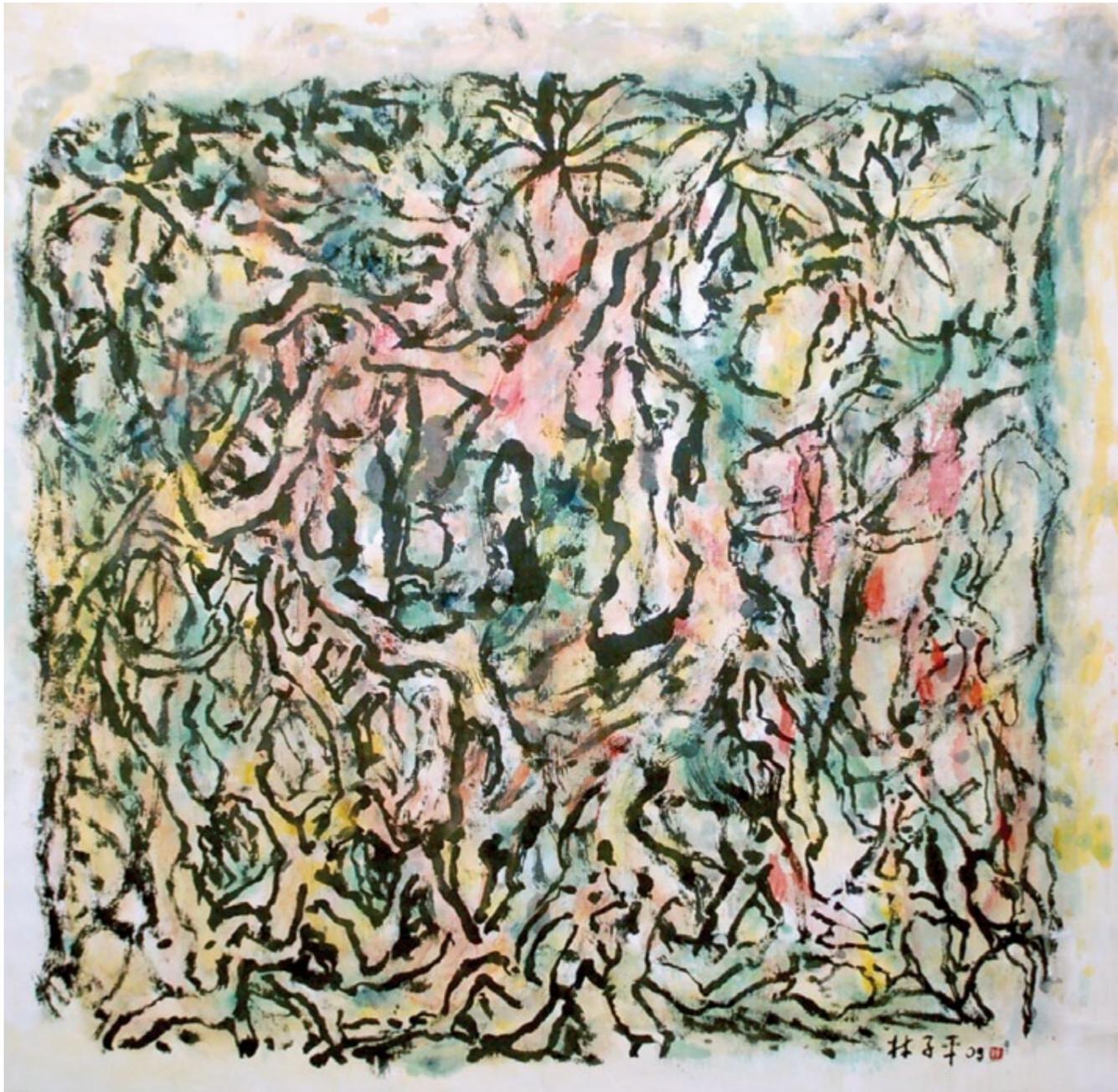
years in London, chose to make Singapore his home and to devote the rest of his life to its service.

An appraisal of his early writings puts in perspective his original contribution to the genre as a pioneer for Malayan writing in English. Robert Yeo, in the introduction to his selection of *Singapore Short Stories Vol. II*, credits Rajaratnam for being the earliest fiction writer in English. Ban Kah Choon acknowledges that “the first stories written by S. Rajaratnam in the early 1940s are clearly important, laying, as it were, the desire to narrativise local events and to think imaginatively with a local voice”.

Indeed, Rajaratnam's early writings add depth and distinction to our literary legacy and deserve to be read, celebrated, interpreted and re-interpreted. Yet so few Singaporeans have read them. It seems not a little ironic that our students read works by Western authors with hardly any link to our social and cultural contexts, but not those of the country's own founding leader, once recognised by the Western literary circles for producing among the greatest short stories in the world. One hopes this will soon change.

#### About the author

Irene Ng is a Writer-in-Residence at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and has been a Member of Parliament since 2001. She compiled and edited *The Short Stories and Radio Plays of S. Rajaratnam*, published in 2011. She also wrote *The Singapore Lion: A Biography of S. Rajaratnam* (2010) and is currently writing the second volume of his biography.



《心向》

# 撕裂与重铸

## 读林子平丙戌后之作

姚梦桐

林子林子平是新加坡艺坛上具有强烈自我超越意识的书法家、画家。从事艺术，必须敢于探索、勇于创新，才能掣鲸鱼于碧海。2006（农历丙戌）年，已是耄耋之年的林子平，苦思冥想，甚至时有“不知如何下笔”的感叹！虽然如此，他仍终日笔耕不辍，殚精竭虑，在艺术创作的道路上，摸索前进，以恢宏的气度，深厚的传统笔法和天马行空的想象力，别开异径，创造一种迥异于之前的书画作品。

对衰年变法的作品，林子平发出一句豪语：“要嘛，就是最好；要嘛，就是最坏，我不走中间路线。”<sup>1</sup>

2008年8月，“林子平新水墨个展”，不仅让本地的艺术爱好者耳目一新，也引起中国美术馆馆长范迪安先生的注目，认为“他在水墨语言上兼融传统与现代、更重视现代表现的实践道路，是值得向美术界介绍”<sup>2</sup>。不久，殷勤的青鸟为他捎来了一封邀请信—北京中国美术馆与上海刘海粟美术馆邀请他去举行个人书画展。

林子平早年求学于中正中学。新加坡第一代书画家张丹农、叶之威、黄载灵、颜绿、张瘦石都曾任教中正中学，春风化雨，他们为学校孕育了不少书画家。林子平并非科班出身，也没曾拜上名师，凭自学成才。没有门户之成见，就没有包袱的压力，



王之涣《凉州词》  
黄河远上白云间，一片孤城万仞山。  
羌笛何须怨杨柳，春风不度玉门关。

也就不囿于一家之言。林老博观约取，转益多师，既对东方传统书画技法有所继承，他激赏黄宾虹、李可染的艺术造诣，也借鉴西方印象派、后印象派以及野兽派勇于创新的思维和表现手法，兼收并蓄。在这样的基础上，可以大胆发挥创造力，敢于尝试别人所不敢尝试的事，其成就当然不是一般人所能及。

读万卷书，可以增加识度；行万里路，足于开拓境界。几十年来，林子平到处写生，足迹遍及印度、东南亚、欧洲、中国、加拿大等地。心中积累了千山万壑，千树万树的创作素材。林老可说是“常年画树画不足”，2008年的“心向系列”，就是一组以树为对象的水墨画作，它是艺术家内在视觉之所得，纯然是心象而非物象。他自己说过：“以前是我见我画，现在是我思我画”<sup>3</sup>。然而，不管是我见我画，还是我思我画，都经过“心”造“境”，随着艺术家的心思造境，勇于取舍，才能达致“妙造自然”。“我思我画”的“思”，包含了林老的审美情趣、学养以及对人生哲理的认知。诗歌的“意境”和画的“境界”，有许多相通之处。诗人面对花鸟，眼前之景，化为心境，吟出“感时花溅泪，恨别鸟惊心”的千古绝唱，这种得之于“心境”的诗句，营造一幅引人入胜的“意境”，而由之生发的是“不尽之意，见于言外”诗意。绘画也是如此，2008年“心向系列”的树，体现了林子平从过去写实，重视细节的手法，转为恣情纵放的大写意的审美情趣。从主体感觉奔泻出来的直线、曲线、弧线、几何图案，极富抽象味，将林老的诗情融入绘画“意境”之中。不假雕琢，单纯朴素，简括有力的画风，不正是林老朴素无华的人生观以及老而弥坚的艺术生命力的写照吗？

《心向系列26》<sup>4</sup>以苍劲有力，曲、直与弧形线条画出扎根土地，枝亚伸空，形态不一的树干，用干湿表现画境的深邃。

又如《心向系列19》<sup>5</sup>盘根错节，枝亚交叉，



李白《黄鹤楼送孟浩然之广陵》  
故人西辞黄鹤楼，烟花三月下扬州。  
孤帆远影碧空尽，唯见长江天际流。

意念奇逸的枯笔，着力纸上，产生飞白的效果。从这两幅画我们可读到古拙、生涩、天真、淳厚的线条与诗一般的情思，而这种传统笔法意蕴的是民族的情态。

在一次访谈中，林子平说了以下两段话：我的水墨画、油画、写字都共同发展。你要知道我们都是亚洲人，在艺术上要有自己的民族特色。中国画（水墨画）非常注重用笔，表现线条；在这些方面与外国人比，我们会压倒他们。而西方在色彩上用的非常好，我们比不过人家。我们要学会了解自己的优势、民族特色才行。<sup>6</sup>

绘画作品要看笔墨、章法、色彩等。如果一张画水墨画在色彩、构图上不错，在笔墨上不行，时间长了我们就会发现它没有什么味道。如果一张水墨画在色彩、构图上差一点，笔墨很不错，我们还可以看下去。当然，如果笔墨好，其他方面也好，这张画就更好了。<sup>7</sup>

《心向系列》正是林子平特别注重民族特笔墨的最好注脚。

以下我们再来欣赏林子平书写的王之涣《凉州词》与李白《黄鹤楼送孟浩然之广陵》的书法作品：

王之涣《凉州词》“黄河远上白云间，一片孤城万仞山。羌笛何须怨杨柳，春风不度玉门关。”诗中雄奇壮阔的景色，委婉蕴藉的情韵，耐人寻味的艺术魅力，深信林子平也有同感，又或者他眼前更出现一幅优美的雪景：天寒微雪，王之涣、王昌龄与高适，三人一起在旗亭小饮。席间，几名貌美的歌妓吟诵诗句，其中一名体态姣丽的歌姬唱出：黄河远上白云间……

李白《黄鹤楼送孟浩然之广陵》“故人西辞黄鹤楼，烟花三月下扬州。孤帆远影碧空尽，惟见长江天际流。”送别好友，诗人心潮起伏，荡漾的诗意，正像浩浩东去的春水，神驰繁花似锦的扬州。

### About the article

Singapore veteran artist and 2003 Cultural Medallion Award winner Lim Tze Peng is known for his continuous efforts to surpass his own achievements and his open-mindedness in exploring new techniques and styles of painting. In August 2008, he held an exhibition titled *Inroads – Lim Tze Peng's New Ink Work* at the Art Retreat Museum in Singapore. His works of creative imagination and skills in integrating modern and traditional techniques impressed not just local art enthusiasts but also attracted overseas attention. He was subsequently invited to exhibit his works in overseas art galleries such as the National Art Museum of China and Shanghai's Liu Hai Su Art Museum.

In this article, Yeo Mang Thong examines the changes in Lim Tze Peng's painting style after the year 2006, in particular the shift from “painting what one sees” to “painting from one's heart”. In Yeo's opinion, the *Inroads* series exhibited in 2008 was a good representation of Lim's switch from realistic painting to works that are relatively more abstract. He observes that Lim derives his artistic inspiration from the emotions that he senses in his surroundings. Yeo also notes similar shifts in the style of Lim's Chinese calligraphy works, from neater and cleaner pieces to those with freehand strokes, evoking a lively and vibrant aura. Yeo views this change in style as a result of Lim's carefree life after retirement, and also Lim's perseverance in achieving higher levels of artistic excellence.

Learn more about Lim Tze Peng by visiting the National Online Repository of the Arts (NORA) at <http://nora.nl.sg>.

<sup>1</sup> 吴启基《林子平高龄变法》，见《联合早报·艺苑》，2008年8月12日。

<sup>2</sup> 范迪安《献辞》。

见《心向：林子平水墨历程》（新加坡：新加坡美术馆出版2009年4月）。

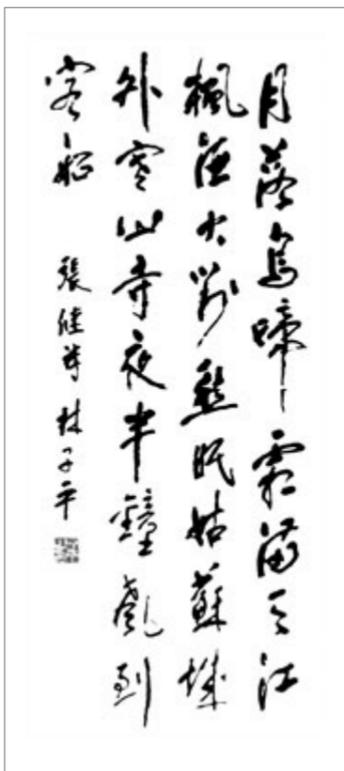
<sup>3</sup> 见张夏帷编《心向——林子平新水墨》（新加坡：Art Retreat Ltd, 2008），页18。

<sup>4</sup> 同注3，页33。

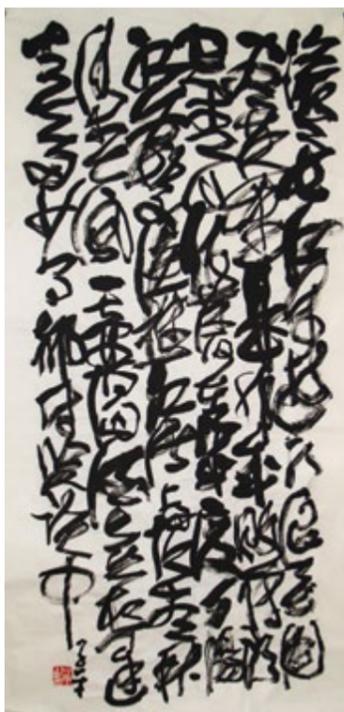
<sup>5</sup> 同注3，页41。

<sup>6</sup> 《对话“新加坡之子”林子平先生》，见<http://zj.cangcn.com/u/3068.shtml>

<sup>7</sup> 同注3。



附图1: 张继《枫桥夜泊》  
月落乌啼霜满天，江枫渔火对愁眠。  
姑苏城外寒山寺，夜半钟声到客船。  
(原作为国家图书馆许少全藏品)



附图2: 罗贯中《三國演義》开篇词  
滚滚长江东逝水，浪花淘尽英雄。  
是非成败转头空。  
青山依旧在，几度夕阳红。  
白发渔樵江渚上，惯看秋月春风。  
一壶浊酒喜相逢。  
古今多少事，都付笑谈中。  
(原作为国家图书馆许少全藏品)



附图3: 张继《枫桥夜泊》  
(原作为国家图书馆许少全藏品)

这两幅书法作品写于2008年。<sup>⑥</sup>林子平在落笔之前，心中营造出诗意，书写时任情恣性，心手达情。线条横、竖、弧形互相交错，随意性特强，充满跳跃与动感。笔力苍劲，绝无纤弱浮滑之笔。墨色浓干并具，间中由于运笔着力，飞白与浓墨对比，加强了作品的节奏感。结体大小错落相参，字与字之间，行与行之间，交叠相挤，然而它不但没予人一种窒息感，反而是通过线条、墨色浓干，建构出不同形状、黑白分明的几何空间，塑造出“疏可走马、密不透风”，张弛有致，和谐统一的艺术效果。

这种“疏可走马、密不透风”的艺术结构语言与收集在《林子平墨迹》（1991年出版）的书法是截然不同的。它与前者既不是一贯的，也缺乏沿袭性，是一种撕裂的；重铸的、崭新的艺术结构语言。一如前文所述，丙戌年之后，林子平的创作观是“以前是我见我画，现在是我思我画”，写的已经不再是物象而是心象，并以大写意取代之前的细腻精致。这，显然也酝酿出书法创造上的新思维。这两幅作品，笔墨随着情性飞动，毫不造作，世俗的美丑、法度，甚至毁誉，均抛于九霄云外，形成了一种结构天成的艺术美。说它是重铸的，整个外貌与前期作品相比令人耳目一新，然而内涵的笔墨还是传统的；说它是崭新的，因为纵观新加坡第一代书法家，如施香沅、陈人浩、黄火若、黄载灵、黄勳吾、崔大地或者颜绿等，他们在章法的处理上，一般都服膺于传统。林子平不甘画地为牢，力求创新。就这个意义上说，他给新加坡的书法艺术呈现出一个不一样的风貌。这两幅书法作品给人的视觉享受不在于哪一个字意态奇逸，哪一个字精神飞动，而是整幅字中的画意，如“惟见长江天际流”数字，给读者的视觉，恰似一江浩浩东去的春水向天际远逝。林子平这种敢于打破传统，极力表达个性的主观意念，应该是人书俱老，水到渠成的自然变化。自我超越、创新，应该建立在尊重固有的艺术文化以及自身深厚传统笔法的基础上，否则是胡搞！这与一般标榜前卫艺术的“书画家”，以低劣的手法，哗众取宠，蛊惑一味追逐时尚的人士，是不可同日而言的。

附图1-3这三幅是林老过渡到“疏可走马、密不透风”的艺术语言的作品，其自我超越而摸索前进的心路历程，从中看出端倪。

林子平这种先驱式的艺术经营手法，不是每个书画家都敢于去冒险，去尝试。我读着林子平的书法《江雪》，心绪随着宣纸上的笔墨舞动，飞到多年前林老的一张照片——孤立作画，目光凝视前方，那种执着与专注，到了浑然忘我的



《寻梦》

“痴”境。<sup>⑦</sup>细味其笔情，在撕裂与重铸的求索路上，他，也可说是独钓“寒江”的长者。

近日，读林子平的新作《寻梦》，画中十来只小舟，围绕着一艘大船，题上“寻梦”两字，他的画作很少题字，到底“寻梦”传达了怎样的信息？既然题上“寻梦”，其中又有何玄机？我不禁浮想联翩，并作出以下的解读：

这一只只的小舟，象征林子平一个个的艺术之梦。在追梦的过程中，时有不同的发现与惊喜，在不同发现的基础上，他又开始追逐另一个艺术之梦。一个个的梦，造就了他不同时期的艺术风貌。画中的大船是他心中的伊人一林老追求的艺术。

上世纪80年代，随着新加坡华文教育的改革，他卸下小学校长的职位，久在樊笼的他，抛弃种种恼人的公务。此后，吟啸徐行，真的是“谁怕？”在广阔的艺术天地里，他自由自在，无拘无束，进入一种“海阔凭鱼跃，天空任鸟飞”的境界。他无时无刻地寻找，不管伊人在水一方、在水之湄或者在水之滨，都抱着痴迷、执著的心态去追求。他从不放下自己的画笔，其衰年变法，无非是希望攀上另一座艺术高峰，让艺术的成果载满这艘大船。从这个意义上，林老给我们新加坡的年轻艺术工作者树立了一个典范——对于艺术的追求，必须抱着痴迷、执著的心态，年龄，只不过是一个数字罢了。

忽然，我想起了戴望舒《寻梦者》的诗句：

梦会开出花来的，

梦会开出娇妍的花来的……

的确，林老的艺术之梦已经开出一朵朵娇妍的花，然而，我们更深信林老心中的艺术之舟，将满载千朵万朵，纵情绽放的花儿！



柳宗元《江雪》  
千山鸟飞绝，万径人踪灭。  
孤舟蓑笠翁，独钓寒江雪。  
(原作为国家图书馆许少全藏品)

#### About the author

Yeo Mang Thong has served the Ministry of Education and other educational institutions in various capacities since 1967. He obtained his MA from the Department of Chinese Studies, National University of Singapore in 1986. His 1992 publication titled 新加坡战前华人美术史论集 [Essays on the History of Pre-war Chinese Painting in Singapore] has become one of the most important references for scholars researching the area of pre-war Singapore art. He was also the editorial advisor for Braddell Heights Chinese Traditional Arts Centre's 2001 publication 新加坡第一代书画家翰墨集珍 [Collection of Ink Painting and Calligraphic Works by Singapore's First Generation Artists].

<sup>⑥</sup> 同注3, 页145,146。

<sup>⑦</sup> 见《求索》Singapore Tyler Print Institute出版, 2006) 页6。



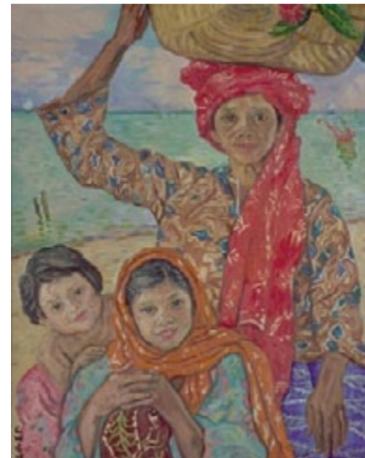
*STILL LIFE WITH CUT APPLE AND ORANGE*  
GEORGETTE CHEN, 1907-1993

THIS DIGITAL COPY © NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD SINGAPORE 2008. THE ORIGINAL WORK ©, GEORGETTE CHEN, [1928-1930].



*SELF PORTRAIT*  
GEORGETTE CHEN, 1907-1993

THIS DIGITAL COPY © NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD SINGAPORE 2008. THE ORIGINAL WORK © GEORGETTE CHEN, 1946.



*EAST COAST VENDOR*  
GEORGETTE CHEN, 1907-1993

THIS DIGITAL COPY © NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD SINGAPORE 2008. THE ORIGINAL WORK ©, GEORGETTE CHEN, [1960-61].

The National Online Repository of the Arts (NORA) is a database of digitised literary, performing and visual art works by prominent Singapore artists. As part of Singapore's digital heritage collection, NORA preserves Singapore's arts heritage while serving as a source of reference for Singaporeans and people overseas interested in Singapore's arts and culture.

FIND OUT MORE AT [NORA.NL.SG](http://NORA.NL.SG)

## The Historical and Cultural Influence of the Record Industry in Singapore, 1903-1975

Ross Laird

Over a period of 75 years during the last century, Singapore was one of the most important centres for the record industry in Southeast Asia.

Despite its considerable economic and cultural importance, however, there has been very little published about the Singapore record industry. So far, there has not been a single book on this subject and the two journal articles that have appeared over the last 30 years<sup>1</sup> cover only part of the story.

By 1903, when the first commercial recordings made in Asia by Fred Gaisberg appeared, Singapore was already a thriving centre of trade and commerce in the region. It had already been exposed to Edison's new invention of the phonograph in 1879,<sup>2</sup> and in 1892 the Improved Phonograph (which was the model for the first commercially available machines) was demonstrated in Singapore by Professor Douglas Archibald,<sup>3</sup> who had travelled from Australia where he had been giving lectures and demonstrations of the device since 1890.<sup>4</sup> This early phonograph, which played wax cylinder records, had first been advertised in Singapore by Robinson & Co. in the same year,<sup>5</sup> and Emile Berliner's gramophone, which played disc records, was being sold in Singapore by John Little & Co. Ltd. in 1899.<sup>6</sup>

These nineteenth-century developments demonstrate that Singapore was fully open to all the latest scientific developments that made possible the development of a global record industry in the coming decades. Together with its geographic location, this meant that Singapore was well placed to function as a logistical and administrative centre for the new record industry. It was also significant that Fred Gaisberg planned his recording expedition in a way that made full use of Singapore as a gateway to the region.



A recording released by the Odeon label (top); a Malay recording released by Columbia Phonograph Co. (bottom).

There are no contemporary accounts published in Singapore newspapers of Gaisberg's visits in 1902-1903. This is an indication that, unlike the various public exhibitions of the latest inventions mentioned above, the first recording sessions in May 1903 were the private operations of a global business enterprise, conducted with the intention of making a profit, and were not considered newsworthy, although they are now regarded as an important historic event. Despite the lack of contemporary reports, the details are known from Gaisberg's diaries.<sup>7</sup> This account shows that Gaisberg had already established logistical procedures

<sup>1</sup> The first study of early record industry activity in Asia to be published was a broad overview by Gronow, P. (1981). The recording industry comes to the Orient. *Society for Ethnomusicology*, 25(2), 251-284. It contains very useful background information and some interesting statistical data, but only mentions Singapore briefly as the coverage is quite broad (it includes India, China, Japan and other regions outside Southeast Asia). The only significant study of record industry history in Southeast Asia is Tan, S. B. (1997). *The 78rpm record industry in Malaya prior to World War II. Asian Music*, 28(1), 34. As its title indicates, this is a brief history of the record industry from a Malaysian perspective and only covers the period up to 1942. It includes a very useful summary of the statistical data from Gronow's article, but is not comprehensive and includes some errors of fact and false assumptions as the author is a musicologist, not a record industry historian.

<sup>2</sup> Untitled. (1892, May 16). *Straits Times Overland Journal*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> The phonograph. (1892, May 10). *Straits Times Weekly*, p. 274.

<sup>4</sup> Laird, R. (1999). *Sound beginnings: The early record industry in Australia* (pp. 3-9). Sydney: Currency Press.

<sup>5</sup> *Robinson & Co.* (1892, May 16). *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* (1884-1942), p. 2.

A Chinese recording released by the Polyphon label (left); a recording by The Trailers, 1967 (right).



that became a model for the way in which the record industry would operate in the region over the following decades. Even in the earliest days, Singapore was established as a key location from which other potential markets in the region were accessed.

Another procedure introduced by Gaisberg was that when he first arrived in Singapore in December 1902, he made arrangements for suitable artists to be available for recording when the expedition returned. It became standard practice for the local agent of a record company to arrange for the artists to be recorded to be available in Singapore when the recording engineers and equipment arrived on their periodic visits, and he also worked with them to select a suitable repertoire in advance. Artists would frequently travel from their home cities in Malaya or Java to Singapore for this purpose.<sup>8</sup>

This method of arranging recording sessions in Singapore was used up until the 1950s. The planning would take place over several months so that when the recording engineer arrived, many recordings could be made in a relatively short time. In those days there were no permanent recording studios in Singapore or anywhere else in Asia. Such places only existed in the main centres of the record industry such as New York or London. In smaller or more remote locations such as Singapore, a hall or rooms in a hotel were normally rented for a few days or weeks for recording purposes as such facilities would not be needed again until the next visit of the recording engineer (which was usually only once a year at most).

The earliest known published account of a Singapore recording session in 1912 refers to a “temporary recording department”,<sup>9</sup> and the earliest known report in a Singapore newspaper of a local recording session in 1929 notes that two rooms at the YMCA “were utilised by the Columbia Gramophone Co., the local agents

for whom are Messrs. Robinson Piano Co. Ltd., as a studio for recording”.<sup>10</sup>

The type of recordings that were made also remained little changed until the 1960s. The first recordings in 1903 were of Malay songs, which were followed soon after by recordings of Chinese opera and dialect songs. The record companies operated on the principal that they did not record material in one location that could easily be made in another location with a higher standard of performance. This meant that in Singapore, the most highly developed performers were those singing material unique to Southeast Asia, and English-language songs, for example, were hardly ever recorded until the 1960s since the companies could import a wide range of English-language performances by famous artists from Britain, Europe or America for those who wanted such recordings.

There were only a handful of exceptions to this rule. For example, the first known English-language records made in Singapore were recorded in 1932 for the Singapore Musical Society.<sup>11</sup> The records were made at the Victoria Memorial Hall by the Singapore Cathedral Choir and E. A. Brown.<sup>12</sup> Another exceptional case was a group of English-language records made for educational purposes in 1936.<sup>13</sup> Otherwise, the vast majority of the recordings made in Singapore from 1903 up until the early 1960s were Malay or Chinese songs.

The Gramophone Company was not only the first to make recordings in Singapore in 1903, it dominated the market up until the 1960s (after 1931 in the form of EMI). In the early years of the record industry, the competition was intense for new markets as companies fought to expand worldwide, and following Gaisberg’s initial recording expedition to the region in 1902-1903, other companies sought to add Malay, Chinese and other Asian recordings to their catalogues. Within a few years there were many labels releasing material recorded in Southeast Asia, and in this

way Singapore quickly became a hub for the record industry as an administrative, distribution and recording centre for the whole region.

The Beka Record Company also recorded in Singapore in January 1906. They returned in 1909 and, by the 1920s, the company was making regular visits for recording. The Beka label was discontinued in 1934.

Another company which briefly made early recordings in Singapore was Lyrophon. Its sessions seem to have taken place in 1910 and again in 1913. The label’s agent in Singapore was Chop Teo Chiang, but this arrangement ceased in 1914.

The Columbia Graphophone Company was active in Singapore from 1912 onwards, but the company went through several changes of ownership before the 1930s (when it became part of EMI), and as a result, its recording operations were rather sporadic. Its last known recording session as an independent entity was in 1929.

The main label of the Lindstrom group (based in Berlin, Germany) was Odeon, which began recording in Asia in 1905. Odeon was acquired by Columbia in 1926 and also subsequently became part of EMI.

Deutsche Grammophon was another German company that conducted recording sessions in Singapore starting in 1927, with issues on the Hindenburg, Polyphon and Parlophon labels until 1931. They also made recordings for the Pagoda label, which began in 1930 as a venture of Mong Huat & Co., which had been the distributor for the Gramophone Co. since 1927.

In 1927, the British company Edison Bell made some recordings for local record distributors that wanted their own labels. The Quek Swee Chiang, Teck Chiang Long and Teo Chiang records were early examples of labels that catered to niche markets such as Chinese dialect opera records in Hokkien or Teochew. All these labels were short-lived and were discontinued in 1928. But Edison Bell retained an interest in the local market and produced some 8-inch records of Malay songs on the Edison Bell Radio label between 1929 and 1930.

There was also a very short-lived Chappell label produced by the British Crystalate Company in 1930.

The Depression of the early 1930s put an end to much of the recording activity that had flourished in Singapore since 1903. Only EMI continued regular recording sessions (which were released mainly on the label His Master’s Voice). By 1934, the economic situation had improved sufficiently for a new label, Chap Kuching, to be launched for Malay records by Moutrie & Co.,<sup>14</sup> which was the agent in Singapore for EMI. This label continued until 1939 and was initially supervised for Moutrie by Tom Hemsley.

Apart from Chap Kuching, the only other new labels to appear in the mid-1930s were for two small private operations. These were Limophone (1935) and Foo Ann (1935-1938). The success of Chap Kuching seems to have encouraged Tom Hemsley to leave Moutrie, and in 1937 he started his own label, Chap Singha,<sup>15</sup> which ran until 1941. In 1938 he also launched the Delima label,<sup>16</sup> which specialised in Javanese singers.

EMI also seems to have felt more confident about the local market in the second half of the 1930s, and in 1937 it re-launched its Columbia label with a new series for Malay records. Columbia also issued a few local Chinese records. His Master’s Voice continued to release both Malay and Chinese dialect records on a regular basis up until 1941.

Two more labels introduced in 1939 were produced in Shanghai by Pathe Orient Ltd. These were Canary, which was aimed at the Southeast Asian market, and Tjap Angsa, which was targeted more specifically at the Java market. Both were distributed in Singapore by Tom Hemsley.<sup>17</sup>

The Japanese invasion in 1942 brought all recording activity in Singapore to a halt. The Japanese systematically looted the existing recording facilities and sent anything they thought useful back to Japan. No new records appeared in Singapore during the Japanese Occupation except a few issues on the Sun Record label that were not local recordings.

The post-war reconstruction period was necessarily initially focused on restoring essential services and on re-establishing the distribution of food and other goods. It was not until 1947-1948 that new recordings began to appear and the record industry resumed normal operations. However, things rapidly returned to normal, and by 1950, essentially the same practices and procedures as had existed in the pre-war period were back in use.

There were two factors that gradually resulted in some change. The first was the development of new tastes in local music. Malay *kronchong* was an established local style which had always been influenced by trends in Western music but had long existed in a standard form. During the 1930s, it began to incorporate elements of American swing<sup>18</sup> and Latin-style songs, and in the 1940s and 1950s these influences increased. There were also many new recordings inspired by the “joget craze” that began in 1949.<sup>19</sup>

In Chinese music, new developments had also started before the war with the importation of “Modern Chinese” music that had first developed in Shanghai during the 1930s. This was essentially a blend of Western jazz and popular songs with elements of traditional Chinese music to form a new style of Chinese pop music. The music was spread by the many recordings produced in Shanghai

In Chinese music, new developments had also started... with the importation of “Modern Chinese” music that had first developed in Shanghai during the 1930s. This was essentially a blend of Western jazz and popular songs with elements of traditional Chinese music to form a new style of Chinese pop music.

6 John Little & Co., Ltd. – *The gramophone*. (1899, August 29). Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (1884-1942), p. 2.

7 The Fred Gaisberg diaries were published as “*The Music Goes Round*” (New York, Macmillan, 1942) and extracts are available in Moore, J. N. (1999). *Sound revolutions: A biography of Fred Gaisberg, founding father of commercial sound recording*. London: Sanctuary Publishing.

8 This procedure is misunderstood in Tan’s study as she claims that “recording engineers such as Gaisberg often stopped by Penang” (p. 3) and she refers to “the recordings made by Gaisberg in Penang” (p. 6) when no such recordings were made. Gaisberg’s diaries show that he did not record in Penang. I believe this mistake is due to a misunderstanding of the fact that Penang is shown on the labels of some of these Gaisberg 1903 recordings. In the early days of the record industry it was a common practice to show on the label the place from which the recording artist originated, but this did not necessarily mean that the recordings were made in that location. Early recording equipment was heavy, cumbersome and difficult to transport so it was simply not possible to travel around making recordings along the way. Instead, artists from various cities or towns would travel to a nearby regional centre and all recordings would be made in the same location.

9 Returns from record making trip around the world. (1913). *Talking Machine World*, 9(1), 43-44.

10 Untitled. (1929, March 13). Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (1884-1942), p. 10.

11 Local choirs – Successful recording of choruses. (1932, May 6). *The Straits Times*, p.12.

12 For a detailed study of E.A. Brown’s extensive musical career in Singapore see Kartini, S. (2008). *Edwin Arthur Brown’s musical contribution to Singapore*. BiblioAsia, 4 (1), 40-44 but this excellent article makes no mention of his recordings.

13 Local gramophone records for the teaching of English. (1936, August). *Chorus: The Journal of the Singapore Teachers’ Association*, p. 33.

14 Advertisement. (1934, July 11). *Malaya Tribune*.

15 Advertisement. (1937, January 8). *Malaya Tribune*.

16 Advertisement. (1938, November 11). *Malaya Tribune*.

17 Advertisement. (1939, March 10). *Malaya Tribune*.

18 Malay music goes swing. (1950, March 19). *The Straits Times*, p. 9.

19 Modern joget is here to stay. (1949, October 2). *The Straits Times*, p. 8.

WORLD FAMOUS GERMAN MAKE

**TELEFUNKEN** HiFi 3-D

**RADIO**

TELEFUNKEN D798WK Hi-Fi  
9 Valve 4 speakers AC  
Receiver

TELEFUNKEN D778WK Hi-Fi  
7 Valve 3 speakers AC  
Receiver

TELEFUNKEN D2667WK Hi-Fi  
6 Valve 3 speakers AC  
Receiver

TELEFUNKEN KL45/TU  
Table Model  
Tape Recorder

TELEFUNKEN KL65/KU  
Portable Model  
Tape Recorder

TELEFUNKEN D7108RG Hi-Fi  
10 Valve 4 speakers  
Radiogram

TELEFUNKEN D788RG Hi-Fi  
7 Valve 4 speakers  
Radiogram

TELEFUNKEN D7688K 6 Valve  
Dry Battery Receiver

TELEFUNKEN D6488K 4 Valve  
Dry Battery Receiver

TELEFUNKEN TW560 Trop.  
Table Model  
Record Changer

TELEFUNKEN TW360 Trop.  
Portable Model  
Record Changer

Obtainable from your nearest TELEFUNKEN dealer or contact  
Sole Agents: **SEOW KUAN CO.** 4/6, Dhoby Ghaut, Singapore. Tel: 37787.  
Branch office: No. 1, 3rd Floor, 67 Ampang Rd., Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 88201

A 1950 advertisement promoting the Telefunken tape recorder and record player. (Source: National Archives of Singapore).

and Hong Kong on the New Moon and Pathe labels, which were soon available in Singapore. A contemporary newspaper report titled "Singapore band plays Chinese love songs in Western dance rhythm"<sup>20</sup> describes the emerging popularity of this music. But the local record industry, dominated by EMI, was too conservative to take a chance on what was still a developing trend, and Chinese recordings made in pre-war Singapore continued to be largely traditional opera and dialect material.

When the Korean War began in 1950, the result was a sudden and dramatic increase in the need for raw materials including rubber, which led directly to the rubber boom of the early 1950s. Post-war austerity was suddenly replaced by a new prosperity, and the demand for records increased dramatically.<sup>21</sup> Consequently it was now economically viable for even a conservative record company like EMI to record new styles of music, and it launched several new series on Parlophone, His Master's Voice, and Regal in order to do so, all of which featured Chinese modern music recorded for the first time in Singapore.<sup>22</sup>

As a consequence, the pattern of local recording in Singapore which had been standard since the 1920s underwent some major changes. Previously, the major companies would conduct an annual recording session that might last a few weeks or months, during which a group of artists would record as many

titles as possible, and these recordings would be released gradually over the following year, before another recording session was held. In the 1950s, for the first time, the increased demand for new recordings meant that Hemsley and Co., the supervisors of local recordings for EMI, announced that "from now on there will be two recording sessions each year instead of one".<sup>23</sup>

Other very significant changes soon followed. One was the introduction of microgroove vinyl records, which were first announced in Singapore in 1950.<sup>24</sup> A gradual process began in which sales of the new vinyl discs increased until they eventually overtook the 78 rpm format in the late 1950s. The 78 rpm record was finally discontinued in 1960-1961, with some labels continuing its use a little longer than others.

A second new development was the introduction of tape recording, which made the recording process much simpler and cheaper. The first reference I have found to the use of tape recording in Singapore is in 1951 in an article on the newly opened air-conditioned EMI recording studios at MacDonald House in Orchard Road,<sup>25</sup> which mentions that "all recordings are made on the most modern... tape-recording apparatus".<sup>26</sup>

With the most modern recording equipment and the only air-conditioned studios in Southeast Asia, Singapore continued to be

Although it has been claimed that the 1961 concert in Singapore by Cliff Richard and the Shadows inspired the emergence of the local guitar-based pop bands that have become so well known as representative of 1960s Singapore music, it was really the phenomenal success of the first record by the Crescendos that caused the industry to finally realise that recording local pop music had the potential to be a money-making venture.

a recording hub for the region. Performers from Malaya and Indonesia came to Singapore specifically to record. A press report mentions that many famous artists made recordings in Singapore, including "Rubiah, Momo, P. Ramlee, Asiah, Abdul Rahman, Julia and Lena, as well as many new discoveries".<sup>27</sup>

The boom in record sales in the early 1950s also created opportunities for a number of smaller labels that filled niche markets. These included some pre-war labels that were revived such as Pagoda and Foo Ann, plus a host of new labels including Double Swallow (Teochew opera), Eastern (Hokkien pop), Flower Brand (Mandarin pop), Grand (Chinese and Malay pop), Horse Brand (Chinese pop), Piakay (Teochew opera), Tiger Brand (Chinese opera), and Unique (Mandarin Modern Chinese songs).

When the Korean War ended in 1953, the rubber boom suddenly collapsed and record sales also suffered. The Parlophone and Regal series were discontinued and most of the new smaller labels also disappeared. However, the downturn was relatively brief.

A 1955 press report states that "the Singapore branch manager of The Gramophone Co. Ltd...said that...record sales have risen by leaps and bounds...and we have more than doubled last year's turnover".<sup>28</sup> This is quite contrary to claims by Tan Sooi Beng that "by the 1950s advertisements of gramophone records in the local newspapers had almost disappeared" and that there was a "decline of the 78 rpm record industry in the 1950s".<sup>29</sup> Both these statements are incorrect. The brief crisis in 1954 when the rubber boom suddenly ended was only temporary and record sales were reported to have increased strongly only a year later.<sup>30</sup> During 1957, sales only increased further.<sup>31</sup>

While it is true that in the late 1950s the sales of 78 rpm records were in decline, this was not a general decline of the record industry as this decline was more than counterbalanced by increased sales of 45 rpm and LP vinyl records. Combined sales were actually increasing, and the changeover from the 78 rpm format to 45 rpm and LP discs was a normal development

due to new types of records becoming available. In fact, in 1958 a new manufacturer of 78 rpm records was established in Singapore.<sup>32</sup> This company initially pressed 78 rpm records from masters recorded in America that were issued on the Colortune and Coral labels. These were not local recordings, but it was the first company to manufacture records in Singapore, and to set up such a factory is hardly a sign that the record industry was in decline. Eventually the Colortune and Coral labels were also produced as 45 rpm vinyl pressings, and by the early 1960s the company began producing the Ruby label as 45 rpm and LP discs. All issues on Ruby were local recordings.

During the pre-war period, all records sold in Singapore were manufactured in Britain, Europe, India or Shanghai. Since the Ruby Record Co. was a relatively small operation, the importation of records manufactured elsewhere continued well into the late 1960s, when several larger record factories were established in Singapore. During the 1950s and most of the 1960s, the majority of records sold in Singapore were manufactured in India, Britain or Australia.

In the early 1960s, the record industry in Singapore was still dominated by EMI (as had been the case since the 1920s). The organisation was famously conservative when it came to signing up local talent in Asia, and the company probably saw no reason to go beyond the well established forms of local popular music such as Malay *kronchong* and Chinese opera, which it had been recording for many years.

Despite the existence of a few small record companies in Singapore like Horse Brand and Ruby in the early 1960s, there was little significant competition for huge multinational companies like EMI as the minor labels restricted their activities to niche markets since they could not hope to compete with the resources available to EMI in terms of distribution and publicity.

It was not until 1963 that a record company decided to release a record by a Singapore pop band. The company was Philips, and the record was by the band The Crescendos. Although it has been claimed that the 1961 concert in

<sup>20</sup> Singapore band plays Chinese love songs in Western dance rhythm. (1936, July 19). *The Straits Times*, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Great demand for Malay star records. (1951, May 25). *The Straits Times*, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> First [Modern] Hokkien records made. (1950, June 18). *The Straits Times*, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Boom in sale of Malay records. (1951, May 2). Singapore Free Press, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> L. P. records: First impressions. (1950, September 20). *Singapore Free Press*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> The EMI recording studios at MacDonald House opened in January, 1951. His Master's Voice studio. (1951, January 10). *Singapore Standard*, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Recording session now in progress. (1951, July 6). *Singapore Standard*, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Recording session now in progress. (1951, July 6). *Singapore Standard*, p. 10.

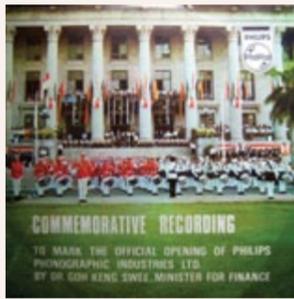
<sup>28</sup> Turnover doubled. (1955, December 13). *The Straits Times*, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Tan, S. B. (1997). *The 78rpm record industry in Malaya prior to World War II*. *Asian Music*, 28(1), 34.

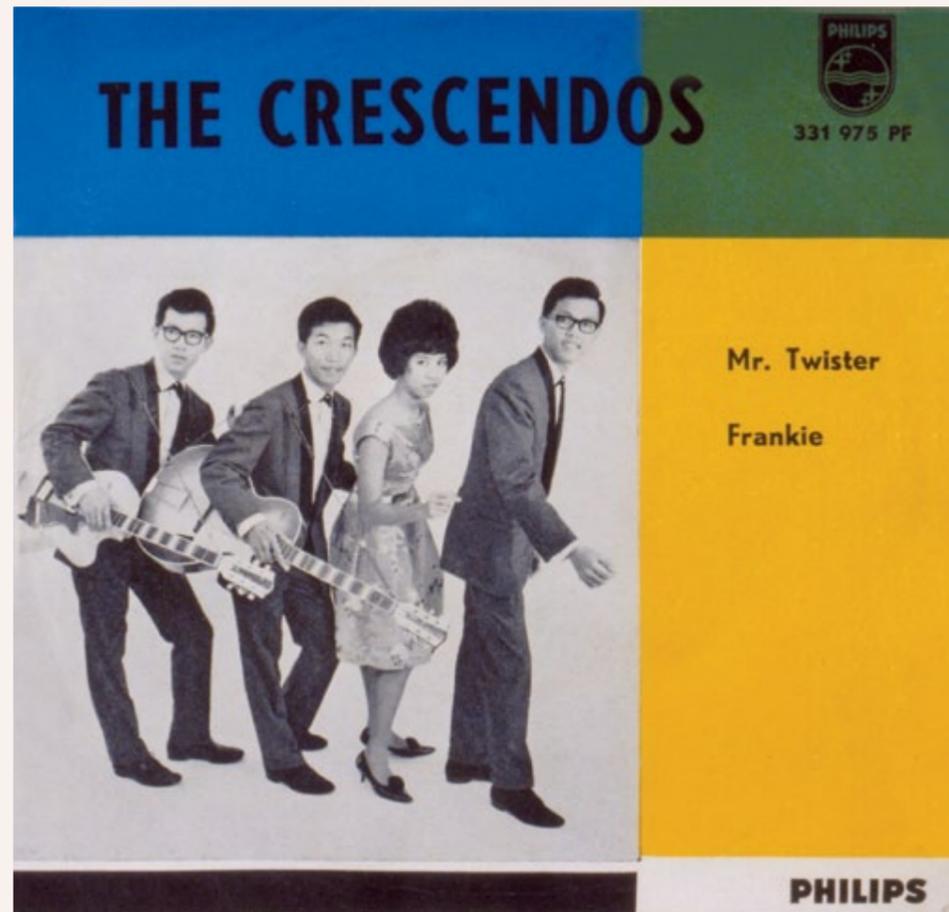
<sup>30</sup> Turnover doubled. (1955, December 13). *The Straits Times*, p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> Malayan disc sales show 25 per cent rise. (1958, February 14). *The Straits Times*, p. 14.

<sup>32</sup> First colony record factory. (1958, May 27). *The Straits Times*, p. 12.



The recording commemorating the official opening of Philips Phonographic Industries Ltd. (Source: Author).



The Crescendos' first recording, released by Philips in 1963, was the first recording by a Singapore pop band to be released by a recording company. (Source: National Archives of Singapore).

<sup>33</sup> See Pereira, J. F. (1999). *Legends of the Golden Venus. Singapore: Times Editions.* The tendency by writers about popular music to seize on a single event (such as the 1961 Cliff Richard concerts) to explain the development of modern pop music in 1960s Singapore is to present mythology as fact. Despite Pereira's claim about the absence of guitar bands in Singapore prior to 1961, the reality is that there were many such bands but the conservative policies of the local record companies meant that they never recorded, so they have tended to be forgotten. Obviously a local musical tradition can only develop over time, and is not caused by any single event. By understanding how the Singapore record industry operated we can better discern how local musical culture evolved, even if in some cases there are no recordings of some crucial genres or periods.

<sup>34</sup> Philips was the first multinational record company to establish a record-pressing plant in Singapore. It was officially opened on 24 November 1967, but by then had already produced more than half a million records. Records firm opening. (1967, November 18). *The Straits Times*, p. 13. Forty per cent of the factory's production was exported to Indonesia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Ceylon and Malaysia. Switch on – 500,000th record by Dr Goh. (1967, November 20). *The Straits Times*, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> Local made 'Pop' records go to Indonesia. (1968, May 24). *The Straits Times*, p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> Singapore's recording firms hit happy note. (1970, May 11). *The Straits Times*, p. 10.

Singapore by Cliff Richard and the Shadows inspired the emergence of the local guitar-based pop bands that have become so well known as representative of 1960s Singapore music,<sup>33</sup> it was really the phenomenal success of the first record by the Crescendos that caused the industry to finally realise that recording local pop music had the potential to be a money-making venture.

By 1965, Philips had initiated a series of local releases that eventually resulted in a very fine catalogue of local pop releases over the next few years.<sup>34</sup> Other labels were quick to follow suit, and soon several small local labels began actively recording a wide range of local popular music. Between 1965 and 1969, over 120 different labels released local recordings in Singapore. This figure did not include the long established EMI labels (Columbia, Pathe, Parlophone, Regal, Odeon, etc.), or any of the numerous labels based in Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and elsewhere that were also distributed (and sometimes pressed) in Singapore, or the many British, European and US labels that released material recorded in those countries for the Singapore market.

In a single decade (1965-1975), the Singapore record industry produced a huge range of recordings in a wide variety of styles. Local content included

recordings in Chinese, Malay, English and other language groups ranging from traditional forms to the latest pops. The majority of recordings were in Malay or Chinese, with Mandarin and Cantonese accounting for most Chinese-language recordings, plus some in various dialects such as Teochew or Hokkien. There were also a significant number of English-language recordings, and many instrumental recordings (ranging from Western-style R&B to Chinese songs played in the current "A-Go-Go" style).

Apart from satisfying the local market, many companies exported a significant percentage of their production, especially to Malaysia and Indonesia. One relatively small producer, Kwan Sia Record Company, reported that half of the 8,000 copies pressed of a single LP release were exported to Indonesia at a value of about \$30,000.<sup>35</sup>

By 1970, there were at least four disc manufacturers in Singapore—Unique Art Records Industrial Enterprise, Life Record Industries, Phonogram Far East, and EMI (South East Asia)—all of whom pressed records on their own labels as well as for other companies. Exact figures are not available, but according to contemporary reports, record production at the four major pressing plants mentioned above had reached one million discs per month.<sup>36</sup>



Workers at the Phonographic Industries Limited factory at Tanglin Halt, 1967. (Source: MITA).

#### REFERENCES

- Advertisement. (1934, July 11). *Malaya Tribune.*
- Advertisement. (1937, January 8). *Malaya Tribune.*
- Advertisement. (1938, November 11). *Malaya Tribune.*
- Advertisement. (1939, March 10). *Malaya Tribune.*
- Advertisements Column 1. (1892, May 16). *Singapore Free Press*, p. 2.
- Boom in sale of Malay records. (1951, May 2). *Singapore Free Press*, p. 4.
- First colony record factory. (1958, May 27). *The Straits Times*, p. 12.
- First [Modern] Hokkien records made. (1950, June 18). *The Straits Times*, p. 5.
- Great demand for Malay star records. (1951, May 25). *The Straits Times*, p. 4.
- Gronow, P. (1981). The recording industry comes to the Orient. *Society for Ethnomusicology*, 25(2), 251-284.
- Happiness is a pop star called Miss Vivi. (1969, October 25). *The Straits Times*, p. 8.
- His Master's voice studio. (1951, January 10). *Singapore Standard*, p. 5.
- John Little & Co., Ltd – The gramophone. (1899, August 29). *Singapore Free Press*, p. 2.
- Kartini, S. (2008). Edwin Arthur Brown's musical contribution to Singapore. *BiblioAsia*, 4 (1), 40-44.
- Local made 'Pop' records go to Indonesia. (1968, May 24). *The Straits Times*, p. 14.
- L. P. records: First impressions. (1950, September 20). *Singapore Free Press*, p. 6.
- Laird, R. (1999). *Sound beginnings: The early record industry in Australia.* Sydney: Currency Press. Call no.: RBUS 338.476213893 LAI.
- Local choirs – Successful recording of choruses. (1932, May 6). *The Straits Times*, p. 12.
- Local gramophone records for the teaching of English. (1936, August). *Chorus: The Journal of the Singapore Teachers' Association*, p. 33.
- Malay music goes swing. (1950, March 19). *The Straits Times*, p. 9.
- Malayan disc sales show 25 per cent rise. (1958, February 14). *The Straits Times*, p. 14.
- Modern joget is here to stay. (1949, October 2). *The Straits Times*, p. 8.
- Pereira, J. F. (1999). *Legends of the Golden Venus.* Singapore: Times Editions. Call no.: RSING q781.64095957 PER.
- Records firm opening. (1967, November 18). *The Straits Times*, p. 13.
- Recording session now in progress. (1951, July 6). *Singapore Standard*, p. 10.
- Returns from record making trip around

During the 1960s, Singapore bands frequently toured places like Sarawak, Brunei, Bangkok or Saigon, and bands from Indonesia, Malaysia, Sarawak, Brunei, the Philippines and other places in the region came to Singapore to appear at hotels and nightclubs or to use Singapore as a recording centre.<sup>37</sup>

By the early 1970s the Singapore record industry had come a long way from the first primitive recordings made in 1903. Unfortunately, by the end of the 1960s, the local record industry had reached a peak, both in terms of creativity and in terms of production. While a significant number of records continued to be produced in the early 1970s, there was a gradual decline. The reasons are complex, but included changes in technology, changes in style, and changes in government policy. By the mid-1970s Singapore was no longer as important a regional recording hub as it had been during the previous 75 years.

#### About the author

Ross Laird was awarded the Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship in 2010. This article presents his research into the history of the music recording industry in Singapore. Prior to the fellowship, Ross was a sound archivist with the National Film & Sound Archive of Australia. He is the author of *Sound Beginnings: The early record industry in Australia* (2000).

the world. (1913). *Talking Machine World*, 9 (1), 43-44.

Singapore band plays Chinese love songs in Western dance rhythm. (1936, July 19). *The Straits Times*, p. 4.

Singapore's recording firms hit happy note. (1970, May 11). *The Straits Times*, p. 10.

Switch on – 500,000th record by Dr Goh. (1967, November 20). *The Straits Times*, p. 16.

Tan, S. B. (1997). The 78rpm record industry in Malaya prior to World War II. *Asian Music*, 28 (1), 34.

"The Music Goes Round" (New York, Macmillan, 1942), in Moore, J. N. (1999). *Sound revolutions: A biography of Fred Gaisberg, founding father of commercial sound recording.* London: Sanctuary Publishing. Call no.: 780.266092 MOO [ART].

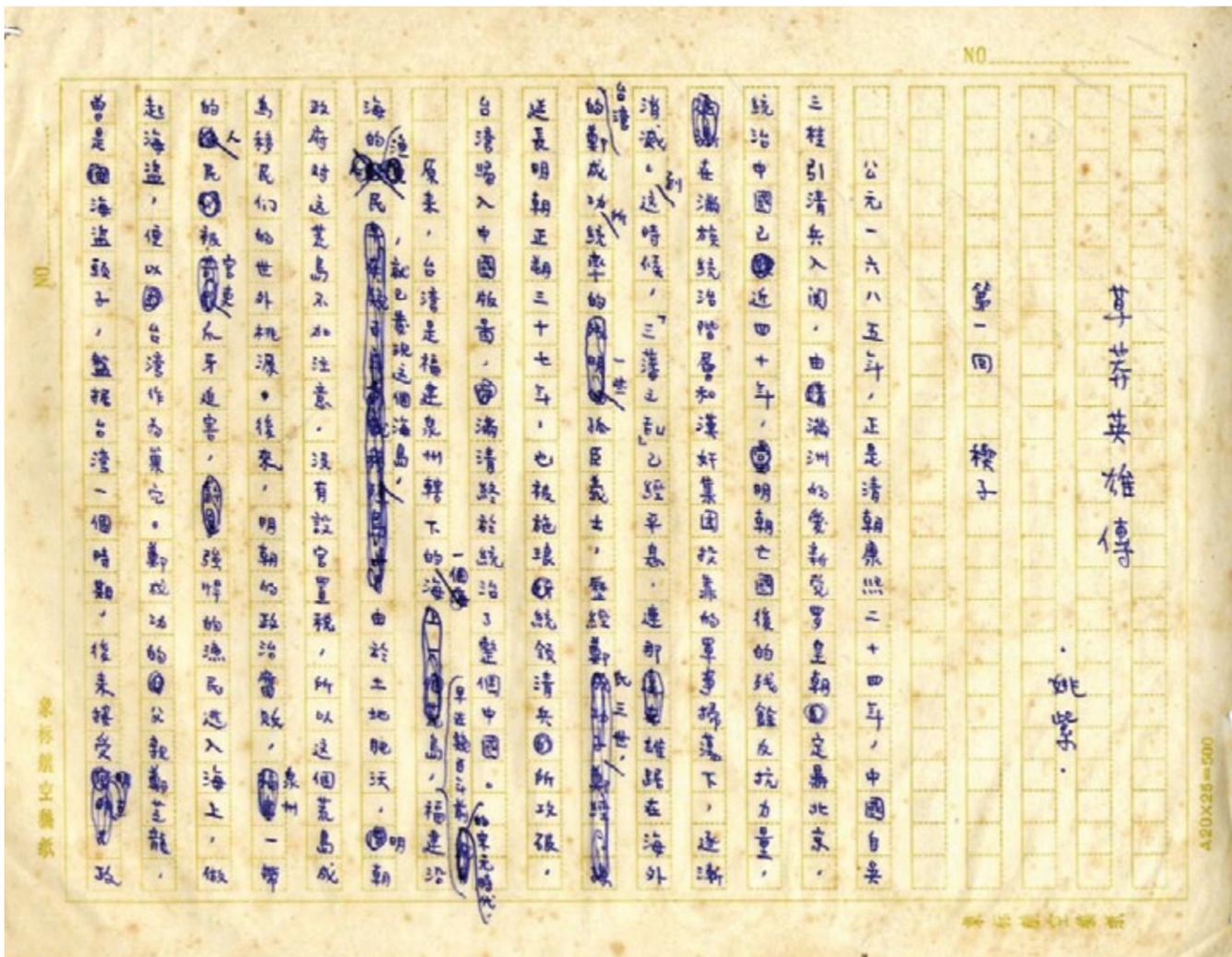
The phonograph. (1892, May 10). *Straits Times Weekly*, p. 274.

Turnover doubled. (1955, December 13). *The Straits Times*, p. 10.

Untitled. (1892, May 16). *Straits Times Overland Journal*, p. 8.

Untitled. (1929, March 13). *Singapore Free Press*, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> To give just one example, it was reported in 1969 that a group of 30 Indonesian singers had come to Singapore to record at Kinetex Studios. The artists included Vivi Sumanti, Bing Slamet, and Ianti Josepha, and they intended to record "250 songs in Malay, Indonesian, Chinese, English and several European languages". The group of artists were to stay for three months, recording almost every day during that period, and "cutting over 70 EPs and 25 LPs." Happiness is a pop star called Miss Vivi. (1969, October 25). *The Straits Times*, p. 8.



姚紫未出版的手稿：草莽英雄传

# 姚紫小说与文学语言研究

刘秀珍

## 文学语言

文学语言虽是一个词，事实上却分成文学与语言两个部分，或两种学科。文学这一门属于感性，而语言却是理性的。因此，如何把文学与语言融合，如何让感性与理性两门完全不同的学科互相融合，是研究者不能忽视的责任。

文学古已有之，语言学也有一段历史。而“文学语言”却是一门比较新的独立学科。所以，在进入文学语言研究之前，不妨先了解一下何谓文学语言？究竟文学语言研究的是文学，还是语言？到底它是一个综合学科或一门独立科学？

“语言文字是文化的主要载体，更是文化发展的标志之一”。那文学语言要研究的究竟是以文学居上或语言为主？根据研究语言学的专家们所见，语言学其实也同哲学、理论等结合在一起。所以，即连语言学这么古老独立的学科也得结合其他学科，成为“模糊语言学”的一份子；那么，文学语言这门结合了文学与语言的共同学科，是否可以称之为“边缘性学科”或“交叉性学科”呢？毕竟这是融汇了文字学与语言学的学科。事实上，在这日新月异的时代，除了文学语言研究，还有法律语言研究，广告语言研究，广播电视语言研究，网络语言等等随着时代的需求而兴起的学科。而各门学科之间又息息相关，所以，说它是交差性学科也没错。

文学语言既是一门比较新的学科，也就显得它的发展空间更为广大。所以近年来吸引了许多学者孜孜于这方面的研究。

既然如此，我们所要研究的，很明显的就是“文学”的“语言”了。要研究文学语言，文学文本就是最起码的工具，所以，研究文学语言所要面对的必须先是从文学文本中进入该文本语言的探讨。

众所周知，文学归类于艺术，其实属于科学的语言也不乏艺术。所以，文学语言所涵括的，既是科学，也是艺术。因此，在探讨这一门科学的每一层段，都必须要有逻辑性的联系，不能像文学脚本那样随作家心之所至而天马行空。

## 研究目的

为什么要研究文学语言？谢国平的《语言学概论》里是这样说的：“语言是反应心智的镜子，因此对语言做详细的研究可以帮助我们了解心智如何使用及处理语言，语言同时也是一个很复杂的系统，如果能了解这个运作，也等于了解我们的心智。”诚然，文学语言的研究也几乎可以等同。因为通过文学文本，除了语言要素如语词、语段、句式、语言等的解读外，还可以就此作从宏观到微观，从环境到人物，从整体到局部的艺术评价。同时，对与文本语言中的乡土性、地方性并历史性有更多的认识。

## 研究工具

研究文学语言的工具少不了文本，有了作家提供的文本（不论是小说、诗歌、散文或戏剧），才能让研究者通过文本的文字（语言）来分析、体认作家在写作时所要表达的在当时当下的社会动态、人文背景及考察作家生存时代的环境等等，在让我们更为生动地认识过去的历史时刻，以及社会变迁的痕迹的同时，也可把作家不经意间流露出来的语言心态挖掘出来，这一切都是研究者的工作。

文本中的语言材料分析至为重要，语音的节奏与表达最能代表作家当下的心情写真；而词汇中的每一个词如名词、副词、动词、形容词等，也是研究文学语言者在纵观一个文本时所不能放过的一环。因为每一个不同的词，都能带给研究者不同的讯息。至于文本中的语法，修辞等，则是文学的重心与评价，更可展现作家的个人风格，无人能代。反正，作家的文学情感都得从文学语言中去搜寻。

## 如何研究

文学语言由文本提供，而文本语言根据时代、时空、地域及民族的不同又可分为普通话、古代文言、古白话、现代白话、方言、外国语言、少数民族语言以及随着潮流、个人创新并引起群体追随以至约定俗成的创造语言如现今的网络语言、青少年语言等。

文学与语言即分别为艺术与科学，因此，文学语言就在艺术与科学间游走，即有感兴的艺术理解，也有理性的科学剖析。艺术是作家感性心智心血的凝聚，科学却理性地为解剖作家字里行间的点点滴滴努

力。表面上看来，艺术属于作家，语言纯为科学。但是也诚如学者高万云所说：“文学语言的研究，必须同时从文学与语言两方面入手。因此，不管是文学或语言，艺术或科学，两者都不能分开，研究时也必须双管齐下，缺一不可。”

展开作家的文本，在欣赏作家掌握文字，把之变成超凡的艺术功力的同时，我们在字里行间所搜集到的语音、词汇、语法，都是属于语言分析解剖的材料。文学语言是作家个人笔下行云流水似的“自然语言”，也就是说，知名的作家都有其个人的风格，此风格也造就了作家个别的文学修养。因此，前述的通过语音、词汇、语法等语言材料的分析，就可以看到作家在应用语词时的得心应手或笔下枯歇，甚而可以指出作家应用语词时的失误，换句话说，评论一个文本，不仅要赞赏其好，也要直指其“坏”。而这一切，都可以直接从文本中觅得。

在作家的文本中，他笔下静态或动态的描述，都与他的心态息息相关。因为语言同思维是直接联系的，它把作家思维活动的结果，用词或词组成的句子记录下来，而语言系统的发展变化如语音、词汇、语义及语法都会随时间改变，就如同现代汉语是古代汉语的继承与发展一样。事实上，语言的变化不仅在语音与构词，甚至句法也会变，随着时间的过去，同一语言可能会变成很多方言或分化成好些不同的语言；好比词汇的变化取决于新词的增加如高清电视、网络语言等，即使借字与翻译，也都有关联。而且它们的变化不是独立的，是相互影响的。高万云也说：“人类的一切有序活动离不开思维和语言的参与，包括人类活动的最高级形态——文学。”

语言所要呈现的是人们对它的理解，所以从原有的同义词中选择一个合适的语词即可，然而，文学语言除了理解外，更重要的是作家的直觉、情感和想像。而从这里，便能让研究者挖掘出作家的真正内涵及他所要表达的究竟是什么？

总之，文学语言研究是一门充满趣味性并挑战性的学科，它的发展空间非常辽阔，有待研究者去探勘。

## 姚紫小说的语言描写

姚紫的文字，是经过“轻挑慢磨”才落墨于白纸上，充满着美感的。他的文字，几乎每一个都像是经过慎重思考推敲后才写下的，所以，研究他的文学语言，就如走入百花园，里头万紫千红，香气逼人，美不胜收。

因此，从文学语言的角度出发来阅读姚紫的文字，总会发现很多惊喜。此外，也可以从姚紫的字里行间，捕捉到他是怎样通过文字语言来表达他的美学理念。

姚紫作品的语言掌握凝练，小说犹然。他常根据小说背景看似随意却是细心地应用语言的能力，总会令人读来欲罢不能。“姚紫小说的语言，清新俊逸而又绮丽畅达，峭拔中透着细腻，好象有一种美的韵律，流泻在他作品的字里行间，他运用语言的熟练和



年青时的姚紫

## About the article

The study of literary language examines both the science and art of the style that the writer employs in his writing, ranging from the choice of language register, structure and tone to expressions. This helps researchers to expand their understanding beyond that of a writer's technical finesse and style, enabling them to reach deep into the writer's feelings and imagination and to have a better grasp of the meaning that the writer is conveying in the story.

In this article, Low Siew Tin studies the literary language of Singapore writer Yao Zi through his many novels, paying close attention to his choice of expression in laying out scenes and his use of dialect. She highlights the beauty of his language and his exceptional ability in moving readers with his words, often utilising both style and register to help them relate to the characters in the story. She also notes the many vanished Singapore scenes that have been preserved through Yao Zi's vivid descriptions. To her, the enjoyment of Yao Zi's novels comes not just from plotlines or beautiful language; it is also the joy of visualising the scenes and the era he has painted with his words. The beauty of literary language, she concludes, is embodied in words that take on a life of their own.

Learn more about Yao Zi by visiting the Singapore Literary Pioneers Gallery at <http://exhibitions.nlb.gov.sg/literarypioneers>.



1965年出版的《窝浪拉里》

技巧，即使与中国30年代的名作家相比，也毫无逊色。”（陈贤茂《论姚紫的小说创作》）

这一切可以从他小说中的描写语言寻获。因为小说中凡有描述的机会，他绝不放过，不论是描写中国背景或南洋风情，他都很用心地把周围的景色、气氛都描摹出来，甚至于一朵云，一根草，一缕风都不会忽略，而其文字的优美，往往能带出美丽的意境，令人有如处身诗的境界。所以说读姚紫的小说是非常赏心悦目的享受。

因此，在姚紫的小说中，除了能够读到引人的故事情节以外，还可以读到他那感动人心的散文字句，且那些动人的文字，也时刻向读者们呈现出一组组的画面，具有电影般的视觉效果。这就是姚紫小说文学语言丰富并成功之处。

比如《秀子姑娘》在开头的时候对于环境的描写，就很细心地牵引着读者走入热带的氛围中，而随着小说情节的渐进，读者似乎可以很确切地体验到身在其中的感觉。因为那属于热带山野中的燥热，都通过作者细腻的文笔一一地描写出来，而热带的景色也在作者细心的勾勒下，仿如画作般一页页地呈现给读者，并老老实实地带领读者走入他所描写的天地。

且看这一系列闲闲地融合了形容词与色彩词的可观词句：

- 天上浮着夕霞，像火一般地烧红了远近的山谷和树林（把晚霞的颜色用火来形容，除了让人感觉晚霞艳丽的颜色映照在远近的山谷和树林之美以外，还有热带气候的“热”）
- 热带的风，轻快地、像囚徒般的逃出炎暑的笼（这是非常传神的描写，囚徒逃跑的时候不但要快，而且还得“偷偷”的，因此用“轻快”来形容，是相当贴切的）
- 上弦的月亮像玉似的浮在棕榈树上（月亮的颜色好像玉，那是带点透明的，写月色的清净澄明）
- 椰子树梢的残月，悄悄地潜进黑晦晦的窗口（残月已经不是美丽的月了，所以它得“悄悄”地潜进去，而且那窗口还是“黑晦晦”的）
- 黑夜的翅膀正沉重地拍打扑着，天空像一池践烂的泥泞，洼地的水湿气味簸摆在清凉凉的风中，摇动那悄悄的形影……（黑夜的翅膀很沉重，天空又像一滩泥泞。。。这样的比喻，让人想象接下来会有不好的事情要发生了，心里顿时有了准备，而且，用“凉凉”的风，“悄悄”的两个叠音词，加重了气氛）
- 映着围墙边那被轰炸烧焦的土堆，像一件褴褛的破衣，披在零落颠倒的破篱笆外（看，不过是一堵破围墙罢了，都会被作者写成褴褛的破衣，这样的一件破衣，具有什么象征意义吗？破衣，是让人不屑一顾的，但是隐藏在破衣里边的故事，必需靠人去发掘）

以上随手捡拾的环境语言描写，正代表着这篇小说的阴暗凄迷和朦胧无奈，阴暗凄迷的是战争，朦胧无奈的是在国家面前，爱情毕竟正如小说中的哈逊参谋官所说的：“情感只是战争以外的玩意儿。”而这样的环境语言描写，也始终是前后连贯，紧跟着情节前进，并没有随着作家个人天马行空的思绪有所更改，可见姚紫下笔时的谨慎。同时，读着小说中所描绘的文字，有如置身其中，确也能使读者从文字中感受到小说中的每一个景色。

姚紫并没有从军的经验，但是他却能以敏感度十分高的直觉与想象力，把战地情景描写得栩栩如生。这应该都是他勤学善记的结果。

- “远地里，曳过几声单调而又寂寞的战马低嘶，和吉普车轧轧的马达声，仿佛一片片枯叶，毅然飘死水上”
- “过了十月的天气愈加炎热了，这两天战场的斗争，无形中暂时停顿，兵士们像垂着流涎舌头的猎狗，蜷横在森林中喘息，但是在这个时候，长官们正急切进行一个广泛的攻击计划，那从孟拱方面开来的卡车，一辆辆载着辎重和补充兵，绵络不绝的马达声预兆着暴风雨来临，骚动在这闷寂的清晨中。”
- “偶而从远地林间的雷多公路上，曳来一阵细微的夜行军的卡车声，在悄然间荡起一点泡沫般的单调的气息，一会又静止了。”
- “季节早已转入严冬，在这北纬十六度间的缅甸北部的山区，虽然属于热带性的气候，但是据气象台的报告，比南方的仰光，气候要相差二十余度之多呢，山谷弥漫着干燥的沙尘，围场上的草木也慢慢凋零起来，间有片片的落叶吹积在俘虏营那高高的土墙边。”

小说中“出现”类似以上有关“战地”的描写虽然不是太多，但也就因为有了这些片段的背景，才能突显战乱时的感情纠葛；设若把秀子与姚的故事安排在远离硝烟的大后方，相信效果就没那么引人了。而这正是作家发挥其高度想象空间，再加上精心布置的语言文字，把战地战事描写得犹如身临其境之处；这除了本身平日在生活上的观察累积外，知识的补充少不了，这样的艺术成就是不可多得的，同时也说明了姚紫善于应用故事架构，懂得利用语言来达到小说的完整之处。

再看这一段：

- “……在海的怀里，当你看见惊涛骇浪，你会觉得自我的渺小，当你看见那万顷烟波，海天相连，你又会觉得胸襟潇洒，一切忧郁都给海风吹散了，又当你站在沙滩上，看着那朝霞夕晖在蔚青的海水中闪烁着点点浮光的时候，你会从自然中体味着人生意义，觉得低沉而轻松，郁黯而焕发，心灵和海混合在一起……”《姚紫小说选》中《秀子姑娘》，第61页

以上这段文字，不仅具备散文语言的真善美，也给小说增添了不同的绚烂的活动画面，而这样生动的文字描述，大概都是作家真实的生活体会，相信这也是姚紫曾当过短期海员的收获？

另外，在《窝浪拉里》中，通过姚紫的深刻描绘，一幅幅充满热带风光且具生命动感的画作仿如眼前：

- “……溪上，已经来了10多个村民，男的在冲凉，女的在洗衣。女人们蹲在石上，湿漉漉的沙笼紧贴在翘起的屁股上，只只都朝着天，显得多么可笑！男人则蒙着一条破沙笼——有的只有一块布巾，但是他们很自然地裸着赤褐色的身体，把头浸一浸水，然后出力地摩擦着头发和胸膛。几个小孩像鲫鱼似的水里翻滚着，溅起水花和嬉笑声，混着那些男女们戏谑声，清清楚楚地就在耳畔。”《姚紫小说选》中《窝浪拉里》，第110页

生动的文字不仅在于人的活动，也别忘了把大自然的美包揽其中。

- “……旭日刚升的屋侧的灌木丛上，金红色的灿光眩目地照着我的面庞，一层薄纱般的雾气在山野间飘飘荡荡，稀疏的椰树挺直着瘦白的腰，叶子在阳光中刷出了油亮，轻轻摆动，村落的土地还掩映在阴影里，清凉的晨风夹着绿色的沁芳充满我的肺部，使我不觉松畅地吹起口哨，走下阿答屋那黑霉的木阶，沿着沙砾的小路走向小溪……”

成功的自然环境描写让人觉得如置身其中般觉得读姚紫小说是“不虚此行”外，字里行间透出来的南洋风情，更是令身为南洋人的读者倍觉亲切，而非南洋人的读者也能耳目一新——原来那个时代南洋乡下的人是这样生活的，山间流动清澈的溪涧，是他们洗衣洗澡的地方，而无论男女，都是穿着一块叫着纱笼的布料，这块布料的作用除了可当衣裳，还是浴袍，并且是被单，当然还有其他种种用途；这些生活细节上生动的描写，说明了姚紫是个对生活观察很仔细的人，否则就无法那么自然地表露出乡间的美丽与乡民的淳朴可爱，通过那些活生生的语言，让读者们看到了解到当时当刻的美与丑。这些活生生的语言，就是带领读者走向生活了解历史的途径。

从《秀子姑娘》和《窝浪拉里》两篇小说中，可以看到俯拾即是的美丽文字描写，且看作家的笔，是如何地结合自然环境与人的思维，通过细腻的形象的描写，清楚明白地展现在读者眼下，如“姚”与秀子的相处中，读者能具体地感觉到那一片朦胧，不知什么时候才可以拨云见月？以下的描写是最好的写照：

- “……烟雾，发青地拂过寂寞的空气，绕回在我正拟休息的脑间……”

“……看她那憔悴的脸容，我的心就如结冰的池水冒上泡沫……”

“……烟圈，发青地拂过寂寞的空气，绕回在我正拟休息的脑间……”

烟雾、泡沫、烟圈……这些虚虚幻幻看得到抓不到的东西，不只是环境的描写，也是实况报导。这就让读者好奇地探寻姚与秀子的爱情，究竟是真的还是假的？

新加坡资深作家兼学者黄孟文博士针对姚紫的几篇作品有如此看法：“在1947年尾—1948年初的马华文坛，曾展开过一场波澜壮阔的有关‘马华文艺’与‘侨民文艺’的论争，认为马华文艺不应该再是中国文艺的延续，而应是地道的马华文艺，它所描写的应该是着重在反映“此时此地”，有自己的独特性，而姚紫的《秀子姑娘》，《窝浪拉里》，《马场女神》等都是针对本土的景物描写具有浓厚的地方色彩”。（见黄孟文《新华文学评论集》，云南园雅舍1996年出版）这就说明了，姚紫的景物描写语言是很成功的。

#### 方言也是文学语言

姚紫对文字的运用伸缩自如，不仅通过比喻，也通过直接的描绘，让读者自己把主角的形象看得一清二楚；此外，姚紫小说中，也很喜欢夹带一两个英文单字，或许这是为了符合主角的“时髦”身份？比如在《咖啡的诱惑》中，不写咖啡馆而直接写上Cafe，舞会是Party，侍应生是Boy，周末为Week-end，描写吴娟娟的衣着，上衣称Blouse，裙子是Skirt，香烟是Cigarette…。

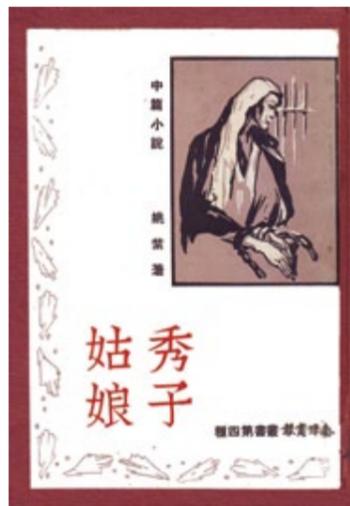
《被当酱科的男人》中出现的Cowboy, Darling, 人Fool-block-head, Foolish等等。《马场女神》中，看赛马的观众大喊Come on! my dear! come on…描写“她”的神态不说迷人而是Charming。

《十三年》中，女主角向男主角提起往事：“你偷Pass（传递）了一张方程式给我……”

今天的新加坡人多数讲“新语”（即英语当中参杂华语或方言），那是自新加坡独立后教育的变革使然；在今天，讲新语听新语已成了新加坡人的习惯。反观姚紫写作的年代，这类的华英夹杂的语言还不流行，所以初读难免有点别扭。但了解那是作者为了配合小说中十里洋场的社会，也就不以为忤了。

另外，姚紫的小说中也不难找到一些方言，而那也是为配合小说的需要而产生的。姚紫本身是闽南人，在小说中常有一些自然流露的闽南话，如《夜茫茫》的主人翁叫“阿憨”，这是当年受教育不多的闽南人较常用的一个最随意的名字，表示“傻气”的意思，阿憨是个没有受过教育的三轮车夫，人老实憨厚，取这个名字是取对了。

- “近来，风姑娘坐他的车子，罕得同他聊天了。”这“罕得”是闽南语，表示少有的意思。阿憨



《秀子姑娘》，三版

对凤姑娘有意思，问明在凤姑娘那边过夜的价钱，暗想着：

- “他妈的，三十五块钱老子也花得来，头家玩的，估里就玩不得了？”——赌拍九少输一点，踏它几天车子，总捞得了三十五块吧！”

这“头家”指的是老板，估里就是劳动阶级——工人之意，“拍九”应是音译，牌九，一种赌博。这些都是方言。

《毒与那个女人》中，洪永昌的老婆交培了不少姐妹伴，这当中的交培也是闽南语，交际，认识的意思。她形容穿得漂亮的人是穿得“苏爽”，也就是整齐，而苏爽一词，闽南语常用。至于骂人的“天寿鬼”，更是闽南语中骂人的“顺口溜”。而“她”的父母在他们婚后搬回“州府”去住，这州府一词，是马来亚还属于英殖民管辖时，新加坡闽南人对它的称呼。

《窝浪拉里》描写英皇加冕游行的庆祝行列将经过的地方，四周满是警察和“暗牌”，这“暗牌”就是闽南语的便衣警探。此外，新马是多元种族国家，其中马来人占了不少，因此马来语也相当普遍，尤

其是一些特别名词如“沙拉”，是犯错的意思，《夜茫茫》中凤姑娘问阿憨可是因为婊妓婊出“沙拉”，问他可是中了梅毒之意。

姚紫也常把“脸孔”写成“面孔”，“脸上”是“面上”等，这些也都是方言。

《新加坡传奇》中的方言更是不少，把薪水说成“估俚工”，警察是“马打”（马来语）等等。而这，相信除了姚紫本身是闽南人外，新加坡毕竟也是个闽南人较多的地方，百姓常用语多为闽南话就不出奇了。至于马来语，因为新加坡是多元种族国家，马来人也是相当重要的国民，人们谈话中参杂马来语是自然的。

虽然如此，但姚紫小说中那些方言土语，相信都是作者为配合故事情节主角身份才应用的技巧，无可厚非；重要的是并非姚紫所有的作品都有这样的语言，否则就会影响读者的接受能力了，足见在文学语言的应用上，姚紫不仅很谨慎，下的工夫也不少。

姚紫也喜欢在小说中应用俚语俗语，比如：“生鸡蛋不会，放鸡屎倒会”（《新加坡传奇》），“没吃过猪肉，也见过猪走路”；“资本应用得法，一本万利，资本运用不得法，把骨头拍卖都没人要”等等；普普通通一句话，姚紫写来特别传神，余味无穷。

另外要提的，姚紫的小说中，除描述中国的景物外，凡属新加坡的，也都忠实地为新加坡的历史做了记录，那是新加坡“过去”一些颇著名的地方或街道，比如在很多篇小说中提及的“拍拖”圣地勿洛海边，如今已被填成了很多高楼大厦，东方戏院早就不见了，国泰戏院已经不再是戏院，芽笼民用机场的Bar-Restaurant根本就是历史，“古迹”还在，只是人事已非。有些地方在今天的城市规划里已经找不到了，但是可以从姚紫的小说中看到，那是新加坡过去的繁华所在，那是后人所要知道的过往的街道或地方历史。同样的，姚紫小说中的红灯区也逐渐从恭锡街、惹兰勿杀转移了。而今日的红灯码头已经关闭不用，因为有了新加坡港务局，有了樟宜机场。

总之，读姚紫的小说，不仅是在读故事或享受他优美灵活生动的语言文字，同时也让我们欣赏了大自然无处不在的美，还有各地的地里风光并活生生的历史，而且了解历史的血泪是如何流出来的。美丽的文学语言，是活着的文字。

## Illustrating the Future: Southeast Asian Ceramic Special Exhibition Catalogues, 1970-2009

Sharon Wong

Exhibition catalogues are important guidebooks for ceramic enthusiasts and researchers to understand Southeast Asian ceramics. Compared with words, images in exhibition catalogues can provide a visual representation and perceptual knowledge of the styles and forms of ceramics.



The dark brown glazed stoneware jars were spread over a rather wide expanse exhibition area in Taipei County Yingge Ceramic Museum, Taiwan.

Exhibition catalogues are also long-lasting records and sources of references on ceramic exhibits shown for specific purposes in museums so as to affect the audience in a predetermined direction. Therefore, it is one of the best tools for us to review the history of research into and future trends of Southeast Asian ceramic studies.

“Southeast Asian ceramics” emerged as an independent analytical unit after World War II, when Southeast Asia became a region with clear political boundaries. The study of important long-term inter-regional cultural and technological interactions has suffered through the creation of modern political barriers. Chinese ceramic traditions are one of the major elements in the development of ceramic industries in Southeast Asia. The timeframe of this article begins with the ninth century, when Chinese trade ceramics were first imported into Southeast Asia, and ends in the sixteenth century, the period when Southeast Asian polities began to come under the political control of European empires.

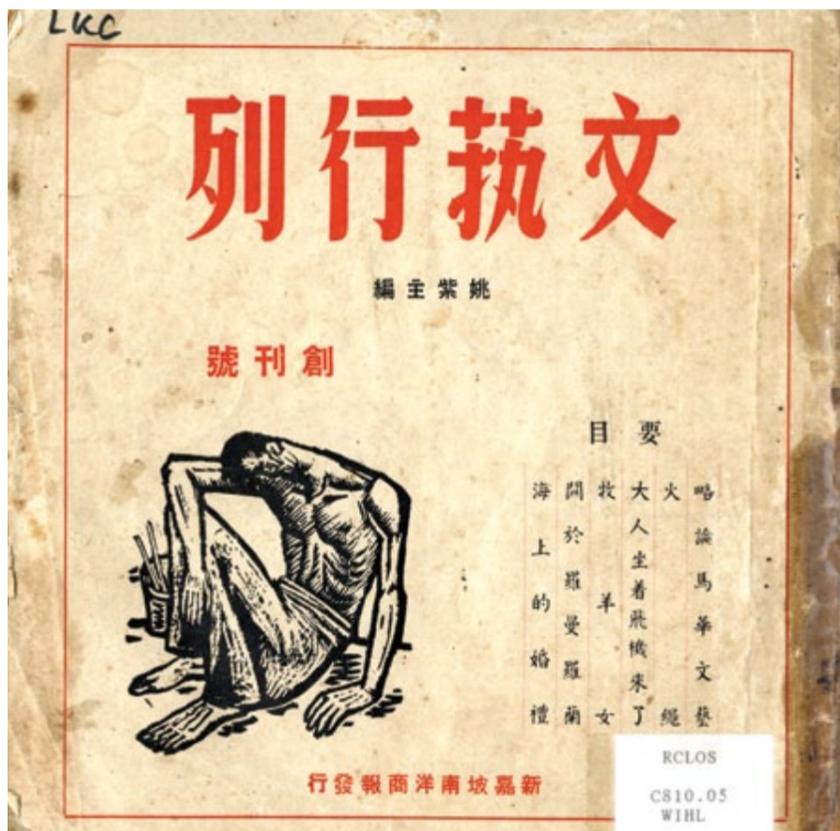
This article traces the history of Southeast Asian ceramic special exhibition catalogues from the 1970s, a decade when most of the existing Southeast Asian ceramic societies were established in the region and many exhibition catalogues were published, to the re-emergence of such exhibitions in the late 2000s. <sup>1</sup> Unlike permanent exhibitions, special exhibitions pay particular attention to a group of ceramic exhibits that are brought together

for public display. They also offer the opportunity for viewers to observe and compare ceramics from different parts of Southeast Asia conveniently concentrated in one place for a limited period of time. They can also enhance the popularity and professional reputation of the museum by highlighting and promoting several new discoveries or important ceramic pieces. Although permanent exhibitions represent long-term results based on the hard work done by museum staff over many years of collecting, preserving and researching, most of the exhibition catalogues depict short-term and temporary special exhibitions instead of permanent exhibitions in the museum. <sup>2</sup> As Southeast Asian ceramic exhibition catalogues are the main publications for special exhibitions in museums, these form the main focus of this study.

### Some observations on the exhibition catalogue

Most of the exhibition catalogues surveyed in this paper were obtained from libraries in Singapore. Singapore has a unique geographical and historical position in Southeast Asian ceramic studies, and is considered a hub of scholarly publications and landmark exhibition catalogues on Southeast Asian ceramic topics in the region. <sup>3</sup> The catalogues studied were from the Singapore and Southeast Asian collection, art and history collections and Ya Yin Kwan Collection of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, National Library of Singapore. In addition, libraries at the National University of Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and the Asian Civilisations Museum hold a number of Southeast Asian, Chinese and Japanese ceramic exhibition catalogues that were published in various parts of the world.

Twenty-three special exhibition catalogues on Southeast Asian ceramic topics were selected from major Singapore library collections. The selection criteria were based on whether the catalogue was a special exhibition catalogue, whether the major topic of the exhibition catalogue was connected with Southeast Asian ceramics, and whether it was available in major Singapore library collections. Many important exhibition catalogues, drawn from a much wider range of pioneer scholars or institutions outside of Singapore collections or books written in local languages, should be acknowledged. <sup>4</sup> We hope that this general overview will provide an indication of the future trends of exhibitions on



姚紫所编的《文艺行》

#### 参考书目

- 谢国平《语言学概论》，《文学语言的多维视野》高万云著，山东文艺出版社2001.9，陈贤茂《论姚紫的小说创作》，姚紫《杂文·这支部队》，《姚紫小说选》，新加坡文艺协会1999年11月初版，黄孟文《新华文学评论集》，云南园雅舍1996年出版

#### About the author

Low Siew Tin was awarded the Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship in 2010. This article presents her research on local literary pioneer Yao Zi. A veteran screen playwright, she is a freelance writer who has published several books. She is also a Writer-in-Residence with the Ministry of Education, and an instructor at the Young Writer's Club at Fuzhou Clan Association and Nan Qiao Secondary School and AME College.

- <sup>1</sup> Wong, 2009, p. 5.  
<sup>2</sup> See Belcher, 1991, pp. 51-52 and Brown, 2009b.  
<sup>3</sup> Wong, 2009, pp. 6-7.  
<sup>4</sup> For example, see Guy & Stevenson, 1997.



Southeast Asian ceramic masterpieces were exhibited on the large and low platform with the glass frames but not much protection in Taipei County Yingge Ceramic Museum, Taiwan



Southeast Asian ceramics "handle holes" in the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum, Bangkok University, Thailand

Southeast Asian ceramic studies.

Five aspects of general information from the special exhibition catalogues will be observed: the quantity of ceramic exhibits by countries; sources of the exhibits; Southeast Asian ware type (glazed, unglazed stoneware or earthenware); the venues, dates, and host organisations and countries; and the topics of associated essays as well as the number of essays.

#### Quantity of ceramic exhibits by countries

With regard to the quantity of ceramic exhibits by countries, Thai and Vietnamese ceramic exhibits are found in much higher proportion than any other Southeast Asian ceramics. Thai and Vietnamese ceramics are usually considered as the only theme in the exhibition. Examples of Thai ceramic exhibitions include *The Legacy of Phra Ruang* (1974), *Ceramics from Thailand* (1977), *Thai Ceramics through the Ages* (1978), and Vietnamese ceramic exhibitions held in 1978, 1982 and 1993. Khmer ceramics make up the third-largest category of ceramic exhibits. Its thematic exhibition includes *Khmer Ceramics 9th to 14th Centuries* (1981) and *Khmer Ceramics from the KamratDn Collection* (1989). Very few exhibition catalogues deal with Burmese and Lao ceramics. The White and Green Wares Excavated in the Tak Area in Thailand (1996) is an exceptional case. About 194 pieces of white-glazed Burmese ware with green decoration, obtained from illegal excavation along the Thai-Myanmar border in the Tak Area of Thailand near the Mae Sot mountain region, were first introduced in a special exhibition in the Machida City Museum.<sup>5</sup> Aside from this special exhibition, ceramics produced in Myanmar or Laos and insular Southeast Asian countries, for instance Brunei, have seldom appeared in Southeast Asian ceramic special exhibitions. These phenomena may reflect a strong contrast in the development of Southeast Asian ceramic studies, and the perceptions of collectors (or lenders) and organisers on which kind of Southeast Asian ceramics should be included in the exhibition.

Another typical example is whether Chinese ceramics

are present in Southeast Asian ceramic exhibitions. In Table 1, 7 out of 23 exhibitions present Chinese ceramics. In the *Talking Jars* (1971), *South-East Asian and Chinese Trade Pottery* (1979), and *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery* (2009), more than 100 Chinese pieces were shown. Another exhibition, *Oriental Trade Ceramics in Southeast Asia 10th to 16th Century* (1980), also displayed 78 pieces of Chinese ceramics. Chinese ceramics are covered in the Southeast Asian ceramic special exhibitions if the organisers support the concept that the flourishing of trade between China and Southeast Asia would transmit new elements to Southeast Asian ceramic products and their societies, and Chinese ceramics could provide one of the major elements in the development of ceramic industries in Southeast Asia. However, if Southeast Asian ceramic traditions, cultural identity and internal unity are emphasised, Chinese ceramics would be excluded from the exhibitions. Table 1 indicates that the latter approach is more frequent.

#### Source of the exhibits

Many ceramic exhibits from Southeast Asian ceramic special exhibitions were lent by private collectors or museums. Singapore is an ideal location to display such pieces since local museums and institutes and members of the Southeast Asian Ceramic Society (SEACS) always provide vital support and act as sources of exhibits, such as for the *Ceramic Art of Southeast Asia* (1971), *Khmer Ceramics 9th to 14th Centuries* (1981), and *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery* (2009) exhibitions.<sup>6</sup> Another supportive country is Japan. Many masterpieces in excellent condition were meticulously selected from institutions such as the Tokyo National Museum, Idemitsu Museum of Art, Machida City Museum, Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum, Kyoto, and Fukuoka Art Museum, or from collections held by private collectors such as Hiroshi Fujiwara and Hiromu Honda. These pieces were displayed in various special exhibitions such as *Thai-Vietnamese Ancient Ceramics* (1988), *Khmer Ceramics from the*

*KamratDn Collection* (1989) and *Vietnamese Ceramics* (1993). Margot and Hans Ries were two of the pioneer collectors of Southeast Asian ceramics. After moving to Los Angeles in the early 1950s, they donated most of their collections of Southeast Asian ceramics to the Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena, California.<sup>7</sup> Another famous collection is the Hauge family's gift of Khmer ceramics to the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution.<sup>8</sup>

Some exhibits were purchased by the museums or borrowed from other galleries and museums in different countries. For instance, for the special exhibition *Southeast Asian Ceramics Ninth through Seventeenth Centuries* (1976), the organising team led by Dean Frasc  successfully grouped ceramic exhibits from the US, Belgium, Netherland, Japan, Thailand and Indonesia that were brought together for visitors to make comparisons among ceramics conveniently in one place. However, cooperative special exhibitions with archaeological departments in Southeast Asia have been very rare. One example is *Thai Ceramics through the Ages* (1977), launched by The Urban Council of Hong Kong and the Fine Arts Department, Thailand. Only a small proportion of archaeological finds with clear provenances and dating information was chosen for display, including the ceramic discoveries from both land-based and underwater archaeology. *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery* (2009) gave an extraordinary demonstration. As compared with previous special exhibitions, this exhibition paid more attention to shipwreck ceramics. They were highlighted with serious research on the relationships of ceramic trade within the region and between China and Southeast Asia.<sup>9</sup>

#### Southeast Asian ware type (glazed, unglazed stoneware or earthenware)

Southeast Asian ceramic ware types from the fourth to sixteenth centuries make up the largest ceramic ware category in the special exhibitions. This result parallels the increased momentum of Southeast Asian ceramic exports. In particular, the development of Vietnamese and Thai ceramic production during the period of distribution of Chinese ceramic export wares was limited during the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644).<sup>10</sup> By comparison, ceramic ware produced from the ninth to thirteenth centuries, a period when glazed ceramics were first produced in Southeast Asia, falls in the second group.

In general, Southeast Asian ware type can also be classified into glazed stoneware, unglazed stoneware and earthenware. Most exhibits from this pre-modern period are intact glazed stoneware from Vietnam, Cambodia and Northeast Thailand. This is because the intense debate about the origins of Southeast Asian glazed stoneware in Southeast Asian ceramic study circles was closely linked to the beginning of China's systematic export trade in ceramics from the ninth century. However, earthenware is an important Southeast Asian ceramic ware type. Except for Ban Chiang earthenware from Thailand, earthenware has never played a major role in ceramic exhibitions. About 10 out of 23 exhibitions include Ban Chiang ware. This reflects the idea (since challenged) that Ban Chiang earthenware was a distinctive artistic and technological

ceramic tradition that could be traced back 4000 years in Southeast Asia as the result of significant excavations at the Bronze and Iron Age site of Ban Chiang from the late 1960s to the early 1980s.<sup>11</sup> However, there is still very little in-depth research and display of both mainland and island Southeast Asian earthenware from the pre-modern period in special exhibitions.

In addition, only a few special exhibitions have displayed important research resources for Southeast Asian ceramic studies: kiln wasters and ceramic fragments, the key materials for the study of technologies and craftsmanship of Southeast Asian ceramic production.

#### Venue, date and the host organisation and country

Southeast Asian ceramic special exhibitions were often scheduled for a limited period of time. In general, the exhibitions did not last longer than three months. For instance, *The Legacy of Phra Ruang* (1974) exhibits for sale in London were only displayed for 15 days. The longest special exhibition, *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery* (2009), was held at the National University of Singapore Museums (NUS Museums) over 9 months and 22 days. The *Oriental Trade Ceramics in Southeast Asia 10th to 16th Century* (1980) catalogue was produced to accompany the travelling special exhibition for three months from the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (6 June – 20 July 1980) to the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (1–31 August 1980), and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (4 October – 9 November 1980). A similar practice can be seen in shipwreck ceramic exhibitions for public education or auction purposes in recent years.<sup>12</sup>

Many ceramic exhibitions were held in art museums or art galleries. This observation demonstrates that Southeast Asian ceramics were treated as art objects or parts of art collections rather than archaeological or historical resources. The major organisers were the founding persons or the successors of the art or ceramic societies or the museums with that area of ceramic collections and specialisation, such as SEACS established in Singapore in 1969. The first Southeast Asian ceramic exhibition, entitled *Ceramic Art of Southeast Asia*, organised by the first SEACS president, William Willetts, was held in 1971 at the Art Museum in the University of Singapore (SEACS 1971).

#### Topic of associated essays and number of essays

The typical exhibition catalogue includes at least one essay. That essay is always an introductory essay about the ceramic exhibits written by the organisers or renowned ceramic specialists in the field. Some catalogues compile three to four excellent articles with serious studies on various topics, like the relationship between Chinese and Southeast Asian ceramics, or ceramic traditions, as well as the biographies of the collectors. *Oriental Trade Ceramics in Southeast Asia 10th to 16th Century* (1980), *Khmer Ceramics 9th to 14th Century* (1981), *Vietnamese Ceramics* (1982) and *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery* (2009) are some of the most exemplary works. These essays, containing detailed illustrations

<sup>5</sup> Yamazaki, 1996, p. 137. About Burmese ceramics from the Thai-Burma border, see Roxanna Brown's book review, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Some Southeast Asian ceramic exhibits were from the Art Museum of University of Singapore. See Sabapathy 2002, pp. 16-19.

<sup>7</sup> Dofflemyer, 1989, pp. VI-IX.

<sup>8</sup> See Cort, et al. 2000, "Foreword" by Milo Cleveland Beach, Director, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, pp. 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> Miksic, 2009, pp. 71-99.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, 2009b, pp. 17, 29; Miksic, 2009, p. 59.

<sup>11</sup> White, 1982, pp. 12-21, 29.

<sup>12</sup> The travelling exhibition on *Sunken Treasures of Brunei Darussalam* from 2003 to 2005 in Australia is an example. See Richards, 2003.



Archaeology-inspired pots by the grandfather of Singapore sculpture, Ng Eng Teng in NUS Museums, Singapore

of ceramic exhibits, are extremely important in transmitting knowledge to succeeding scholars of the field.

### Visits to Southeast Asian Ceramic Exhibitions in Singapore and Taiwan

To present a better understanding of the future study of Southeast Asian ceramics, I want to discuss two Southeast Asian ceramic special exhibitions held in Asia in recent years. The first is *The Ceramic Road of Southeast Asia: Pottery Villages, Ancient and Contemporary Ceramics* special exhibition, which was staged from 17 October 2009 to 28 February 2010 in Taipei County Yingge Ceramics Museum, Taiwan, one of the most well-known ceramic museums in Asia. About 240 ceramic works were included in the exhibition. The objective of this exhibition was to “provide the Taiwanese [with] a deeper understanding of Southeast Asia and better appreciation to their Southeast Asian neighbours”.<sup>14</sup>

The Southeast Asian artefacts joined collections through a variety of routes: through private collections on loan from different museums and institutes from Japan, Taiwan and Thailand or archaeological discoveries in Taiwan. I was very impressed that some selected pieces were exhibited on a large and low platform with glass frames but not much protection. Such a display would be refreshing to visitors because the ceramic objects were spread over a rather wide expanse, resulting in blank spaces. Visitors could experience a greater connection with the seemingly unprotected ceramic objects, while the glass frames served to remind visitors that although Southeast Asian ceramics are cheap and common enough compared to gold ornaments or paintings, they were still untouchable art objects. We should note also that this special exhibition adopted the “handle holes” display method from the Southeast Asian Ceramic Museum, Bangkok, and allowed visitors to touch wasters.<sup>15</sup>

This exhibition was apparently intended to showcase certain kinds of Southeast Asian ceramic exhibits: intact, exceptional, exquisite, exotic, glazed and preferably high-quality vessels mainly from private collections in

the museums, with approximated dating, provenance and places of discovery. Unlike most previous special exhibitions, *The Ceramic Road of Southeast Asia* exhibition was surprisingly concerned with ceramics from mainland Southeast Asian countries (including Laos and Myanmar), both ancient and contemporary ceramic works, the significance of ceramic traditions, and a study on pottery villages and usage of the ceramic vessels (see TABLE 1). Undoubtedly it would yield a broader view and generate comparatively greater interest in Southeast Asian ceramics among researchers and ceramic enthusiasts.

Another special exhibition, *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery*, organised by SEACS and NUS Museums, was displayed from 14 November 2009 until 5 September 2010 in NUS Museums. Since its establishment in 1969, SEACS has played an important role in the development of Southeast Asian ceramic studies and the transmission of the accomplishments of Southeast Asian ceramic researchers. In 1971, its pioneering exhibition catalogue *Ceramic Art of Southeast Asia: first annual exhibition* was published. The special exhibition 38 years later marked the 40th Anniversary of SEACS<sup>16</sup> and paid tribute to the late Dr Roxanna Brown.<sup>17</sup>

Compared with the Taiwan exhibition, some ceramic exhibits were protected within three-tiered glass vitrines. These fit well in the limited exhibition space and directed visitors’ attention in particular to the ceramic objects in the upper and middle layer. The interpretive labels in front of the exhibits and stories about the discoveries on the floor panels showed that the ceramic objects were unified as a group based on the consistency of content and the kinds of materials.

The exhibition focused not only on ceramic findings from mainland Southeast Asian kiln sites, but also on the fragmented, general, coarse unglazed stoneware and earthenware, tiles and brick building materials with archaeological contexts from both insular and mainland Southeast Asia. Traditionally, an intact and fine piece is selected as the major image on the front cover of an exhibition catalogue. However, in *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery*, the editor made the bold choice of a ceramic fragment of a glazed milky-blue Sawankhalok guardian figure for the front cover. This shows that fragments were considered an important component in this exhibition.<sup>18</sup> The essays in the exhibition catalogue provided many substantial research findings and new ideas on Southeast Asian ceramic studies, including kilns of Southeast Asia, research on ceramic trade within Southeast Asia and between Southeast Asia and China.<sup>19</sup>

Apparently, both exhibition organisers indicated their interest in the hot topic of the revival, protection and promotion of Southeast Asian ceramics. The *Ceramic Road of Southeast Asia* organisers intended to raise awareness of the connection between contemporary and ancient Southeast Asian ceramics. For instance, the editors separated the special exhibition catalogue into two volumes: all contemporary ceramic art works by artists in Southeast Asia were grouped in volume one, while the ancient ceramic exhibits and related essays were compiled in volume two. They also used Singaporean ceramist Swee Tuan Pang’s artwork *Ripples* to

Table 1: The Quantity of Ceramic Exhibits by Country<sup>13</sup>

No.	Exhibition	Ceramic Exhibits by Country										
		Mainland Southeast Asia					Insular Southeast Asia					China
		Khmer	Thai	Viet	Laos	Burmese	Malaysia	Singapore	Indonesia	Philippines	Brunei	
1	Ceramic Art of Southeast Asia (1971)	20	205	127								
2	The Talking Jars (1971)	1	36	15								113
3	The Legacy of Phra Ruang (1974)		PH7, 70									
4	Southeast Asian Ceramics (1975)	5	PH5, 16	13								15
5	Southeast Asian Ceramics Ninth Through Seventeenth Centuries (1976)		57	53								
6	Ceramics from Thailand (1977)		S146									
7	Thai Ceramics through the Ages (1978)	8	PH27, 35, SH32									5
8	Vietnamese Ceramics (1978)			55								
9	South-East Asian and Chinese Trade Pottery (1979)	13	59	73								160
10	Ceramics of Thailand (1980)	2	PH5, 149									2
11	Oriental Trade Ceramics in Southeast Asia 10th to 16th Century (1980)		39	36								78
12	Khmer Ceramics 9th-14th Centuries (1981)	120										
13	Vietnamese Ceramics (1982)			235								
14	Southeast Asian Ceramics Special Exhibition: Annam, Khmer, Thai (1983)	15	PH5, 51	52								
15	Thai-Vietnamese Ancient Ceramics (1988)	14	22 (P17)	59								
16	Ceramics of Mainland Southeast Asia (1988)	5	PH7, 51	31		1						
17	Southeast Asian Ceramics from the Collection of Margot and Hans Ries (1989)	17	PH1, 97	7								
18	Khmer Ceramics from the Kamratān Collection (1989)		150									
19	Vietnamese Ceramics (1993)			260								
20	The White and Green Wares Excavated in the Tak Area in Thailand (1996)					194						
21	Thai and Khmer Ceramics (1996)	27	PH7, 112									
22	Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery (2009)	7	29	47		4	6	CL85	6, CS11, SH8	1		123
23	The Ceramic Road of Southeast Asia (2009)	16	PH4, 87	47	3	12						

#### LEGEND

CL: Chinese ceramics land-based excavation  
SH: Shipwreck  
CS: Chinese ceramics shipwrecks  
PH: Pre-history

<sup>13</sup> The Quantity of Ceramic Exhibits by Countries was based on the pre-modern ceramic exhibits mentioned in the exhibition catalogue. It may not include all the exhibits shown in the exhibition.

<sup>14</sup> Chen, 2009, p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, 2009a, pp. 60-61.

<sup>16</sup> Miksic, 2009, p. 7.

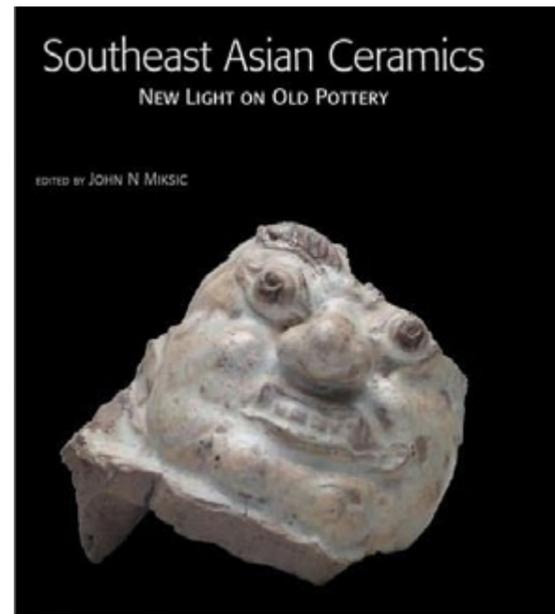
<sup>17</sup> Chia, 2009, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> In 1993, the Tokyo National Museum held a special exhibition entitled *Korean and Other Asian Ceramics Excavated in Japan* (one quarter of the exhibits were Southeast Asian ceramics). Most of the ceramic exhibits were fragments. See Tokyo National Museum, 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Miksic, 2009, pp. 49-99.



Opening ceremony of "Southeast Asian Ceramics: Night Light on Old Pottery" exhibition in NUS Museums, guests of honour (L-R) Mr. Ahmad bin Mashadi, Prof. Wang Gungwu, Mr. Alvin Chia, and Prof. John N. Miksic



*Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery*  
(All right reserved, Southeast Asian Ceramic Society, 2009)

represent the ceramic road of Southeast Asia embraced by the intriguing changeable and unpredictable nature of water, and put a Si Satchanalai celadon Kinnari ewer at the right bottom corner of the front cover.<sup>20</sup> The catalogue included the study of contemporary earthenware production in various pottery villages in Southeast Asia. The contemporary earthenware traditions may provide the essential link with past technologies of Southeast Asian ceramic production. In *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New Light on Old Pottery*, the curators displayed the archaeology-inspired pots of Ng Eng Teng, the grandfather of Singapore sculpture, together with the ancient potteries in the exhibition.<sup>21</sup> Another possible method of making the connection between contemporary and ancient ceramics is to produce replicas of ancient ceramics to help revitalise Southeast Asian ceramic production. In the meantime, it is possible to use different approaches to integrate both contemporary and ancient Southeast Asian ceramics in the same exhibition. It also indicates that systematic analysis of the link between contemporary and ancient Southeast Asian ceramics and collaboration between contemporary ceramic artists, art historians and archaeologists within the region will further increase in the near future.

### Discussion

As an object-oriented display, a Southeast Asian ceramic special exhibition is more heavily reliant upon ceramic objects that form the foundation of our understanding of ceramics than on any other form of interpretive media. However, ceramic exhibitions are always lacking in dynamic and participatory elements.<sup>22</sup> Is it necessary to put a protective glass front on all ceramic exhibits, thus making them untouchable art objects? Some exhibits, such as heirloom jars, kiln wasters, ceramic fragments of recent date, and contemporary earthenware

are common pottery types that can be found in tribal houses, ceramic workshops or elsewhere. They are essential components of Southeast Asian ceramic studies and should not be treated as rare, precious, individual and unusual pieces in exhibitions. As the eminent French archaeologist and Southeast Asian ceramic scholar Bernard P. Groslier pointed out, "The amateurs (the hunters of rare and precious objects) risk selecting only 'exceptional' pieces, and end up with only a partial and prejudiced view of this (Southeast Asian ceramic) art...[I]n 1981, due to the absence of systematic studies, identification and dating are frequently done 'negatively' by 'impressionist' comparisons...it will be dated by 'likeness' to some pieces seen through the glass of a museum showcase or during a visit to a colleague or in a sales catalogue".<sup>23</sup> Thirty years later, as more archaeological data has been accumulated and more in-depth and comprehensive studies have been done by researchers, this unbalanced situation has improved.

What are the future trends in Southeast Asian ceramic studies? Based on the above analysis, topics on archaeological ceramic findings, shipwreck ceramics in the region, the linkage between contemporary and ancient Southeast Asian ceramics, and comparisons between Southeast Asian and Chinese ceramics will become more significant in future studies. Moreover, special exhibitions organised by various organisations from different countries, displaying cross-border Southeast Asian ceramic findings with proper dating and provenance information for comparison, and accompanied by exhibition catalogues containing several substantial essays and informative illustrations of ceramic exhibits will not be only a dream. The distinctive characters of Southeast Asian ceramic traditions—unity and diversity—will then emerge in their fullness through exhibitions and their catalogues.

### Acknowledgement

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Ms Louise Allison Cort, Curator for Ceramics, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., and Associate Professor John N. Miksic, Southeast Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore, in reviewing the paper.

### About the author

Sharon Wong was awarded the Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship in January 2010. She received her PhD in the Southeast Asian Studies Programme at the National University of Singapore in 2010. She obtained her MA from the School of Archaeology and Museology in Peking University, China, where she studied ceramic archaeology. Her research interests include Chinese trade ceramics, and South China and Southeast Asia interaction in pre-modern period.

### REFERENCES

- Belcher, M. (1991). *Exhibitions in museums*. Leicester: Leicester University Press; Smithsonian Institution Press. Call No.: RUR 069.5 BEL
- Bluett and Sons, Ltd. (1974). *The Legacy of Phra Ruang: An exhibition of Thai ceramics and of ancient pottery from Ban Chiang*. London: Bluett and Sons, Ltd.
- Brown, R. M. (1988). Guangdong: A missing link to Southeast Asia. In R. M. Brown (Ed.), *Guangdong ceramics from Butuan and other Philippine sites*, (pp. 81-85). Manila: Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines. Call no.: RART q738.074599 GUA
- Brown, R. M. (2004). [Review of book ceramics from the Thai-Burma border]. *Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter*, 1(1), 2.
- Brown, R. M. (2009a). *Southeast Asian ceramics museum, Bangkok University*. Bangkok: Bangkok University Press.
- Brown, R. M. (2009b). *The Ming gap and shipwreck ceramics in Southeast Asia: Towards a chronology of Thai trade ware*. Bangkok: The Siam Society. Call no.: RSEA 738.09593 BRO
- Chen, T. H. (2009). *Recognizing Southeast Asia*. In M.-L. Hsieh, (Ed.), *The ceramic road of Southeast Asia: Pottery villages, ancient and contemporary ceramics II*. Taipei: Taipei County Yingge Ceramics Museum.
- Chia, A. (2009). Preface. In J. N. Miksic (Ed.), *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New light on old pottery*. Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society. Call no.: RSING 738.0959 SOU
- Cort, L. A., Farhad, M., and Gunter, A. C. (2000). *Asian traditions in clay: The hauge gifts*. Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.
- Dofflemyer, V. (1989). *Southeast Asian ceramics from the collection of Margot and Hans Ries*. Pasadena: Pacific Asia Museum. Call no.: RSEA 738.30959307479493 DOF
- Drzik, A. M. (1983). *Southeast Asian ceramics from the collection of Mr & Mrs Andrew M. Drzik*. Tokyo: A. M. Drzik. Call no.: RSING 738.0959 DRZ
- Frasché, D. F. (1976). *Southeast Asian ceramics: Ninth through seventeenth centuries*. New York: The Asia Society. Call no.: RSEA 738.0959 FRA
- Fujiwara, H. (1989). *Khmer ceramics from the Kamratan collection*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Groslier, B. P. (1981). Introduction to the ceramic wares of Angkor. In D. Stock (Ed.), *Khmer ceramics 9th-14th century*, (pp. 9-40). Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society. Call no.: RSING 738.09596 KHM
- Guy, J. (1980). *Oriental trade ceramics in Southeast Asia, 10th to 16th century: Selected from Australian collections, including the Art Gallery of South Australia and the Bodor collection*. Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria. Call no.: RSING 738.0959 GUY
- Guy, J., and Stevenson, J. (Eds.) (1997). *Vietnamese ceramics: A separate tradition*. Chicago, IL: Art Media Resources with Avery Press. Call no.: RUR ART 738.09597 STE
- Hsieh, M. L. (Ed.) (2009). *The ceramic road of Southeast Asia: Pottery villages, ancient and contemporary ceramics I & II*. Taipei: Taipei County Yingge Ceramics Museum.
- Machida City Museum. (1993). *Vietnamese ceramics*. Machida: Machida City Museum.
- Machida City Museum. (1996). *The white and green wares excavated in the Tak area in Thailand*. Machida: Machida City Museum.
- Miksic, J. N. (Ed.) (2009). *Southeast Asian Ceramics: New light on old pottery*. Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society. Call no.: RSING 738.0959 SOU
- Moes, R. (1975). *Southeast Asian ceramics*. New York: Brooklyn Museum. Call no.: RUR SEA 738.0959074 MOE
- Musée Royal de Mariemont. (1978). *Ceramiques Vietnamiennes: Musée Royal de Mariemont*, 28 Avril-15 September 1978. Mariemont, Belgium: Musée Royal de Mariemont. Call no.: RUR SEA 738.09597074 CER
- The Museum Yamato Bunkakan. (1983). *Southeast Asian ceramics special exhibition: Annam, Khmer, Thai*. Nara: The Museum Yamato Bunkakan.
- Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong. (1979). *South-East Asian and Chinese trade pottery: An exhibition catalogue* January 26 to April 2, 1979, Hong Kong Museum of Art. Hong Kong: The Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong. Call no.: RSEA 738.20959 ORI
- Ozaki, N. (Ed.) (1996). *Thai and Khmer ceramics*. Fukuoka: The Fukuoka Art Museum.
- Peacock, B. A. V. (1978). *Thai ceramics through the ages*. Hong Kong: Urban Council. Call no.: RSEA 738.09593 THA

Richards, D. (Ed.) (2003). *Lost for 500 years: Sunken treasures of Brunei Darussalam*. Sydney: Art Exhibitions Australia Limited. Call no.: RSEA q910.95955 LOS

Sabapathy, T. K. (2002). *Past-present: A history of the University Art Museum*. In T. K. Sabapathy (Ed.), *Past, present, beyond re-nascence of an art collection*. Singapore: South and Southeast Asian Gallery, National University of Singapore Museums. Call no.: RSING q709.5 PAS

The Shoto Museum of Art. (1993). *Thai-Vietnamese ancient ceramics*. Tokyo: The Shoto Museum of Art.

Southeast Asian Ceramic Society. (1971). *Ceramic art of Southeast Asia: First annual exhibition*. Singapore: Art Museum, University of Singapore. Call no.: RSING 738.0959 SOU

Stanford University Museum of Art. (1980). *Ceramics of Thailand*. Stanford: Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. Call no.: RSEA 738.09593 CER

Stock, D. (Ed.) (1981). *Khmer ceramics 9th-14th centuries*. Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society. Call no.: RSING 738.09596 KHM

Till, B. (1988). *Ceramics of mainland Southeast Asia*. Victoria, B.C.: Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Call no.: RSEA 738.30959 TIL

Tokyo National Museum. (2000). *Korean and other Asian ceramics excavated in Japan*. Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum.

Übersee-Museums und Celadon Co. Ltd. (1977). *Keramik aus Thailand: Sukhothai & Sawankhalok*. Kuala Lumpur: Übersee-Museums und Celadon Co. Ltd. Call no.: RUR SEA 738.3095930740352 KER

Vancouver Society for Asian Art. [1971]. The Vancouver Society for Asian Art presents The talking jars: An exhibition of oriental ceramic folkwares found in South East Asia, Centennial Museum, Vancouver, Canada, October-November, 1971. Vancouver: Vancouver Society for Asian Art. Call no.: RSEA 738.095074 VAN

White, J. C. (1982). *Ban Chiang: Discovery of a lost bronze age*: An exhibition organized by the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, the Smithsonian Institution, Traveling Exhibition Service, the National Museums Division, Department of Fine Arts, Thailand. [Philadelphia]: The Museum; [Washington, D.C.]: The Service; Philadelphia, PA: Distributed by the University of Pennsylvania Press. Call no.: RSEA 959.302074 WHI

Wong, W. Y. (2009). A glimpse at Southeast Asian ceramics publications on Southeast Asian ceramics since the 1960s. *SPAFA Journal*, 19(3), 5-17.

Yamasaki, K. (1996). Study on the material and technique of white-glazed ware with green decoration. In *Machida City Museum, The white and green wares excavated in the Tak area in Thailand*. Machida: Machida City Museum.

Young, C. M., Dupoizat, M. F., Lane, E. W. (Eds.) (1982). *Vietnamese ceramics with an illustrated catalogue of the exhibition*. Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society. Call no.: RSING 738.09597 VIE

<sup>20</sup> See Hsieh, 2009, VOL. I, pp. 122-123; VOL. II, p. 70.

<sup>21</sup> Miksic, 2009, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> Belcher, 1991, p. 66.

<sup>23</sup> Groslier, 1981, p. 9.



五十至六十年代是读书风气旺盛的时代。图为1965年大减价售书时的盛况。（蒙上海书局提供）

# 新加坡华文书业 历史简述

邹璐

新加坡是一个移民城市国家，自1819年开埠至今已经走过一百九十多年历史。在今天500多万人口中，超过75%的人口比例是华人。而这些华人，他们或者是移民的后代，或者是新移民。他们将别无选择，无从逃避地面对身为海外华人对于自己母语语言，文化，传统，习俗的传承选择。这不是什么问题，而仅仅是一个现实存在，一个需要面对的事实。

当年新加坡华文书业的兴起，支撑了新马乃至整个南洋地区的华文教育事业。我们很难设想，如果没有当年华文书业源源不断提供的教科书，以及其他各类书籍，幼童的启蒙，学校的教育，社会的进步，文化的发展，都将从何谈起？

人们常说，华社，华校，华文报纸是坚持和维护华族语言、文化、传统的重要堡垒。事实上，是华文书业，提供了最初始的书籍支援，奠定了最基本的

物质基础，尤其是在为早期华校提供教科书方面，华文书业前辈在遥远异乡的土地上，用华文滋养华族后代，让他们可以延续华文华语的能力，得以传承发展华社、华校、华文报的社会职能和历史使命。

本文尝试对新加坡华文书业的历史做一个简单回顾和梳理，从而了解期间的发展过程。

## 新加坡华文书业历史分期

**萌芽时期** 1、1912年商务印书馆在新加坡设立分馆

2、1917年中华书局在新加坡设立新加坡分局

**起步阶段** 1、上海书局的设立

2、世界书局的设立

3、南洋书局的设立

**初步发展** 1、战前新加坡华文书业

2、日据时期新加坡华文书业

**迅速恢复** 战后新加坡华文书业

**蓬勃发展** 1、五十年代华文书业

2、六十年代华文书业

3、七十年代华文书业

**重要转型** 八十年代华文书业

**缓慢复苏** 九十年代华文书业

**新的机遇** 二十一世纪第一个十年华文书业

## 萌芽时期

1819年新加坡开埠，诚如我们所知道的，早期的华族拓荒者，他们多数由于生活所迫、农村破产、社会动荡等因素南来，因此生存是他们飘洋过海后的第一需要。

安顿之后，通过辛勤劳作，慢慢开始繁衍生息，安居乐业，他们也开始关注和展开早期华文教育，通过创办学堂，聘请老师，有了早期华文教育的雏形。

19世纪末至20世纪初，中国正在轰轰烈烈兴办新式教育。由于维新派以及早期孙中山追随者的影响，在本地出现了大批新式学校，如道南学校，养正学校等就是那个时代的新式教育的代表。

新式学校采用新式教科书，改变以往《三字经》、《千字文》等的传统蒙学课本，设立包括语文、算术、科学等科目，当时这些教科书多来自上海，广州等地。

这应该就是新加坡华文书业的源起。但是，至于从前华校通过怎样的进口什么管道引进这些课本书籍，哪些贸易公司开展这样的书业进口业务？年进口量如何？这些还有待进一步发掘了解。

有资料显示商务印书馆1912年开始在本地设立分行，直到1916年获得本地政府注册，可以称之为第一粒华文书业的种子：

- 《商务印书馆建馆八十周年纪念(1897—1977)》，编辑者：商务印书馆香港办事处，印刷者：

## About the article

The beginnings of the Chinese book industry in Singapore can be traced back to the 1910s, when book companies from China set up branches here. The Commercial Press and Chung Hwa Book Company were the first and sold mainly their own publications and textbooks. In the 1920s, when Cheng Hing Company (later known as World Book Company) and Shanghai Book Company were established, a wider variety of Chinese publications from China became available. By the early 1940s, the number of Chinese bookstores in Singapore had increased to 22, mostly located at South Bridge Road. The five largest were The Commercial Press, Chung Hwa Book Company, World Book Company, Shanghai Book Company and Nanyang Book Company, which was founded locally in 1935.

Although many bookstores were destroyed during World War II, the industry managed to recover and began to publish local edited works, as there was a shortage of supply from China due to civil wars. During the boom of the 1950s and early 1960s, more local bookstores were set up for students. The Youth Book Company, a major industry player, led the trend of publishing local works, which helped to encourage the creation of a local literary scene.

However the industry suffered a setback in the 1970s, when changes in Singapore's education policy gave less emphasis to the Chinese language and spurred the growth of English bookstores. The closure of Nanyang University and the enforced merger of *Nanyang Siang Pau* and *Sin Chew Jit Poh* in the 1980s marked the decline of the Chinese book industry in Singapore. Though the industry today is still supported by demand from the older generation of readers, the internet has made business survival even more challenging.



摄于1951年，新加坡上海书局创办人陈岳书（左）和王叔暘先生在书店前留影。（蒙上海书局提供）

商务印书馆香港印刷厂(1977年)，第106页。

- 《联合早报》副刊“现代生活”，1997年12月4日(星期四)，第3版。
- 它在新加坡落地生根至今，很快将迎来它的100周年。而在中国，商务印书馆的历史更为久远，创办于光绪二十三年(1897年)年，有114年之久。《商务印书馆建馆八十周年纪念(1897—1977)》，编者：商务印书馆香港办事处，印刷者：商务印书馆香港印刷厂(1977年)，第101页。
- 中华书局作为一个以新版教科书起家的老字号，也相继落户本地。中华书局于1912年1月1日由陆费逵先生连同陈寅、戴克敦、沈颐等集资在中国上海成立，有称第二年就开始开发海外市场。它在1917年在本地设立分行，1923年获得正式注册。《陆费逵与中华书局》，中华书局出版发行(2002年)，第3页。
- 《回忆中华书局》（上编），中华书局出版发行（1981年），《星加坡分局史略》，（施寅佐文），第183页。

#### 起步阶段

1924年正兴书局创立（世界书局前身），1925年上海书局创立，它们的创立打破了中华、商务仅售卖本版书籍的界限。上海书局还在上海设立分局，方便选购新书及时发往新加坡。书籍的品种变得丰富、多样和相对及时，上海的最新出版物，在南洋几乎同步发行。

#### 初步发展

从20年代向30年代过渡到战前，本地书店由八间增加到二十二间，并且主要集中在大坡大马路，也就是今天的桥南路。较为知名的就是商务印书馆星加坡分行、中华书局星加坡分局、世界书局、上海书局、南洋书局等，行业中称为“五大书局”，具有拓荒者，先行者的重要历史地位。

而南洋书局是由本地知名学人陈育崧先生联合友人于1935年创办，与上述四间书局均由中国外设海外分行，或者新客在本地创办设立的经历、背景有所不同，陈育崧先生曾任英殖民地政府华文副视学官多年，是以本地人士身份创办南洋书局，除代理销售商务印书馆的出版物而外，并代理马来西亚出版公司(MPH)的英文课本等，兼顾中英文两种语文源流，这在华文书业界是一大突破。

- 南洋书局十五周年纪念特刊
- 陈育崧与南洋书局》（姚楠文）（1965年1月20日《星洲日报》艺文副刊刊载）

二战爆发，新加坡被日军占领，进入日据时期。日本人不仅要占有土地和人民，也要占有人们的思想和文化，因此对于华文书业的存书等极端粗暴野蛮地加以毁灭、摧毁。这对于刚起步不久的华文书业来说无疑是“灭顶之灾”，损失惨重。在《南洋书局十五周年纪念特刊》中的一段文字，让我们对当时惨烈景况或

有一定了解，“日敌南侵，本局首当其冲，吉礁分局为敌先头部队所毁，檳城分局经理殉难，仰光分局洗劫一空，吉隆坡分局职员被戮者二人，吧城分局被敌没收，经理职员被囚。仅存者惟星洲总局，檳城，马六甲分局铺屋。所存图书，全部烧毁，被祸之烈，莫可言诉。”

#### 迅速恢复

不过，早期从事华文书业的人不仅有坚强的意志，更有传播华文文化的使命感。战后，百废待兴，华文学校蓬勃发展，因此华文书业随之重振旗鼓，恢复运作。所不同的是，由于中国内战缘故，货源受到影响，于是本地华文书业开始组织编辑力量拓展出版业务。1948年，由于区域以及中国局势动荡变化，本地书业如上海书局、世界书局多在香港设立专门出版机构，加上商务、中华早已在香港设立分行，在一定程度上，催生了香港出版发行行业。当时正有为数不少的知识分子、文化界、教育界、出版界人士由上海、广州来到香港，遂形成人才来自中国大陆、资金来自新加坡、商业运作立足香港、分销方向包括南洋各地的区域联合书业经营格局。

当时的出版品种繁多，数量巨大，仅上海书局就有一两万种之巨，包括小说、诗歌、散文、戏剧、历史、地理、社科、传记、翻译等等。

#### 蓬勃发展

五十年代，本地渐已形成完整华文教育体系。南洋大学在整个南洋地区享有盛誉，受到华人社会的高度重视和极力推崇，学生汇聚，本地人口膨胀，学校教育发展蓬勃，尤其英殖民当局拟定一套“十年教育计划”（Ten-year Education Programme），即政府承担免费六年小学教育，照顾到更多学生入学。工商业发展，就业人口增加，无论是学生还是社会人士，整个社会非常尊重知识，重视文化和教育。

但由于殖民地政府对于中国出版物的限制，华文书的主要来源遭断绝，香港台湾书籍取代中国货源，开始在当地市场兴盛。同时，小型传统书店应运而生，大量涌现，书店数量大大增加，如学生书店、青年书局、南大书店、中学生书店等就在那个时代应运而生，表现活跃。

以青年书局为代表，本地书店开始大量出版本地作家作品，产生极大社会反响，不仅满足市场迫切需要，同时也对本地文学创作起到奠定与鼓励的作用。

世界书局推出《马华新文学大系》、《中国新文学大系》，堪称壮举。

多间书店以及民间团体大量创办各类文学、时政、综合性等杂志，各领风骚，如世界书局出版《世界儿童》、《世界少年》、《南洋文摘》，南洋书局出版《南洋杂志》等。

当时的新加坡是一个相对商业发达的自由港，因此被视为南洋商业中心。书店不仅零售业兴旺，同



上海书局在1929年迁至桥北路349号，自立门市部兼做批发和代理其他书店的出版物，更在1932年成为中国上海商务印书馆在南洋地区的特约发行所。（蒙上海书局提供）



1940年上海书局热烈庆祝建店15周年纪念，书局同仁在书店门前合影。（蒙上海书局提供）



日军南侵新加坡时，上海书局业务全部停顿，只靠售卖文具存货度日子。图为1941年上海书局桥北路349号。旁边店址已遭日军炸毁。（蒙上海书局提供）

时多有代理、邮购业务，多个书店分设出版公司，集零售、发行、出版三者为一体，小而全，灵活而全面发展。这一格局和态势被认为是本地华文书业的发展成型时期，兴旺一时，甚至在后来于美芝路黄金大厦形成又一个新的华文书业中心。

五十至六十年代是新加坡社会运动风起云涌的年代，工人运动、学生运动、妇女运动、文艺运动蓬勃兴盛，加上南洋大学的创办，当时人们的求知欲很强，读书风气极盛，这直接推动了本地华文书业的发展。

六十年代中后期，各地民族解放运动和反殖民运动风起云涌，印尼、泰国等地出现不同程度的排华，当地华人被实行同化政策，华文教育受到压制，新加坡的华文书业外销邮购服务停止。

七十年代是新加坡经济转型期，由工业制造业向高附加值的高端金融、科技、能源等方面转移，教育政策也在悄然发生改变，传统华校逐渐改制，华文已经不是那么重要，甚至变成不是那么“必要”。

当高端教育和社会需求将华文实际边缘化之后，随之而来的是本地英文书店的大举进入。而经过

英文教育之后的年轻一代更加与华文生疏隔膜，最终使新加坡的华文华语出现颓势。

#### 重要转型

进入八十年代，是相关教育政策改变的发酵期和显形期。政府关闭了以华文为主要教学媒介语的南洋大学，本地两大华文主流报章《南洋商报》和《星洲日报》被强制合并为《联合早报》，一叶知秋，更何况萧萧落木，华文书业开始出现萧条冷落之势。

九十年代的本地报章杂志上出现多次有关华文书业何去何从的大讨论，表现出当时社会的担忧焦虑。如在1995年5月出版的《锡山》（半年刊）第16期，第84—90页，《锡山》半年刊编委会曾经主催一次华文书业座谈会，并撰文在刊物上发表，题目为《在缝隙中创造生机——本地华文书商谈书店现状与前景》。

八十年代百胜楼兴建，是一次行业大调整。一些意兴阑珊的书店就此关门大吉，而个别蓄势待发的企业进入百胜楼，准备大展拳脚，从中涌现出逆流而上，坚持至今的时代勇者，如长河书局，新华文化有

限公司等。

值得注意的是，八十年代香港经济迅速发展，工业进步，社会发展，也将它们的出版事业、文化娱乐等行业带入新的里程，而新加坡的经济发展似乎并不为文化、艺术、娱乐，创意产业带来更大进步和实际的提升发展。1980年9月1日香港成立“联合出版（集团）有限公司”，统领20几个出版、印刷、唱片、报馆及置业公司等，成为香港最大出版集团，但是新加坡无论何种语文，都不曾出现这样的一间大公司，更不必说华文书业。其中最主要原因，就是华文本身没有市场价值，也就影响其存在价值。

八十年代开始由于语文政策的改变，最后一批华校生走进历史。他们的年龄今天算来大约在40岁向上，他们的下一代现在上小学的年龄。换言之，文化的断层在这里，就是现在20-40岁的这一批人。从各文学团体中这个年龄层本地写作者奇缺的事实，也让我们了解到这个断层的荒芜荒凉，由此可见，时局政策对于社会与文化的改变所起的作用是多么巨大。

#### 缓慢复苏，新的机遇

而恰在此时，中国改革开放，中国人有条件，较为自由便利的走出国门。新加坡政府适时的移民政策调整，鼓励大量的华人移民本地。他们年龄普遍介于20-40岁之间，有机会进入本地的教育源流，或者以专业技能、职业经验进入本地的就业市场。他们当中有很多人因为移民条件符合政策规定而获得落户，安居乐业。于是，他们的孩子开始渐渐进入到本地的小学以及中学。

这是时代带给新加坡的某种改变，新移民有较好的华文教育背景，包括标准普通话口音，较高文学欣赏品味，和几乎与中国文化时尚同步的资讯拥有等。但是，语言文化不是铁板一块，而是处于变化之中，可以很快也可以很慢。新移民所拥有的华文华语能力并不必然保持进步和纯粹。相反的，也可能同化于当地社会而退步和落后。

一度本地华文书业的从业者对于大量新移民的涌现曾经充满期待，很快他们发现，新移民习惯使用互联网，并且迅速习惯于使用国家图书馆的公共借阅系统，再加上他们中的大多数是由于工作机会来到新加坡，谋生开创事业是他们的首要任务和最大追求，因此，英文的重要程度大大超过华文，也因此，他们出乎意料地并没有给本地华文书业产生多大的影响和帮助。而在与本地华文书业经营者的访谈中，大家一致认为，一直以来持续忠实地支持本地华文书业的还是老一辈受华文教育者，即老华校生。但是，也并非完全没有影响，由于新移民的加入，从社会层面上，华文华语程度有显著提升，在阅读欣赏品味上有一定进步。

新移民的加入，以及中国在最近十年经济发展所带来的改变，让华文书业似乎看到新的希望。但事实上，与此同时，华文书业正面临新的挑战，即来自互联网科技的致命影响。人们说，这是一个买书的好

时代，因为历史上从来没有一个时候像今天有这么多的出版物。但是，这却是一个阅读的坏时代。人们受到科技进步所带来的生活方式，阅读方式的改变，已经很难安静阅读，如饥似渴地需要阅读。所以，书业面临新的机遇，同时也有新的更大挑战。

近来，人们在报章上注意到本地多家书店关门大吉走进历史，这其中有华文书店亦有国际知名英文书店，多家书店的关闭和由于华文书业没落所带来的关闭是问题的不同层面，需要加以区分，并且华文书业作为一种行业，是一个环环相扣的庞大产业链系，需要从不同环节不同层面加以剖析，历史上曾经出现过这样的产业链，但是，由于华文阅读市场的萎缩，最终始终没有从社会层面完善这一产业系统。

总体而言，从全球范围来看，由于互联网科技的兴起，已经深刻改变人们的纸媒阅读习惯，这是由于阅读习惯改变带来的扼杀式的行业调整。

#### 结束语

回望新加坡华文书业一百年，尤其面对华文书业的现状，令人感慨。华文书业作为文化企业之一种，它即是商业的，也是文化的，更是社会的。书业所具有的是商业价值、文化价值和社会价值的综合，其中商业价值可以量化，文化价值、社会价值则是难以估价的。书业不是“大”行业，却是一个重要行业，任重道远。本文只是进行初步探索，这个课题的研究有待进一步深化。

#### 感谢

感谢新华文化有限公司杨善才先生，上海书局陈蒙志先生，陈蒙星女士，原商务印书馆经理成泰忠先生，今古书店岳波先生、海南会馆文教主任韩山元先生的多次访谈以及对于本文的指教意见。

感谢新加坡国立大学文学暨社会科学院副教授李志贤教授的研究指导和论文指教。

#### About the author

Zou Lu is a writer, poet and editor. A recent project that she was involved in was the writing of the biography of Emporium Holdings founder Lim Tow Yong. Between July 2010 and January 2011, she held the Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship awarded by the National Library Board. This article summarises her research into the 100-year history of the Chinese book industry in Singapore.



八十年代兴建的百胜楼被视为新加坡华文书业的一大调整。虽然有些书店因此关门大吉，但也有些蓄势待发的企业因此进入百胜楼大展拳脚。

#### 参考书目

- 《回忆中华书局》（上编），中华书局出版发行，1981年
- 《陆费逵与中华书局》俞筱尧，刘彦捷编，中华书局出版发行，2002年
- 《商务印书馆：民间出版业的兴衰》杨扬著，上海教育出版社，2000年
- 《南洋书局十五周年纪念特刊》南洋书局编，1950年
- 《锡山》（半年刊）第16期，1995年5月出版。
- 《商务印书馆建馆八十周年纪念（1897—1977）》，编辑者：商务印书馆香港办事处，印刷者：商务印书馆香港印刷厂，1977年。
- 《联合早报》副刊“现代生活”，1997年12月4日（星期四）。
- 《陈育崧与南洋书局》（姚楠文）（1965年1月20日《星洲日报》艺文副刊）
- 书籍类：柏杨主编（1982）。《新加坡共和国华文文学选集》。台北：时报文化出版事业。索书号:RSING C810.08 XJP
- 杂志类：黄向京（2004年8月）。〈南洋是我的“大溪地”——南洋传奇女画家张荔英〉，《源》65期，页52-55。索书号: RSING 369.25957 Y year 2004
- 报章类：周文龙、王舒杨（2011年4月14日）。《没有他就没有今日新加坡音乐，音乐界人士惋惜梁荣荣逝世》。《联合早报》。《现在zbNow》，5版。Microfilm no.: NL22103
- 访谈：陶先生（2007年）。于2007年11月26日与作者访谈。新加坡。
- 网页：作者（年份）文章名称。2010年9月30日下载自<http://bawean.org/>



## புதுமைதாசன் எனும் இலக்கியவாதி

Sundari Balasubramaniam



மேலே: 1974 இல் டெஹ்ரான் கார் பந்தயத்தின் போது உடன் சென்ற சகவருணையாளர்களுடன் பி. கிருஷ்ணன்.

இடது: இ. எஸ். ஜே. சந்திரனுடன் கதா காலட்சேபம் நிகழ்த்தும் புதுமைதாசன்

புதுமைதாசன் என்ற புனைபெயரில் நமக்கு நன்கு அறிமுகமான திரு பி. கிருஷ்ணனின் படைப்புகள் பல. 1951 இல் ஆரம்பித்த அவருடைய எழுத்துக்கள் இன்றுவரை நம்மை மகிழ்வித்துக் கொண்டிருக்கின்றன. தம்முடைய 60 ஆண்டு எழுத்துப் பணியில் இதழ்கள், வானொலி, தொலைக்காட்சி, மேடை ஆகியவற்றுக்குச் சிறுகதைகள், கட்டுரைகள், இலக்கியப் பேச்சுகள், சிறப்பு ஒலிச்சித்திரங்கள், தனி நாடகங்கள், தொடர் நாடகங்கள் என ஏறத்தாழ 500க்கு மேல் பல்வேறு இலக்கியப் படைப்புகளை எழுதிப் படைத்திருக்கிறார்.

1932 இல் ஜோகூர் மாநிலத்தில் பிறந்த திரு பி. கிருஷ்ணன், தமது தொடக்கநிலைக் கல்வியை, ஜோகூரிலும், சீனியர் கேம்பிரிட்ஜ் கல்வியை சிங்கப்பூரிலும் முடித்தார். இளமைக் காலந்தொட்டே தமிழில் மிக ஆர்வம் கொண்ட திரு பி. கிருஷ்ணன், நூல் நிலையங்களுக்குச் சென்று தாமதவே சங்க கால இலக்கியங்கள் தொட்டு தற்கால இலக்கண, இலக்கியங்கள் அனைத்தையும் ஆழ்ந்து கற்றார். ச. சா சின்னப்பனார் என்ற தமிழ்ப் புலவரிடம் யாப்பிலக்கண விளக்கமும் அறிந்து தெளிந்தார்.

எழுத்து / பணி

தமது 20 வது வயதிலிருந்து சிங்கப்பூர், மலேசியத் தமிழ் பத்திரிகைகளுக்குக் கட்டுரைகள், சிறுகதைகள் எழுதத் தொடங்கினார். பல இலக்கிய விவாதங்களிலும் கலந்துகொண்டார்.

1953 இல் தொடங்கிய சிங்கப்பூர்த் தமிழ் எழுத்தாளர் கழகத்தின் அமைப்பாளர்களுள் ஒருவரான இவர், சில காலம் செயலாளராகவும் பணியாற்றியுள்ளார். சிங்கப்பூர் வானொலியின் தமிழ்ப்பள்ளிகள் ஒலிபரப்புப் பிரிவிலும், இந்தியப்பகுதியிலும் பகுதிநேரக் கலைஞராகப் பணியாற்றினார்.

1962 ஆம் ஆண்டு முதல் வானொலியின் இந்தியப் பகுதியில் முழுநேர அறிவிப்பாளராகச் சேர்ந்து, தமது அயராத உழைப்பால் பல்வேறு பதவி உயர்வுபெற்று, இறுதியில் மூத்த நிருவாகத் தயாரிப்பாளர் - படைப்பாளர் என்னும் பொறுப்பில் துணைத்தலைவராக உயர்ந்தார். வானொலியில் 31 ஆண்டுகள் பணியாற்றிய இவர், 1992 ஆம் ஆண்டு பணி ஓய்வு பெற்றார். வானொலிக்கு ஏறத்தாழ 360 நாடகங்கள் படைத்துள்ளார். இவைத் தவிர, சிறுகதைகள், இலக்கியப் பேச்சுக்கள், கட்டுரைகள் என இதுவரை 500க்கும் மேற்பட்டப் படைப்புகளை எழுதிப் படைத்திருக்கின்றார். 1960களில் தென்கிழக்காசிய தீபகற்ப விளையாட்டுகள், சிங்கப்பூர் கிராண்ட் ப்ரீ கார்ப் பந்தயங்கள் போன்றவற்றிற்கு வருணனையாளராக இருந்து சிறப்பாகப் பணியாற்றினார்.

ஐம்பதுகளின் முற்பகுதியில், முரசு நடத்திய போட்டிகள், ரசனை வகுப்பு, பேரவை ஆகியவற்றில், இவர் கை வண்ணங்கள் மலர்ந்தன. இவரின் சிறுகதைகள் யாவும் 1950களில்

### About the article

P. Krishnan, who uses the pseudonym Puthumaithasan, is a prolific Tamil writer and 2008 Cultural Medallion award winner. Well-versed in Tamil literature and grammar, he is also regarded as an authority on the language.

Krishnan started writing professionally in 1951 but rose to prominence in the mid-1960s with his radio play *Adukkuveettu Annaasamy*, a 52-episode comedic drama based on life in Housing and Development Board flats. He then wrote a 52-episode sequel, *Maadiveettu Mangalam*, which was also widely praised. His extensive literary output includes about 40 short stories, more than 100 articles, poems, reviews and special radio plays, and over 360 social, comedic, literary and thriller dramas. He has published six books, and at the age of 80 is still an active writer.

Krishnan joined Radio Singapore in 1953 as a part-time artiste for the Indian and Tamil school programmes section. He became a full-time announcer for the Indian section after 1963 and retired in 1992 as a senior executive producer-presenter. Over the course of his career, he encouraged children to participate in programmes that he had created especially for them. Many of his students have become famous writers and radio and television presenters.

In recognition of Krishnan's dedication and contribution to the Tamil language and literary landscape, he has been conferred many prestigious local and international awards. His legacy will be a long-lasting one that is felt for many generations to come.

### Exhibition by the National Library Board

The National Library Board (NLB) launched an exhibition on 10 March 2012 to showcase the literary works and accomplishments of P. Krishnan. Held at the National Library Building till 22 April 2012, *P. Krishnan: His Literary Journey* was part of an exhibition series to honour pioneer writers for their contributions to local literary arts. To facilitate a wider appreciation of P. Krishnan's achievements, the exhibition was moved to two public libraries after 22 April: Bukit Merah Public Library (23 April – 22 May) and Jurong West Public Library (23 May – 21 June).



பி. கிருஷ்ணன்



60களில் சிங்கப்பூர் கிராண்ட் ப்ரீ பந்தயத்தின் போது வருணையாளராக



1955 இல் 'இன்பம் எங்கே' நாடகத்தை உறுவாக்கிய புதுமைதாசன், ரா நாகையன், முகம் ஆகியோர். இதில் புதுமைதாசன் வேலப்பன் என்ற வில்லன் பாத்திரத்தில் நடித்தார்.



சிங்கப்பூர்த் தமிழ் எழுத்தாளர் கழகம் வழங்கிய தமிழவேல் விருது

எழுதப்பட்டவை. சிங்கப்பூர்ச் சூழ்நிலையைக் கருத்தாகக் கொண்டு பல சிறந்த கதைகளை எழுதினார். இவரின் கதைகள், நாடகங்கள், கட்டுரைகள் யாவும் சிங்கப்பூர்த் தமிழ்ச் சமூகத்தை விவரிக்கும் ஒரு சிறந்த ஆவணமாகும். சத்தான உரையாடலும், ஐப்பானிய, பிரிட்டிஷ் காலப் பின்னணியும் இவரின் கதைகள், நாடகங்களுக்கு மெருகேற்றின.

இவரின் அடுக்கு வீட்டு அண்ணாசாமி, சிங்கையின் அடுக்குமாடி வீடுகளில் வாழும் மக்களின் வாழ்க்கையை அடிப்படையாகக் கொண்டு எழுதப்பட்டத் தொடர் நகைச்சுவை நாடகமாகும். 52 வாரங்கள் வானொலியில் ஒலிபரப்பாகி மக்களின் பாராட்டைப் பெற்றது. மேலும், இவரின் பச்சிலை பச்சையப்பர், தரகர் தணிகாசலம், நல்ல வீடு, மாடிவீட்டு மங்களம், ஐடியா ஐயாக்கண்ணு ஆகிய நகைச்சுவைத் தொடர்கள் சிங்கை மக்களின் அன்றாட வாழ்க்கையை மையமாக வைத்து எழுதப்பட்டவை. இத்தொடர் நாடகங்கள் யாவும் மக்களின் மனதில் நீங்கா இடம்பெற்றன.

#### சிங்கப்பூர் வானொலியின் தமிழ்ப் பிரிவிற்கு ஆற்றிய பங்கு

இவர்தம் நீண்ட கால வானொலிப் பணியில், ஒலிபரப்புத்துறை சார்ந்த அனைத்தையும் பயின்று, தேறி, எல்லா

வயதுப் பிரிவினர்க்கும் ஏற்புடைய வகையில் அறிவித்தல், கற்பித்தல், மகிழ்வித்தல் என்னும் வானொலிக் கொள்கைகளின் அடிப்படையில் நிகழ்ச்சிகளைப் படைத்தார். இவர் நிகழ்ச்சியாக்கம் செய்து ஒலியேற்றியவற்றுள் பல்வகை நாடகங்கள், சிறுகதை, இலக்கியப் பேச்சுக்கள், ஒலிச்சித்திரங்கள், வருணனைகள், நவீன கதா காலட்சேபங்கள் முதலியனவும் அடங்கும்.

மழலையர், சிறுவர்கள், மாணவர்கள், இளையர்கள் ஆகியோர்க்கென குழந்தை நட்சத்திரம், சிறுவர் மலர், சிறுவர் மேடை, மாணவர் மன்றம், மாணவர் உலகம், மாணவர் மேடை, மாணவர் இசைக்குழு, உங்கள் தமிழ் எனப் பலவகை நிகழ்ச்சிகளையும் நிகழ்ச்சியாக்கம் செய்து படைத்துள்ளார். இவர் படைத்த இந்த நிகழ்ச்சிகளில் அன்று கலந்துகொண்ட சிறுவர்கள், மாணவர்கள் போன்றோருள் பலர் பின்னாளில் பல்வேறு உயர்பொறுப்புகளை ஏற்றுப் பணியாற்றத் தொடங்கினர்.

#### கலைத்திறன்

திரு கிருஷ்ணன் ஒரு சிறந்த எழுத்தாளர், படைப்பாளர் மட்டுமல்ல, ஒரு சிறந்த கலைஞரும் ஆவார். தாம் எழுதிய நாடகங்கள் பலவற்றில்



கலாசாரப் பதக்க விருது - சிங்கப்பூர் குடியரசு விருது

இவரும் நடித்துள்ளார். ஆயிரத்திற்கும் மிகுதியான நாடகங்களில் பல்வேறு பாத்திரங்களில் நடித்துத் தம் திறமையைப் புலப்படுத்தினார். ஷேக்ஸ்பியரின் ஹேம்லெட் நாடகத்தில் ஹேம்லெட்டாகவும், பெர்னாட்ஷாவின் பிக்மேலியன் நாடகத்தில் பேராசிரியர் ஹிக்கின்ஸாகவும் நடித்துப் புகழ்பெற்றார். பல நவீன கதாக்காலச்சேப நிகழ்ச்சிகளின் தொடக்கத்தில் இவர் இ. எஸ். ஜே சந்திரனின் சீடராகத் தோன்றிப் பாடி நடித்தார். பின்னர் இவரே பல காலட்சேபங்களை எழுதி பாகவதராகவும் நடித்தார்.

#### விருதுகள்

திரு பி. கிருஷ்ணன், தமது அயராது 60 ஆண்டுகால இலக்கியப் பணிக்காகவும் அரசாங்க அருஞ்சேவைக்காகவும் பல விருதுகளைப் பெற்றிருக்கின்றார்.

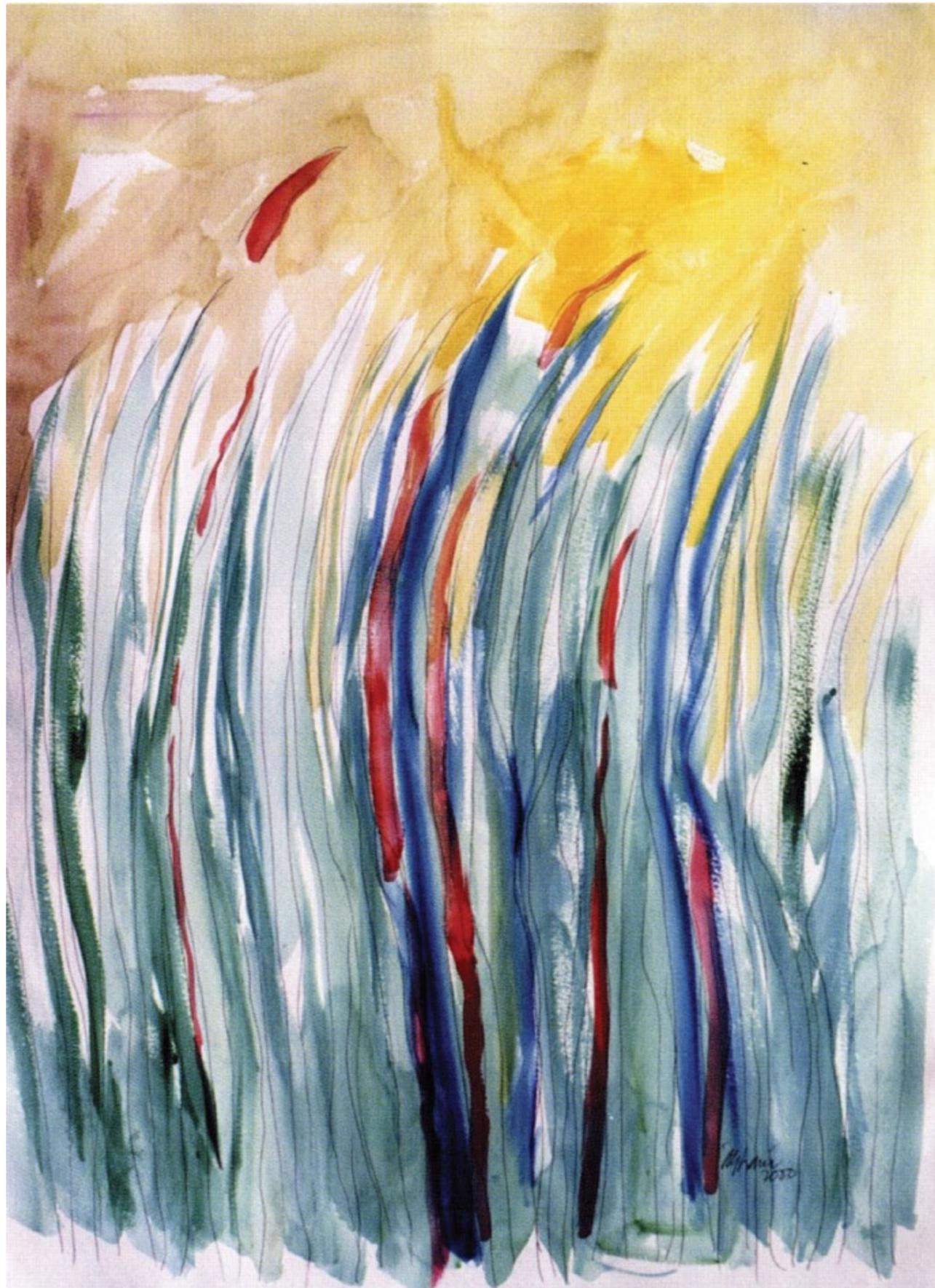
- 1992 நீண்ட காலச் சேவை விருது - வானொலியில் 25 ஆண்டுக்கு மேலாகச் சேவையாற்றியதற்கு வழங்கப்பட்டது.
- 1992 செயல்திறன் விருது (Efficiency Medal) - தேசிய நாள் விருதளிப்பு நிகழ்ச்சியில் அளிக்கப்பட்டது
- 1994 தேசிய புத்தக மேம்பாட்டு மன்றத்தின் பாராட்டு

- 1998 தமிழவேள் விருது - சிங்கப்பூர்த் தமிழ் எழுத்தாளர் கழகம் வழங்கியது
- 2005 கலை இலக்கிய நற்சேவையாளர் விருது - சிங்கப்பூர் ஐக்கிய இந்திய முஸ்லீம் சங்கம் வழங்கியது
- 2002 மொழி, இலக்கிய விருது - சிங்கப்பூர்த் தமிழர் சங்கம் வழங்கியது
- 2003 கணையாழி இலக்கிய விருது - கவிமாலை வழங்கியது
- 2005 ஞானவை விருது - மிரர் நாடக மன்றம் வழங்கியது
- 2005 தென்கிழக்காசிய எழுத்து விருது - பாங்காக்கில் நடந்த விழாவில், பாங்காக் இளவரசி வழங்கியது
- 2006 இலக்கிய விருது - தமிழ்மொழி பண்பாட்டுக் கழகம் வழங்கியது
- 2008 கலாசாரப் பதக்க விருது - சிங்கப்பூர் குடியரசு விருது
- 2009 சாதனை விருது - பூன்வே சமூக நிலைய இந்திய நற்பணி மன்றம் வழங்கியது

இவை தவிர பல்வேறு அமைப்புகள் நடத்திய போட்டிகளில் இவரின் பல படைப்புகள், பரிசுகளைப் பெற்றுள்ளன.

#### About the author

Sundari Balasubramaniam is a Librarian with the National Library Arts division. She helped to compile the *Bibliography of Singapore Tamil Literature (1872 – 2009)* and organised the exhibition *P. Krishnan: His Literary Journey*, held recently at the National Library Building.



Lalang  
Abdul Ghani Hamid

## Melihat Alam melalui Mata & Hati Abdul Ghani Hamid

Juffri Bin Supa'at

Apabila kita membicarakan karya-karya Abdul Ghani Hamid, kita tidak dapat menafikan betapa prihatinnya beliau dengan alam sekitarnya dan perubahan-perubahan yang berlaku di sekelilingnya. Mungkin atas dasar inilah beliau banyak menulis dan merakamkan puisi-puisi yang berkisar pada alam sekitar dan juga tentang tempat-tempat yang mempunyai kesan terhadap beliau.

Menurut Mohamed Latiff Mohamed (2011), Abdul Ghani Hamid merupakan seorang pencinta alam yang lembut, tenang dan penyabar dan beliau menjadikan alam sebagai contoh "betapa kaya dan indah alam ciptaan Tuhan. Antaranya puisi yang menyampaikan perutusan sebegini ialah:

*Alam Ini Kami Punya (1965)*

*Kami cinta alam ini  
pada puspa mekar di puncak tinggi  
atau semut melata di bumi  
dalam lukisan kami.*

*Merasa indah semuanya  
dalam seribu kejadian bercerita  
dari wajah jelita manis  
bingga si pincang hamis.*

*Alam yang engkau dan kami punya  
pada karya kami disua  
berhimpun rasa dan suara  
kami melukis kerana cinta.*

*Alam ini kami punya  
untuk manusia fahamkan cinta.*

Melalui puisi ini beliau mengajak pembaca "merasa indah semuanya dalam seribu kejadian bercerita" kerana "alam ini kami punya untuk manusia fahamkan cinta".

Dalam merenung kehidupan "lalang" pula, beliau menatap kisah bumi, seperti yang terungkap dalam bait berikut,

*"Kutatapi wajahnya  
selemah suaranya  
kudakap bisikannya  
sesepi bayatnya  
kisahnya adalah  
kisah bumi."*

### About the author

Juffri Supa'at is a Senior Librarian with the National Library Arts division. He curated the exhibition *Abdul Ghani Hamid: Mata & Hati*, held at the National Library Building from 3 December 2011 to 26 February 2012. He also helped to compile the *Bibliography of Singapore Malay Literature (1965-2009)*, published in 2011.

Menurut penyair Masuri S.N. (1998), puisi-puisi Abdul Ghani Hamid mempunyai nada yang tenang, merdu suaranya dan berhasil diangkat menjadi karya seni". Namun, kadangkala, di sebalik ketenangan itu terdapat bisikan suara yang agak keras untuk menegaskan pendiriannya terhadap perubahan yang sedang berlaku di sekelilingnya. Ini dalam dikesan umpamanya dalam puisi "Antara Penghuni Alam", melalui rangkap berikut,

*"Tapi, mengapa senja menghitam  
melindung tangan-tangan durjana  
meragut dan mencakar alam,  
dan musnah bumi pusaka?"*

Pandangan yang serupa ini juga diberikan oleh Rasiah (1999) yang mengatakan bahawa "puisi-puisi Abdul Ghani menggambarkan seorang yang akrab dengan alam, lembut bersuara bagai puputan bayu walau kelembutan dan kesopanan into boleh menyusuk tangkai kalbu.

Alam banyak mengilhamkan penyair Abdul Ghani Hamid. Melalui mata dan hatinya beliau dapat melihat dan merasakan perubahan dan pergolakannya dan ini diluahkan dalam puisi-puisinya.



### About the article

The poems of Abdul Ghani Hamid are inspired by his keen sense of his natural surroundings, and express his deep love for earth's serenity and natural beauty. The poems discussed in this article capture the author's thoughts and feelings on the rapid changes in his environment.

Learn more about Abdul Ghani Hamid by visiting the Singapore Literary Pioneers Gallery at <http://exhibitions.nlb.gov.sg/literarypioneers>.

### RUJUKAN

- Abdul Ghani Hamid. (1998). *Sepanjang jalan ini*. Perkumpulan Seni, Singapura.
- Abdul Ghani Hamid. (2003). *Ombak terbang tinggi (200 puisi pilihan, 1955-2000)*. Angkatan Sasterawan '50, Singapura.
- Mohamed Latiff Mohamed. (2011). *Abdul Ghani Hamid: Seniman Melayu dalam Bibliografi Abdul Ghani Hamid*. National Library Singapore.
- Rasiah Halil. (1999). Karya puisi Singapura 1995-99 mendedahkan pelbagai persoalan. *Berita Minggu*, (27 Jun, hlm 16).

# PictureSg

*Digitizing Our Past, Capturing Our Present,  
Tagging Our Collective Memories*

This 1890s photograph from G. R. Lambert & Co. shows Cavenagh Bridge. Built in 1868, the bridge was the last major work of Indian convicts based in Singapore. The bridge was named after Sir Lieutenant General William Orfeur Cavenagh, the last Governor of the Straits Settlements (1859-1867).

*All rights reserved, Lee Kip Lin  
and National Library Board,  
Singapore 2009.*

VISIT [PICTURES.NL.SG](http://PICTURES.NL.SG) TO VIEW  
MORE IMAGES



