

and literary activists, such as Keris Mas, migrated to Kuala Lumpur. Those who remained in Singapore were mostly Malay teachers. The late 1960s and 1970s was a gloomy phase of Malay literary development in Singapore. With the exception of Harun Aminurrashid's *Simpang Perinang* (Junction) (1966), most works of the period were pessimistic. However, this was also the period when Singapore Malay literature evolved an identity of its own. Themes like nationalism and patriotism, which once dominated the pre-Independence period, receded. Religion began to dominate, especially in the context of the religious revivalism that started in the 1970s.

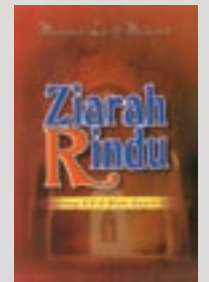
The new wave

In the mid-1980s, English-educated Malays were beginning to make their presence felt. Amongst them are Isa Kamari, Ahmad Muhammad Tahir and Khalid Lani. Significantly also, graduates of the Malay Studies department of the University of

Singapore, such as Rasiah Halil, Hadijah Rahmat, Saeda Buang, Sharifah Maznah, and Mohd Raman Daud began making an impact, providing literary commentaries and criticism, and also producing creative works themselves.

The challenge of promoting and developing a literary culture has been taken up consistently by various organizations and individuals. ASAS 50 continues to exist, though it is no longer as influential as it was in the 1950s and 1960s. The Malay Language Council of Singapore (MLCS), the NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL and NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD all actively promote Malay literature.

The MLCS gives out the Tun Seri Lanang Award to outstanding Malay literary figures of Singapore who have made significant contributions to the Malay literary world. Recipients include MUHAMMAD ARIF AHMAD, MASURI S.N., ABDUL GHANI ABDUL HAMID, SURATMAN MARKASAN, ALIMAN HASSAN, HARUN AMINURRASHID, NOOR S.I., MAHMUD AHMAD, and SURADI PARJO.



Today, a new generation of writers, who are mostly bilingual, dominate the scene, experimenting with new literary styles and themes. It includes writers like Rafaat Hamzah, Muhammad Rafi Abu Bakar, Noridah Kamari and Noor Hasnah Adam. However, as in the past, Malay literary culture still has a strong didactic slant and it still documents the community's experience of adjustment, despair, anxiety, hope and determination. The Malay press continues to become an important platform for Malay

literature. BERITA HARIAN regularly publishes literary pieces. It is also proactive in setting up Kelab Coretan Remaja (Youth Writing Club) with the aim of promoting literary activities amongst Malay youths.

Malay literature in Singapore today reflects a literature of a developing community that has to make sense of the changes and expectations of living in a multi-racial, modern Singapore.

1960s



Literary figures such as Usman Awang migrated to Malaysia after the 1965 Separation, shifting the Malay literary centre to Kuala Lumpur.

1980s



Malay writers that are English-educated, such as Hadijah Rahmat, began to make an impact with their research publications as well as creative writing.

Present



Berita Harian's Kelab Coretan Remaja encourages Malay youth to write by featuring their short stories and poems. Over 3,200 works from 1,600 writers have been published since the 1960s.

Di Waktu Malam (Singapore At Night) (1947). It was from 1952 onwards, however, that MFP was most active, with household names like P. Ramlee directing films such as *Bujang Lapok* (Confirmed Bachelor) (1957), *Musang Berjanggut* (The Bearded Fox) (1959), *Antara Dua Darjat* (Between Two Social Classes) (1960), *Labu dan Labi* (Labu and Labi) (1962) and *Ibu Mertuaku* (My Mother-in-Law) (1962).

In the light of growing competition from Merdeka Studio in Kuala Lumpur, and following Singapore's SEPARATION from Malaysia, the Shaw Brothers decided to limit production of Malay movies in Singapore. The company eventually decided to close MFP after the film *Raja Bersiung* (The King With Fangs) (1967) failed at the box office.

Malay Heritage Centre This institution was opened in July 2005 to showcase Malay culture, traditions and heritage. It occupies the former ISTANA KAMPONG GELAM. The centre regularly hosts activities and courses in crafts such as pottery-making and BATIK painting. The centre is supported by the Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts.

Malay literature See box.

Malay Mail, The Originating in Kuala Lumpur in 1896, this newspaper—also known as UTUSAN MELAYU—was launched in Singapore in 1907 as the Malay version of the English-language SINGAPORE FREE PRESS. With the latter's support, *The Malay Mail* became a daily in 1915. The paper became separate from the *Singapore Free Press*, and closed down in 1921, to be resurrected in 1938 by journalist YUSOF ISHAK, who later became the first President of Singapore.

After SEPARATION, the paper's headquarters were moved to Kuala Lumpur. A Singapore-published edition continued to appear up to 1969; the Malaysian edition has continued to the present day.

Malay Regiment Approval to establish a regiment of Malay soldiers was first granted by the Colonial and War Offices in 1932.

An 'Experimental Company' was established on 1 March 1933 in Port Dickson, Negri Sembilan, and a sum of \$75,000 was put aside to acquire land for training grounds for the new company. The recruitment of an initial batch of 25 men began in February 1933. The Experimental Company was officially re-designated the Malay Regiment on 1 January 1935.

Under the command of Major G. McL. S. Bruce, the Malay Regiment grew. By

Bruce's retirement in 1938, it had reached a strength of 800 men. The Malay regiment was viewed by the British as an economical alternative to Indian troops and the Burma Rifles, and the Legislative Council recommended further expansion of the regiment in the lead-up to the outbreak of WORLD WAR II. A second battalion was raised in 1941, just days before the landing of Japanese forces in northern Malaya.

The Malay Regiment fought alongside British forces during the Japanese invasion of Malaya and Singapore. The most important moment for the regiment came at the BATTLE OF PASIR PANJANG, where Lieutenant ADNAN SAIDI led the regiment in trying to stave off the advancing Japanese troops. Heavily outnumbered, the regiment fought bravely but

Malay Heritage Centre



The Malay Mail