

SHARING BORDERS:

SINGAPORE / MALAYSIA WRITERS SYMPOSIUM 2009

MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2009

9.00 AM – 6.30 PM

THE ARTS HOUSE

Free Admission

To register, please email your contact details and state your preferred workshops to info@bookcouncil.sg.

With the support of the National Arts Council, the National Library Board, and the Department of English Language and Literature, FASS, National University of Singapore, the National Book Development Council of Singapore is organizing **Sharing Borders, a Singapore – Malaysia Writers Symposium**, as part of the **Singapore Writers Festival**. A milestone study of Singapore and Malaysian literature in English in two volumes will be launched at this event.

Our literatures in English have come a long way since their serious beginnings some sixty years ago. The founding of the University of Malaya in October 1949 was a significant moment in the intellectual, political, educational and cultural life of both Malaya and Singapore. Nationalism in Asia was on the march. The strong desire for freedom and identity, for the nation to rise and lift its people out of colonialism and to fulfill a national vision, of the people for the people, inspired whole generations, including writers.

In our corner of Asia, the political vision was of an independent multi-racial Malaya that included Singapore. The early writers, especially those who continued to be productive – Lim Thean Soo, Ee Tiang Hong, Edwin Thumboo, Wong Phui Nam and Lloyd Fernando – were much concerned with the history, politics, the ethnic destinies and the cultural directions of both Malaya and Singapore. Subsequent political developments that led to merger and separation that gave Singapore its independence in 1965 refocused literary energies.

While Bahasa was the national language in Malaysia, the older writers continued to write in English, joined by a few younger writers such as K. S. Maniam, Kee Tuan Chye, Ghulam Sawar and Mohammad Haji Salleh before he embraced Bahasa fully. On the other hand, in Singapore, English grew increasingly influential, inevitably at the expense of other languages. While every attempt is made to sustain the literature in Chinese, Malay and Tamil, economic and other factors privilege English and therefore the growth of literature in it. Given the background of its writers, Singapore's literature in English is the most multi-racial and in this sense the most national.

The Symposium would like to reflect this broad reach of our literatures in English by bringing together scholars and writers to address the engagement of our literatures.

There will also be **An Evening with Edwin Thumboo** (27th October) and **Dissecting the Merlion** (1st November) which will also be the occasion for launching an anthology of merlion poems, old and new.

PROGRAMME

8.15AM	REGISTRATION			1.30PM	PLENARY 2	LIVING ROOM
					<i>Traditional Influences on Contemporary Malaysian Drama</i>	
					Featuring: Dr Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof / MALAYSIA	
8.55AM	WELCOME ADDRESS	LIVING ROOM		2.15PM	CONCURRENT WORKSHOP 6	LIVING ROOM
	Prof. Edwin Thumboo				<i>In Conversation with Wong Phui Nam: A Discussion on Malaysian Poets</i>	
					Featuring: Mr. Wong Phui Nam / MALAYSIA	
9.00AM	KEYNOTE 1	LIVING ROOM			CONCURRENT WORKSHOP 7	SCREENING ROOM
	<i>Teaching Singapore Literature</i>				<i>In Conversation with Mohammad A. Quayum:</i>	
	Featuring: Prof. Peter Nazareth / USA				<i>A Discussion on Malaysian Fiction</i>	
					Featuring: Dr Mohammad A. Quayum / MALAYSIA	
9.45AM	CONCURRENT WORKSHOP 1	LIVING ROOM		3.00PM	TEA BREAK	LIVING ROOM CORRIDOR
	<i>Engaging Singapore Novels</i>					
	Featuring: Dr Eddie Tay / HONG KONG			3.30PM	PANEL DISCUSSION	LIVING ROOM
					<i>Literature and Nationalism</i>	
					Featuring:	
					Chairman: Assoc. Prof. Kirpal Singh	
					Panel: Mr. Sunil Govinnage, Mr. Aaron Lee, Dr Lily Rose R. Tope, Prof. Peter Nazareth, Mr. Alvin Pang	
	CONCURRENT WORKSHOP 2	PLAY DEN		5.30PM	BOOK LAUNCH	PLAY DEN
	<i>Engaging Singapore Short Stories</i>				<i>Sharing Borders: Studies in Contemporary Singaporean-Malaysian Literature I, edited by Dr Mohammad A. Quayum and Mr. Wong Phui Nam</i>	
	Featuring: Ms Suchen Christine Lim / SINGAPORE				<i>Sharing Borders: Studies in Contemporary Singaporean-Malaysian Literature II, edited by Dr Gwee Li Sui</i>	
					RECEPTION	
	CONCURRENT WORKSHOP 3	SCREENING ROOM		6.30PM	END	
	<i>Engaging Singapore Drama</i>					
	Featuring: Ms Ovidia Yu / SINGAPORE					
10.30AM	TEA BREAK	LIVING ROOM CORRIDOR				
11.00AM	PLENARY 1	LIVING ROOM				
	<i>Edwin Thumboo's Poetry – The Private Voice</i>					
	Featuring: Dr Lily Rose R. Tope / PHILIPPINES					
11.45AM	CONCURRENT WORKSHOP 4	LIVING ROOM				
	<i>Singapore Poetry – A Neighbourly Look</i>					
	Featuring: Ms Isabela Banzon / PHILIPPINES					
	CONCURRENT WORKSHOP 5	SCREENING ROOM				
	<i>Singapore Poets – The New Generation</i>					
	Featuring: Dr Gwee Li Sui / SINGAPORE					
12.30PM	LUNCH					
	Not provided					

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME _____

ORGANISATION _____

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EMAIL _____

Please indicate your choice of workshop in order of preference.

Allocation of workshop is on a first-come-first-serve basis. We reserve the right to allocate you to your 2nd or 3rd choice should your 1st choice be unavailable.

	1ST CHOICE	2ND CHOICE	3RD CHOICE
CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS 1-3			
1 / Engaging Singapore Novels	{ }	{ }	{ }
2 / Engaging Singapore Short Stories	{ }	{ }	{ }
3 / Engaging Singapore Drama	{ }	{ }	{ }

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS 4-5			
4 / Singapore Poetry – A Neighbourly Look	{ }	{ }	
5 / Singapore Poets – The New Generation	{ }	{ }	

CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS 6-7			
6 / In Conversation with Wong Phui Nam: A Discussion on Malaysian Poets	{ }	{ }	
7 / In Conversation with Mohammad A. Quayum: A Discussion on Malaysian Fiction	{ }	{ }	

PLEASE TURN OVER FOR REGISTRATION OPTIONS 

Registration Options

You can register using any of the following options:

- ONLINE** www.bookcouncil.sg
- MAIL** Sharing Borders: Singapore – Malaysia Writers Symposium 2009
National Book Development Council of Singapore
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Singapore 389777
- FAX** +65 6742 9466
- EMAIL** info@bookcouncil.sg

For Enquiries

National Book Development Council of Singapore
Tel: +65 6848 8290
E-mail: info@bookcouncil.sg

All information is correct at time of printing. The organisers reserve the right to change speakers, events and/or session times, dates, and other details as necessary, and without prior notice.

SPEAKERS



Prof. Peter Nazareth / USA
Peter Nazareth is Professor of English and Advisor to the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. His father was born in Goa, his mother was born in Kuala Lumpur, and he was born in Kampala, Uganda. His work includes two novels, three radio plays produced by the BBC and six volumes of literary criticism, most recently *Edwin Thumboo: Creating a Nation Through Poetry*. He has edited *Pivoting on the Point of Return*, subtitled *Goan Literature: A Modern Reader*, to be published in January 2010 by Goa 1556.



Dr Eddie Tay / HONG KONG
Eddie Tay is the author of two poetry collections, *Remnants* and *A Lover's Soliloquy*. He currently teaches poetry and children's literature at the Department of English, Chinese University of Hong Kong.



Ms Suchen Christine Lim / SINGAPORE
Prize-winning author, Suchen Christine Lim, was awarded the inaugural Singapore Literature Prize for her novel, *Fistful of Colours*. Another novel, *A Bit of Earth*, and a collection of short stories, *The Lies That Build A Marriage*, were short listed for the same prize. This year, a new edition of her first novel, *Rice Bowl* is published to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its publication. A Fulbright Fellow in the University of Iowa's International Writers' Program, she has held several writing residencies overseas, in the US, Australia, Scotland and the Philippines. {Photo by Russell Wong}



Mr. Sunil Govinnage / AUSTRALIA
Sunil Govinnage is Sri Lankan born bi-lingual Australian writer/poet now living in Joondalup (Perth), Australia.



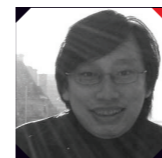
Ms Ovidia Yu / SINGAPORE
With well over 30 plays to her credit, Ovidia Yu is one of the most prolific, versatile and international of Singaporean playwrights. Her play, *The Woman in a Tree on the Hill* is the first and so far only Singapore play to receive an Edinburgh Fringe First award. Ms Yu has received the Singapore Youth Award for Literature, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Award and the Fulbright Award.



Assoc. Prof. Kirpal Singh / SINGAPORE
Kirpal Singh is a poet, literary and cultural critic, and university lecturer in English language and literature, has written and published three collections of poetry and edited many literary journals and books. He was a founding member of the Centre for Research in New Literatures, Flinders University, Australia in 1977, the first Asian director for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1993 and 1994, and chairman of the Singapore Writers' Festival in the 1990s. He is currently an Associate Professor with the Singapore Management University (SMU).



Mr. Wong Phui Nam / MALAYSIA
Wong Phui Nam is a leading Anglophone poet from Malaysia. Most of the poems he wrote during the sixties appeared in *Bunga Mas*, an anthology of Malaysian literature edited by T. Wignesan. They were subsequently collected in book form and published as *How the Hills are Distant*. His work includes *Remembering Grandma and Other Rumours* (1989), *Ways of Exile* (1993), *Against the Wilderness* (2000), and in 2005, a collection of his work under the title, *An Acre of Day's Glass*. He has also published two verse plays, *Anike* (2005), and *Aduni* (2009). In addition, his poems have appeared in numerous anthologies and journals.



Dr Gwee Li Sui / SINGAPORE
Gwee Li Sui is a literary critic, poet, and graphic artist. He has previously lectured at the National University of Singapore for a number of years. His range of academic writings covers the Reformation, early modern science, the Enlightenment, European Romanticism, Protestant theology, critical theory, and modern German and Singaporean literature. He also wrote Singapore's first graphic novel, *Myth of the Stone*, in 1993 and published a volume of verse, *Who Wants to Buy a Book of Poems?*, in 1998. His poems have been featured in various anthologies and international journals.



Dr Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof / MALAYSIA
Dato' Dr Ghulam Sarwar Yousof is one of Malaysia's most distinguished scholars, and one of the world's leading specialists of traditional Southeast Asian theatre. He joined the Cultural Centre, University of Malaya (UM) as Professor in 2002. Currently he is Adjunct Professor at the Centre, and also Director of The Asian Cultural Heritage Centre Berhad, a private research initiative set up by him to promote research in traditional Asian cultures.



Ms Isabela Banzon / PHILIPPINES
Isabela Banzon teaches poetry (writing) and Philippine literature at the University of the Philippines. Her two books of poems are *Paper Cage* and *Lola Coqueta*. She has been published in Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, and has read her poems in countries including Indonesia and Spain. She is currently working with Rajeev Patke, Philip Holden and Lily Rose Tope on an anthology on Southeast Asian literature in English.



Dr Mohammad A. Quayum / MALAYSIA
Mohammad A. Quayum has taught at universities in Singapore, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and the US, and is currently professor of English at International Islamic University Malaysia. He is the author or editor of nineteen books, and his scholarly articles have appeared in distinguished literary journals in the UK, the USA, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Singapore, Taiwan, India, and Malaysia.



Dr Lily Rose R. Tope / PHILIPPINES
Lily Rose Tope teaches at the Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of the Philippines. She is author of *(Un)Framing Southeast Asia: Nationalism and the Postcolonial Text in English in Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines* and various articles on Southeast Asian and Philippine literatures in English.



Mr. Aaron Lee / SINGAPORE
Aaron Lee is a poet, editor, arts commentator and writing mentor. His latest collection of poems *Five Right Angles* (Ethos Books, 2007) was a finalist for the Singapore Literature Prize.



Mr. Alvin Pang / SINGAPORE
Alvin Pang is a poet, writer, editor and cultural activist. He has published two volumes of poetry, *Testing the Silence* (1997) and *City of Rain* (2003). He co-edited *No Other City: The Ethos Anthology of Urban Poetry* (2002). Alvin received the National Arts Council's Young Artist Award in 2005 and the Singapore Youth Award in 2007.

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