SCORPION ORCHID (1976)
LLOYD FERNANDO
(1926–2008)

Novels
- *Scorpion Orchid* (1976)
- *Green is the Colour* (1993)

Play
- *Scorpion Orchid, the Play* (2003)

Short Story
- *Surja Singh* (2002)

Literary Criticism
- “New Women” in *Late Victorian Fiction* (1977)
- *Cultures in Conflict* (1986)

Edited Anthologies
- *Malaysian Poetry in English* (1966)
- *Twenty-two Malaysian Short Stories* (1968)
- *New Drama One* (1972)
- *New Drama Two* (1972)

Literary Magazine & Journal
- *Write* (1957)
- *Tenggara* (1967)
SCORPION ORCHID

Set in pre-independence (1950s) in Singapore, *Scorpion Orchid* follows the lives of four young men—a Malay, an Eurasian, a Chinese and a Tamil—against a backdrop of racial violence and political factions struggling for dominance.
STORYLINE

• The main characters are university students Sabran, Guan kheng, Santinathan and Peter D’almeida. They all share a prostitute by the name of Sally, whom they assume to be Chinese but later learn is Malay, her real name being Salmah. Another character worth mentioning is the enigmatic Tok Said, a shaman–like personage who makes the direst predictions about the country’s fate but whom we never see or hear directly.

• When the social unrest erupts into violence, Peter is assaulted by a group of strangers in what he claims is a racially motivated attack and, in a separate incident, Sally is raped by a “multiracial” gang. From then on, interpersonal relationships break down. Overcome by doubt, mistrust, and despair, all five characters become increasingly conscious of their ethnic differences and eventually retreat one by one to their individual ethnic comfort zones.
NARRATIVE STYLE & STRUCTURE

• Disjointed narrative = Primary narrative + secondary narrative
• Perplexing stream-of-consciousness passages
• Numerous interpolations of excerpts from historical texts such as *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (assume a mythical and dreamlike quality and have no causal connection to the plot of the main story)
• The knowledge of the past (historical knowledge) and knowledge of myth and folklore (cultural knowledge) are combined with knowledge of Western modes of fictional representation
Use of metaphors:

Sally – land (Malaya/Singapore)

Tok Said – fear of the unknown

The text itself reflects growth – Growing up

The four young men at the centre of the novel gain a new awareness of their ethnic identities as they negotiate the race riots that destroy their complacent sense of camaraderie. This awareness is central to their transition from adolescence to adult life, which, "corresponds in Malayan society to a period of transition between former tolerance and present assertiveness" (Sheperd 53).
SIGNIFICANCE OF SCORPION ORCHID IN MLIE

- Ideological agenda: to promote a tolerant multi-ethnic nationalism by foregrounding a common regional heritage (Chiu).
- Creates myths almost arbitrarily to present an integrated Malaysian nationality (KS Maniam)
- Attempts to recreate a version [of history] more consonant with the local’s experience and sense of an usurped history (Koh).
- “Heritage” novel (Chuah).
- Serve as the foundation for national consciousness.
- National allegory
“ATOMIC JAYA” (1998)

ATOMIC JAYA!
What happens when Malaysia decides to build an atomic bomb?
HUZIR SULAIMAN (b. 1973)

Malaysian actor, director and writer based in Singapore. One of Malaysia's leading playwrights, known for his dark humour, political satire, and surrealistic style.

**Plays**
- 1997: *Lazy Hazy Crazy*
- 1998: *Atomic Jaya*
- 1998: *The Smell of Language*
- 1998: *Hip-hopera*
- 1999: *Notes on Life & Love & Painting*
- 1999: *Election Day*
- 2000: *Those Four Sisters Fernandez*
- 2002: *Occupation*
- 2002: *Whatever That Is*
- 2003: *They Will Be Grateful*
- 2004: *Opiume*
- 2005: *Colony of Singapore*
- 2007: *Cogito*
- 2011: *The Weight of Silk on Skin*
STORYLINE

• The play deals with an imaginary situation in which Malaysia is involved in making a nuclear bomb, and the country begins to celebrate its success in the project although it is eventually doomed to failure because of the all round incompetence, intellectual numbness, and nonchalance of those involved in the enterprise. The project is overseen by a dumb minister.

• Three scientists from three different cultural backgrounds working on the nuclear project — Mary Yuen (Chinese), Saiful (Malay) and Ramachandran (Indian).
NARRATIVE STYLE AND STRUCTURE

- Sarcasm
- Cynicism
- Humour
- Mockery
- Farce
SIGNIFICANCE OF ATOMIC JAYA IN MLIE

- Satirical play
- Criticism of the Malaysian brand – post independence/post modern era