The objectives of this Academic Exercise are two-fold. Firstly, Part One of the paper, which is based on primary research and academic study, attempts to examine the development of Malayan Chinese literature from the 1920s through the 1950s by focusing on the theme of 'Nanyanisation' or the introduction of local colour in such literature. Secondly, Part Two of the paper translates into English a few of the shorter literary works of the period so as to reveal this flavour of 'Nanyanisation'. With the exception of one work "Survive or Sin", the translated works have never been translated into English.

The first part of this Academic Exercise traces the development of early Chinese literature in Malaya. One sees how the old or classical forms gave way to the new or vernacular styles of writing and how a group of local-born Chinese writers who advocated that there must be 'local colour' in local Chinese literature struggled to change literary attitudes which hitherto had been dominated by China-born writers who were too pre-occupied with China and things Chinese. This paper also discusses the rationale for the trend towards 'Nanyanisation' of local Chinese literature in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and scrutinizes some of the representative works, writers and literary groups of that period. It then explains that Chinese
patriotism during the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-45 stifled the quest for local literary identity. However, this quest gained momentum after the war, by which time, it involved more than a mere detachment from the influence of China. It called for the promotion of a local cultural spirit and identity as interest in Malaya and Singapore had grown from mere concern to deep-seated commitment; while in the mental outlook of writers, frustration with the adopted homelands had given way to a sense of fulfilment and hope while living in a "brave new world".

This Academic Exercise reveals that the literary movement of the period under review is of great significance. The movement involved more than mere changes in literary forms, styles and other linguistic features. It is important because it reflects the changing attitude of the Malayan Chinese intellectual towards China and his adopted homelands, Malaya and Singapore, during those important and turbulent years of local history.