

Handout 3: Not Just a Footnote

In Literature, writers produce works with ethical invitations to explore narratives, histories and cultures that can expand a student’s understanding of the world. In this poem by Pooja Nansi, her focus is on Mustaq Ahmad, the founder of Mustafa Centre.

With this activity, we will consider how the poet encourages readers to be aware of Mustaq’s story, such that he would not be relegated to the footnotes of Singapore history.

Activity 3A: Invitations to Feeling

In small groups, discuss the following questions about the poem:

- i. What significant events have affected Mustaq in the text?
- ii. How does he respond?
- iii. What are your feelings towards Mustaq as you learn of his experiences?

i. Significant events affecting Mustaq	ii. How Mustaq responds	iii. Your feelings towards Mustaq

Activity 3B: Creative Response – “Not just a...”

As an individual, pair or group task, write a short response poem of at least eight lines from the perspective of one of the workers in Mustafa Centre who is faced with the closure of the Serangoon Plaza branch. In your short response poem, make use of the anaphora “not just a/an...” and end your poem with “We are not just a footnote.”

Extension task: Reading aloud

As a class, read aloud your original response poems either individually or by way of choral reading.