

AL 303 / IDE AL 303

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

FINAL EXAMINATION- MAY 2010

TITLE OF PAPER: TRADITIONAL/ORAL LITERATURE 11

COURSE CODE : AL 303 / IDE-AL 303

TIME ALLOWED: TWO (2) HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS :**
- 1. ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS, CHOOSING AT LEAST ONE (1) FROM EACH SECTION.**
 - 2. EACH QUESTION SHOULD BE COMMENCED ON A SEPARATE PAGE.**
 - 3. CANDIDATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BRING ANY READING MATERIAL INTO THE EXAMINATION HALL**
 - 4. IN THE ASSESMENT OF THIS PAPER, CORRECT USAGE OF ENGLISH, THE QUALITY OF EXPRESSION AND THE PRESENTATION OF ANSWERS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE INVIGILATOR.

TRADITIONAL/ORAL LITERATURE 11

INSTRUCTIONS : ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS, CHOOSING AT LEAST ONE (1) FROM EACH SECTION

SECTION A: THE NATURE AND THEORY OF ORAL NARRATIVES

1. Discuss the artistic strength of the narrator in the process of storytelling in traditional Swazi setting. (20 Marks)
2. With the use of appropriate and clear examples, comment on the fluid and ambiguous nature of oral narratives. (20 marks).
3. Oral narrative performance like all other speech acts, is a communication system in which a social discourse takes place principally between a narrator/performer and an audience. Discuss. (20 marks)
4. Distinguish between the ethnological, taxonomist and cognitionist traditions of oral narrative studies with particular reference to Swaziland. (20 Marks).

SECTION B: ORAL NARRATIVES, FIXED FORMS AND WITTICISMS

5. Identify the similarities that exist in the language of Swazi Proverbs, Riddles and Jokes. (20 Marks)
6. With Relevant examples drawn from the Swazi society, comment on the following categories of proverbs:
 - a. Cosmological reflections. (5 Marks)
 - b. Socio-cultural and domestic. (5 Marks)
 - c. Morality and ethics of behaviour (5 Marks)
 - d. Science and logic. (5 Marks)
7. Is the proverb popular in contemporary Swaziland? Support your answer with concrete examples. (20 marks)
8. Proverbs are used to test mental abilities-Discuss. (20 marks)

9. In a well illustrated discussion, explain the rationale for the extensive use of animal characters and fantastic images in traditional Swazi oral narratives. (20 Marks)
10. Read the following story of the Hyena and the Squirrel and answer the questions that follow :

The Hyena and the Squirrel

A long time ago, hyena and squirrel were great friends and lived in the same homestead. They were very wealthy. They had many goats, cattle, and sheep. Both of them were good herdsman, and took great care of their animals. They grazed them in turn; that is, the hyena would be in the homestead looking after domestic affairs there for so many days, while the squirrel grazed the animals for so many days, and so on.

One day the the hyena began to think how he might own all the animals, and kill the squirrel. Often when they were in the field together grazing their animals, he would suggest to the squirrel that they go for a swim in the river. He always hoped to drown the squirrel/but realizing that this, the squirrel always avoided swimming near the hyena. So the hyena tried all sort of tricks, but his friend was too smart to fall into any of his traps.

When the squirrel realized that the hyena really meant to kill him, he decided to retaliate. One day, the hyena was in the field grazing their animals, while the squirrel was left to look after the housework and cook. Squirrel prepared a very nice dish of meat, and the fragrant delicious food could be smelled from afar. He also burnt a small stone red-hot, which he wanted to use to kill the hyena. At sunset, when the herdsman returned their animals to their homesteads, the squirrel was expecting his friend to bring back the

animals and put them in their sheds. Usually the hyena use to be very hungry at the end of the day's work and he ate gluttonously whatever he was given. He would complain bitterly if the food was not ready for him when he returned.

Now one could hear the bells of the bulls and goats coming nearer and nearer. The hyena was coming home, very hungry as usual. When he was only a few yards away, the cunning squirrel rolled the red-hot stone in meat and fat, and made a nice roll of delicious meat round it. It looked like a kind of meat ball, and its fragrance made the hyena's mouth water. The hot stone was burning the meet and fat and it produced such a nice smell that one could smell it from far away.

At the end of the homestead, the hyena shouted and asked if there was something nice for him to eat. He said he was very hungry and threatened to eat the squirrel if there was not enough food for him. This did not worry the squirrel. He called out that he has cooked special food that evening and that the hyena will surely enjoy it. But this assurance did not seem to please the hyena, who was more interested in killing the squirrel than in having a nice food. He advanced towards the squirrel very angrily, when the latter said to him. 'Eh my dear friend Hyena, look I have prepared a very special and nice food for you. Can't you smell it?'

Yes, replied the hyena. 'I can smell it, but is it enough? I am tired and hungry after spending the whole day looking after these animals of yours. If there isn't enough food, I shall have to eat you for supper tonight'

Oh, no, my friend Hyena,' replied the squirrel, there is more food than you can eat.' And at this point, he picked up the roll of meat with the red-hot stone inside and said, 'Open your mouth, my friend Hyena, and taste this special piece of meat. Swallow it at once while I serve you a yet larger dish of meat.'

The hyena opened his mouth without hesitation or suspicion, and the squirrel threw the roll of meat into his mouth; as it was too small to chew, he swallowed it at once. It was too delicious and tasty as it went down, but a few seconds after he swallowed it, the red-hot stone produced so much heat in the hyena's stomach that it killed him instantly. So squirrel was left in peace. He acquired the possessions of all the animals and all the land, and lived happily after the death of his friend.

QUESTIONS

- a) What does this story tell us about the economic and social conduct of the Swazi community? (5 marks)
- b) How does this story fulfil the functions of oral narratives? (5 marks)
- c) "The fact that animal tricksters almost always emerge victorious in a competition does not mean that the people approve of their activities. Rather, the people see in the trickster figures a reflection of the vices they condemn, the follies they ridicule and the evils with which they must contend". Discuss the validity of the above assertion with reference to the story of the Squirrel and the Hyena and other related stories you have studied. (10 marks)