

AL 403 / IDE AL 403

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

FINAL EXAMINATION-MAY 2010

TITLE OF PAPER: TRADITIONAL/ORAL LITERATURE 111

COURSE CODE : AL 403 / IDE-AL 403

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.

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

**SECTION A: THE MEDIA, GLOBALIZATION AND
DIGITALIZATION OF ORAL
LITERATURE**

- 1 Comment on the performance of Swazi oral literature in the electronic media with particular emphasis on trends and deviations. (20 marks)
- 2 A) What is globalization from the point of view of cultural studies? (6 marks)
B) How should the African oral artist react to the challenges posed by Globalization? (14 Marks)
3. “In Swaziland, like in any other African country, oral literature is a national treasure. It is, and has always been, a solid bedrock for a life that invigorates and is in turn invigorated.” Discuss (20 Marks).
4. “The library, the memory of the written word today has the capability to be the memory of the spoken word, and to aid in the creation of organizations whose role will be to collect, preserve, and digitalize oral literature”-Discuss. (20 Marks)

SECTION B: MYTHS, LEGENDS AND FOLKTALES

5. What are the major differences between Myths, Legends and Folktales? How can you account for such differences? (20 Marks)
6. Discuss the following categories of Myths:
 - Myth of the hero, (5 marks)
 - Cosmogonic myths (5 Marks)
 - Hierophantic myths (5 Marks)
 - Kratophantic myths (5 marsks)
7. Comment on the important functions of Myths and legends in contemporary Swaziland. (20 Marks)

SECTIONC: WOMEN AND/ IN ORAL LITERATURE

8. Do Swazi proverbs, while ascribing the acceptable norms and values that Swazi women and girls should conform to, serve as a catalyst to subjugate or protect the young and the mature Swazi women? (20 Marks)
9. With apt examples drawn from different forms of Orature, critically examine the role of women in African Oral literature. (20 Marks)
10. With examples drawn from a variety of Swazi praise poetry you have studied, comment on how Swazi women depict themselves in their praises. (20 Marks)
11. Read the folktale below and answer the questions that follow (20 marks)

USIWELEWELE, INTOKAZI EYAYIYOGANA

Once upon a time, there was a lad who had reached the state of manhood. His parents encouraged him to take a wife. They loved him so much that they made it their duty to choose a wife that would befit their son. The lad was not happy about his parent's wish. He wanted to go and propose to a girl of his choice, a girl that he will love endlessly.

After his parents had agreed that he could choose a girl of his dreams, he then woke up at dawn and set out for the journey. He travelled and travelled, looking for a girl that he could marry, until he reached a country he did not know whose inhabitants look like real people. He was deluded into thinking that the inhabitants were real people. But alas! This was a world of witches whose body was covered with hair.

As he was travelling towards a river, there suddenly appeared a group of breathtakingly beautiful girls. He looked at the girls admiring their beauty, until he saw one that stole his heart. The girl's beauty was unsurpassed. He proposed marriage to the girl. The girl accepted the lad's proposal. The lad was overjoyed. He was taken to the girl's place. As a traveller and future son in-law, his stay was made comfortable and hospitable. He stayed a few days until it was time for him to go back home. When he arrived home, he informed his parents about the journey. His Father suggested that, because he was now old and sickly, it would please him if lobola would be paid so that he would see the bride before he dies. The cattle for lobola were driven to the girl's home. They were amazed to see a large herd of cattle because they did not expect him back so soon. All the formalities for lobola were carried out. When everything was done, they set out on a journey to the grooms place. On their arrival, there was joy, women ululating and men shouting praises. Everyone was commenting about the bride's beauty. The groom's parents were excited to see such a beautiful bride. The name of the bride was Siwelewele.

Siwelewele stayed at home for a few days, then she was expected to go with the girls from the neighbourhood to collect wood. Indeed, they went. Siwelewele was very excited to get this opportunity because she would see where the forest was. When they finished collecting the wood and were ready to leave, Siwelewele went to a secluded spot and she was heard singing:

I am Siwelewele, they don't know who I am
They see me with a shock of hair
They say I am a bride
Whose bride are you Siwelewele?

As Siwelewele was singing, suddenly her hair started to grow and it covered her body. She also grew horns on her head that resembled those of a goat. The girls just stood there, shocked. After sometime, Siwelewele started grazing. She grazed and grazed until she was full. Within a wink of an eye, she changed back to a beautiful girl. The girls could not explain the miracle they had just seen. They thought that telling Siwelewele's husband will be a futile exercise because he would not believe them as Siwelewele was too beautiful. They went home and kept the secret to themselves.

Siwelewele also had to fetch water from the river. She was accompanied by her bride's maid. As they were drawing water from the river, filling up their pots, they heard a frog croaking. Siwelewele changed to a stork. Her mouth was as long as that of a bird, and she had long thin feet. The little girl looked at her, shocked at what she was seeing. Siwelewele began singing her song and said:

I am Siwelewele, they don't know who I am
They see me standing with my long thin legs, they don't know me
They say I am a bride, they don't know me.
Whose bride are you Siwelewele?

When she finished eating the frogs, she turned back into a beautiful girl. From then on, she kept disappearing at night. Her husband would search for her but all in vain. Siwelewele would come back when she had grazed and eaten frogs to her satisfaction.

Rumour started spreading in the neighbourhood like wild fire about Siwelewele's mysterious behaviour. Some people discussed their experience with her at the forest and at the river, while others would express their shock at the encounter with her at night. As days went by, the husband began to have suspicions about Siwelewele. His suspicion was raised by the fact that when the sun was setting, her eyes would flicker like a spark of fire, and the hair covering the whole body will just turn hard. The husband once overheard her singing her favourite song. From then on, he became indifferent from Siwelewele.

Siwelewele's husband was annoyed about her disappearing acts, and he decided to watch her every move. He then followed her one night, not knowing where she was going to, until she arrived at the forest. She then saw wild animals. Siwelewele was jubilant and she greeted them singing:

I am Siwelewele, they don't know who I am
They see me with a shock of hair
They say I'm a bride.
Whose bride are you Siwelewele?

She moved from that place, unaware that her husband was still following her. She travelled and travelled until she arrived at the river. She heard a frog croaking. She stood there, and suddenly she changed into stork. Then she sang:

I am Siwelewele, they don't know who I am
They see me standing with my long thin legs, they don't know me
They say I'm a bride, they don't know who I am
Whose bride are you Siwelewele?

When she had finished eating the fogs, she changed back into a beautiful woman and decided to go home. She got the shock of her life when she saw her husband standing there, staring at her. Her husband was furious and he asked her to sing her song. Siwelewele was numb with fear. She could hardly utter a word. Her husband attacked her, punching her and eventually stabbed her with an assegai. Her body was thrown in the river where animals devoured her.

End.

QUESTIONS

- 1) Bring out the traditional Swazi conception of marriage as depicted in the folktale. (2marks)
- 2) Comment on the portrayal of women in this narrative in relation to Swazi norms and values (2 marks)
- 3) What is the function of the song in the text and how does it help in the understanding of the character of Siwelewele? (4 marks)
- 4) What is the pattern of life of the principal character? To what extent is her behaviour implausible or strikingly unrealistic? (6 marks)
- 5) Comment on the style of the folktale. (6 marks)