

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES & LITERATURE

FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION PAPER, DECEMBER 2010

TITLE OF PAPER : CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN FICTION AND NON-FICTION

COURSE CODE : AL212/IDE-AL212

TIME ALLOWED : TWO (2) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. ANSWER THREE (3) QUESTIONS, ONE FROM EACH SECTION. EACH QUESTION CARRIES 20 MARKS.
2. EACH QUESTION SHOULD BE COMMENCED ON A SEPARATE SHEET.
3. DO NOT REPEAT MATERIAL OR WRITE ABOUT THE SAME TEXT AT LENGTH MORE THAN ONCE.
4. CANDIDATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BRING ANY READING MATERIALS INTO THE EXAMINATION HALL.
5. IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS PAPER, CORRECT USAGE OF ENGLISH, THE QUALITY OF EXPRESSION AND PRESENTATION OF ANSWERS WILL BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

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

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**SECTION A**  
**FICTION - NOVEL**

**QUESTION 1**

Chinua Achebe: *Arrow of God*

According to Lewis Nkosi, in *Arrow of God*, "African gods lose because they have outlived their usefulness". Discuss this statement in relation to the 'demise' of Ulu in Umuaro.

**QUESTION 2**

Mongo Beti: *The Poor Christ of Bomba*

Discuss the uses of irony in *The Poor Christ of Bomba*.

**QUESTION 3**

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: *A Grain of Wheat*

What is feminist criticism? Bearing in mind the various types of female characters predominant in African literature, attempt a feminist reading of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*. Illustrate your points with activities of the women in the novel.

**SECTION B**

**PROSE – SHORT STORIES**

**QUESTION 4**

Bessie Head: *The Collector of Treasures*

Many works of literature examine the lives of women in custom-bound societies. In a well-organized essay, explore the **roles**, **restrictions** and **resourcefulness** of Bessie Head's women in **two** of her short stories from *The Collector of Treasures and other Botswana Village Tales*. Instead of being a mere catalogue of characters and examples, your essay should progress toward conclusions about the 'significance' and 'insignificance' of the feminine in the African settings portrayed in the stories.

**QUESTION 5**

"Even when Head's characters fail to achieve physical freedom, they still act and think independently" Discuss this statement in light of **two** of Bessie Head's short stories from *The Collector of Treasures and other Botswana Village Tales*.

**SECTION C**  
**PROSE NON-FICTION**

**QUESTION 6**

Omafume Onoge: "The Crisis of Consciousness in Modern African Literature: A Survey"

- **Answer both 6 a and b**
- (a) According to Omafume Onoge in his article titled *The Crisis of Consciousness in Modern African Literature: A Survey*, "African Literature was a literature using the 'weapons of words' for the 'legitimate defense' of the African heritage". Explain the meaning of this comment, using Chinua Achebe's position to buttress your point.
- (b) Also, discuss the theory of 'affirmative consciousness' in the same article mentioned above.

**QUESTION 7**

Bessie Head: *A Woman Alone*

- **Answer both 7 a and b**
- a. Bessie Head's portrayal of the Coloreds in *A Woman Alone* bears a striking resemblance to Lydia Maria Child's *Tragic Mulatto*. Discuss.
- b. Analyze the various types of women portrayed in *A Woman Alone*.