

AL 214 / IDE AL 214

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**  
**FINAL EXAMINATION-MAY 2011**

**TITLE OF PAPER:      TRADITIONAL/ORAL LITERATURE 1**

**COURSE CODE    :      AL 214 / IDE-AL 214**

**TIME ALLOWED:      THREE (3) 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 1**

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

### **SECTION A: ESSAY QUESTIONS ON ORAL POETRY**

1. "The song or poem is the lifeline of a Swazi; and he/she learns the art of poetry because he/she is born and bred in a society which recognizes that the poetic form is, emotionally, most expressive of the human predicament". Comment on the above statement in the light of Swazi oral poetry (20 marks).
2. Discuss the different categories of oral poets in traditional Swazi society (20 marks).
3. Discuss the idea that "although praise poetry basically extols the good qualities of their objects, they sometimes satirize or even criticize the bad ones". Use relevant examples to justify your point (20 marks).
4. Discuss the role played by of each of the following forms of oral poetry in Swaziland
  - a. Love poetry (4 marks).
  - b. Wedding songs (4 marks).
  - c. Funeral poetry (4 marks).
  - d. Incantations (4 marks).
  - e. Lusekwane and Reed dance songs (4 marks).

### **SECTION B: ANALYSIS ORAL POEMS**

5. Discuss the diction of the lullaby quoted below paying particular attention to the poetic devices that have been employed to make its content look like a "prescription" for raising a Swazi boy-child.

*Ngubani Lo? Ngu Yeye*  
*Uhamba nabani? Neyise*  
*Umphatseleni? Emasi*  
*Ngendzebe lenjani? Lebovu*  
*Wayibekaphi? Esibayeni*  
*Lesingakanani? Lesikhulu*

Who is this? It is Yeye  
Whom is he walking with? With his father  
What is the father carrying for him? Emasi food  
In what kind of container? Red one  
Where did he put it? In the cattle kraal  
How big is the kraal? A very large one. (20 marks).

6. Comment on the following traditional prayer by a traditional poet showing the relationship between the living and the dead in the African belief system as well as the use of symbols and images:

Nkwenti, son of Ntembi,  
Nkwenti, elephant of Menda,  
It is I, Akenji whom you left behind to look after your household,  
Whom you left behind to gather your fruits.  
It is I calling you.  
I am not calling you from my own powers,  
After all, I am only an ant.  
I am calling you from the power  
Conferred on me when you left me this cup.  
I am calling you to tell you that we,  
Your children are gathered in this hut.  
We are gathered because we are told that you are angry.

You are angry because we have neglected our duty.

We have now set things right.

May you not be angry anymore

May you release your child whom you have caused to be sick.

Let him get well soon.

Shower your blessings upon us.

So that our crops should grow.

So that our wives and daughters may produce children,

So that no harm may befall us.

When you lie down in the ground,

Lie on your right side. (20 marks).