

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
MAIN EXAMINATION 2010/11

COURSE NAME: MODERN LITERATURE III

COURSE CODE: AL 402 / IDE AL 402

TIME ALLOWED: TWO (2) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. ANSWER ANY 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 MATERIAL INTO THE EXAMINATION HALL.**
- 5. IN THE ASSESSMENT 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.

SECTION – A
PROSE

QUESTION 1

Buchi Emecheta: The Slave Girl

What is a Bildungsroman? Discuss the characteristic features of a Bildungsroman with textual illustrations taken from Emecheta's The Slave Girl.

QUESTION 2

Ama Ata Aidoo: Changes: A Love Story

“When we were young we were told that people who were condemned to death were granted any wish on the eve of their execution ... anyhow, a woman on her wedding day was something like that ... because that whole ceremony was a funeral of the self that could have been.”

Discuss the institution of marriage as portrayed in the novel.

QUESTION 3

Nawal el Saadawi: Woman at Point Zero

“Throughout the story that Firdaus narrates, she describes the act of looking as akin to an act of possession.” Discuss the connection between surveillance and ownership.

SECTION – B
POETRY

QUESTION 4

Kofi Awoonor: “Harlem on a Winter Night” and O. M. Mtshali’s “Nightfall in Soweto”

Attempt a thematic comparison of “Harlem on a Winter Night” and “Nightfall in Soweto.” (The poems are attached at the end of the paper)

QUESTION 5

Charles D. Marechera: “Pledging my Soul”

Read the following poem and answer the questions given below:

When I was a boy
I climbed onto to your granite breasts
smooth and round
I trailed my body
from the small of your back
to your yielding neck
the cup of your breasts
was my pillow
the rivers of your tears drowned in your depths
and the smooth plain of your flat belly
yielded to mine
I was yours and you were mine.

Now a man
in exile from the warmth of your arms
and the milk of your teeth
the breath of your secret whispers in my ears
shall I not stride back to you with haste
rout all my enemies and bind the wicked husbandmen
Shall I not kneel to kiss the grains of your sand
to rise naked before you – a bowl of incense?
and the smoke of my nakedness shall be
an offering to you
pledging my soul.

- a. How does the poet describe the landscape in this poem? (10 Marks)
- b. Comment on the mood and tone employed in the poem. (10 marks)

QUESTION 6

David Rubadiri: "Stanley Meets Mutesa"

How does the poet portray the theme of encounter between Europe and Africa, the coloniser and the colonized in his poem, "Stanley Meets Mutesa"?

QUESTION 7

Kofi Anyidoho: "Hero and Thief"

"When thievery has become a common culture, it cannot take a single hero to rescue the nation." How does this statement connect to the theme of the poem?

SECTION – C
DRAMA

QUESTION 8

Wole Soyinka: Death and the King's Horseman

"Biodun Jeyifo has criticized Soyinka's resolution of the conflict in the play as a typical African "bourgeois" historical tragedy characterized by conformism."

Discuss the conflict in the play and state your reasons with textual illustrations to show if Jeyifo is right or wrong in his criticism of Soyinka.

QUESTION 9

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii: I Will Marry When I Want

Discuss how any **one** of the conventional oppositions listed below apply to the play, with relevant textual illustrations:

- a. African Culture versus Western Culture
- b. Traditional religion and customs versus Christianity
- c. National socialism versus Capitalism

QUESTION 10

Athol Fugard: Exits and Entrances

“This world is ugly enough as it is ... people go to the theatre to be elevated above its squalor and filth, not to have it thrown in their faces.”

Compare and contrast Andre's and the Playwright's concept of theatre with relevant textual illustrations.

Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali's "Nightfall in Soweto"

Nightfall comes like
a dreaded disease
seeping through the pores
of a healthy body
and ravaging beyond repair.

A murderer's hand,
lurking in the shadows,
clasping the dagger,
strikes down the helpless victim.

I am the victim.
I am slaughtered
every night in the streets.
I am cornered by the fear
gnawing at my timid heart;
in my helplessness I languish.

Man has ceased to be man
Man has become beast
Man has become prey.

I am the prey;
I am the quarry to be run down
by the marauding beast
let loose by cruel nightfall
from his cage of death.

Where is my refuge?
Where am I safe?
Not in my matchbox house
Where I barricade myself against nightfall.

I tremble at his crunching footsteps,
I quake at his deafening knock at the door.
"Open Up!" he barks like a rabid dog
Thirsty for my blood.

Nightfall! Nightfall!
You are my mortal enemy.
But why were you ever created?
Why can't it be daytime?
Daytime forever more?

Kofi Awoonor's "Harlem on a winter night"

Huddled pavements, dark,
the lonely wail of a police-siren
moving stealthily across
grey alleys of anonymity
asking for food either
as plasma in hospital jars,
escaping fires in tenements
grown cold and bitter,
or seeking food in community garbage cans
to escape its eternal nightmare.

Harlem, the dark dirge of America
heard at evening
mean alleyways of poverty,
dispossession, early death
in jammed doorways and creaking elevators,
glaring defeat in the morning
of this beautiful beautiful America.