

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FUCULTYOF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER, DECEMBER 2013

TITLE OF PAPER: INTRODUCTION TO PROSE FICTION AND PROSE NON-FICTION

COURSE CODE: AL 111/IDE AL111 – MAIN PAPER

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS

- (1) ANSWER THREE (3) QUESTIONS IN ALL, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE QUESTION FROM EACH SECTION.
- (2) DO NOT ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS FROM ONE TEXTBOOK
- (2) DO NOT REPEAT MATERIAL IN YOUR ANSWERS.
- (3) EACH QUESTION SHOULD BE COMMENCED ON A FRESH SHEET.
- (4) CLARITY OF EXPRESSION AND GOOD ORGANIZATION OF CONTENT WILL COUNT IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS PAPER.

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

SECTION A PROSE FICTION

THINGS FALL APART- CHINUA ACHEBE

Question 1

Read the excerpt below and answer the questions that follow -

As Okonkwo sat in his hut that night, gazing into a log fire, he thought over the matter. A sudden fury rose within him and he felt a strong desire to take up his machet, go to the church and wipe out the entire vile and miscreant gang. But on further thought he told himself that Nwoye was not worth fighting for. Why, he cried in his heart, should he, Okonkwo, of all people, be cursed with such a son? He saw clearly in it the finger of his personal god or chi. For how else could he explain his great misfortune 5 and exile and now his despicable son's behaviour? Now that he had time to think of it, his son's crime stood out in its stark enormity. To abandon the gods of one's father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens was the very depth of abomination. Suppose when he died all his male children decided to follow Nwoye's steps and abandon their ancestors? Okonkwo felt a cold shudder run through him at the terrible prospect, like the prospect of annihilation. He saw himself 10 and his fathers crowding round their ancestral shrine waiting in vain for worship and sacrifice and finding nothing but ashes of bygone days, and his children while praying to the white man's god. If such a thing were ever to happen, he, Okonkwo, would wipe them off the face of the earth.

Okonkwo was popularly called the 'Roaring Flame'. As he looked into the log fire he recalled the name. He was a flaming fire. How then could he have begotten a son like Nwoye, degenerate and effeminate? Perhaps he was not his son. No! he could not be. His wife had played him false. He would teach her! But Nwoye resembled his grandfather, Unoka, who was Okonkwo's father. He pushed the thought out of his mind. He, Okonkwo, was called a flaming fire. How could he have begotten a woman for a son? At Nwoye's age Okonkwo had already become famous throughout Umuofia for his wrestling and his fearlessness. 20

He sighed heavily, and as if in sympathy the smouldering log also sighed. And immediately Okonkwo's eyes were opened and he saw the whole matter clearly. Living fire begets cold, impotent ash. He sighed again, deeply.

- (a) The first paragraph (between lines 1 & 5) has two words that describe Okonkwo's strong feelings against the Christians. Identify those words. 2 points
- (b) What attitude is captured by the allusion to "effeminate men clucking like old hens"? 3 points
- (c) What would you feel and say to Okonkwo with respect to the fact that, "He saw himself and his fathers crowding round their ancestral shrine waiting in vain for worship and sacrifice and finding nothing but ashes of bygone days, and his children the while praying to the white man's god." 4 points

- (d) What two (interrelated) things sour Okonkwo's mood in this excerpt? 4 points
- (e) Discuss his relationship with the three boys each of whom is a turning point in Okonkwo's life. How does this mirror Okonkwo's void for a father figure in his life? 12 points

Total 25 points

Question 2

Discuss Achebe's use of oral traditions in Things Fall Apart. 25 points

KHULUMANI SIVE – ZODWA MOTSA (ed)

Question 3

Of the stories you have read in Khulumani Sive pick any two that reveal the troubled relationship between parenting and the goals of formal schooling.

Question 4

Discuss the story that in your view best illustrates the economy and power of the short story.

SECTION B NON-FICTION PROSE

THE AFRICAN CHILD- CAMARA LAYE

Question 5

Discuss African mysticism/the supernatural and Camara Laye's developing this thread in his autobiography. How does this impact the quality of social and familial relationships? 25 points

Question 6

One reader has this to say about *The African Child*: "Deeply nostalgic, the book is an autobiography portraying a vision of Islamic and ancient African community in the precolonial era, a time when tradition engendered mutual understanding and respect for all." Support this view paying special attention to how "tradition engendered mutual understanding and respect for all." 25 points

LONG WALK TO FREEDOM- NELSON MANDELA

Question 7

Read the excerpt below and then

- (a) Describe the mood in the courtroom created by Professor Murray's conduct. 5 points
- (b) Discuss what this scene suggests about the politics of ideas and the politics of apartheid and anti-apartheid. 20 points

To support the allegation that we intended to replace the existing government with a Soviet-style state, the Crown relied on the evidence of Professor Andrew Murray, head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Cape Town. Murray labeled many of the documents seized from us, including the Freedom Charter itself, as communistic.

Professor Murray seemed relatively knowledgeable, until Berrange began his cross-examination. Berrange said he wanted to read Murray a number of passages from various documents and then ask Murray to label them as communistic or not. The first passage concerned the need for ordinary workers to cooperate with each other and not exploit one another. Communistic, Murray said. Berrange said the statement had been made by former premier of South Africa, Dr Malan. Berrange proceeded to read two other statements, both of which Professor Murray described as communistic. These passages had

been uttered by the American presidents Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson. The highlight came with a passage that the professor described as 'communism straight from the shoulder.' Professor Murray himself had written this in the 1930s

Question 8

A critic has suggested that, "Autobiographical values are determined by the narrator's acute and pervasive sense of participating in a great historical moment. His valuable life surrenders its meaning in a gesture of collectivity." Interrogate this statement in the light of Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, paying particular attention to 'the narrator's acute and pervasive sense of participating in a great historical moment.' END