

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 212/IDE AL212 – 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

ARROW OF GOD – CHINUA ACHEBE

## Question 1

Read the excerpt below and answer the questions that follow

Whenever Ezeulu considered the immensity of his power over the year and the crops and, therefore, over the people he wondered if it was real. It was true he named the day for the feast of the Pumpkin Leaves and for the New Yam feast; but he did not choose the day. He was merely a watchman. His power was no more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his. As long as the goat was alive it was his; he would find it food and take care of it. But the day it was slaughtered he would know who the real owner was. No! the Chief Priest of Ulu was more than that, must be more than that. If he should refuse to name the day there would be no festival ---no planting and no reaping. But could he refuse? No Chief Priest had ever refused. So it could not be done. He would not dare.

Ezeulu was stung to anger by this as though his enemy had spoken it.

'Take away that word dare,' he replied to this enemy. 'Yes I say take it away. No man in all Umuaro can stand up and say that I dare not. The woman who will bear the man who will say it has not yet been born.'

But this rebuke brought only momentary satisfaction. His mind still persisted in trying to look too closely at the nature of his power. What kind of power was it if everybody knew that it would never be used? Better to say that it was not there, that it was no more than the power in the anus of the proud dog who tried to put out a furnace with his puny fart. ... He turned the yam with a stick.

- (a) How would you describe Ezeulu's mood in this excerpt? 2 points
- (b) Comment on the images he uses to characterize his power. 5 points
- (c) Comment on the thought that, 'The woman who will bear the man who will say it has not yet been born.' 3 points
- (d) To what extent would you say that Ezeulu's inner conflict captured in the excerpt is what gives rise to the tragedy of Arrow of God? 15 points

Total 25 points

## Question 2

Discuss Ezeulu's relationship with his sons. Judging by this man's relationship with his sons, would you say a parent ever has any reason to like or dislike one or other of his children?

## Question 3

"Karanja is the one character who inspires more contempt than even Mugo." In your view why is the one Judas preferable to the other?

## Question 4

Read the excerpt below and answer the questions that follow -

In the end, Nyamu announced that General R., the man who had fought side by side with Kihika, would speak, in the place of Mugo. Circumstances outside anybody's control had prevented Mugo from coming to the meeting. This announcement was **met with silence**. Then from one corner, a man shouted for Mugo's name. The **demand** was immediately **chorused** from different parts of the field, until the meeting **seethed** with Mugo's name in a threatening unison. Then the unison broke into undisciplined **shouting and movement; people stood up, groups formed, and they all argued, gesticulated, protested, as if they had been tricked** into the meeting. Nyamu consulted the elders. They decided to make one last appeal to Mugo. It took time for Nyamu and the elders to bring the gathering back to order with a promise that a delegation of two would be dispatched immediately to fetch Mugo. The two elders were asked not to take 'No' for an answer. Meanwhile, would the people sit and hear General R.'s words? They settled down again with the song of the trench:

'And he jumped into the trench,

The words he told the soldier pierced my heart like a spear;

You will not beat the woman, he said,

You will not beat a pregnant woman, he told the soldier.'

- (a) Paying close attention to the emboldened words, describe the people's mood and suggest why they think Mugo is not present at this meeting. 4 points
- (b) Who does the song of the trench celebrate? 1 point
- (c) "Mugo is either afraid or remorseful." Which emotion do you think more accurately describes Mugo? Give a well reasoned response. 5 points
- (d) How did Mugo get entangled with Kihika? 10 points

## SECTION B – PROSE NON-FICTION

AN ILL-FATED PEOPLE- LAWRENCE VAMBE

## Question 5

Read the excerpt below and respond to the questions that follow –

In the general scuffle that ensued, the family was sharply divided. On the one hand grandfather Mizha, Catherine and Maria ganged up together against Josephine and minced no words in reminding her of the consequences of her irresponsible disregard for the rules of Christian conduct which the Church imposed on its tenants in Chishawasha. She might have exercised a little self-control, they said, wise after the event. She was selfish, thinking only of herself, when duty, common decency and the good upbringing she had had might have reminded her that in these matters the interests of the whole family were at stake. Why had she been so precipitous? Was she so weak that she could not have resisted the wild demands of Martin, her fiancé? Look now, what a mess the whole family was in.

On the other hand, grandmother Madzidza took a completely opposite point of view, and was supported by several other women closely related to our family, who had by now joined our internecine group.

Stating her own case, Madzidza, whose prejudices against anything alien were always strongly expressed, spoke as if this was the best news she had had for a long time. She said she recognized no law outside that of the tribe. She was nauseated, repeat nauseated, by the views held by Mizha, her husband, and her two sin-fearing daughters, who took too much account of the peculiar opinions of the interfering white clerics at the Chishawasha Mission. This matter was African, she said, and strictly domestic. Why should a white man be permitted to thrust his red nose into it? She asked this question again and again, ramming her clenched right fist into the open palm of her left hand, dramatizing each word, each phrase and looking contemptuously at her husband and the two daughters in league with him as if they were the guilty ones. For just this once, she emphasized, the Father Superior at the Mission might be told to mind his business while the Africans, especially her family, minded theirs. As far as she was concerned, her daughter and husband Martin, for her husband he now was, had done no wrong whatever. God bless them, they had shown courage and true African independence in these critical times when all sorts of white men were charging about the country, expecting and demanding blind obedience from black people who asked for nothing more than to be left alone to live their own lives and follow their God-given customs in peace.

- (a) What is this 'scuffle' and what has caused it? Find one sentence in the first paragraph and another in the last paragraph to support your view? 5 points
- (b) The excerpt above highlights some of the issues that preoccupy Lawrence Vambe's *An Ill-fated People*. What 'ill-fate/s' are highlighted above? 20 points.

## Question 6

Discuss Vambe's politics of portrait of the various black and white characters of his narrative. What redeems some of them from being caricatures?

I WRITE WHAT I LIKE- STEVE BIKO

## Question 7

How does Biko characterize the relationship between white missionaries/Churches and the apartheid South Africa with respect to black oppression? 25 points

## Question 8

'When I turn on my radio, when I hear that someone in Phondoland forest was beaten and tortured, I say we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead, when I turn on my radio, when I hear that someone slipped on a bar of soap, fell and died I say that we have been lied to: Hitler is not dead, he is likely to be found in Pretoria.'

- (a) Comment on the rhetorical devices used in the above quote. 5 points
- (b) Comment on the metaphor of Hitler. Discuss other metaphors of racialized violence in this text. 20 points

END