

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER, MAY 2016

TITLE OF PAPER: POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN POETRY AND DRAMA

COURSE CODE: AL 213/ IDE AL 213

TIME ALLOWED: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS

- (1) ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS IN ALL; AT LEAST ONE QUESTION FROM EACH SECTION
- (2) DO NOT UTILIZE ONE POEM OR PLAY MORE THAN ONCE
- (3) COMMENCE EACH QUESTION ON A NEW SHEET
- (4) CLARITY OF EXPRESSION AND EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION OF RESPONSE CONTENT WILL COUNT IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THIS PAPER
- (5) EACH QUESTION IS WORTH 33 MARKS

SECTION A: POETRY

QUESTION 1

Read the poem below and answer the following questions.

**Farewell at the Moment of Parting** by Agostinho Neto

My mother

(oh black mothers whose children have departed)

you taught me to wait and to hope

as you have done through the disastrous hours

But in me

Life has killed that mysterious hope

I wait no more

it is I who am awaited

Hope is ourselves

Your children

Travelling towards a faith that feeds life

We the naked children of the bush sanzalas

unschooled urchins who play with balls of rags

on the noonday plains

ourselves

hired to burn out our lives in coffee fields

ignorant black men

who must respect the whites

and fear the rich

we are your children of the native quarters

which the electricity never reaches

men dying drunk

abandoned to the rhythm of death's tom-toms

your children

who hunger

who thirst

who are afraid to call you mother

who are afraid to cross the streets

who are afraid of men

It is ourselves

the hope of life recovered.

- (a) Explain the meaning of the word 'life' as used in line 6. (5 points)
- (b) Discuss the mood of this poem. (8 points)
- (c) The persona says, 'I wait no more/ it is I who am awaited.' Suggest what he is awaited to do. (5 points)
- (d) What evidence is there that the persona's childhood was marked by material deprivation? (5 points)
- (e) Comment on the thematic import of the line, 'hired to burn out our lives in coffee fields.' (5 points)
- (f) What do you understand by the phrase 'death's tom-toms'? (5 points)

## QUESTION 2

How do you account for poetry's ability to convey multiple levels of meaning? Discuss with examples from the poems we have studied this semester.

## SECTION B: DRAMA

### QUESTION 3

In Soyinka's **The Strong Breed**, what prompts Eman to choose to be that year's carrier of the people's ills and what complicates his efforts?

### QUESTION 4

Suspense and tension characterize the depiction of Eman in Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*. What do these two elements contribute to Eman's ultimate destiny?

### QUESTION 5

How does Soyinka manage to stage complex issues of human existence in *A Dance of Forests*?

### QUESTION 6

What complicates an analysis of characterization in Soyinka's *A Dance of Forests*?