

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FINAL EXAMINATION 2006

TITLE OF PAPER: MODERN CRITICAL THEORY

COURSE CODE: ENG 304/ IDE ENG 304

TIME ALLOWED: TWO (2) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS. EACH QUESTION CARRIES 30 MARKS.

2. DO NOT REPEAT MATERIAL OR WRITE ABOUT THE SAME TEXT AT LENGTH MORE THAN ONCE.

3. CANDIDATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BRING ANY READING MATERIAL INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM.

4. CORRECT USAGE OF ENGLISH WILL BE REWARDED AND GRAMMATICAL AND SPELLING MISTAKES PENALIZED.

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

Answer any two questions from the following
Each question carries 30 marks

Colonialism / Post Colonialism

1. a) Write short notes on the following:
- i) Negritude
 - ii) Frantz Fanon's 'Manichaeism delirium'
 - iii) 'Bolekaja' critics
 - iv) Different stages in the development of post colonial literatures

or

- b) With the texts you are conversant with, show how post colonialism is manifested in African literature.

Modernism / Postmodernism

2. a) "Postmodernism is a continuation of modernism and it also takes the counter traditional experiments of modernism to an extreme form" Do you agree?

or

- b) With reference to at least one author, show how modernism is reflected in African Literature.

Feminist Literary Criticism: Western / Afro American/ African

3. a) Discuss the contributions of any two of the following feminist theorists.
- i) Simone de Beauvoir
 - ii) Kate Millett
 - iii) Betty Friedan
 - iv) Germaine Greer

or

- b) What are the salient issues underlying the works of Alice Walker, Bessie Head and Buchi Emecheta.

Deconstruction:

4. With relevant examples, show how the concept of deconstruction is applied to literature.

Structuralism

5. Outline the key arguments in structuralism and show their relevance to the analysis of literature.

Existentialism

6. “Existentialism emphasizes the active participation of the will, rather than reason, in confronting the problems of a non-moral or absurd universe”
Discuss this idea with illustrations from any one of either Albert Camus’ or Samuel Beckett’s works.

Reader-Response criticism

7. Read the attached extract from a short story and analyse it applying the reader-response criticism.

(vi)

This passage from a short story describes a girl's visit to a bereaved household in the neighbourhood.

Then the door opened. A little woman in black showed in the gloom.

Laura said, 'Are you Mrs Scott?' But to her horror the woman answered, 'Walk in, please, miss,' and she was shut in the passage.

5 'No,' said Laura, 'I don't want to come in. I only want to leave this basket. Mother sent —'

The little woman in the gloomy passage seemed not to have heard her. 'Step this way, please, miss,' she said in an oily voice, and Laura followed her.

10 She found herself in a wretched little low kitchen, lighted by a smoky lamp. There was a woman sitting before the fire.

'Em,' said the little creature who had let her in. 'Em! It's a young lady.' She turned to Laura. She said meaningly, 'I'm 'er sister, miss. You'll excuse 'er, won't you?'

15 'Oh, but of course!' said Laura. 'Please, please don't disturb her. I — I only want to leave —'

But at that moment the woman at the fire turned round. Her face, puffed up, red, with swollen eyes and swollen lips, looked terrible. She seemed as though she couldn't understand why Laura was there. What did it mean? Why was this stranger standing in the kitchen with a basket?

20 What was it all about? And the poor face puckered up again.

'All right, my dear,' said the other. 'I'll think the young lady.'

And again she began, 'You'll excuse her, miss, I'm sure,' and her face, swollen too, tried an oily smile.

25 Laura only wanted to get out, to get away. She was back in the passage. The door opened. She walked straight through into the bedroom where the dead man was lying.

'You'd like a look at 'im, wouldn't you?' said Em's sister, and she brushed past Laura over to the bed. 'Don't be afraid, my lass,' — and now her voice sounded fond and sly, and fondly she drew down the sheet —

30 'e looks a picture. There's nothing to show. Come along, my dear.'

Laura came.

There lay a young man, fast asleep — sleeping so soundly, so deeply, that he was far, far away from them both. Oh, so remote, so peaceful. He was dreaming. Never wake him up again. His head was sunk in the pillow, his eyes were closed; they were blind under the closed eyelids. He was given up to his dream. What did garden parties and baskets and lace frocks matter to him? He was far from all those things. He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane. Happy . . . happy . . . All is well, said that sleeping face. This is just as it should be. I am content.

38

But all the same you had to cry, and she couldn't go out of the room without saying something to him. Laura gave a loud childish sob.

'Forgive my hat,' she said.

45 And this time she didn't wait for Em's sister. She found her way out of the door, down the path, past all those dark people. At the corner of the lane she met Laurie.

He stepped out of the shadow. 'Is that you, Laura?'

'Yes.'

'Mother was getting anxious. Was it all right?'

50 'Yes, quite. Oh, Laurie!' She took his arm, she pressed up against him.

'I say, you're not crying, are you?' asked her brother.

Laura shook her head. She was.

Laurie put his arm round her shoulder. 'Don't cry,' he said in his warm, loving voice. 'Was it awful?'

55 'No,' sobbed Laura. 'It was simply marvellous. But, Laurie - ' She stopped, she looked at her brother. 'Isn't life,' she stammered, 'isn't life - ' But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood.

'Isn't it, darling?' said Laurie.