

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FINAL EXAMINATION 2007

TITLE OF PAPER: MODERN CRITICAL THEORY

COURSE CODE: ENG 304/ IDE ENG 304

TIME ALLOWED: TWO (2) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. ANSWER ANY 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.

1. Colonialism / Postcolonialism

- a. How did the white European settlers in the Americas, Australia and New Zealand face the problem of establishing their 'indigeneity' and differentiating it from their continuing sense of their European inheritance?

Or

- b. African literature works that are classified as postcolonial are not necessarily post independence. Do you agree? Use a sample postcolonial text and a post independence literary work to sustain your arguments.

2. Feminist Literary Criticism: Western / Afro American / African

- a. Alice Walker's "womanist consciousness" concept has greatly influenced the feminist movement in Africa. Which two African women writers eloquently manifest this influence? Use one of each of their key texts to sustain your arguments.

Or

- b. Simone de Beauvoir argues in her book, The Second Sex, that society sets up man as the positive and woman as the negative and this argument is in some ways analogous to Virginia Woolf's concept, "woman as mirror." Compare and contrast de Beauvoir's and Woolf's contributions to feminist literary criticism.

3. Existentialism

Define existentialism and clearly distinguish the divergent views on it by Jean Paul Satre and Albert Camus.

4. Modernism and postmodernism

Modernism and postmodernism started as a reaction against two cataclysmic human aberrations (the two world wars). With the help of either an African or a European literary text, show how these concepts were manifested.

5. Structuralism

In literary studies, structuralism entails the sustenance and building upon an existing order of works. Use one or two texts by African writers to showcase the application of this concept in literature.

6. Reader Response Criticism

According to Wolfgang Iser, one of the precursors of the reader response theory, the actual reader's response to a literary text depends on the reader's own literary knowledge of the subject. Read the following poem and give your response based on your knowledge of the Victorian era.

Thomas Hardy: “ “Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?”

‘Ah, are you digging on my grave,
My loved one? – planting rue?’
--- ‘No, yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
“It cannot hurt her now,” he said,
“That I should not be true.”’

‘Then who is digging on my grave?
My nearest, dearest kin?’
‘Ah, no: they sit and think, “what use!
What good will planting flowers produce?
No tendance of her mound can loose
Her spirit from Death’s gin.”’

‘But someone digs upon my grave?
My enemy? – prodding sly?’
‘Nay: when she heard you had passed the Gate
That shuts on all flesh soon or late,
She thought you no more worth her hate,
And cares not where you lie.’

‘Then who is digging on my grave?
Say – since I have not guessed!’
‘O, it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog, who still lives near,
And much I hope my movements here
Have not disturbed your rest?’

'Ah, yes! *you* dig upon my grave...

Why flashed it not on me

That one true heart was left behind!

What feeling de we ever find

To equal among human kind

A dog's fidelity!'

'Mistress, I dug upon your grave

To bury a bone, in case

I should be hungry near this spot

When passing on my daily trot.

I am sorry, but I quite forgot

It was your resting place.'