

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION - 2010

TITLE OF PAPER: INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL THEORY

COURSE CODE: ENG 204

TIME ALLOWED: TWO (2) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer any two questions. Each question carries 30 marks. The total marks for the examination is 60%.
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 use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded and the contrary will be penalised.

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

QUESTION 1

Show the connections between Mimetic Criticism and Plato's idea of literature. [30]

QUESTION 2

Distinguish between Critical Theory, Practical Criticism and Literary History. How are they related to one another? [30]

QUESTION 3

Choose either Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory or Russian Formalism and apply it to the following poem.

Porphyria's Lover : Robert Browning

The rain set early in to-night,
 The sullen wind was soon awake,
 It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
 And did its worst to vex the lake:
 I listened with heart fit to break.
 When glided in Porphyria; straight
 She shut the cold out and the storm,
 And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
 Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
 Which done, she rose, and from her form
 Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
 And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
 Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
 And, last, she sat down by my side
 And called me. When no voice replied,
 She put my arm about her waist,
 And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
 And all her yellow hair displaced,
 And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
 And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
 Murmuring how she loved me—she
 Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
 To set its struggling passion free
 From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
 And give herself to me forever.
 But passion sometimes would prevail,
 Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain
 A sudden thought of one so pale
 For love of her, and all in vain:
 So, she was come through wind and rain.
 Be sure I looked up at her eyes

Happy and proud; at last I knew
 Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
 Made my heart swell, and still it grew
 While I debated what to do.
 That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
 Perfectly pure and good: I found
 A thing to do, and all her hair
 In one long yellow string I wound
 Three times her little throat around,
 And strangled her. No pain felt she;
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.
 As a shut bud that holds a bee,
 I warily oped her lids: again
 Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
 And I untightened next the tress
 About her neck; her cheek once more
 Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
 I propped her head up as before,
 Only, this time my shoulder bore
 Her head, which droops upon it still:
 The smiling rosy little head,
 So glad it has its utmost will,
 That all it scorned at once is fled,
 And I, its love, am gained instead!
 Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
 Her darling one wish would be heard.
 And thus we sit together now,
 And all night long we have not stirred,
 And yet God has not said a word!

QUESTION 4

Plato, Cassius Longinus and Victor Shklovsky and others founded their theories of literature on the basis of some orientations. Identify the orientations from which the theories were founded and further discuss how the theories relate to the orientations. [30]

QUESTION 5

In which major orientation of literary study would you place Marxist literary theory? Justify your answer with specific reference to Alex laGuma's A Walk in the Night or Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Weep not Child. [30]