

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE
SECOND SEMESTER FINAL EXAMINATION – MAY 2015

COURSE CODE: IDE-ENG404
COURSE NAME: ADVANCED STUDIES IN AFRICAN LITERATURE
TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer Question 1, plus **one** other question.
2. Make sure you focus on the question asked and avoid unnecessary narration.
3. Make sure you adhere to relevant literary rules.
4. Make sure you proofread your work to eliminate grammatical errors and resultant loss of marks.
5. This paper is 4 pages long, cover page included.

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

Question 1 (compulsory)

“Decolonizing the mind” has seemingly been one of the major preoccupations of the Negritude poet, Birago Diop, as well as Tsitsi Dangarembga in Nervous Conditions; while the South African writer, Fugard’s major concern has been to mirror the black South African people’s struggle to survive under the apartheid regime.’ Discuss under the following topics:

- a) Birago Diop’s approach to Negritude in his poetry studied on the course such as the one cited below. [10]
- b) Dangarembga’s portrayal of Tambudzai’s experiences at Baba’s house and at Sacred Heart. [10]
- c) Fugard’s portrayal of Sizwe Bansi in “Sizwe Bansi Is Dead”. [10]

“Animism” Birago Diop

When the land of El Kanésie awakens
Miracles will come to pass,
The light springing from your brows
Will restore to Africa its fervour.

When the whiteness of millennial bones
Has shaken free the soul
Held etherized and heavy,
When other rays bombard you,

You will know then what your clay gods think,
What black-masked fetishes have said,
At flaming twilights, on beautiful nights,

You will learn then what your scriptures are,
What the voice of things repeats to the great winds
From the dark forests to the distant east.

Question 2

“The Island” Athol Fugard

Using the excerpt below as a point of departure, discuss:

- a) The perceived thematic relevance of “Antigone” to “The Island”. [10]
- b) The choices that, first, Antigone, and, later, John and Winston, have to make concerning the respective challenges they face, and their justification for those choices. [20]

John: Captain Prinsloo, Hodoshe, Warders, ...and Gentlemen! Two brothers of the house of Labdacus found themselves on opposite sides in battle, the one defending the State, the other attacking it. They both died on the battlefield. King Creon, Head of the State, decided that the one who had defended the State would be buried with all religious rites due to the noble dead. But the other one, the traitor ... who had come back from exile intending to burn and destroy his fatherland, to drink the blood of his masters, was to have no grave, no mourning. He was to lie on the open fields to rot, or at most be food for the jackals. It was the law.

Question 3

Nervous Conditions Tsitsi Dangarembga

- ✕ a) How does Dangarembga invite her readers to view Nyasha: is it as a hopeless 'coconut', nervous wreck, an admirably budding feminist, a rude African girl or...? Discuss with the aid of illustrations from the novel. [25]
- b) Do you agree with Dangarembga's portrayal of this character? [5]

Question 4

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow it:

"Negro Tramp" David Diop

You who move like a battered old dream
A dream trans-pierced by the blades of the mistral
By what bitter ways
By what muddy wanderings of accepted suffering
By what caravels drawing from isle to isle
The curtains of Negro blood torn from Guinea
Have you carried your old coat of thorns
To the foreign cemetery where you read the sky
I see in your eyes the drooping halts of despair
And dawn restarting the cotton fields and mines
I see Soundiata the forgotten
And Chaka the invincible
...
O my old Negro harvester of unknown lands
Lands of spice where everyone could live
What have they done with the dawn that lifted on your brow
With your bright stones and sabres of gold
Now you stand naked in your filthy prison
A quenched volcano exposed to others' laughter

To others' riches
To others' hideous greed
...
O buried promise
O forsaken seed
Forgive me Negro guide
Forgive my narrow heart
The belated victories the abandoned armour
Have patience the Carnival is over
I sharpen the hurricane for the furrows of the future
For you will remake Ghana and Tumbuktu
And the guitars shuddering with a thousand strokes
Great mortars booming under the blows
Pestles
Pounding
From house to house
In the coming day.

- α
- a) ~~Give a close analysis of~~ the poem's meaning by identifying its *subject, the situation it paints, its theme, tone and mood*. [15]
 - b) Discuss the poet's diction. [10]
 - c) Does the poem conform to a typical David Diop's ending of his Negritude poems? [5]
-