

ENG2603

October/November 2014

COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN LITERATURES

Duration 2 Hours

100 Marks

EXAMINERS
FIRST
SECOND

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Closed book examination

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This paper consists of 3 pages.

You must answer **TWO** questions, one from Section A and one from Section B **Each question carries 50 marks, for an examination total of 100 marks.** As indicated in your Tutorial Letter 101, your **final mark** will include the semester mark, which you obtained for your assignments. Essays should be between two and four pages long

SECTION A

You must answer **ONE** question from this section

Question 1: Michael Chapman's *A New Century of South African Poetry*

Discuss how the imagery of B W Vilakazi's 'Nightfall' highlights the negative consequences of industrial technology on the ecosystem and on humanity

"Nightfall"

I watch the darkness falling
And hills withdraw their shadows
The sun, like ochre, reddens

The swallows are at rest,
The sea-wind still and silent,
Above me fly the bats

Now, as the streets are lit,

I fear the lurking thieves
Who seek their prey like hunters

Here there is no grass,
But dust from off the mine-dumps
Like smoke is drifting skyward

Here there is no river
To shelter lurking frogs
And harbor water-fowl

Here are only people
Jostling home from labour,
Herded by dusk, together

(Malcolm, Friedman)

[50]

OR

Question 2: Fred Khumalo's *Seven Steps to Heaven*

With reference to the following extract about Thembi, who dates a white student at university, discuss the politics of class and racial stereotyping in Fred Khumalo's *Seven Steps to Heaven*

My parents were thrilled to hear that I was going out with Patrick McGuinness. A gallant Irish man, my father called him. Then he started regaling me and Mama with stories about an Irish town called Limerick. A town of poets and writers, he said. Irish people were like black people. They had suffered just like us black people. But they are still white, my mother countered later on, to me. They are still better than these black monkeys in our country, monkeys who don't want to work and blame all their misfortune on the white government, she said. Look where we are right now, despite our black colour. We took it upon ourselves to work hard, that's why I have no truck with these monkey faces who are forever whingeing about oppression, apartheid. Damn! It makes you wish you were born another colour, in another country! I can't wait to see Patrick McGuinness sitting with us at dinner table. You say he is doing his master's in Irish literature, he must be a bright boy, my father had said. But it is never too late to steer him in the right direction, my mother jumped in. Get him to do some commercial subjects, she said. What's the use of having a husband with all the theories about literature and the world, but with no commercial sense, and therefore no means of taking care of you financially? (2007: 146)

[50]

SECTION BYou must answer **ONE** question from this Section**Question 3: Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun***

Read the extract below and answer the question that follows

GEORGE (*looking at him with distaste, a little above it all*) You're all whacked with bitterness, man

WALTER (*Intently, almost quietly, between the teeth, glaring at the boy*) And you – ain't you bitter, man? Ain't you just about had it yet? Don't you see no stars gleaming that you can't reach and grab? You happy? – You contented son-of-a-bitch – you happy? You got it made? Bitter? Man, I'm a volcano Bitter? Here I am a giant – surrounded by ants! Ants who can't even understand what it is the giant is talking about

In a carefully-worded essay, examine the conversation of the two characters as underscoring the aspirations and frustrations of their class positions. Make references to the play to motivate your response

[50]

Question 4: Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*

Filomena Chioma Steady states, "True feminism is an abnegation* of male protection and a determination to be resourceful and self-reliant. The majority of black women in Africa have developed these characteristics, though not always by choice" (1981: 35)

*The action of renouncing or rejecting something

With reference to the above statement, write an essay in which you discuss the extent to which at least three women in *Nervous Conditions* try to be resourceful and self-reliant, and the ways in which the element of choice plays a role in the process

[50]

Exam Total marks: 100