

ENG2603

October/November 2015

**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 examination question paper consists of 4 pages

You must answer **TWO** questions, one from Section A and one from Section B.

Each question carries **50** marks.

The examination total is **100** marks.

[TURN OVER]

SECTION A

You must answer ONE question from this section

Question 1: Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

BENEATHA (*Eagerly opening the package and drawing out some records and the colourful robes of a Nigerian woman*) Oh Asagai! ... You got them for me! . How beautiful and the records too! (*She lifts out the robes and runs to the mirror with them and holds the drapery up in front of herself*)

ASAGAI (*Coming to her at the mirror*) I shall have to teach you how to drape it properly. (*He flings the material about her for the moment and stands back to look at her*) Ah – Oh-pay-gay-day, oh-gbah-mu-shay. (*A Yoruba exclamation for admiration*) You wear it well very well. mutilated hair and all

BENEATHA (*Turning suddenly*) My hair – what’s wrong with my hair?

ASAGAI (*Shrugging*) Were you born with it like that?

BENEATHA (*Reaching up to touch it*) No of course not.
(*She looks back to the mirror, disturbed*)

ASAGAI (*Smiling*) How then?

BENEATHA You know perfectly well how . as crinkly as yours . . that’s how

ASAGAI And it is ugly to you that way?

BENEATHA (*Quickly*) Oh, no-not ugly .. (*More slowly, apologetically*) But it’s so hard to manage when it’s, well – raw

ASAGAI And so to accommodate that – you mutilate it every week?

BENEATHA It’s not mutilation!

(Act One, Scene II)

Using the scene from *A Raisin in the Sun* above as your starting point, write an essay in which you discuss Asagai’s influence on Beneatha’s identity and the changes her identity undergoes during the play

[50]

OR

[TURN OVER]

Question 2: Fred Khumalo, *Seven Steps to Heaven*

In *Seven Steps to Heaven*, Fred Khumalo places greater emphasis on Sizwe's personal journey and the process of his identity formation than on the larger political transition that was taking place in the country at the time the novel is set.

Through close reading of the extracts below, write an essay in which you discuss the statement above

Extract 1:

In his journal, he wrote 'I am tired of this I feel dirty This is disgusting I feel inferior I feel belittled Why is it that I always come after Thulani? His father seems to be leading the way, while mine follows Why is this so? Are we inferior to them? Is there something wrong in our intellectual make-up?' It was a question that would keep popping up in his mind in the years to follow

As an afterthought, he made the following entry 'I lost my virginity on the same day that Mandela was released from prison Any significant meaning behind this?'

He laughed out loud until his mother poked her head into his bedroom 'Are you all right?'

'Mandela's release has made me a mature, happy young man!'

Extract 2:

The South African elections of 1994 were one of the biggest stories of the century They marked the end of apartheid, the most abominable system of racial oppression in the world They also marked the return of the country to the fold of the international community after more than three decades of isolation as a result of its segregationist, violent regime

But to Sizwe this moment was just a blur he never got to appreciate, engrossed as he was in the biography, hardly sleeping and hardly venturing out of the house He read few newspapers these days, relying on Patrick to keep the clippings that would be of interest to him He was quarantined in his writing studio, with Patrick coming in now and then to give him food and drink He also prepared a huge collection of zols, which Sizwe smoked one after the other as he wrote feverishly

[50]

SECTION B

You must answer ONE question from this section
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Question 3: Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

At the conclusion of *Nervous Conditions*, Nyasha is afflicted by both anorexia and a nervous breakdown She says to Tambu. "Look what they've done to us [] I'm not one of them but I'm not one of you."

Using Nyasha's comment as a starting point, write an essay in which you explore how her identity has been shaped by the colonial experience. You should also analyse other significant moments in the novel to support the argument that you develop Remember that your essay should be carefully structured and that each paragraph should have a particular focus

[50]

[TURN OVER]

OR**Question 4: Michael Chapman, *The New Century of South African Poetry***

Discuss the ways in which the poem "To Whom It May Concern" explores the theme of identity in urban apartheid South Africa. You should avoid simply summarising the poem and you should instead identify significant words or phrases and show how these advance the poem's central concerns. This analysis should be carefully structured and each paragraph should develop a particular idea

"To Whom It May Concern" (Sipho Sepamla)

Bearer

Bare of everything but particulars

Is a Bantu

The language of a people in southern Africa

He seeks to proceed from here to there

5

Please pass him on

Subject to these particulars

He lives

Subject to the provisions

Of the Urban Natives Act of 1925

10

Amended often

To update it to his sophistication

Subject to the provisions of the said Act

He may roam freely within a prescribed area

Free only from the anxiety of conscription

15

In terms of the Abolition of Passes Act

A latter-day amendment

In keeping with moon-age naming

Bearer's designation is Reference number 417181

And (he) acquires a niche in the said area

20

As a temporary sojourner

To which he must betake himself

At all times

When his services are dispensed with for the day

As a permanent measure of law and order

25

Please note

The remains of R/N 417181

Will be laid to rest in peace

On a plot

Set aside for Methodist Xhosas

30

A measure also adopted

At the express request of the Bantu

In anticipation of any faction fight

Before the Day of Judgement

[50]