



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, THEOLOGY, HUMANITIES & EDUCATION

HNE 321: CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN DRAMA

END OF SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATIONS

MAY 2021

LECTURER: J. MUZAMHINDO

DURATION: 7 HRS

INSTRUCTIONS

Answer **ONE (1)** question only.

Attempt **ALL** sections of the question.

Credit will be awarded for logical AND systematic presentations.

Question 1

In plays, one identifies the movements and gestures through the dialogue and stage directions.

(a) Read the following passage below, identify the movements/gestures in the excerpt:

AYA: [Entering to find him in this state] My son, is this weeping you're weeping? What is the matter?

ANANSE: [Wringing out the handkerchief,] Mother!

AYA: My stalwart son

ANANSE: Mother. [He returns the handkerchief and acting like a man in conflict. Yells out:] Destroyers! Evil-doers! They won't rest until they have ruined me. Enemies whose outward appearance makes you think they are not enemies

AYA: [Wide-eyed with confusion] Enemies? It's that woman Christy, isn't it? The minute I met that woman here I felt instinctively that trouble marches alongside people of her kind

ANANSE: [Bursting into fears afresh] Handkerchief! (Act 3, p52)

(From *The Marriage of Anansewa* by Efua T. Sutherland)

(a) Based on the knowledge you have acquired in this course, define what is meant by the term "contemporary". In your response, discuss what is 'contemporary' in Contemporary African Drama. Illustrate with relevant examples.

(b) Discuss some of the major issues and functions of theatre in contemporary African society. Support your answer with relevant examples from specific plays you have read or studied.

(c) Identify dramatic techniques that are used by any playwright of your choice and explain briefly do they achieve in the play.

Question 2

Read the following excerpt from *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* and answer the questions that follow:

KIMATHI: I will not plead to a law in which we had no part in the making.

JUDGE: Law is law. The rule of law is the basis of every civilized community. Justice is justice

KIMATHI: Whose law? Whose justice?

JUDGE: There is only one law, one justice.

KIMATHI: Two laws. Two justices. One law and one justice protects the man of property, the man of wealth, the foreign exploiter. Another law, another justice, silences the poor, the hungry, our people.

(Jubilance and excitement among the Africans. Fury in the faces of the settlers. Tension)

JUDGE: I am not talking about the laws of Nyandarua jungle

KIMATHI: The jungle of colonialism? Of exploitation? For it is there that you'll find creatures of prey feeding on the blood and bodies of those who toil: those who make the earth yield... (*Second Movement* pgs. 25-26)

(a) Using the above excerpt as a starting point, discuss the themes dealt with by Ngugi wa Thiongo and Micere Githae Mugo's *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. In your response highlight some of the socio-cultural factors and political problems that influenced the content and form of contemporary African drama during the colonial period. (30 marks)

(b) Examine the significance of the events of the Mau Mau. In your response, you may explore the effect the movement had on individuals in Kenya as David Anderson, professor of African Politics at Oxford University, posits that: *"Everything that could happen did happen. Allegations about beatings and violence were widespread. Basically you could get away with murder. It was systematic."* In your response you can explore race relations between the colonisers and the indigenous communities in Kenya after it was estimated that the death toll in the conflict (Mau Mau rebellion) to have been as high as 25,000. (30 marks)

Question 3

"A song is something that we communicate to those people who otherwise would not understand where we are coming from. You could give them a long political speech – they would still not understand. But I tell you: when you finish that song, people will be like 'Damn, I know where you nigga's are comin' from. Death unto Apartheid!'" – (Sifiso Ntuli). Using this quotation as a starting point, discuss the dramatic function of songs in Contemporary African Drama. Make reference to specific plays to support your answer.

End of Paper