

University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Faculty of Arts

Special Degree Examination in Arts (English), Year 4, Semester II, 2016/2017

ENG 4277 – Postcolonial African Writing

Two Hours

Answer any **THREE (3)** questions.

Question 4 is an OPEN BOOK question.

Please do not refer to the same literary text in more than one answer.

Either

1. a) Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* "offers a rigorous exploration of the complexities of post-independence politics." Critically examine this statement with close reference to Achebe's novel.

Or

b) In Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*, the major ideologue – Ikem – declares that nation-building may follow a number of different paths. However, he refrains from making definite "prescriptions" for the changes the novel advocates. Discuss the alternative socio-political constructions proposed in *Anthills of the Savannah*, with close reference to the text.

Either

2. a) Discussing the concept of the 'Anthropological Exotic', Graham Huggan notes that writing from postcolonial contexts is often viewed "as primarily an export product, aimed at largely foreign audiences for whom the writer acts, willingly or not, as cultural spokesperson or interpreter." How would you read Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* in light of Huggan's claim above?

Or

b) The polyvocality in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* enables a wide representation of racial, class, gender and generational issues in the construction of a new nation-state. Critically analyse the above statement with detailed reference to Adichie's text.

3. Postcolonial literature is often seen in very general terms “as having both a recuperative and deconstructive dimension: recuperative insofar as it conscripts the literary text into the service of a continually refashioned cultural identity; deconstructive insofar as it [...] works towards dismantling self-privileging Western modes of vision and thought.”

Is this a fair assessment of the postcolonial African literature that you have read? Discuss in relation to any film/novel of your choice.

4. **OPEN BOOK QUESTION**

Either

- a) Write a critical introduction to a selection of South African poems, drawing on Andrew Foley’s (2016) insights into the ‘politics of anthologising’ in your response. Make detailed references to **THREE (3)** poems in your answer.

Or

- b) Evaluate the manner in which the ‘quotidian experience’ is explored and exploited in the work of the South African poets that you have read. Make detailed references to **THREE (3)** poems in your answer.
