208/1 UCE LITERATURE SEMINAR 2022

***Sample Contexts***

**FRANCIS IMBUGA: *The Return of Mgofu***

ADONIJA: (*Standing up quickly*) Did you hear that? That’s him. I knew Mgofu would be

back. You know Mgofu didn’t die! Mgofu is back!

MATIA: Our kinsman, sit down.

ADONIJA: Oh, I’m so happy. Better birth than death. Have you ever seen someone at

their moment of departure from this world?

BIZIA: What kind of question is that?

ADONIJA: (*To audience*) Have you? Have you ever seen someone die? Aah, but what is

the use, you will probably think that I’m crazy if I tell you. (*Pause*) I have

evidence here. I saw them kill one another because of soil. It’s all here. I secretly

recorded some of their meetings. There were preachers, priests and a chief. They

were all there, plotting to shed the blood of their brothers and sisters.

BIZIA: What is your name?

ADONIJA: Name? I have already answered that question. Everything starts with a name,

and then you are either friend or foe. What is in a name? Father, Pastor or Chief,

what do you mean? What is in a name? They hunted one another like mad dogs.

They destroyed our good name. This time I said no, not again. I will not be party

to this again. So I decided to become Mgofu Ngoda’s eyes.

BIZIA: (*To* *Mude*) Does that make any sense to you?

MUDE: Yes it does. It means someone somewhere has driven this man to the fringes of

existence. That is how we transform people to be animals. We learnt that at the

academy.

ADONIJA: You don’t seem to have graduated yet, and you might never. (*Turning to the*

*rest*) Mgofu Ngoda died. He died in my arms, but the old python renews itself

with thorns and thistles. Mgofu has just come back to us.

BIZIA: How do you know?

ADONIJA: How do I know? The pumpkin never says, ‘worms have eaten my belly’. When

you graduate in the academy of life – you will hear the baby cry. But you and

good Adonija here are still waiting to graduate. (*Paces*) Before he died in my

arms, Mgofu Ngoda promised to return soon. That is him.

***Questions:***

1. What leads to this conversation? (06 marks)
2. Who are ‘they’ that Adonija is talking about? What is their relationship with the people in the passage?(04 marks)
3. Describe the character and role of Adonija in the passage. (06 marks)
4. Explain what happens after this passage. (04 marks)

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*: The Merchant of Venice***

Portia: He is well paid that is well satisfied,

And I delivering you, am satisfied

And therein do account myself well paid,

My mind was never yet more mercenary.

I pray you know me when we meet again,

I wish you well and so I take my leave.

Bassanio: Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further,

Take some remembrance of us as a tribute,

Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you

Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Portia: You press me far, and therefore I will yield,

Give me your gloves, I’ll wear them for your sake,

And for your love I’ll take this ring from you,

Do not draw back your hand, I’ll take no more,

And you in love shall not deny me this.

Bassanio: This ring good sir, alas it is a trifle,

I will not shame myself to give you this.

Portia: I will have nothing else but only this,

And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bassanio: There’s more depends on this than on the value

The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,

And find it out by proclamation,

Only for this I pray you pardon me.

Portia: I see sir you are liberal in offers,

You taught me first to beg, and now methinks

You teach me how a beggar should be answer’d

***Questions:***

1. What events lead to this scene? (05 marks)
2. What does this passage reveal about Portia’s character? (05 marks)
3. Why do you think Bassanio is reluctant to give his ring to Portia? What would you have done if you were in his position? Give reasons for your answer. (05 marks)
4. What does Portia mean by “I pray you know me when we meet again”? How does what she says happen later in the play? (05 marks)

**JOHN STEINBECK: *The Pearl***

The iron ring pounded against the gate. Kino took off his hat and stood waiting. Coyotito moaned a little in Juana’s arms, and she spoke softly to him. The procession crowded close the better to see and hear.

After a moment the big gate opened a few inches. Kino could see the green coolness of the garden and the little splashing fountain through the opening. The man who looked out at him was one of his own race. Kino spoke to him in the old language. “The little one – the firstborn – has been poisoned by the scorpion,” Kino said. “He requires the skill of the healer.”

The gate closed a little, and the servant refused to speak in the old language. “A little moment,” he said. “I go to inform myself,” and he closed the gate and slid the bolt home. The glaring sun threw the bunched shadows of the people blackly on the white wall.

The servant from the gate came to the open door and stood waiting to be noticed.

“Yes?” the doctor asked.

“It is a little Indian with a baby. He says a scorpion stung it.” The doctor put his cup down gently before he let his anger rise.

“Have I nothing better to do than cure insect bites for ‘little Indians’? I am a doctor, not a veterinary.”

“Yes, Patron,” said the servant.

“Has he any money?” the doctor demanded. “No, they never have any money. I, I alone in the world am supposed to work for nothing – and I am tired of it. See if he has any money!”

At the gate the servant opened the door a trifle and looked out at the waiting people. And this time he spoke the old language.

“Have you money to pay for the treatment?”

Now Kino reached a secret place somewhere under his blanket. He brought out a paper folded many times. Crease by crease he unfolded it, until at last there came to view eight small misshapen seed pearls, as ugly and gray as little ulcers, flattened and almost valueless. The servant took the paper and closed the gate again, but this time he was not gone long. He opened the gate just wide enough to pass the paper back.

“The doctor has gone out,” he said. “He was called to a serious case.” And he shut the gate quickly out of shame.

***Questions:***

1. What leads to the passage? (06 marks)
2. Describe the character of the doctor in the passage. (04 marks)
3. Mention and explain two themes revealed in the passage. (04 marks)
4. What happens after the passage? (06 marks)

**LAWRENCE DARMANI: *Grief Child***

When Nimo dashed into the house dripping rain-water with Mahama trudging after him, the first place he glanced towards was the kitchen. He expected to see his wife and daughter but they were not there. He looked round and saw that the pepper his wife must have left drying in the weak sun was now drenched with water. Impulsively he bent down and lifted the basket and its contents into the kitchen.

Mahama, who was on his way to his room, looked round and saw some clothes on the drying line. Quickly he gathered them and rushed to the shed where Nimo was wiping streaks of water from his face.

‘I knew it was going to be heavy rain,’ Nimo said.

‘It is.’

Nimo left the shed and entered the kitchen again. There was no sign of his wife and daughter. There was no freshly cut firewood to indicate that they were home. He walked through the rain towards his wife’s room. The door was locked. He went back to the shed where Mahama, suddenly realizing that Birago and Yaa were not at home, wore a confused face more gloomy than his master’s.

‘They’re not home yet? Mahama asked.

‘It seems not.’

They sat down. Nimo’s eyes were fixed on the entrance of the house, expecting Birago and Yaa to rush in, wet but grateful. Through the door he could see people rushing past to their own houses. Three times within a short while Nimo got up and sat down again. He was clearly impatient.

‘Sometimes Birago behaves like a child,’ Nimo burst out his distress. ‘How can she remain on the farm in this rain?’

‘Maybe they’re waiting for the rain to pass.’

‘Waiting where?’

But worry soon replaced impatience and fear took over from worry. Unable to hold on any longer Nimo took his machete and told Mahama, ‘We can’t just sit down like this, Mahama.’

***Questions:***

1. What events lead to this passage? (06 marks)
2. Describe Nimo and Mahama’s feelings in the passage? (04 marks)
3. Describe the character of Nimo in the passage. (04 marks)
4. What happens immediately after the passage? (06 marks)

***Sample Essay Questions:***

1. ***Title questions***
2. How relevant is the title, *The Return of Mgofu* to the play, *The Return of Mgofu*?
3. What makes Antonio, the merchant of a dominant character in the play, *The Merchant of Venice*?
4. How suitable is the title, *The Pearl* to John Steinbeck’s novel, *The Pearl*?
5. Discuss the relevance of the title *Grief Child* to the novel, *Grief Child*.
6. Highlight the various shadows of time in the novel, *Shadows of Time.*
7. What are the voices of the people in the play, *Voice of the People*?
8. What actually falls apart in the novel, *Things Fall Apart*?
9. Do you find Mema or Ntsame Minlame, a dominant character in the novel, *Mema*? Why?
10. Who are the heart soothers in the play, *The Heart Soothers*?
11. ***Character questions***
12. Describe to character of Mgofu Ngoda as brought out in the play *The Return of Mgofu*.
13. Why would you prefer Antonio to any other character in the play *The Merchant of Venice*?
14. What of Kino makes him quite outstanding in the novel, *The Pearl*?
15. What makes Adu the darling of the reader of the novel, *Grief Child*?
16. Describe the character of Flora as portrayed in the story, *Shadows of Time*.
17. How does Nasirumbi standout as good leader in the play, *Voice of the People*?
18. Discuss the character of Okonkwo as brought out in the novel, *Things Fall Apart*.
19. What are Mema’s most outstanding qualities of a good mother?
20. In which ways is Jimmy portrayed as a young man of modernity in the play, *The Heart Soothers*?
21. ***Thematic questions***
22. What are Imbuga’s major concerns in the play, *The Return of Mgofu*?
23. Illustrate the theme of love as portrayed in the play, *The Merchant of Venice*.
24. Discuss any five themes in the novel, *The Pearl*.
25. Closely referring to the story of *Grief Child*, point out the causes of grief.
26. What social evils are brought out in the novel, *Shadows of Time*?
27. What does Nasirumbi hate about Boss’ government in the play, *Voice of the People*?
28. Describe the most important ideas brought out in the story, *Things Fall Apart*.
29. What does Mengara advocate in the novel, *Mema*?
30. What are the main conflicts in the play, *The Heart Soothers*?
31. ***Questions on Relevance***
32. How relevant is the play, *The Return of Mgofu* to African countries?
33. What is the relevance of the play, *The Merchant of Venice* to the modern society?
34. How relevant is the story of *The Pearl* to your society?
35. How closely can the story of *Grief Child* relate to your society?
36. What is the relevance of the novel, *Shadows of Time* to a Ugandan society?
37. What are the similarities between Boss’ government in *Voice of the People* and that of your country?
38. What particular characters and situations do you find familiar in *Things Fall Apart*?
39. In which ways can a Ugandan reader identify with the story of *Mema*?
40. How accurate is the assertion that the story of *The Heart Soothers* isn’t peculiar to a Ugandan society?

1. ***Questions on Lessons***
2. Discuss the major lessons derived from the play, *The Return of Mgofu*.
3. Discuss the lessons derived from the play, *The Merchant of Venice*.
4. Discuss the important lessons derived from the novel, *The Pearl*.
5. How relevant is the play, *Voice of the People* to the contemporary situation?
6. What lessons does a Ugandan student derive from the novel, *Things Fall Apart*?
7. What important moral lessons does a Ugandan reader draw from the story of *Mema*?
8. What caution does Onzivua put across to the reader of the play, *The Heart Soother*?

**DAVID RUBADIRI: *Growing up with Poetry***

***Either:*** *Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow.*

***Life is Tremulous***

Life is tremulous like a waterdrop on a mophane tree

My body is wrinkled, my hair grey

The talk is Bushmen everywhere

I am called a ‘no body’

A race of ragged filthy people

Who cannot clean their floors

Whose blanket is the firewood

Who spit and sneeze freely everywhere

Whose bodies smell of root-ointment

Or like a cowhide soaked in the river water

My countrymen call me names

I am torn between life and death

Propped between freedom and slavery

My tears glide in pairs down my cheeks

My hands shake because of old age

I am no more than a refugee

A loafer they say

Yet others loaf too whilst other men work

It is true I do not worry for lunch

As birds do not worry for theirs too

To me the delights of knowledge

And the pomp of power are anathema

Life is tremulous like drops

Of water on mophane leaf

My countrymen eat, drink and laugh

I and my fellow men and women sleep under trees

In caves or open ground

We starve, we can no longer hunt freely

Life is a scourge, a curse

It is tremulous like a drop of water on a mophane leaf.

*Albert G. T. K. Malikongwa (Botswana)*

***Questions:***

1. Describe the speaker in the poem. (02 marks)
2. What is the poem about? (05 marks)
3. Explain the meaning of the following expressions as used in the poem: (04 marks)

i) The talk is Bushmen everywhere

I am called a ‘no body’

ii) A race of ragged filthy people

Who cannot clean their floors

1. How is the life of the speaker and his likes a scourge? (05 marks)
2. What are your feelings towards the countrymen who eat, drink and laugh as described by the speaker? (04 marks)

***Or:*** *Select a poem you have studied on the theme of Village Life and use it to answer the following questions.*

1. State the title of the poem and the name of the poet. (04 marks)
2. What is the poem about? (06 marks)
3. Why have you chosen this particular poem? (05 marks)
4. What lessons do you learn from the poem? (05 marks)

**D. AMATESHE: *An Anthology of East African Poetry***

***Either:*** *Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow.*

***Illegal Brew (****Dr. Noah K. Ndosi)*

He was a man

of favoured health,

whose speech was clarity

- a successful player

in the mysterious game

of fluctuating life

The beginning

was only a few sips;

but each time

he hit the fullness

of bulging calabashes

Time pulled on;

his head entered a pot

and remained

firmly stuck in;

his head flooding

with intoxicating

currents of alcohol,

he is now the last

to leave the beer markets.

Despite floods of warnings

from families and friends,

he firmly transplanted

his young life

on the lip-burning

illegal brew

Of late,

his bowels have become

visibly distended;

his breath short

and shallow

he also drags thickly

swollen limbs.

Beyond despair,

he sees the leveller coming

to add him to a list

like some heedless neighbour

who perished the same way.

***Questions:***

1. Describe the speaker in the poem. (02 marks)
2. Explain what the poem is about? (05 marks)
3. Explain the meaning of the following words/phrases as used in the poem: (04 marks)
4. favoured
5. fluctuating
6. head entered a pot
7. floods

d) Describe the feelings that the poem arouses in you and why? (04 marks)

e) What makes this poem appealing to you? (05 marks)

***Or:*** *Select a poem by* ***Everett Standa*** *from An Anthology of East African Poetry and answer the following questions.*

1. State the title of the poem. (02 marks)
2. What is the poem about? (06 marks)
3. Why have you chosen this particular poem? (06 marks)
4. What lessons do you learn from this poem? (06 marks)

***The Labourer is Worthy His Hire!***