

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION 2011 / 2012

TITLE OF PAPER: TRADITIONAL/ORAL LITERATURE 11

COURSE CODE : AL 315 / IDE-AL 315

TIME ALLOWED: THREE (3) HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS :**
- 1. ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS, CHOOSING
ATLEAST ONE (1) FROM EACH SECTION.**
 - 2. EACH QUESTION SHOULD BE COMMENCED ON A
SEPARATE PAGE.**
 - 3. CANDIDATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BRING ANY
READING MATERIAL INTO THE
EXAMINATION HALL**
 - 4. IN THE ASSESMENT OF THIS PAPER, CORRECT
USAGE OF ENGLISH, THE QUALITY OF EXPRESSION
AND THE PRESENTATION OF ANSWERS WILL BE
TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT**

**THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED
BY THE INVIGILATOR.**

SECTION A: THE NATURE AND THEORY OF ORAL NARRATIVES

1. Examine the role of the narrator and the audience in the performance of Swazi folktales (20 marks).
2. Comment on the fluid and ambiguous nature of oral narratives (20 marks).
3. Briefly comment on the following theories of oral narrative studies
 - a). Evolutionism (4 marks)
 - b). Functionalism (4 marks)
 - c). Diffusionism (4 marks)
 - d). Formalism (marks)
 - e). Psychoanalysis and symbolism (marks)
4. Read the following story and answer the questions that follow:

WHY PIGS DIG THE SOIL

Once upon a time, Mr. Tortoise was invited to attend the wedding of his best friend. This was a special occasion and Mr. Tortoise wanted to create a real impression. But as usual, he was so poor that he could not even afford a goat. So he sat in front of his hut wondering how he could obtain a gift that could make his best friend happy.

When his wife came back from the stream and found him in a pensive mood, she asked, "What on earth must be troubling the father of my children?" Mr. Tortoise replied: "keeper of my hut, you know that my best friend is to get married the next market day. I have thought of an appropriate gift but, unfortunately, it is beyond my means". The wife thought for a while and his face brightened. "Owner of my laps", she said, why don't you go to your friend Mr. Pig and ask him to give you two sacks of grain which you will return after the next harvest?"

"That is a bright idea, warmer of my bed", answered Mr. Tortoise, "I wonder why I had not thought of it all this time. I will go at once".

Mr. Tortoise went to Mr. Pig and was warmly received. After having served his friend with fresh palm wine and kola nuts, he enquired: "What brings my friend to this humble part of the village so early in the morning?"

Tortoise gulped down two calabashes of palm wine before replying: "There is nothing wrong I just thought I should pay a visit to my brother here whom I have not seen for the past two market days. By the way, you must have heard that my friend Lela the Hare will soon be married. I have already preserved a cow for the feast but I need some grain for fufu which I know you like very much. So I thought of asking you for two sacks of grains which will be returned by the next harvest. I am also inviting u to be my right hand man at the ceremony".

Mr. Pig was a hedonist and found the idea of being a special guest so pleasing that he forgot to ask Mr. Tortoise where he hoped to find the two sacks of grain since he was not only lazy and improvident but also had no farm of his own.

Mr. Pig hurriedly gave Mr. Tortoise the two sacks of grains, and accompanied him to the wedding where they feasted for a whole market day.

When the villagers began harvesting their crops, Mr. Pig thought it was time for him to remind Mr. Tortoise of the promise. Mr. Tortoise's hut was situated on top of a hill so that he could spy anybody approaching it for a distance. Immediately he saw Mr. Pig climbing the hill, he fell flat on his back and asked his wife to start grinding corn on his belly.

By the time Mr. Pig arrived, Madam Tortoise was busy grinding grain to the rhythm of the following work song:

Grinding grain is a woman's job

Grinding grain is a pleasant task

Especially as the flour is used

To prepare the fufu to fill her Lords hungry stomach

Grub grub grub grub

The grinding stone is singing

Grin grin grin

The grinding stone is singing;

Mr. Pig knocked but Madam Tortoise pretended not to have heard. He knocked again but no reply. He knocked the third time before she answered.

After greeting her, he asked if her husband was in. She replied that he was out. He asked if she knew where he went and when he was expected back. She answered in a very angry voice: "since when did u men start telling your wives where you are going? If I went to your house now and ask your wife of your whereabouts would she know?"

The pig was puzzled. Why was Madam Tortoise angry with him? Anyway, no woman would treat him in that manner and get away with it. He would teach her a lesson. He picked up what he thought was the grinding stone and threw it out of the door. "Now answer me woman!" He shouted.

Just then, Mr. Tortoise, whom Mr. Pig in his anger had thrown out thinking it was the grinding stone, walked in and greeted his friend very warmly. He offered him hospitality and then told him that he had just been to Mr. Pig's house to tell him that his two sacks of grains were ready. He added that since Mr. Pig was present, he could convey his sacks of grains immediately.

"Wait a minute", said Madam Tortoise, your friend has not behaved like a gentleman. He met me grinding grain and bombarded me with questions until my head ached. To make matters worse, he threw my grinding stone away. Now I cannot prepare your afternoon meal in time. I am a woman and so cannot ask him to apologize but he should at least bring back my grinding stone before he takes away his sacks of grains".

"The woman is right", said the pig. "I will just step out and bring back her grinding stone". He went and looked around but could not see the grinding stone. He looked everywhere but saw nothing. He then started digging the soil in the hope of finding the grinding stone. This explains why the pig is always digging the ground.

Questions:

- a). Comment on the narrator's use of dialogue in the story (5 marks).
- b). Discuss the significance of the song in the story (5marks).
- c). "The fact that animal tricksters almost always emerge victorious in whatever they do does not mean the people approve of their activities. Rather, the people see in the trickster figures a reflection of the vices they condemn, the follies they ridicule and the evil with which they must contend". Discuss the validity of the above assertion with reference to the above story and other related stories you have studied (10 marks).

SECTION B: PROVERBS AND RIDDLES

5. "Proverbs like riddles are used to test mental abilities". Discuss this statement (20 marks)
6. With Relevant examples drawn from Swazi society, comment on the following categories of proverbs:
1. Cosmological reflections (5marks).
 2. Socio-cultural and domestic (5 marks).
 3. Morality and ethics of behaviour (5marks).
 4. Science and logic (5 marks).
7. Are riddles popular in contemporary Swaziland? Support your answer with concrete examples. (20 marks).