

P310/1
Prose and Poetry
3hrs

UGANDA ADVANCED CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION
LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

PAPER 1

PROSE AND POETRY

TIME: 3 HOURS

Instructions:

Attempt **ALL QUESTIONS**

SECTION I (34 marks)

Q.1 Read the following extract and answer the questions that follow on it.

Identity is who and what a person is. Now, you would think that is easy enough for anyone to know. But is it? Someone asks you who you are and you answer, 'I am Angela Vuyanzi' or 'I am Suleiman Samiji.' Answers like these are certainly useful. Your name is part of your identity. One may argue that a mere name does not tell really much about your identity. But it does. A comprehensive identity profile of a person should also tell us about their gender, their community their origins, their beliefs, their profession. In any case, even the names we are called often derive from a combination of these things. Thus, we can rationally assume that a person called Angela Vuyanzi is female, Christian, probably from western Kenya and quite possibly from the Luhya community. Similarly, Suleiman Samiji may be assumed to be male, Muslim and probably from the Taveta community of south-eastern Kenya. More could be deduced from what a person is called. In the case of our friends mentioned above, for example, if Vuyanzi was introduced to us as 'Dr. Angela Vuyanzi' and Samiji was identified as 'Professor Suleiman Samiji,' we might begin to get some ideas of their professions. We could assume that Angela speaks O-luluhya as her home language and Samiji speaks Kitaita. But here is where we must call for some caution.

Contemporary societies are so fluid and so variable that none of the assumptions above can be taken for granted. In fact, many of them may be quite far from the reality. Because of the rapid and extensive movement of people and the mingling of cultures, identities are extremely difficult to establish. Dr. Angela Vuyanzi, for example, may be an American, born and bred in the United States. She might have a Kenyanborn father but a Vietnamese-born mother, and might never have visited Kenya or Africa for that matter. Would it be right to assume anything about her identity from her name?

Indeed, some people claim that it is impossible to know who or what anyone really is, today. This includes ourselves. We may have black skins and we may be living in an African country. We may have Ugandan, Kenyan or Zambian names, but do these features really identify us? There many young people in Kenya and Uganda, for example, whose first and home language is English!

Such people may have been born in a large city, like Nairobi, by parents who always communicated in English because they had no common ethnic language. At the schools they attended the daily language of communication was English, both as a matter of policy and also because the pupils had no other common language. Is there not a disturbing quality 'Africans' whose first and maybe only language is English, a European language? Are they Africans or Europeans? Are they African-Europeans or European-Africans? The same may be asked of the faiths they profess, the clothes they wear and, indeed, even the names they call themselves. The answer is probably that these people are a little bit of both.

The Kenyan author Mugo Gatheru call modern Africans 'children of two worlds' because of this blending of cultures and identities. Leopold Senghor, the Senegalese poet and philosopher, calls the same phenomenon, 'cultural hybridity.' In reality, however, the situation is more complicated than what these two eminent Africans suggest. We are mixtures of not just two but of many worlds. Professor Suleiman Samiji, for example, would be a child of not only his Taita world but also of his Western, 'European' education and of his Islamic faith. This reality of our being 'mixtures' worries and confuses some Africans. A character in Ferdinand Oyono's novel *Houseboy* dies agonizing about his identity, crying, 'Brother, what are we, what are we Blackmen who are called French?'

The exposure to various cultures, however, should not disconcert the modern African. It is an inevitable process of history. With the phenomenally improved means of human mobility and communication in general, it is practically impossible for any group of people to remain isolated from the rest of humankind and its varied cultures. In fact, any sensible person or community should regard this widened and intensified interaction as an opportunity rather than a threat.

What is required of the African, as of any other sensible human being, is a clear understanding of cultural identity and its main purpose, which is to make us confident and fulfilled human beings. With this understanding, the African looks at all the cultural practices available to him – languages, beliefs, technologies, arts – and chooses those that are most suitable to his or her situation. These choices should be sensible and well-reasoned and not based on mere excitement about the 'new' and especially the foreign. This practice of adopting strange practices and identities even when it is not necessary is what Okot p'Bitek, the Ugandan poet cultural scholar, calls 'apemanship'! No sensible person wants to copy other people's practices without thinking, like an ape!

- (a) State the major argument in the passage. (05 marks)
- (b) How reliable is the use of a person's name to determine his/her identity, according to the passage? (08 marks)
- (c) What reasons are given in the passage to support cultural 'cultural mix'? (10 marks)
- (d) What are the contextual meanings of the following words and expressions as used in the passage?
- i. profile (02 marks)
 - ii. rationally (01 marks)
 - iii. contemporary societies are so fluid (02 marks)
 - iv. African-Europeans or European-Africans (02 marks)
 - v. inevitable process of history (02 mark)
 - vi. fulfilled human beings (01 mark)

SECTION II (33 marks)

Q.2 Read the following story and answer the questions that follow on it.

Night would fall. Bats would zip through the air. Crickets would cry from the grass. Frogs would croak. The stars would come out. Dew would dampen the earth. Yellow squares of light would glow in the distance as kerosene lamps were lit in our homes. Finally, from across the fields or down the road a long slow yell would come:

'Youuuuuuuu! Daaaaaavee!'

Easy laughter among the boys, but no reply.

'Calling the hogs.'

'Go home, pig.'

Laughter again. A boy would slowly detach himself from the gang.

'Youuuuuuuuuu, Daaaaaaaavee!'

He would not answer his mother's call, for that would have been a sign of dependence. The boy would trot home slowly and there would be more easy laughter. More talk. One by one we would be called home to fetch water from the hydrant in the back yard, to go to the store and buy greens and meal for tomorrow, to split wood for kindling.

We were now large enough for the white boys to fear us and both of us, the white boys and the black boys, began to play our traditional racial roles as though we had been born to them, as though it was in our blood, as though we were being guided by instinct. All the frightened descriptions we had heard about each other, all the violent expressions of hate and hostility that had seeped into us from our surroundings, came now to the surface to guide our actions. The roundhouse was the racial boundary of the neighborhood, and it had been tacitly agreed between the white boys and the black boys that the whites were to keep to the far side of the round house and we blacks were to keep to our side. Whenever we caught a white boy on our side we stoned him; if we strayed to their side they stoned us.

Our battles were real and bloody; we threw rocks, cinders, coal, sticks, pieces of iron, and broken bottles, and while we threw them we longed for deadlier weapons. If we were hurt, we took it quietly; there was no crying or whimpering. If our wounds were not truly serious, we hid them from our parents. We did not want to be beaten for fighting. Once, in a battle with a gang of white boys, I was struck behind the ear with a piece of broken bottle; the cut was deep and I bled profusely. I tried to stem the flow of blood by dabbing at the cut with a rag and when my mother came from work I was forced to tell her that I was hurt, for I needed medical attention. She rushed me to a doctor, who stitched my scalp; but when she took me home she beat me, telling me that I must never fight white boys again, that I might be killed by them, that she had to work and had no time to worry about my fights. Her words did not sink in, for they conflicted with the code of the streets. I promised my mother that I would not fight, but I knew that if I kept my word I would lose my standing in the gang, and the gang's life was my life.

From: Black Boy by Richard Wright.

- (a) Who is the speaker in the story? (03 marks)
(b) Explain the causes of the conflict described in the passage. (06 marks)

- (c) What features of behaviour commonly associated with the youth does the passage demonstrate? (06 marks)
- (d) Illustrate with any FOUR examples from the passage the effectiveness of the writer's style. (12 marks)
- (e) Comment on the following in the passage: I. Tone ii. Mood iii. Attitude

SECTION III

Q.3 Read the following poem and answer the questions that follow on it.

W – W - Woman

Whence, weary woman, wailing, worn with work
Immersed in muted misery and mired in murk
In worry, wormy wheals of of whips and weeds
Of custom, crooked 'culture', creaky creeds, Denied
a voice, a visage, even a name,
Will fair fortune flare upon your frail frame?

Why, weeping waif, await wild wizard winds
To chase away the haunting, taunting fiends
That bind, and bend and bound and blight Your
life, your love, your right, your light?

When, wounded womb, will wisdom will
And steely nerve ascend the craggy hill
Assert your power, pain and pointed pact To
be, to do, to grow, be free, impact?

- (Austin Bukenya)

- (a) Identify the speaker in the poem (02 marks)
- (b) How effective is the title? (02 marks)
- (c) Clearly state the theme of the poem? (03 marks)
- (d) Give an interpretation of the meaning of the poem. (08 marks)
- (e) Show how effectively ANY FOUR devices used in the poem help in you in its appreciation
(12 marks)
- (f) Comment on the following
- I. Tone
- ii. Mood iii.
- Intention

END