



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS 2011/2012

SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR
OF ARTS AND BACHELOR OF EDUCATION
ALT 300: STYLISTICS AND LITERARY TECHNIQUES

DATE: Thursday, 29th March, 2012

TIME: 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer **THREE** questions.
2. Question 1 (**COMPULSORY**)
 1. **COMPULSORY**. What bearing does 'literary stylistics' have on the study of literature? **(26 MARKS.)**
 2. Identify and illustrate any **FOUR** stylistic features in Chinua Achebe's **Arrow of God**. How effective are they? **(22 MARKS.)**
 3. With examples, clearly define the following terms:-
 - a) **Semantic Deviations.**
 - b) **Lexical Variations.****(22 MARKS.)**
 4. Attempt a literary appreciation of the attached short story, 'BLANKETS' by Alex La Guma, bearing in mind the following:-
 - a) Setting
 - b) Plot
 - c) Characterization
 - d) Aspects of style**(22 MARKS.)**

5. Present a stylistic analysis of the attached poem, 'Zulu Girl' by Roy Campbell.

(22 MARKS.)

Text for Q.4 (Short Story)

Blankets

by Alex La Guma

Choker lay on the floor of the lean-to in the back yard where they had carried him. It was cooler under the sagging roof, with the pile of assorted junk in one corner; an ancient motor tyre, sundry split and warped boxes, an old enamel display sign with patches like maps of continents on another planet where the enameling had cracked away, and the dusty footboard of a bed. There was also the smell of dust and chicken dropping and urine in the lean-to.

From outside, beyond a chrome-yellow rhomboid of sun, came a clatter of voices. In the yard they were discussing him. Choker opened
10 his eyes, and peering down the length of his body, past the bare, grimy toes, he saw several pairs of legs, male and female, in tattered trousers and laddered stockings.

Somebody, a man, was saying: '... that was coward ... from behind, mos.'

'Ja. But look what he done to others ...'

Choker thought, to hell with those baskets. To hell with them all.

Somebody had thrown an old blanket over him. It smelled of sweat and having-been-slept-in-unwashed, and it was torn and threadbare and stained. He touched the exhausted blanket with thick, grubby fingers.

20 The texture was rough in parts and shiny thin where it had worn away. He was used to blankets like this.

Choker had been stabbed three times, each time from behind. Once in the head, then between the shoulder blades and again in the right side, out in the street, by an old enemy who had once sworn to get him.

The bleeding had stopped and there was not much pain. He had been knifed before, admittedly not as bad as this, but he thought through the pain, The basket couldn't even do a decent job. He lay there and waited for the ambulance. There was blood drying slowly on the side of
30 his hammered-copper face, and he also had a bad headache.

The voices, now and then raised in laughter, crackled outside. Feet moved on the rough floor of the yard and a face not unlike that of a brown dog wearing an expiring cloth cap, looked in.

'You still awright, Choker? Am'ulance is coming just now, hey.'

'___ off,' Choker said. His voice croaked.

The face withdrew, laughing: 'Ou Choker. Ou Choker.'

He was feeling tired now. The grubby fingers, like corroded iron clamps, strayed over the parched field of the blanket ... He was being taken down a wet, tarred yard with tough wire netting over the
40 windows which looked into it. The place smelled of carbolic disinfectant, and the bunch of heavy keys clink-clinked as it swung from the hooked finger of the guard.

They reached a room fitted with shelving that was stacked here and there with piled blankets. 'Take two, jong,' the guard said, and Choker began to rummage through the piles, searching for the thickest and warmest blankets. But the guard, who somehow had a doggish face and wore a disintegrating cloth cap, laughed and jerked him aside, and seizing the nearest blankets, found two and flung them at Choker.
50 They were filthy and smelly and within their folds vermin waited like irregular troops in ambush.

'Come on. Come on. You think I got time to waste?'

'It's cold, mos, man,' Choker said. But it wasn't the guard to whom he was talking. He was six years old and his brother, Willie, a year senior, twisted and turned in the narrow, cramped, sagging bedstead which they shared, dragging the thin cotton blanket from Choker's body. Outside the rain slapped against the cardboard-patched window, and the wind wheezed through cracks and corners like an asthmatic cold man.

'No, man, Willie, man. You got all the blanket, jong.'

60

'Well, I can't mos help it, man. It's cold.'

'What about me? Choker whined. 'What about me. I'm also cold mos.'

Huddled together under the blanket, fitted against each other like two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The woman's wiry hair got into his mouth and smelled of stale brilliantine. There were dark stains made by heads, on the crumpled, grey-white pillow, and a rubbed smear of lipstick, like a half-healed wound.

The woman was saying, half-asleep, 'No, man. No, man.' Her body was wet and sweaty under the blanket, and the bed smelled of a mixture of cheap perfume, spilled powder, human bodies and infant urine. The faded curtain over a window beckoned to him in the hot breeze. In the early slum-coloured light a torn under-garment hanging from a brass knob was spectre in the room.

The woman turned from him under the blankets, protesting, and Choker sat up. The agonized sounds of the bedspring woke the baby in the bathtub on the floor, and it began to cry, its toothless voice rising in a high-pitched wail that grew louder and louder ...

80 Choker opened his eyes as the wail grew to a crescendo and then quickly faded as the siren was switched off. Voices still splattered the sunlight in the yard, now excited. Choker saw the skirts of white coat and then the ambulance men were in the lean-to. His head was aching badly, and his wounds were throbbing. His face perspired like a squeezed-out was-rag. Hands searched him. One of the ambulance attendants asked: "Do you feel any pain?"

Choker looked at the pink-white face above his, scowling. 'No, sir.'

The layer old newspapers on which he was lying was soaked with his blood. 'Knife wounds,' one of the attendants said. 'He isn't bleeding much,' the other said. 'Put on a couple of pressure pads.'

90 He was in mid-air, carried on a stretcher and flanked by a procession of onlookers. Rubber sheeting was cool against his back. The stretcher rumbled into the ambulance and the doors slammed shut, sealing off

the spectators. Then the siren whined and rose, clearing a path through the crowd.

Choker felt the vibration of the ambulance through his body as it sped on its way. His murderous fingers touched the folded edge of the bedding. The sheet around him was white as cocaine, and the blanket was thick and new and warm. He lay still, listening to the siren.

Text for Q.5 – Poem

ZULU GIRL by Roy Campell (South African)

When in the sun the hot red acres smoulder,
Down where the sweating gang its labour plies,
A girl flings down her hoe, and from her shoulder
Unslings her child tormented by the flies.

She takes him to a ring of shadow pooled
By thorn trees: purpled with the blood of ticks
While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

5

His sleepy mouth, plugged by the heavy nipple,
Tugs like a puppy, grunting as he feeds:
Through his frail nerves her own deep languors ripple
Like a broad river sighing through its reeds.

10

Yet in that drowsy stream her flesh imbibes
An old unquenched unsmotherable heat –
The curbed ferocity of beaten tribes,
The sullen dignity of their defeat.

15

He body looms above him like a hill
Within whose shade a village lies at rest,
Or the first cloud so terrible and still
That bears the coming harvest in its breast.

20