



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**FACULTY OF COMMERCE, HUMAN SCIENCES, AND EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGES**

<b>QUALIFICATION: BACHELOR OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS (HONOURS)</b>	
<b>QUALIFICATION CODE: (08BAEN)</b>	<b>LEVEL: 8</b>
<b>COURSE CODE: AOL811S</b>	<b>COURSE NAME: AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE</b>
<b>SESSION: JULY 2025</b>	<b>PAPER: Theory</b>
<b>DURATION: 3 HOURS</b>	<b>MARKS: 75</b>

<b>SECOND OPPORTUNITY EXAMINATION QUESTION PAPER</b>	
<b>EXAMINER(S)</b>	<b>Dr. A. M. Hautemo</b>
<b>MODERATOR:</b>	<b>Dr. L. Namaseb</b>
<b>INSTRUCTIONS</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read all the questions carefully before answering.</li><li>2. Number the answers clearly</li><li>3. Give essay-type responses where necessary</li><li>4. Use blue or black ink only</li></ol>	

**THIS QUESTION PAPER CONSISTS OF 8 PAGES (Including this front page)**

## QUESTION 1

25 MARKS

Read the folktale below and discuss the characteristics of oral literature in depth. Support your analysis with examples from the text.

**Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale**

A long time ago, in a cretin place in Africa, a small village lay across a river and half a day's journey from a city where a great king lived. A man named Mufaro lived in this village with his two daughters, who were called Manyara and Nyasha. Everyone agrees that Manyara and Nyasha were very beautiful. Manyara was almost always in a bad temper. She teased her sister whenever their father's back was turned, and she had been heard to say, "Someday, Nyasha, I will be queen, and you will be a servant in my household. "If that should come to pass," Nyasha responded, "I will be pleased to serve you. But why do you say such things? You are very clever, strong, and beautiful. Why are you so unhappy?"

"Because everyone talks about how kind you are, and they praise everything you do," Manyara replied. "I'm certain that Father loves you best. But when I am a queen, everyone will know that your silly kindness is only weakness." Nyasha was sad that Manyara felt his way, but he ignored her sister's words and went about her chores. Nyasha kept a small plot of land, on which she grew millet, sunflowers, yams, and vegetables. She always sang as she worked, and some said it was her singing that made her crops more beautiful than anyone else's. One day, Nyasha noticed a small garden snake resting beneath a yam vine. "Good day, little Nyoka," she called to him. "You are welcome here. You will keep away any creatures who might spoil my vegetables." She bent forward, gave the little snake a loving pat on the head, and then returned to her work. From that day on, Nyoka was always at Nyasha's side when she tended her garden. It was said that she sang even more sweetly when he was there.

Mufaro knew nothing of how Manyara treated Nyasha. Nyasha was too considerate of her father's feelings to complain, and Manyara was always careful to behave herself when Mufaro was around. Early one morning, a messenger from the city arrived. The Great King wanted a wife. "The Most Worthy and Beautiful Daughters in the Land are invited to appear before the King, and he will choose one to become Queen!" the messenger proclaimed.

Mufaro called Manyara and Nyasha to him. "It would be a great honor to have one of you chosen," he said. "Prepare yourselves to journey to the city. I will call all our friends

together to have a wedding party. We will leave tomorrow as the sun rises.” “But, my father,” Manyara said sweetly, it would be painful for either of us to leave you, even to be wife to the king. I know Nyasha would grieve to death if she were parted from you. I am strong. Send me to the city, and let poor Nyasha be happy here with you.” Mufaro beamed with pride. “The king has asked for the worthiest and most beautiful. No, Manyara, I cannot send you alone. Only a king can choose between two such worthy daughters. Both of you must go!”

That night, when everyone was asleep, Manyara stole quietly out of the village. She had never been in the forest at night before, and she was frightened, but her greed to be the first to appear before the king drove her on. In her hurry, she almost stumbled over a small boy who suddenly appeared, standing in the path. “Please,” said the boy, I am hungry. Will you give me something to eat?” “I have brought only enough food for myself,” Manyara replied. “But, please!” said the boy. “I am so very hungry.” “Out of my way, boy! Tomorrow I will become your queen. How dare you stand in my path?”

After traveling for what seemed to be a great distance, Manyara came to a small clearing. There, silhouetted against the moonlight, was an old woman seated on a large stone. The old woman spoke, “I will give you some advice, Manyara. Soon after you pass the place where two paths cross, you will see a grove of trees. They will laugh at you. You must not laugh in return. Later, you will meet a man with his head under his arm. You must be polite to him.” “How do you know my name? How dare you advise your future queen? Stand aside, you ugly old woman!” Manyara scolded and then rushed on her way without looking back.

Just as the old woman had foretold, Manyara came to a grove of trees, and they did indeed seem to be laughing at her. “I must be calm,” Manyara thought. “I will not be frightened.” She looked up at the trees and laughed out loud. “I laugh at you, trees!” she shouted, and she hurried on. It was not yet dawn when Manyara heard the sound of rushing water. “The river must be up ahead,” she thought. “The great city is just on the other side.” But there, on the rise, she saw a man with his head tucked under his arm. Manyara ran past him without speaking. “A queen acknowledges only those who please her,” she said to herself. “I will be queen. I will be queen,” she chanted, as she hurried on toward the city. Nyasha woke at the first light of dawn. As she put on her finest garments, she thought how her life might be changed forever beyond this day. “I’d much prefer to live here,” she admitted to herself. “I’d hate to leave this village and never see my father or sing to little Nyoka again.” Her thoughts were interrupted by loud shouts and a commotion from the wedding party assembled outside. Manyara was missing! Everyone bustled out, searching and calling for her. When they found her footprints on the path that led to the city, they decided to go on as planned. As the wedding party moved through the forest, brightly plumed birds darted

about in the cool green shadows beneath the trees. Though anxious about her sister, Nyasha was soon filled with excitement about all there was to see.

They were deep in the forest when she was a small boy standing by the side of the path. "You must be hungry," she said and handed him a yam she had brought for her lunch. The boy smiled and disappeared as quietly as he had come. Later, as they were approaching the place where the two paths crossed, the old woman appeared and silently pointed the way to the city. Nyasha thanked her and gave her a small pouch filled with sunflower seeds. The sun was high in the sky when the party came to the grove of towering trees. Their uppermost branches seemed to bow down to Nyasha as she passed beneath them. At last, someone announced that they were near their destination.

Nyasha ran ahead and topped the rise before the others could catch up with her. She stood transfixed at her first sight of the city. "Oh, my father," she called. "A great spirit must stand guard here! Just look at what lies before us. I never in all my life dreamed there could be anything so beautiful!" Arm in arm, Nyasha and her father descended the hill, crossed the river, and approached the city gate. Just as they entered through the great doors, the air was rent by piercing cries, and Manyara ran wildly out of a chamber at the center of the enclosure. When she was Nyasha, she fell upon her, sobbing. "Do not go to the King, my sister. Oh, please, Father, do not let her go!" she cried hysterically. "There's a great monster there, a snake with five heads! He said that he knew all my faults and that I displeased him. He would have swallowed me alive if I had not run. Oh, my sister, please do not go inside that place." It frightened Nyasha to see her sister so upset. But, leaving her father to comfort Manyara, she bravely made her way to the chamber and opened the door.

On the seat of the great chief's stool lay the little garden snake. Nyasha laughed with relief and joy. "My little friend!" she exclaimed. "It's such a pleasure to see you, but why are you here?" "I am the king," Nyoka replied. And there, before Nyasha's eyes, the garden snake changed shape. "I am the king. I am also the hungry boy with whom you shared a yam in the forest and the old woman to whom you made a gift of sunflower seeds. But you know me best as Nyoka. Because I have been all of these, I know you to be the Worthiest and Most Beautiful Daughters of the Land. It would make me very happy if you would be my wife." And so it was that, a long time ago, Nyasha agreed to be married. The king's mother and sisters took Nyasha to their house, and the wedding preparations began. The best weavers in the land laid out their finest cloth for her wedding garments. Villagers from all around were invited to the celebration, and a great feast was held. Nyasha prepared the bread for the wedding feast from millet brought from her village. Mufaro proclaimed to all who would hear him that he was the happiest father in all the land, for he was blessed with two beautiful and worthy daughters - Nyasha, the queen, and Manyara, a servant in the queen's household.

**SECTION B ELECTIVE QUESTIONS****50 MARKS**

Answer any two questions from this section.

**QUESTION 2****25 MARKS**

Read the poem below and thereafter discuss the social functions of oral poetry in African culture. Illustrate with examples from the poem.

The Grave of the King  
I, the Bard of Gompo  
Am starting this song  
Of poverty and degradation  
Of sorrow and oppression  
Of wounds and exploitation  
Of humiliation and deprivation  
That led to the destruction of our nation  
Like the falling of the banks of a river.  
I sing it for the future generation  
Who will hear it as a story  
Of things they had not seen with their eyes  
Of things they had not heard with their ears  
For they never had to dodge the bullets  
They never had to smell gun powder  
They never had to cut war shields  
They never had to sharpen any weapons  
They never had to smelt iron  
They never had to sleep in caves.  
Sing this song  
To true patriots, Sing it!  
Embellish it with all the details  
As would a Teller of Tales.  
Sing it in memory  
Of the people of this land  
Who fought trying to save it  
Who spilled the last drop of their blood,  
From this body, so beautiful.  
To what end did they do it  
You, of the young generation, we ask,  
Those, your forebears  
Who gave their all?  
They were fighting to save their kings  
They were fighting to save their country,  
In the hope that you, their future generation

Would build those fallen walls  
And out of their strength  
Reap not the seeds of weakness  
That country is coming back  
Hold that dear in your hearts  
It is not lost, but kept  
By the "Father of Orphans";  
It is well protected  
In the "Fortress of Truth";  
Misfortune has passed it by

So, when you are ready  
They'll say:- "Here is it; Take it"  
And when you are grown and mature,  
When you understand and are united,  
When you are tired of all the quarrels,  
When your minds and hearts at peace,  
When you have retrieved your culture,  
And gone back to your roots,  
When you speak with one voice,  
Whose truth will cleave the skies,  
Then, your Moses will come,  
And in joy, you will come out.  
Sing then this song  
The Gompo Bard exhorts you  
Bless these waters  
That this king has chosen;  
They are the only waters we will love,  
Love even above gold,  
Great are the things  
We are going to do with them.  
Our work is done,  
Sandile has been offered as sacrifice.

*from The Collected Poems of S.E.K. Mqhayi,  
Edited by Ntongela Masilela,  
Translation by Phyllis Ntantala,*

### QUESTION 3

25 MARKS

Read the story below and critically evaluate it to show how it illustrates Greimas's model of folktales OR Labov's narrative structure.

#### **Daughter and Stepdaughter**

A widowed peasant with a daughter married a widow who also had a daughter, so they each had a stepchild. The stepmother was a wicked woman and constantly nagged the old man, 'Take your daughter off to the forest, to a hut. She'll spin more yam there.' What

could he do? He did as the woman said, carted his daughter off to the forest hut and gave her steel, flint and tinder, and a bag of millet, saying, "Here is fire; keep the fire burning and the porridge boiling, sit and spin, and let no one in."

Night fell. The maid heated the stove, cooked the porridge, and suddenly heard a little mouse say, "Maid, Maid, give me a spoonful of porridge." "Oh, little mouse," she cried, "stay and talk to me: I'll give you more than a spoonful of porridge, I'll feed you to your heart's content." So the mouse ate his fill and left. In the night, a bear broke in, calling, "Come on, girl, put out the light and let's play blindman's buff." The mouse came scampering up to the maid's shoulder and whispered in her ear, "Don't be afraid. Say yes, then put out the light and crawl under the stove, and I'll run about ringing a little bell." And the game began. The bear started to chase the mouse, but could not catch him; he soon began to holler and hurl logs at him; he hurled one after the other, but kept missing, and he grew tired. "You are good at playing blindman's buff, little girl," he said. "I will send you a drove of horses and a cartload of good things in the morning."

Next morning the old man's wife said, "Go and see how much yam the girl has spun since yesterday, old man." So off he set, while his wife sat waiting for him to bring back his daughter's bones! By and by, the dog began to bark. "Bow-wow-wow! The old man is coming with his daughter, driving a drove of horses and bringing a cartload of good things." "You're lying, fleabag!" shouted the step-mother. "Those are her bones rattling and clanking in the cart." The gate creaked, the horses raced into the yard, and the old man and his daughter sat in the cart. With a cartload of good things! The woman's eyes gleamed with greed. "That's a pittance!" she cried. "Take my daughter to the forest for the night: she'll come home driving two droves of horses with two cartloads of good things."

The peasant drove his wife's daughter Natasha to the hut, providing her with food and fire. At nightfall, she cooked porridge for herself. Out came the little mouse asking for a spoonful of porridge. But Natasha cried. "Be off. You pest!" And she threw the spoon at him. The mouse ran away. Natasha gobbled up the porridge all by herself, put out the light and lay down in a corner.

At midnight, the bear broke in crying. "Hey! Where are you, girl? Let's have a game of blindman's buff." The maid was silent, only her teeth chattering from fear. "Ah! There you are," cried the bear. "Here, take this little bell and run. I'll try to catch you." Her hand trembled, and she took the little bell and could not stop it from ringing. Out of the darkness came the mouse's voice. "The wicked girl will soon be dead!" The next morning, the woman sent her husband to the forest, saying, "Go and help my daughter drive back two droves of horses with two cartloads of good things." The peasant went off, leaving his wife waiting at the gate. The dog began to bark. "Bow-wow-wow! The mistress's girl is coming: her bones are rattling in the bag, the old man's sitting on the nag!" "You're lying, fleabag," cried the dame. "My daughter's driving droves and bringing loads." But when she looked up, the old man was at the gate, handing her a bundle. When she opened it and saw the bones, she began to rant and rage so much that she died the next day from grief and fury. The old man lived his life peacefully with his daughter and a wealthy son-in-law, too.

**QUESTION 4****25 MARKS**

Write an essay discussing why, in your opinion, proverbs and riddles are significant in your culture. Provide examples of proverbs and riddles from your culture (translated into English) to illustrate their significance.

**END OF PAPER**