Dear Student

Thank you for submitting your first assignment on time. It was our pleasure to mark it. Hope your marks are good if not work hard in assignment 2. It was evident that many fail to follow instructions as outlined in the assignment (e.g. font type, size, line spacing, and aligning paragraphs). Please read instructions carefully before attempting to answer the questions. There are still students who are failing to reference, both in the text and when compiling a reference list. This is mainly for question two. It is recommended that you summarise your ideas. There are lots of materials available on line to help you with referencing. Please note that references that appear in the text are those that you use to write a reference list. Please read more on the course and topics to enrich your mind and share knowledge.

You might have noticed that the system via TurnItIn picks up issues of plagiarism etc. Always read through your work to check for spelling and any other errors. Do take note of these comments to avoid doing the same in assignment 2. If there is anything that you are still unsure of, do not hesitate to contact the marker-tutor.

We wish you all the best in assignment 2.

Regards,

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Course Name: SOUTHERN AFRICAN LITERATURE

Course Code: SAL721S

Department: COMMUNICATION

Course Duration: SEMESTER 2

NQF Level and Credit: LEVEL 7, 14 CREDITS

Your marker-tutor for SOUTHERN AFRICAN LITERATURE
The Namibia University of Science and Technology has appointed ANNELI NGHIKEMBUA as marker-tutor for SOUTHERN AFRICAN LITERATURE
ANNELI NGHIKEMBUA will be at your service, should you experience any problems with your studies or with the assignments. Contact details are as follows:
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Your moderator for SOUTHERN AFRICAN LITERATURE
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ASSIGNMENT 1 [50 Marks]

Answer ALL QUESTIONS

Question 1 [25 Marks]

Read the following article and attend to the question given thereafter.

IDENTITY AND IDENTITY CRISIS IN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

Every human being, in addition to having their own personal identity, has a sense of who they are in relation to the larger community—the nation. Postcolonial studies is the attempt to strip away conventional perspective and examine what that national identity might be for a postcolonial subject. To read literature from the perspective of postcolonial studies is to seek out—to listen for, that indigenous, representative voice which can inform the world of the essence of existence as a colonial subject, or as a postcolonial citizen. Postcolonial authors use their literature and poetry to solidify, through criticism and celebration, an emerging national identity.

Postcolonial literature is the best way to find out how postcolonial nations and their subjects try to redefine or rebuild their new identities through their pre-colonial past and their colonial experiences. The question of identity in itself is very crucial to the writers who come from a similar background related to colonialism and its aftermath since they express their feeling of loss and try to find out any links that make them feel the sense of. Therefore, this issue of identity is of a great importance in postcolonial literature and it is explored at a wide range by postcolonial writers in their works. It is also a fertile ground of debate concerning the attempt of postcolonial writers to reconstruct or restore their original identity and that of their peoples through literature. Elements that either construct the identity of a society or affect and reshape it like language, displacement, otherness, and so on are always present in the works of postcolonial writers, and this is the fruit of their personal experience as well as the experience of their society, and their attempt either to decolonize their literature and culture to free themselves from the chains of the imperial powers or to hybridize their discourse and stress their peoples" multicultural atmospheres.

Postcolonial Identity is a central theme to postcolonial literature since it is the result of the process of colonialism; a thing that justifies all the debates and controversies that underlie this notion and which have been dealt with earlier. This identity is forged by the colonial history and the postcolonial predicament a thing that led to the emergence of cultural and spatial elements that affected the postcolonial identity and postcolonial writers.
In fact, one of the main reasons that pushed colonised peoples to rebel against colonial powers is the feeling that they begun losing the components that forge their identity. As Paolini (1999) reports Stephen Slemon —to continue the resistance to (neo) colonialism through a deconstructive reading of its rhetoric and to achieve and reinscribe those post-colonial traditions... as principles of cultural identity and survival. (Paolini, 1999). He carries on postulating that this resistance to colonisation and this search for a distinct independent identity constitute some of the basic elements of postcolonialism. So postcolonialism is a notion that came to stress the role of postcolonial people in the world and to bring to life their voices as distinct from their colonizers’ voice. It came to highlight the postcolonial identity as different from the colonial one. For this, Paolini says the postcolonial “Other” comes back in a newly formed identity that is far away from western identity, he reports Helen Tiffin’s words that: postcolonial writers —rehabilitate the self against European appropriation. In fracturing imposed European master narratives and perspectives, postcolonialism replaces them with an —alternative vision.

This postcolonial identity can be defined through various elements that constitute it; for instance Otherness which is a key concept in defining the postcolonial identity as referring to how colonial and postcolonial subjects see each other, or more accurately how the West sees the rest and vice versa; and also how postcolonial subjects perceive themselves within their own societies. For, as Couze Venn said: —identity is an entity that emerges in relation to another or others; it is a plural self... (Couze 2006: 2). Not only Otherness is a key feature that defines postcolonial identity, there is also the issue of language and place. John McLeod reported Bhabha”s words talking about place and its effect on postcolonial identity when saying that: —we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity (McLeod 2000: 217). The issue of language is widely dealt with since it is a controversial issue when it comes to studying postcolonial literary works which constituted a unique identity through the hybrid language used by postcolonial writers; that’s why hybridity is also one of the key features that forge the postcolonial identity.

The basic elements that forge the postcolonial identity. These elements can be divided into cultural elements and spatial ones. The cultural elements are directly linked with the dialectics of language and hybridity, self and otherness; while the spatial elements are deeply rooted in the question of land and identity construction. Postcolonial writers picture the nationalists as striving to forge an independent identity but one which succeeds in coming to terms with the borrowed notions that have been imposed by the colonizer. But to understand how these postcolonial writers picture out their identity in the literature they produce we have to know first the effect of colonialism on postcolonial subjects. Imperialism tried to reconstruct a new
identity to his subjects so that it can maintain control over them easily. This process went through stages; one of these stages is through internalising the sense of inferiority of these people, also through displacing them from their lands, or though educating an élite to ensure control over colonies even after independence. So, imperialism was the main reason behind the fact that postcolonial subjects are still wandering to figure out their status in society.

The aim of the colonisers was to know and govern other lands, to be the masters; while the colonised were abused, they were treated as slaves, even those who helped the colonisers to rule, and were promised with high positions. So, the colonised perceived the colonisers as destroyers of societies and as monopolist. So, Europeans have dominated the world under the cover of civilizing the uncivilised, or savages, and securing their “happiness, prosperity and salvation of dark tribes sunk in barbarism”(Boehmer, 2005) planting the sense of inferiority, and trying to erase and destroy the colonised identity through different processes, among which are replacing their national identity with an imperial identity were among the ways by which the coloniser, in a sense, shaped the new identity of the colonised, but there has been another successful in a sense way to do so, which is educating a certain class belonging to the colonised society.

Despite the fact of being bilingual and bicultural and despite the fact of identifying with two societies (the colonial and the colonised), this category of people found itself rejected by the two types of societies. They were seen as belonging to the coloniser in their homelands, and as inferior, controlled and oppressed for Europeans. Even if they were for the split with the empire, because of their belief in achieving a national identity by compromising with the coloniser, they were alienated in their homelands. Boehmer adds that without the precious help of such a group of people, imperialism could never last as long as it did (110). After that, this élite group split from the institution that shaped their new identities. They wanted to restore the lost identity of their peoples and thus give a hand to the nationalists and speak up in support of their peoples “to claim a part of their wholeness” (Boehmer 2005, 117). So, if the coloniser hadn’t used political imperialism together with cultural imperialism, it wouldn't have succeeded spreading its power.

As Chew and Richards pointed out, the European colonialism caused distortions in many aspects of the lives of the colonised. Therefore, as Fanon assumed, colonialism did not just take the liberty of those peoples, it worked at deeper levels, on the psychological level. It destroyed the “essence of identity” of the colonised peoples through generating a “form of mental illness” (10-11).

Postcolonial literature holds as a theme identity crisis, and the way a postcolonial state recovers from a long time of suppression, postcolonial fiction writers may tell their stories (or re-tell them) through the viewpoint of an oppressed minor character, while their protagonists are always struggling to figure out an identity
in the midst of clash between a native society and a dominant oppressing society. So postcolonial literature mainly discusses the change in cultural identity that has already taken place, or the newly established change, and attempts to answer such question as: should postcolonial societies restore their original cultural identity? Should they stick to the new identity forged by the coloniser? Or should they compromise the two ways by negotiating their identities?

Postcolonial studies have been all the time interested in the question of identity through many aspects among which is language. For postcolonial scholars, using the coloniser’s language is a symptom of a distortion in identity, for this, During argues that one’s identity depends upon his choice of which language to use.(125/126). The novel, together with other means of communication, has contributed in the creation of the notion of “nation” and “nationalism” through many processes among which is the standardization of languages by drawing an image of the nation in the minds of the people. (173).

It is necessary to teach the native language so that people can maintain “the continuity of past and present and future”. So language represents the culture of people, that’s why controlling language leads to colonizing culture, the coloniser used many different ways to do so, among which are: the displacement of the colonized language and the placing of the coloniser’s language in a different area. The whole process of “knowing” also depends on language; thus, it is through language that one may recognise the world, describe and communicate it; it is through language that one may convey thoughts and ideas, and, shape. The independent governments still use these languages in their administrations, and see it as a linking language (as in the case of English; a universal language), but this privileging attitude cause “social and cultural implication” and native languages begin losing their influence.

Migration constitutes one of the central interests of postcolonial studies since it brought into being a new way and a different perspective to view identity. The question of identity, as studied by postcolonial scholars, is no more bound to questions of nationality or ethnicity; as imperialism and displacement has led to the emergence of this new category of people who mix a variety of cultures and traditions. Migration has created a new way to view identity, and has contributed to making identity a crucial theme in postcolonial literature (242-248). For, the crisis of identity in postcolonial societies, as the editors of The Empire Writes Back pointed out, comes out of the tight link between the place and the self. The mass migration caused by colonization and after colonization periods, deliberate or undesired, hinders the sense of self; and by undesired or forced migration we mean slavery.
In answering the question below, use your own words as far as possible.

1.1) Drawing from the above article, what is identity in post-colonialism? Also, outline the identity crisis that arises in postcolonialism.

This question required students to draw from the article. Students’ responses will vary. The responses were to be placed in well written paragraphs touching on both requirements of the questions i.e. what is identity in postcolonialism and identity crisis. Students should demonstrate that they have indeed understood the article and not simply copying and pasting responses. Below are some pointers:

- It should be noted that post-colonialism entails issues of race, ethnicity, culture, and human identity. Identity is a central theme in postcolonialism in reference to individuals or groups questioning who they really are in the face of colonialism. The individual or group tries to understand self/themselves. Colonialism has displaced people, oppressed the natives, changed their culture or deprived, language and land are two central issue of the natives when it comes to identity. The article mentions two form of postcolonial identity:
  i) Cultural element: entails language, hybridity, self and otherness
  ii) Spatial element: land and identity construction or restoration

It is identity issue that led many authors to migrate in order to create a new niche, however it turns out to still hinder the sense of self. Many resort to writing novels as a way of finding solace yet as the same time sharing their experience.

- Identity is an issue given the situation in which the colonised lived (i.e. through racial tension, discrimination, slavery etc.) an individual or community seeks to reconstruct or restore their identity (reclaim back e.g. land). They wanted to decolonize/free themselves/claim back their dignity.

Question 2 [25]

With relevant examples, discuss the following trends in southern African literature:

a) Pre-independence

b) Independence
c) Post-independence

Each of the three periods should be discussed in its own paragraph. References are required. Below are some of the points for consideration though student responses may vary.

Pre-independence/Colonial period:

- The colonial period characterised by concern with the African’s plight in relation to the influence of European influence.
- Consisted of protest against domination.
- Calls for unity against the oppressor and assertions of the African’s right to self-determination.
- The themes and subjects of literature in this era focused mainly on the behaviour of the colonists and on the need and importance of liberation or independence.
- Mixed with these is the fight against European culture which the people, the supposed elite and their followers, had imbued, consciously or unconsciously, into their systems.

The independence period:

- From the late 1950s to the late 1960s,
- Several African countries gained independence.
- Political exploitation and oppression did not disappear with the attainment of independence; only the exploiters had changed.
- Economic struggle, political agitations and labour unrest and upheavals continued.
- Literature emanating from this period was characterised by corruption, rampant arrests and imprisonment of the people.

The post-independence period:

- Return to democracy of most countries
- It’s marked by the discussion of gender (or women) issues
- Alternative routes to development
• Issues of corruption could be seen in this form of literature
• Any other contemporary issue that the student gives (e.g. rape, theft, labour issues)

Total Marks [25]

2. Plagiarism and Deduction of Marks
Students should be informed that marks will be deducted if they do not adhere to the rules of the University according to Rule AC3.2.

All assignments should be submitted through Turnitin, the similarity software that is integrated into the MOODLE Learning Management System. If plagiarism is detected, marks should be deducted as follows:

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* Please note that the % shown above is an average % for all Faculties and should be used as a Guideline.

Assignments found with a similarity report above 20%, will not be allowed to apply for a remark or a re-check of marks. For students who fall into the 60-100% similarities group, Rule AC3.2 will apply, and the misconduct procedure will start.

[END OF FEEDBACK LETTER]