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Answer Key: Silk Roads and Shadow Lines: 12th Grade World Literature Analysis Quiz

Deconstruct structural hybridity and subaltern voices in texts that challenge the Western canon, from the Rubaiyat to contemporary global realism.

1. In the context of Persian literature, how does the 'Ruba'i' stanza structure specifically support the philosophical themes often found in the works of Omar Khayyam?

Answer: A) The AABA rhyme scheme creates a sense of unresolved tension mirroring existential doubt.

The Ruba'i is a two-line stanza (four lines total) where the third line often lacks the rhyme of the others (AABA), providing a 'turn' or a moment of reflection that suits Khayyam's themes of fleeting time and the mystery of the afterlife.

2. The concept of 'Joie de vivre' is often contrasted with the 'Mono no aware' aesthetic found in classic Japanese literature, which translates most closely to:

Answer: B) A pathos for the ephemeral nature of things

Mono no aware is a central Japanese aesthetic involving an awareness of impermanence (transience) and a gentle sadness at its passing, frequently seen in works like 'The Pillow Book' by Sei Shōnagon.

3. Postcolonial literature frequently utilizes 'appropriation,' which involves taking the language of the colonizer and adapting it to convey local cultural nuances and rhythms.

Answer: A) True

Appropriation is a key strategy for postcolonial writers (like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o or Arundhati Roy) to dismantle the linguistic hegemony of the former colonial power by infusing it with indigenous syntax and perspectives.

4. Wole Soyinka's play 'Death and the King's Horseman' serves as a critical bridge between Yoruba cosmology and which Western literary tradition?

Answer: B) The Aristotelian Tragedy

Soyinka uses the framework of the Aristotelian tragic hero to explore the metaphysical collision between British colonial administration and the spiritual duties of the Yoruba people.

5. In Latin American literature, the technique of incorporating indigenous myths into modern political settings to challenge Eurocentric reality is known as:

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Answer: B) Lo Real Maravilloso (The Marvelous Real)

Alejo Carpentier pioneered 'Lo Real Maravilloso,' arguing that the history and geography of Latin America are inherently fantastic, distinct from the 'contrived' surrealism of Europe.

6. The 'Epic of Gilgamesh' is considered world literature simply because it is the oldest story, though it lacks the complex character development found in modern narratives.

Answer: B) False

False. While ancient, Gilgamesh features highly sophisticated character development, particularly in Gilgamesh's psychological transformation from a tyrant to a grieving seeker of immortality following the death of Enkidu.

7. Considering the works of Czech author Franz Kafka, the term 'Kafkaesque' best describes a literary situation where:

Answer: B) A protagonist is trapped in a dream-like, illogical, and menacing bureaucratic maze.

Kafka's 'The Trial' and 'The Castle' depict individuals struggling against opaque, arbitrary powers, a hallmark of Central European modernism and existential angst.

8. The 'Negritude' movement, associated with Léopold Sédar Senghor, was a literary and ideological movement that sought to:

Answer: C) Reclaim and celebrate a distinct Pan-African identity and heritage.

Developed in the 1930s by Francophone African and Caribbean intellectuals, Negritude was a response to French colonial racism and a call for a collective African cultural self-determination.

9. In Chinese literature, the 'Journey to the West' is primarily a historical account of the Tang Dynasty's expansion, devoid of supernatural or allegorical elements.

Answer: B) False

False. It is a highly allegorical and mythological fantasy involving a monkey king, a pig demon, and a monk, serving as a satire of bureaucracy and a spiritual quest toward enlightenment.

10. What is the primary function of the 'Chorus' in ancient Greek drama, and how does it compare to the modern 'unreliable narrator' in global fiction?

Answer: B) The Chorus represents the communal or 'ideal' spectator, while the unreliable narrator represents the fractured individual perspective.

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The Greek Chorus voiced society's moral and religious perspective on the play's events, providing a collective objective view that contrasts with the subjective, often suspect narration found in modern psychological novels.