

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FINAL EXAMINATION 2009/10

COURSE TITLE: COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COURSE CODE: ENG 405 / IDE-ENG 405 / E4P4

TIME ALLOWED: ENG 405 / IDE-ENG 405: 2 HOURS
E4P4: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. ENG 405 / IDE-ENG 405:

ANSWER 2 QUESTIONS, ONE FROM EACH SECTION

- 2. E4P4: ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS, AT
LEAST ONE FROM EACH SECTION**
- 3. DO NOT REPEAT MATERIAL OR WRITE
ABOUT THE SAME TEXT MORE THAN
ONCE**
- 4. GOOD EXPRESSION AND ADHERENCE TO
LITERARY CONVENTIONS WILL COUNT**
- 5. ALL QUESTIONS CARRY EQUAL MARKS**
- 6. THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF 5 PAGES,
COVER PAGE INCLUDED.**

**THIS PAPER SHOULD NOT BE OPENED UNTIL
PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE
INVIGILATOR**

SECTION A: POETRY

Question One

Read the poems below and answer the questions that follow:

“Frederick Douglass” Robert Hayden

When it is finally ours, this freedom, this liberty, this beautiful
And terrible thing, needful to man as air,
Usable as earth; when it belongs at last to our children,
When it is truly instinct, brain-matter, diastole, systole,
Reflex action; when it is finally won; when it is more
Than the gaudy mumbo jumbo of politicians:
This man, this Douglass, this former slave, this Negro
Beaten to his knees, exiled, visioning a world
Where none is lonely, none hunted, alien,
This man, superb in love and logic, this man
Shall be remembered. Oh not with statues' rhetoric,
Not with legends and poems and wreaths of bronze alone,
But with the lives grown out of his life, the lives
Fleshing his dream of the beautiful needful thing.

“Remember” Don Mattera

Remember to call at my grave
When freedom finally
Walks the land
So that I may rise
To tread familiar paths
To see broken chains
Fallen prejudice
Forgotten injury
Pardoned pains.

And when my eyes have filled their sight
Do not run away for fright
If I crumble to dust again

It will only be the bliss
Of a long-awaited dream
That bids me rest
When freedom finally walks the land.

- a) In not more than 2 ½ pages discuss in detail the situation presented by the two poems, paying attention to certain key words and expressions (underlined for your convenience) which enhance meaning. [20]
- b) In one page, identify and briefly discuss the major theme(s) of both poems as well as comparatively highlight any observable similarities / differences in their political statements. [10]

Question Two

In an essay of not more than 3 ½ pages, comparatively respond to the two poems' treatment of the theme of identity within the context of an oppressive society. [30]

“My Name” Magoleng wa Selepe

Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa

Look what they have done to my name...
the wonderful name of my great-great grandmothers
Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa.

The burly bureaucrat was surprised.
What he heard was music to his ears:
‘Wat is daai, se nou weer?’
‘I am from Chief Daluxolo Velayigodle of EmaMpondweni
And my name is *Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa*’

Messiah, help me!
My name is so simple
and yet so meaningful,
but to this man it is trash...

He gives me a name
Convenient to answer his whim:
I end up being Maria
I...
Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa.

“Sympathy” Paul Laurence Dunbar

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;

When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals –
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting –
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore, -
When he beats his bars and he would be free;
It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings –
I know why the caged bird sings!

SECTION B: PROSE

Question Three

Manchild in the Promised Land Claude Brown
Coconut Kopano Matlwa

Read the excerpts below and answer the questions that follow:

"I guess it was harder on the girls than it was on anybody. Dixie started tricking when she was thirteen. She was big for her age, and 'nice' ladies used to point at her and say, "oh, ain't that a shame." But it wasn't. The shame of it was that she had to do it or starve. When she got hip and went out there on the street and started turning tricks, she started eating and she stopped starving. And I thought ...it ain't no shame to stop starvin'..."

"I walked out of Silver Spoon that afternoon straight into The Meisies Store across the way. My heart was thumping against my rib cage, each breath hurtling out of my flared nostrils in short, forced bits. I could hear the blood rushing past my ears. I refused to lose this job. And so when I got onto the escalator and headed down, first past the lingerie section and then the fragrances, I knew what I had to do. I calmly removed from the shelf the first size 32 black jeans I saw, folded them into my bag and went back up the escalator, past the fragrances and then the lingerie section and walked out of the store."

- a) Identify the speaker in each passage. [2]
- b) Briefly explain the setting (in time and place) of each passage and the predicament that is highlighted. [8]
- c) In not more than 3 pages, comparatively discuss the theme of girlhood captured in these two passages and in the texts as a whole. [20]

Question Four

The Madonna of Excelsior Zakes Mda
In My Father's House Earnest Gaines

"He was not in physical pain, he told his visitors. His pain was the pain of the heart. The pain of knowing that he had betrayed those he loved and those who loved him. It was the work of the devil, he said. The devil had sent black women to tempt him and to move him away from the path of righteousness."

"I don't know.... I don't know yours, I don't know your brother's, I don't know your sister's. But you mine and I love you. I love you now, and I loved you then. I was too weak then to do anything. Today I have strength. 'Cause today I have God."

- a) Having read the two passages above, briefly, in not more than a page, highlight the circumstances leading the respective characters to make the above pronouncements. [10]
- b) In not more than 2 ½ pages identify the implied themes and comparatively discuss how Mda and Gaines treat them in their novels. [20]

Question Five

Manchild in the Promised Land Claude Brown
In My Father's House Ernest Gaines
The Madonna of Excelsior Zakes Mda
A Lesson Before Dying Earnest Gaines
Coconut Kopano Matlwa

Focusing on specific character roles, comparatively discuss the portrayal of the theme of boyhood in an oppressive society as outlined in the four novels studied on the course. [30]