

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2006

COURSE TITLE: ADVANCED STUDIES IN AFRICAN LITERATURE

COURSE CODE: ENG 404

TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS

- INSTRUCTION:
1. Answer TWO questions, one from each section. Each Section carries equal marks.
 2. Do not repeat material or write about the same text more than once.
 3. Correct use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded and the reverse will be penalised.

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED
BY THE INVIGILATOR

SECTION A

God's Bits of Wood – Ousmane

1. "African traditional cultures tend to regard women as inferior to men." How does Ousmane's portrayal of women support or negate this view? (30)

To My Children's Children – Magona

2. To what extent may Magona be viewed as both a feminist and a womanist? (30)

Kehinde - Emecheta

3. This novel depicts divergent cultures uniting to oppress women, but it is also a revelation of women's resourcefulness and resilience." Discuss how this is reflected through the roles women play in this novel. (30)

Yoranivoyoto – Mnthali

4. "Malawi as portrayed in this novel can be viewed as the microcosm for failed independence in much of Africa." Support your answer with close reference to the text. (30)

The Red Head Khumalo – Bregin

5. "Bregin presents South Africa at the threshold of a new dispensation." What do you see as the strengths and weakness in the way she portrays the situation in this novel? (30)

SECTION B

Blood Knot – Fugard

6. Given the events and circumstances of the play what is the significance of the title? (30)

Song of a Goat – Clark

7. "Among other things this play seems to explore the inherent contradictions in African indigenous cultures and traditions." Discuss this view. (30)

Crossings – Heywood

Read the poem that is attached and answer the questions that follow.

“Abiku” by J.P. Clark

- (a) What aspects of Yoruba culture and tradition are reflected in this poem? (10)
- (b) Comment on the way the Yoruba religious world is presented in the poem. (10)
- (c) “African people subscribe to the idea of the circle of life.” To what extent is this view reflected in the poem? (10)

8. What type of imagery did you find most prevalent in some of the poems you studied in this course? (30)

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J. P. Clark (Nigeria)

- Coming and going these several seasons,
 Do stay out on the baobab tree,
 Follow where you please your kindred spirits
 If indoors is not enough for you.
- 5 True, it leaks through the thatch
 When floods brim the banks,
 And the bats and the owls
 Often tear in at night through the eaves,
 And at harmattan, the bamboo walls
- 10 Are ready tinder for the fire
 That dries the fresh fish up on the rack.
 Still, it's been the healthy stock
 To several fingers, to many more will be
 Who reach to the sun.
- 15 No longer then bestride the threshold
 But step in and stay
 For good. We know the knife scars
 Serrating down your back and front
 Like beak of the sword-fish,
- 20 And both your ears, notched
 As a bondsman to this house,
 Are all relics of your first comings.
 Then step in, step in and stay
 For her body is tired,
- 25 Tired, her milk going sour
 Where many more mouths gladden the heart.

TITLE. *Abiku*: In Yoruba belief, abiku is a mischievous child spirit who allows himself to be born repeatedly to the same mother, only to die soon afterwards. This causes great sadness to the mother and family, and very cruel rituals are practised to discourage abiku and make it recognisable if it returns.

LINE 9. *harmattan*: the cold wind of the dry season

LINE 15. *bestride the threshold*: linger in the doorway

LINES 20-21. *notched as a ... bondsman*: the ears of bonded slaves used to be cut, as is done with cattle