

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FINAL EXAMINATION 2006

TITLE OF PAPER: COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COURSE CODE: ENG405 / E4P4

TIME ALLOWED: ENG405: 2 HRS.
E4P4: 3 HRS

- INSTRUCTIONS:
1. ENG405: Answer TWO questions; ONE from each section.
 2. E4P4: Answer THREE questions; at least ONE from each section.
 3. Under no circumstances should you repeat material or write about the same text more than once.
 4. Incorrect use of English and literary conventions will be penalized.
 5. All questions carry equal marks.
 6. This paper contains 5 pages, cover page included.

THIS PAPER SHOULD NOT BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE INVIGILATOR.

SECTION A: PROSE AND DRAMA (Answer at least one question from this section)

Question 1

“Christianity and its practitioners, the clergy, feature a lot in the texts we have studied in this course.” Respond to this observation by:

- a) Briefly outlining the views of two or more authors on the above. [10]
- b) Comparing and contrasting the narrative techniques (characterization, plot structure, authorial comment, dramatisation of certain scenes, etc.) the authors have employed in their texts to project their views. [16]
- c) Briefly stating your own standpoint on the authors’ portrayal of Christianity; in other words, to what extent do you agree with their views? [04]

Question 2

Compare and contrast the challenges facing Frederick Douglass in Narrative and Claude Brown (Sonny) in Manchild as they grow and develop from childhood to manhood and maturity. (Your discussion should take into account the different setting in time and place.)

Question 3

With the aid of illustrations from both texts, show how Andre Brink in A Dry White Season and Ernest Gaines in A Lesson Before Dying have used plot structure, characterization and setting to protest the injustice faced by their protagonists.

Question 4

“The quest for belonging is found in both Jubilee by Margaret Walker and A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry, but the historical circumstances motivating the quest are different.”

Discuss, highlighting the different circumstances confronting the characters and thus shaping their quests in the two texts.

Question 5

“In a number of the texts studied in this course the male child is portrayed as a threatened species – Eseki in Down Second Avenue, Sonny in Manchild in the Promised Land,

Walter Junior in A Raisin in the Sun, Jonathan in A Dry White Season, Jefferson in A Lesson Before Dying.”

Focusing on three or more texts comparatively show how the authors have projected this view.

SECTION B: POETRY (Answer at least one question from this section)

Question 6

Read the following poems and answer the questions below:

Self Peter Abrahams

I am a shadow,
Restless,
Roving everywhere.
Dawn greets me
Sneaking from a park bench
And a rendezvous with cold and sky,
I am a bum, hungry and lonely;
Milk vanishes from doorsteps at dawn
As I pass.

I'm a prostitute,
Seeking a pick-up from the street.
I have a kid and it cries for bread.
I'm a mother,
Just heard my son died at the Front –
A medal and an empty heart.
I'm a toiler, sweating all day,
But somehow I've more debts to pay.

I'm in the cold,
A youngster, hungry and thin,
My soul cries for love and laughter,
But I'm on this side of the window;
In there, there's fire and laughter
And the warmth of love.

I'm a poet,
And through hunger
And lust for love and laughter
I have turned myself into a voice,

Shouting the pain of the People
And the sunshine that is to be.
(1940)

Negro Langston Hughes

I am a Negro:
Black as the night is black,
Black like the depths of my Africa.

I've been a slave:
Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean.
I brushed the boots of Washington.

I've been a worker:
Under my hand the pyramids arose.
I made mortar for the Woolworth Building.

I've been a singer:
All the way from Africa to Georgia
I carried my sorrow songs.
I made ragtime.

I've been a victim:
The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo.
They lynch me still in Mississippi.

- a) Identify and briefly comment on the black experience projected by the two poems. [10]
- b) Identify and discuss the poetic technique used in the two poems to project their themes. [14]
- c) Comment on any obvious structural devices of the two poems. [06]

Question 7

The two poems below project some deep-felt longing: identify and comment on the projected longing in each poem and comment on its cause. [15]
Cite and discuss certain linguistic devices which enhance the projected longing in each poem. [15]

Outcast Claude McKay

For the dim regions whence my fathers came
My spirit, bonded by the body, longs.
Words felt, but never heard, my lips would frame;
My songs would sing forgotten jungle songs.
I would go back to darkness and to peace,
But the great western world holds me in fee,
And I may never hope for full release
While to its alien gods I bend my knee.
Something in me is lost, forever lost,
Some vital thing has gone out of my heart,
And I must walk the way of life a ghost
Among the sons of earth, a thing apart;
For I was born, far from my native clime,
Under the white man's menace, out of time.

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, brainmatter, 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.

Question 8

“Christianity has been the subject of numerous South African and African American poems studied in this course.” Basing your discussion on a number of poems from both regions, substantiate this claim, highlighting noticeable insights shed on this issue in the poems from each region.