

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2007

COURSE TITLE: COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COURSE CODE: ENG405/IDE-ENG405 / E4P4

TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS (E4P4: 3 Hours)

- INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Answer TWO questions, ONE from each section.
(E4P4: Answer 3 questions; at least ONE from each section)
 2. Do not repeat material or write about the same text more than once.
 3. Good expression and adherence to literary conventions will count.
 4. All questions carry equal marks.
 5. This paper consists of 5 pages, cover page included.

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

SECTION A: PROSE AND DRAMA

Question 1

- a) Briefly sketch the life stories of Tjaart Cronje and Viliki Pule in The Madonna of Excelsior and Suzette Du Toit and Jonathan Ngubene in A Dry White Season. [15]
- b) Briefly highlight the socio-political criticism advanced by the respective authors of these texts through their portrayal of these characters. [15]

Question 2

Focusing on well selected incidents, comparatively discuss the images of Mahlatswetsa, Soweto and Harlem and how these images are used to reflect the situation of the disadvantaged black person.

Question 3

- a) Briefly sketch the anecdotal accounts given by Ben Du Toit and Stanley in A Dry White Season and Sonny in Manchild in the Promised Land. [15]
- b) Comparatively discuss the thematic roles of these anecdotes. [15]

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

Question 4

Read the poems below and answer the questions that follow:

“Food for the Couple” Mafika Gwala

He hadn't gone to the wedding ceremony
at the local parish.
I asked him why.
'Man, it's my brother Sitha,' he started.
'He courted her for three years
They went steady for four years.
They quarreled, he went to Jo'burg
And swore he didn't want her

There were brighter girls there –
What was she but an old maid?
Away he went for five years.
Until he heard she was marrying
this morning her former high-school-day teacher
- his arch rival.
He came back last night –almost greying all over.
And a damned stupid thing he did
this morning. He hanged himself
- in the lavatory.'

“The haunted oak” Paul Laurence Dunbar

Pray why are you so bare, so bare,
Oh, bough of the old oak-tree;
And why, when I go through the shade you throw,
Runs a shudder over me?

My leaves were green as the best, I throw,
And sap ran free in my veins,
But I saw in the moonlight dim and weird
A guiltless victim’s pains.

I bent me down to hear his sigh;
I shook with his gurgling moan,
And I trembled sore when they rode away,
And left him here alone.

1. Briefly (in not more than a page) identify and explain the situation presented by each poem. [10]
2. Identify and discuss the dominant aspect(s) of form of each poem. [4]
3. Identify the persona of “Food for the couple” as well as the other people mentioned in the poem. [4] What does “food for the couple” refer to? [2]
4. Identify the poetic genre of “The haunted oak” and the speakers featuring in the poem. [3]
5. Briefly highlight the social criticism advanced by each poem. [7]

Question 5

a) Comparatively discuss the aspects of black experience (and their background) projected in the following poems. [18]

b) Comment on any interesting aspects of the tone, mood and form of the two poems.
[12]

Elevator Boy Langston Hughes

I got a job now
Runnin' an elevator
In the Dennison Hotel in Jersey,
Job aint no good though.
No money around.
Jobs are just chances
Like everything else.
Maybe a little luck now,
Maybe not.
Maybe a good job sometimes:
Step out o' the barrel, boy.
Two new suits an'
A woman to sleep with.
Maybe no luck for a long time.

Only the elevators
Goin' up an' down,
Up an' down,
Or somebody else's shoes
To shine,
Or greasy pots in a dirty kitchen.

I been runnin' this
Elevator too long.
Guess I'll quit now.

The Efficacy of Prayer Casey Motsisi

They called him Dan the Drunk.
The old people refuse to say how old he was,
Nobody knows where he came from – but they all
Called him Dan the Drunk.
He was a drunk, but perhaps his name was not really Dan.
Who knows, he might have been Sam.
But why bother, he's dead, poor Dan.
Gave him a pauper's funeral, they did.
Just dumped him into a hole to rest in eternal drunkenness.
Somehow the old people are glad that Dan the Drunk is dead.
Ghastly!
They say he was a bad influence on the children.

But the kids are sad that Dan the Drunk is no more
No more will the kids frolic to the music that used to flow out of his battered
concertina. Or listen to the tales he used to tell.
All followed him into that pauper's hole.
How the kids used to worship Dan the Drunk!
He was just one of them grown older too soon.
'I'm going to be just like Dan the Drunk,' a little girl said to her parents
of a night cold while they crowded around a sleepy brazier.
The parents looked at each other while their eyes prayed,
'God Almighty, save our little Sally.'
God heard their prayer.
He saved their Sally.
Prayer it can work miracles.
Sally grew up to become a nanny...

(1960)