

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FINAL EXAMINATION 2008/9

COURSE TITLE: A STUDY OF POETRY

COURSE CODE: ENG 206 /IDE-ENG 206

TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
1. This paper has TWO sections: answer ONE question from each section.
 2. Correct use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded; grammatical errors and incorrect use of conventions will be penalised.
 3. This paper consists of 8 pages, cover page included.
 4. Each question carries 30 marks.

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

Section A: Answer ONE question

Question One

Choose ONE poem below and analyse it following the steps outlined in the course:

- (i) **“The Sun”** Daniel P. Kunene (South Africa)

The sun
a crimson ball of flame
reddened the eastern sky
the first golden rays
shot out sharp as assegais
And I saw more clearly
a Golgotha
of dead and walking skeletons
of children
starved and wasted in a land of plenty
of women and men
chained in a land of freedom

What, O sun, will you tell your mother
when you get home tonight?

- (ii) **“African Grass”** Shimmer Chinodya (Zimbabwe)

Grass grows here, enough
To thatch a thousand roofs.
Tall khaki African grass
Two heads taller than I, laden
With beads of dew
In the early morning. Shove armfuls aside
To pass.

Grass caressing my bare thighs
Sweeping past me, rustling softly
like lovers.
Adam and Eve once walked here
Naked and innocent in this wild savannah;
When the world was young
And there was no one else to watch.

It's hard to think that this tall crop
Coarse in its maturity
Burst out of October's black burnt plains
Green and succulent, and savouring the mellow sun

Green to this height.
But it's harder yet to think
That this crop will crumple
To veld fire ashes;
Fruitless growth!

This whispering
Shall be
Gone.

(iii) **"The Twin of Sleep"** Robert Graves (England)

Death is the twin of Sleep, they say:
For I shall rise renewed,
Free from the cramps of yesterday,
Clear-eyed and supple-thewed.

But though this bland analogy
Helps other folk to face
Decrepitude, senility,
Madness, disease, disgrace,

I do not like Death's greedy looks:
Give me his twin instead –
Sleep never auctions off my books,
My boots, my shirts, my bed.

Question Two

Read the following poem and answer the questions below briefly and precisely.

"Piano and Drums" Gabriel Okara (Nigeria)

When at break of day at a riverside
I hear the jungle drums telegraphing
the mystic rhythm, urgent, raw
like bleeding flesh, speaking of
primary youth and the beginning,
I see the panther ready to pounce,
the leopard snarling about to leap
and the hunters crouch with spears poised;

And my blood ripples, turns torrents,
Topples the years and at once I'm
In my mother's lap a suckling;
At once I am walking simple

paths with no innovations,
rugged, fashioned with the naked
warmth of hurrying feet and groping heart
in green leaves and wild flowers pulsing.

Then I hear a wailing piano
solo speaking of complex ways
in tear-furrowed concerto;
of faraway lands
and new horizons with
coaxing diminuendo, counterpoint,
crescendo. But lost in the labyrinth
of its complexities, it ends in the middle
of a phrase at a dagger point.

And I lost in the morning mist
of age at a riverside keep
wandering in the mystic rhythm
of jungle drums and concerto.

- a) Identify the poem's sub-genre and support your choice. [5]
- b) Discuss the situation presented by the poem. [10]
- c) What is the main theme of this poem? [5]
- d) Identify and discuss the two dominant metaphors presented in this poem and how they contribute to the realisation of the poem's central theme. [6]
- e) Identify and briefly discuss two more figures of speech used in this poem. [4]

Question Three

Using the three sonnets below for illustration, point out the key features of the sonnet form:

“Since There's No Help” Michael Drayton (England)

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part:
Nay, I have done; you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands forever; cancel all our vows;
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath
When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death

And innocence is closing up his eyes;
Now, if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From Death to Life thou might'st him yet recover.

“Composed Upon Westminster Bridge” William Wordsworth (England)

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

“The Rites for Cousin Vit” Gwendolyn Brooks (USA)

Carried her un-protesting out the door.
Kicked back the casket-stand. But it can't hold her,
That stuff and satin aiming to enfold her,
The lid's contrition nor the bolts before.
Oh oh. Too much. Too much. Even now, surmise,
She rises in the sunshine. There she goes,
Back to the bars she knew and the repose
In love-rooms and the things in people's eyes.
Too vital and too squeaking. Must emerge.
Even now she does the snake-hips with a hiss,
Slops the bad wine across her shantung, talks
Of pregnancy, guitars and bridgework, walks
In parks or alleys, comes haply on the verge
Of happiness, haply hysterics. Is.

Section B: Answer ONE question

Question Four

With specific reference to the following poem, describe the characteristics of its sub-genre.

"My Last Duchess" Robert Browning (England)

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) 10
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat": such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
--E'en then would be some stooping, and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without

Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The Company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

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Question Five

Read the excerpts below and answer the questions that follow:

(i)

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

(ii)

In vain your bangles cast
Charmed circles at my feet;
I am Abiku, calling for the first
And the repeated time.

Must I weep for goats and cowries
For palm oil and the sprinkled ash?
Yams do not sprout in amulets
To earth Abiku's limbs.

(iii)

Listen more to things
Than to words that are said.
The water's voice sings
And the flame cries

