

# UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FINAL EXAMINATION 2008/9

**COURSE TITLE: COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**

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

**TIME ALLOWED: ENG 405/ IDE-ENG 405: TWO HOURS  
E4P4: THREE HOURS**

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- 1. ENG 405 /IDE-ENG 405:  
Answer TWO questions  
E4P4: Answer THREE questions.**
  - 2. Do not repeat material or write about the same text at length 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**

## Question One

Read the poems below and answer the questions that follow:

### **“To a Brown Girl”** Ossie Davis

Since I care naught for what is pale and cold,  
My heart must hunger when the snows are down  
For dearer climates, where the sun, of old,  
Taught us that love is something warm and brown.

Here, like a stranger, stranded in the north,  
I dream the scarlet dream of purple skies,  
And strain for glimpses, as I hurry forth,  
Of shy reports: rich-black, and passion-wise.

And laugh to plumb the deep-remembered flood  
of tropic heats, where winter cannot come.  
And feel within the pulses of my blood  
The white-eyed throbbings of some ancient drum.

And I can treasure this: to catch a trace,  
Still burning hot and bright beneath the chill –  
Beneath the bosom of your brown embrace  
Hot suns of Africa are burning still.

### **“The Harlem Dancer”** Claude McKay

Applauding youth laughed with young prostitutes  
And watched her perfect, half-clothed body sway;  
Her voice was like the sound of blended flutes  
Blown by black players upon a picnic day.  
She sang and danced on gracefully and calm,  
The light gauze hanging loose about her form;  
To me she seemed like a proudly-swaying palm  
Grown lovelier for passing through a storm.  
Upon her swarthy neck black shiny curls  
Luxuriant fell; and tossing coins in praise,  
The wine-flushed, bold-eyed boys, and even the girls,  
Devoured her shape with eager, passionate gaze;  
But looking at her falsely-smiling face,  
I knew her self was not in that strange place.

a) In not more than a page, highlight (discuss) the situation presented by each poem. [10]

- b) Identify and comparatively discuss the themes of the two poems and show how they convey protest against white domination. [10]  
c) Comment on each poem's linguistic aspect in relation to the projected themes. [10]

### **Question Two**

#### **"The New Negro" James Edward McCall**

He scans the world with calm and fearless eyes,  
Conscious within of powers long since forgot;  
At every step, new man-made barriers rise  
To bar his progress – but he heeds them not.  
He stands erect, though tempests round him crash,  
Though thunder bursts and billows surge and roll;  
He laughs and forges on, while lightnings flash  
Along the rocky pathway to his goal.  
Impassive as a Sphinx, he stares ahead –  
Foresees new empires rise and old ones fall;  
While caste – mad nations lust for blood to shed,  
He sees God's finger writing on the wall.  
With soul awakened, wise and strong he stands,  
Holding his destiny within his hands.

#### **"On Liberty and Slavery" George Moses Horton**

Alas! And am I born for this,  
To wear this slavish chain?  
Deprived of all created bliss,  
Through hardship, toil and pain!

How long have I in bondage lain,  
And languished to be free!  
Alas! And must I still complain-  
Deprived of liberty.

Oh, Heaven! And is there no relief  
This side the silent grave-  
To sooth the pain – to quell the grief  
And anguish of a slave?

Come, Liberty, Thou cheerful sound,  
Roll through my ravished ears!  
Come, let my grief in joys be drowned,  
And drive away my fears.

Say unto foul oppression, Cease:  
Ye tyrants rage no more,  
And let the joyful triumph of peace,  
Now bid the vassal soar.

Soar on the pinions of that dove  
Which has long cooed for thee,  
And breathed her notes from Afric's grove,  
The sound of liberty.

Oh, Liberty thou golden prize,  
So often sought by blood –  
We crave thy sacred sun to rise,  
The gift of nature's God!

Bid slavery hide her haggard face,  
And Barbarism fly:  
I scorn to see the sad disgrace  
In which enslaved I lie.

Dear liberty! Upon thy breast,  
I languish to respire;  
And like the swan unto her nest,  
I 'd to thy smiles retire.

Oh, blest asylum – heavenly balm!  
Unto thy boughs I flee –  
And in thy shades the storm shall calm,  
With Songs of Liberty!

- a) Compare and contrast the tone and mood of “The New Negro” and “On Liberty and Slavery” [10]
- b) How has setting contributed to the difference in tone and mood of the two poems? [10]
- c) Comparatively discuss the central themes of the two poems. [10]

### **Question Three**

Lorraine Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun  
Zakes Mda, The Madonna of Excelsior  
Ernest Gaines, In My Father's House

Discuss how TWO of the authors above have, through their respective portrayal of their focal male characters (Walter, Viliki, Robert X), advanced the theme of male maturation in an oppressive society. [30]

**Question Four**

Both The Madonna of Excelsior and In my Father's House reflect the black experience under the white rule. Compare and contrast the black experience projected in these novels. [30]

**Question Five**

Select TWO authors above and comparatively discuss their portrayal of Christianity in relation to the black / African experience under white rule. [30]

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