

# UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION 2008/9

**COURSE TITLE: COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**

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

**TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS**

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
1. Answer TWO questions.
  2. Do not repeat material or write about the same text at length more than once.
  3. Proper 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:

### **“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, brain-matter, diastole, systole,  
Reflect 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.

### **“Remember”** Don Mattera

Remember to call at my grave  
When freedom finally  
Walks the land  
So that I may rise  
To tread familiar paths  
To see broken chains  
Fallen prejudice  
Forgotten injury  
Pardoned pains.

And when my eyes have filled their sight  
Do not run away for fright  
If I crumble to dust again

It will only be the bliss  
Of a long-awaited dream  
That bids me rest  
When freedom finally walks the land.

1. In not more than 2 pages discuss in detail the meaning /sense of the first poem, paying attention to certain key words which enhance meaning. [15]
2. Identify and briefly discuss the major theme of each poem and how it projects protest against oppressive white rule. [10]
3. Briefly discuss ONE dominant similarity in the two poems. [5]

## Question Two

Read the two poems below and answer the questions that follow:

### **“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 the 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 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 herself was not in that strange place.

### **“An Abandoned Bundle” – Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali**

The morning mist  
and chimney smoke  
of white city Jabavu  
flowed thick yellow  
as pus oozing  
from a gigantic sore.  
It smothered our little houses  
Like fish caught in a net.

Scavenging dogs  
Draped in red bandanas of blood  
fought fiercely  
For a squirming bundle

I threw a brick;  
They bare fangs  
Flicked velvet tongues of scarlet  
And scurried away,  
leaving a mutilated corpse-  
an infant dumped on a rubbish heap-  
‘Oh! Baby in the manger  
Sleep well

On human dung.'

Its mother  
Had melted into the rays of the rising sun,  
Her face glittering with innocence  
Her heart as pure as untrampled dew.

- a) Briefly highlight the situation presented by each poem. [14]
- b) Compare and contrast the black experience projected in the following poems.  
*Your discussion must not exceed three pages.* [16]

### **Question Three**

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

Comparatively discuss the techniques used by Hansberry in A Raisin in the Sun and Gaines in In My Father's House to outline the theme of racism. [30]

### **Question Four**

Focusing on ONE or more clearly identified white characters from each novel, comparatively discuss the images of whites in In My Father's House and The Madonna of Excelsior. [30]

### **Question Five**

The conflict between fathers and sons in In My Father's House and The Madonna of Excelsior is mainly the result of differences in political views. Support this assertion with specific examples from the two novels. [30]