

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATION 2013

COURSE TITLE: ADVANCED STUDIES IN AFRICAN LITERATURE

COURSE CODE: ENG 404

TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Answer TWO QUESTIONS.

2. Your answers should not exceed three pages.

3. Do not repeat material or write about the same text more than once.

4. Correct use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded and the reverse will be penalized.

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE
INVIGILATOR

106 ABIKU

J. P. Clark (Nigeria)

Coming and going these several seasons,
Do stay out on the baobab tree,
Follow where you please your kindred spirits
If indoors is not enough for you.
5 True, it leaks through the thatch
When floods brim the banks,
And the bats and the owls
Often tear in at night through the eaves,
And at harmattan, the bamboo walls
10 Are ready tinder for the fire
That dries the fresh fish up on the rack.
Still, it's been the healthy stock
To several fingers, to many more will be
Who reach to the sun.
15 No longer then bestride the threshold
But step in and stay
For good. We know the knife scars
Serrating down your back and front
Like beak of the sword-fish,
20 And both your ears, notched
As a bondsman to this house,
Are all relics of your first comings.
Then step in, step in and stay
For her body is tired,
25 Tired, her milk going sour
Where many more mouths gladden the heart.

TITLE. *Abiku*: In Yoruba belief, abiku is a mischievous child spirit who allows himself to be born repeatedly to the same mother, only to die soon afterwards. This causes great sadness to the mother and family, and very cruel rituals are practised to discourage abiku and make it recognisable if it returns.

LINE 9. *harmattan*: the cold wind of the dry season

LINE 15. *bestride the threshold*: linger in the doorway

INES 20–21. *notched as a ... bondsman*: the ears of bonded slaves used to be cut, as is done with cattle

52 PLEDGING MY SOUL

Charles Marechera (Zimbabwe)

When I was a boy
I climbed onto your granite breasts
smooth and round
I trailed my body
5 from the small of your back
to your yielding neck
the cup of your breasts
was my pillow
the rivers of your tears
10 drowned me down in your depths
and the smooth plain of your flat belly
yielded to mine
I was yours
and you were mine.

15 Now a man
in exile from the warmth of your arms
and the milk of your teeth
the breath of your secret whispers in my ears
shall I not stride back to you with haste
20 rout all my enemies and bind the wicked husbandmen
Shall I not kneel to kiss the grains of your sand
to rise naked before you – a bowl of incense?
and the smoke of my nakedness shall be
an offering to you
25 pledging my soul.

LINE 20. *husbandmen*: farmers. But the meaning of usurpers, adulterers, is also there.

Section A: Novels

QUESTION 1

Among other things in So Long a Letter Ba bemoans the fact that among the emergent Senegalese elite community the girl child is sacrificed on the altar of affluence. With specific references to the novella discuss this statement. [30]

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the view that the way Bregin ends her novel suggests that South Africans can overcome the racial challenges that they face in the post-apartheid era? [30]

Question 3

Magical realism can be defined as a narrative that blurs the distinction between fantasy and reality in order to enable the reader to accept the ordinary and extraordinary simultaneously. In what way does Dunseith's The bird of Heaven fit this definition? [30]

Section B: Drama and Poetry

Question 4

As a dramatist Clark has been criticized for leaning too much on the Greek Classical mode but the poetic quality of his drama has always been admirable. Discuss this view with special references to Song of a Goat.

Question 5

Using the two poems that are attached, discuss how African poets find inspiration in indigenous poetry as well as other oral traditions in the writing of their poetry. [30]