

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATION – MAY, 2014

COURSE CODE: IDE-ENG404
COURSE NAME: ADVANCED STUDIES IN AFRICAN LITERATURE
DURATION: 2 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer TWO questions in all, ONE from each section.
2. Each question carries 30 marks.
3. Make sure you adhere to literary and poetic rules.
4. Make sure you proofread your work to eliminate grammatical errors and resultant loss of marks.

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

SECTION A – NOVEL

Question 1

“It may be argued that African patriarchy as depicted by Dangarembga in Nervous Conditions is a double-edged entity as it both invests the patriarch with absolute authority while at the same time overburdening him with too much responsibility towards the whole family. It also creates weak and emasculated males.” Discuss in relation to Baba, Jeremiah and Takesure. [30]

Question 2

Discuss the varied experiences of the African girl child depicted through Tshidiso in Mending Season, Nyasha in Nervous Conditions and Binetou in So Long a Letter. [30]

SECTION B – POETRY

Question 3

Give a fully illustrated discussion of the following poem as an example of Negritude poetry. [30]

“**Viaticum**” Birago Diop (Senegal)

In one of the three pots
 the three pots to which on certain evenings
 the happy souls return
 the serene breath of the ancestors,
 the ancestors who were men,
 the forefathers who were wise,
 Mother wetted three fingers,
 three fingers on her left hand:
 the thumb, the index and the next;
 I too wetted three fingers,
 three fingers of my right hand:
 the thumb, the index and the next.

With her three fingers red with blood,
 with dog’s blood,
 with bull’s blood,
 with goat’s blood,
 Mother touched me three times.

She touched my forehead with her thumb,
 With her index my left breast

178

And my navel with her middle finger.
I too held my fingers red with blood,
with dog's blood.
With bull's blood,
with goat's blood.
I held my three fingers to the winds
to the winds of the North, to the winds of the Levant,
to the winds of the South, to the winds of the setting sun;
and I raised my three fingers towards the Moon,
towards the full Moon, the Moon full and naked
when she rested deep in the largest pot.
Afterwards I plunged my three fingers in the sand
in the sand that had grown cold.
Then Mother said, 'Go into the world, go!
They will follow your steps in life.'

Since then I go
I follow the pathways
the pathways and roads
beyond the sea and even farther,
beyond the sea and beyond the beyond;
And whenever I approach the wicked,
the Men with black hearts,
whenever I approach the envious,
the Men with black hearts
before me moves the Breath of the Ancestors.

Question 4

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

"Poem of Return" Jofre Rocha (Angola)

When I return from the land of exile and silence,
do not bring me flowers.

Bring me rather all the dews,
tears of dawns which witnessed dramas.
Bring me the immense hunger for love
and the plaint of tumid sexes in star-studded night.
Bring me the long night of sleeplessness
with mothers mourning, their arms bereft of sons.

When I return from the land of exile and silence,
no, do not bring me flowers ...

Bring me only, just this
 the last wish of heroes fallen at day-break
 with a wingless stone in hand
 and a thread of anger snaking from their eyes.

“Pledging My Soul” Charles Marechera (Zimbabwe)

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

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
 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
 Pledging my soul.

- a) Briefly highlight the colonial experience of the two poets. [6]
- b) Discuss the two ways in which the poets' use of free verse liberates them. [8]
- c) Identify and discuss the major figure of speech used by Marechera in the second poem and what it reveals about his feelings for Zimbabwe. [16]