

1485

# UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION, 2013

**COURSE NAME:** COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

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

**TIME ALLOWED:** TWO HOURS

## **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Answer any TWO questions.
2. **Do not repeat material or write about the same text more than once.**
3. Make sure you proofread your work to ensure good expression and adherence to literary and poetic conventions.
4. Note that all questions carry equal marks.
5. This paper is 7 pages long, cover page included.

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

**Question 1**

196

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

**“The Children of Nonti” Mafika Gwala**

Nonti Nzimande died long, long ago  
Yet his children still live.  
Generation after generation, they live on;  
Death comes to the children of Nonti  
And the children of Nonti cry but won't panic  
And there is survival in the children of Nonti.

Poverty swoops its deadly wings. But tough,  
strong and witty are the children of Nonti.  
The wet rains fall. The roads become like  
the marshed rice paddies of the Far East;  
And on these desolate roads there is song  
Song in the Black voices of the children of Nonti.

Someone marries  
The bride does not hide her face under the veil;  
The maidens dance near the kraal  
Dance before the 'make it be merry' eyes  
of the elders. The elders joshing it  
on their young days.  
There is still free laughter  
in the children of Nonti.

An ox drops to the earth, then another;  
Knives run into the meat. Making the feast  
to be blood-filled with Life.  
The old, the dead, are brought into the Present  
of continuous nature in the children of Nonti.  
Got to be a respecting with the children of Nonti.

When a daughter has brought shame  
The women show anger; not wrath.  
And the illegitimate born is one of  
the family.  
When a son is charged by the white law  
The children of Nonti bring their heads together  
In a bid to free one of the children of Nonti.

There are no sixes and nines be one

187

with the children of Nonti. Truth is truth  
and lies are lies amongst the children of Nonti.  
For when summer takes its place after the winter  
The children of Nonti rejoice  
and call it proof of Truth  
Truth reigns amongst the children of Nonti.

Sometimes a son rises above the others  
of the children of Nonti. He explains the workings  
and the trappings of white thinking.  
The elders debate;  
And add to their abounding knowledge  
of black experience.  
The son is still one of the black children of Nonti  
For there is oneness in the children of Nonti.

And later, later when the sun  
is like forever down;  
Later when the dark rules  
above the light of Truth  
The black children of Nonti will rise and speak.  
They will speak of the time  
when Nonti lived in peace with his children;  
Of the times when age did not count  
above experience. The children of Nonti will stand  
their grounds in the way that Nonti speared his foes  
to free his black brothers from death and woes;  
They shall fight with the tightened grip  
of a cornered pard. For they shall be knowing that  
Nothing is more vital than standing up  
For the Truths that Nonti lived for.  
Then there shall be Freedom in that stand  
by the children of Nonti.  
Truthful tales shall be told  
Of how the children of Nonti pushed their will;  
And continued to live by the peace  
The peace that Nonti once taught them.

**"White Lies"** Stanley Motjuwadi

Humming Maggie.  
Hit by a virus  
the Caucasian Craze,  
sees horror in the mirror.  
Frantic and dutifully

she corrodes a sooty face,  
braves a hot iron comb  
on a shrubby scalp.  
I look on.

154

I know pure white,  
a white heart,  
white, peace, ultimate virtue.  
Angels are white  
angels are good.  
Me I'm black,  
black as sin stuffed in a snuff-tin.  
Lord, I've been brainwhitewashed.

But for heaven's sake God,  
just let me be.  
Under cover of my darkness  
let me crusade.  
On a canvas stretching from here  
to Dallas, Memphis, Belsen, Golgotha,  
I'll daub a while devil.  
Let me teach black truth.  
That dark clouds aren't a sign of doom,  
but hope. Rain. Life.  
Let me unleash a volty bolt of black,  
so all around may know black right.

- a) Identify and discuss at least three black consciousness themes found in "The Children of Nonti". [20]
- b) In about a page comparatively discuss Gwala and Motjuwadi's approaches to the interlinked themes of Black Consciousness and Identity in their poems. [10]

## Question 2

'Lorraine Hansberry prefaces her play, A Raisin in the Sun, with the poem cited below, thus suggesting some link between the two texts.' In your reading of the play, did you note the link? Discuss with the aid of illustrations. [30]

**"Harlem"** Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?  
Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore –  
And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat  
Or crust and sugar over –  
Like a syrupy sweet?  
Maybe it just sags  
Like a heavy load

*Or does it explode?*

### **Question 3**

*'The authors of the two poems below express reservations about the situations they depict.'*  
*Discuss the setting and language use of the poems in order to show how they reflect the poets'*  
*reservations about the situations they depict. [30]*

**"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.

**"Why?"** Bongekile Mbanjwa

I have had enough of digging.  
I searched, and was tired.  
I asked and asked again,  
But no one gave me the answer.  
Why?

170

The cow's teat is full of milk  
But there is no bucket,  
So where are we going to store it?  
Let it not turn to curds  
Before the young generation can eat and finish up!  
Milk-pail, where can we find you?  
Milk-pail, how do we find you?  
Milk-pail, who can find you?  
Whose children will enjoy you?  
If things go on like this  
We shall be left sucking our thumbs.

Day and night wasps are buzzing.  
I take pen and paper and write.  
I write again and again  
But curds end up in my fingers  
Because I do not have the milk calabash.  
Who can find it?

I thought about discriminating according to race  
But disagreed.  
We have our heroes who have the milk pail  
Where we can guzzle.

Why don't they open the gate for us to enter?  
Why are they not breaking these chains?  
What are we going to leave for the generations to come?  
I will not stop asking:  
Why?

#### **Question 4**

- a) In not more than 2 pages, briefly summarise the experiences of Walter Lee Younger in A Raisin in the Sun and Fikile's uncle in Coconut in their contact with the white race. [15]
- b) Discuss the insights shed through the experiences and aspirations of these two characters. [15]

#### **Question 5**

With the aid of illustrations from both texts, comparatively discuss Ngwenya and Mhlongo's portrayal of South African township life in "SOWETO" (reproduced below) and Dog Eat Dog. [30]

**"SOWETO"** Sphiwe ka Ngwenya

Womb of black souls  
 White with stains  
 Signs that welcome a stranger  
 Mean caution  
 Not caution  
 Traffic lights red at night  
 Just yield  
 &take flight  
 Sorrow & joy  
 Lead to you at sunset  
 Traffic jam of dreams  
 In the void  
 Come Friday  
 Come month end  
 Ghetto vibration staggering  
 Couples cuddle  
 Muggers lurk  
 The law lives on the loot  
 Before they shoot  
 Angelic voices gyrate to kwaito music  
 Maskandi takes the lead  
 When glasses smash on walls  
 Between a lull of emergency sirens  
 No ambush  
 Not even derailing  
 Of the train dripping  
 Gravy  
 I cannot taste

**Question 6**

‘The African Americans’ relation to their African ancestral past is a recurrent theme in all their writing.’ Respond to this assertion by citing and comparatively discussing relevant texts of any genre. Your discussion should highlight the inherent ambiguities contained in the writing. [30]