

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS  
JULY, 2015

**COURSE CODE:** ENG405 /IDE-ENG405  
**COURSE NAME:** COMPARATIVE LITERATURE  
**TIME ALLOWED:** TWO HOURS

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Answer TWO questions, one from each section.
2. Make sure you proofread your work to eliminate grammatical and conventional errors and thus avoid losing marks.
3. The paper is 8 pages, cover page included.

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## SECTION A POETRY

### Question 1

Comparatively discuss the different approaches to the theme of identity in the three South African poems. [30]

1. “My Name” Magoleng wa Selepe

*Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa*

Look what they have done to my name...  
the wonderful name of my great-great grandmothers  
*Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa.*

The burly bureaucrat was surprised.  
What he heard was music to his ears:  
‘Wat is daai, se nou weer?’  
‘I am from Chief Daluxolo Velayigodle of EmaMpondweni  
And my name is *Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa*’

Messiah, help me!  
My name is so simple  
and yet so meaningful,  
but to this man it is trash...

He gives me a name  
Convenient to answer his whim:  
I end up being Maria  
I...  
*Nomgqibelo Ncamisile Mnqhibisa.*

2. “Self” Peter Abrahams

I am a shadow,  
Restless,  
Roving everywhere.  
Dawn greets me  
Sneaking from a park bench  
And a rendezvous with cold and sky,  
I am a bum, hungry and lonely;  
Milk vanishes from doorsteps at dawn  
As I pass.

I'm a prostitute,  
Seeking a pick-up from the street.  
I have a kid and it cries for bread.  
I'm a mother,  
Just heard my son died at the Front –  
A medal and an empty heart.  
I'm a toiler, sweating all day,  
But somehow I've more debts to pay.

I'm in the cold,  
A youngster, hungry and thin,  
My soul cries for love and laughter,  
But I'm on this side of the window;  
In there, there's fire and laughter  
And the warmth of love.

I'm a poet,  
And through hunger  
And lust for love and laughter  
I have turned myself into a voice,  
Shouting the pain of the People  
And the sunshine that is to be.

(1940)

### 3. "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.

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.

## **Question 2**

Read the three poems on incidental encounters and answer the questions that follow them:

### 1. **"Incident"** Countee Cullen

Once riding in old Baltimore,  
Heart-filled, head-filled with glee'  
I saw a Baltimorean  
Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,  
And he was no whit bigger'  
And so I smiled, but he poked out  
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore  
From May until December;  
Of all the things that happened there  
That's all that I remember.

### 2. **"White Child Meets Black Man"** James Berry

She caught me outside a London  
suburban shop, I like a giraffe  
and she a mouse. I tried to go

but felt she stood  
lovely as light on my back.

I turned with hello  
and waited. Her eyes got  
wider but not her lips.  
Hello I smiled again and watched.

She stepped around me  
slowly, in a kind of dance,  
her wide eyes searching  
inch by inch up and down:  
no fur no scales no feathers  
no shell. Just a live silhouette,

and compulsive  
till mother came horrified.

'Mummy is his tummy black?'  
Mother grasped her and swung  
toward the crowd. She tangled  
mother's legs looking back at me.  
As I watched them birds were singing.

### 3. "Painful Good Friday" Marumo Molusi

Life is a battle against the forces of evil.  
In 1978 on a Good Friday,  
I was bedded in a hospital ward  
With pains like knives cutting into my knee:  
Multiple fractures of the legs  
Made me call out for help in a sea of anguish.  
I was nailed in the darkness of the Golden City ...

I cried like a madman for the nurses and medical people

To help relieve the pain in my hour of need.  
Pain like a dragon's teeth bit persistently, endlessly  
Through the entrails of my black body.  
Pain  
Pain  
And more pain, biting like a dragon ...

My face was drowned in waves of sweat,  
No one answered my plea for help;

Why are men silent when their brothers suffer?  
In that dense forest, my roar was not of power but of weakness.

Hunger and agony live in a black man's forest.  
Other patients, riddled by their own maladies,  
Listened and nodded.  
Pain is personal.

Yes, waves of pain commanding and controlling the  
ship of my body,  
Waves beating and bashing me for more days than I  
could count  
... Were these the same pains felt by the Son of MAN?

By Jesus Christ ...?  
Pain is personal ...

I rolled in the bed of endless days that came,  
Into dark nights where angels fear to tread.

They told me to go home.  
I was unwell,  
But they told me to go.  
Where ...?

I limped to the place where I stayed, which is not home.

A home is something,  
A home is people.

For me, there was nobody.  
No friends,  
Just a Native Shelter,  
Just Soweto  
Far away ...

Pain is indeed a lonely and personal thing.

- a) Briefly discuss the situation captured by each poem and relate it to its respective social context. [15]
- b) Relying on a few well-selected examples from each poem, discuss each poet's peculiar diction in relation to eliciting the intended reader total response. [6]
- c) Identify the theme of each poem and comparatively comment on the projected black experience. [9]

## SECTION B PROSE AND DRAMA

### Question 3 (IDE)

A Raisin in the Sun Lorraine Hansberry

“The issue of masculinity is at the core of Walter Lee Jr.’s frustrations and George Murchison’s self-assured stance.” Comparatively discuss the two characters’ roles in the play and how far you agree with this assertion. [30]

### Question 4 (Fulltime)

Both Narrative and the cited poem below outline the same major theme: Identify the theme and discuss how it is handled in each case. [30]

“**The Slave Auction**” Frances E. W. Harper

The sale began –young girls were there,  
Defenseless in their wretchedness,  
Whose stifled sobs of deep despair  
Revealed their anguish and distress.

And mothers stood with streaming eyes,  
And saw their dearest children sold;  
Unheeded rose their bitter cries,  
While tyrants bartered them for gold.

And woman, with her love and truth –  
For these in sable forms may dwell –  
Gaz’d on the husband of her youth,  
With anguish none may paint or tell.

And men, whose sole crime was their hue,  
The impress of their Maker’s hand,  
And frail and shrinking children, too,  
Were gathered in that mournful band.

Ye who have laid your love to rest,  
And wept above their lifeless clay,  
Know not the anguish of that breast,  
Whose lov’d are rudely torn away.

Ye may not know how desolate

Are bosoms rudely forced to part,  
And how a dull and heavy weight  
Will press the life-drops from the heart.

**Question 5** (Fulltime)

Comparatively discuss the theme of motherhood as depicted in Narrative and Manchild. [30]

**Question 6** (IDE)

A Lesson Before Dying Ernest Gaines

A Raisin in the Sun

Coconut Kopano Matlwa

Comparatively discuss how the theme of racism is advanced in the three texts and the main characters each author uses to advance it. [30]