

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION
JULY, 2016

COURSE CODE: ENG405 / IDE-ENG 405
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 other errors and thus avoid losing marks.
3. This paper is 6 pages, cover page included.

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SECTION A: POETRY

Question 1

Comparatively discuss the portrayal of a South African township and an African American ghetto as depicted in the poems below, along with their projected political statements. [30]

“Soweto” Sphiwe ka Ngwenya

Womb of black souls
White with stains
Signs that welcome a stranger
Mean caution
Not coition
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

“The Still Voice of Harlem” Conrad Kent Rivers

Come to me broken dreams and all,
bring me the glory of your wayward souls;
I shall find a place for them in my garden.

Weep not for the golden sun of California,
think not of the fertile soil of Alabama,
nor of your father's eyes, your mother's
body twisted by the washing board.

I am the hope
and tomorrow
of your unborn.

Truly, when there is no more of me
there shall be no more of you...

Question 2

Comparatively discuss the theme of identity as outlined in the poems below. [30]

"Ancestor on the auction block" Vera Bell

Ancestor on the auction block
Across the years your eyes seek mine
Compelling me to look.
I see your shackled feet
Your primitive black face
I see your humiliation
And turn away ashamed.

Across the years your eyes seek mine
Compelling me to look
Is this creature that I see
Myself?
Ashamed to look
Because of myself ashamed
Shackled by my own ignorance
I stand
A slave.

Humiliated
I cry to the eternal abyss
For understanding
Ancestor on the auction block
Across the years your eyes meet mine
Electric
I am transformed
My freedom is within myself.

I look you in the eyes and see
The spirit of God eternal
Of this only need I be ashamed
Of blindness to the God within me
The same God who dwelt within you
The same eternal God
Who shall dwell
In generations yet unborn.
Ancestor on the auction block
Across the years
I look

I see you sweating, toiling, suffering
Within your loins I see the seed
Of multitudes
From your labour
Grow roads, aqueducts, cultivation
A new country is born
Yours was the task to clear the ground
Mine be the task to build.

"The Visitation" Sun-Ra

In the days of my visitation,
Black hands tended me and cared for me...
Black minds, hearts and souls loved me...
And I love them because of this

In the early days of my visitation,
Black hands tended me and cared for me;
I can't forget these things
For black hearts, minds and souls love me-
And even today the overtones from the fire
of that love are still burning

In the early days of my visitation
White rules and laws segregated me...
They helped to make me what I am today
And what I am, I am.
Yes, what I am, I am because of this
And because of this
My image of paradise is chromatic black.

Those who segregate did not segregate in vain
For I am,
And I am what I am.

SECTION B PROSE, DRAMA, POETRY

Question 3

Discuss the different approaches to the theme of change from apartheid to post-apartheid observed in Coconut by Kopano Matlwa and in Dog Eat Dog by Niq Mhlongo. [30]

Question 4

Comparatively discuss the images of inner city 'Jozi' life projected in the following poem and in Dog Eat Dog. [30]

"HILLBROW" Sphiwe ka Ngwenya

hillbrow
hill
brow
i jostle in your streets
& raise my eye
brow
eyes always glancing at your tricksters
& pimps at the corner

hillbrow
i walk between thighs & bums
of your heartless angels
parading on pavements & brothels
& feel the syphilis inside my veins

hillbrow
you possess a spell that tempts
i have seen even the devils yielding
the mocking bird chirping to their morals
your sagging breasts heaving to bank notes

hillbrow
hill
brow
you lie awake day & night
even your captives worship you
for you hide the poor, the criminal & forsaken
it takes time to awaken

even the taxman grows fat
from your spoils
hillbrow
hill
brow.

Question 5

Focusing on one character in each case, comparatively discuss the challenges faced by elderly women in A Raisin in the Sun, Dog Eat Dog, and Coconut. [30]