

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND**

**FINAL EXAMINATION 2007**

TITLE OF PAPER: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

COURSE CODE: ENG 104 / IDE ENG 104

TIME ALLOWED: TWO (2) HOURS

**INSTRUCTIONS: 1. ANSWER ANY TWO QUESTIONS. EACH QUESTION CARRIES 30 MARKS.**

**2. DO NOT REPEAT MATERIAL OR WRITE ABOUT THE SAME TEXT AT LENGTH MORE THAN ONCE.**

**3. CANDIDATES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BRING ANY READING MATERIAL INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM.**

**4. CORRECT USAGE OF ENGLISH WILL BE REWARDED AND GRAMMATICAL AND SPELLING MISTAKES PENALIZED.**

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

**1. Geoffrey Chaucer: “The General Prologue” to The Canterbury Tales**

a. “Of Chaucer’s characters ... some of the names or titles are altered by time, but the characters themselves remain for ever unaltered” (William Blake). Discuss. (30)

or

b. How do the Miller and Reeve’s Tales reveal folk medieval practices, beliefs and sensibilities in England? (30)

**2. Edmund Spenser: Epithalamion**

Show how the poem fuses traditional features with strong personal elements. (30)

**3. Philip Sidney: Astrophil and Stella**

How does Sidney’s poem attempt to achieve the extraordinary out of an ordinary background? Does it project unrealistic ideals? (30)

**4. John Milton: Paradise Lost Books I and IX**

“Milton’s work depicts the depraved human condition resulting from gross disobedience to a benevolent and merciful God who is patient and loving.” Sustain or refute this view with ample examples. (30)

**5. William Shakespeare: Hamlet**

But two months dead – nay, not so much, not two –  
So excellent a king, that was to this  
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly.  
... and yet within a month –  
Let me not think on't – Frailly, thy name is Woman.

- a. Explain how these lines depict Hamlet's state of mind and his attitude to his mother (10).
- b. Identify the imagery that contrasts King Hamlet and his brother Claudius and show how the imagery portrays the basic situation of the play to appear as one in which the beast in man has destroyed the god and now reigns in his kingdom (20).

**6. Jonathan Swift: Gulliver's Travels**

"The character of Gulliver is one of Swift's cleverest inventions: a decent, practical, Patriotic Englishman of his time, yet somehow at the same time credulous and (as his name suggests) gullible (easily deceived)." Discuss the paradoxical character with apt illustrations. (30)