

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FIRST SEMESTER EXAMINATION, 2010

TITLE OF PAPER: **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**

COURSE CODE: **IDE-ENG104**

TIME ALLOWED: **TWO (2) HOURS**

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer any two questions. Each question carries 30 marks. The total marks for the examination is 60%.
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 use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded and the contrary will be penalised.

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

QUESTION 1:**Geoffrey Chaucer – Canterbury Tales**

Define “Gothic double vision.” How does the first stanza of the general prologue and the Miller’s tale illustrate Chaucer’s spirit of the Gothic “double vision”? [30]

QUESTION 2**Edmund Spenser – Amoretti Sonnets**

a) Using at least three of the following interconnected poems from Spenser’s *Amoretti Sonnets*, describe how they function as a conventional trace of a man’s attempt to woo his beloved, the moment she capitulates to him and returns his love, and his sorrow at somehow losing her again. [30]

"Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day"

Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day
 Didst make thy triumph over death and sin,
 And having harrowed hell, didst bring away
 Captivity thence captive, us to win:
 This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,
 And grant that we, for whom thou diddest die,
 Being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,
 May live forever in felicity:
 And that thy love we weighing worthily,
 May likewise love thee for the same again;
 And for thy sake, that all like dear didst buy,
 May love with one another entertain.
 So let us love, dear love, like as we ought,
 Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

"Happy ye leaves! whenas those lily hands"

Happy ye leaves when as those lily hands,
 Which hold my life in their dead-doing might,
 Shall handle you and hold in love's soft bands,
 Like captives trembling at the victor's sight.
 And happy lines, on which with starry light,
 Those laming eyes will deign sometimes to look
 And read the sorrows of my dying sprite,
 Written with tears in heart's close-bleeding book.
 And happy rhymes bath'd in the sacred brook,
 Of Helicon whence she derived is,

When ye behold that Angel's blessed look,
 My soul's long-lacked food, my heaven's bliss.
 Leaves, lines, and rhymes, seek her to please alone,
 Whom if ye please, I care for other none.

"One day I wrote her name upon the strand"

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
 But came the waves and washed it away:
 Again I wrote it with a second hand,
 But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
 Vain man, said she, that doest in vain assay
 A mortal thing so to immortalize,
 For I myself shall like to this decay,
 And eek my name be wiped out likewise.
 Not so (quoth I), let baser things devise
 To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
 My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
 And in the heavens write your glorious name.
 Where whenas Death shall all the world subdue,
 Out love shall live, and later life renew.

"Fair is my love, when her fair golden hairs"

Fair is my love, when her fair golden hairs
 With the loose wind ye waving chance to mark:
 Fair, when the rose in her red cheeks appears,
 Or in her eyes the fire of love does spark:
 Fair, when her breast, like a rich laden bark
 With precious merchandise she forth doth lay:
 Fair, when that cloud of pride, which oft doth dark
 Her goodly light, with smiles she drives away
 But fairest she, when so she doth display
 The gate with pearls and rubies richly dight,
 Through which her words so wise do make their way,
 To bear the message of her gentle sprite.
 The rest be works of nature's wonderment,
 But this the work of heart's astonishment. →

Or

b) Define an ode and discuss "Epithalamion" as a spousal Ode.

[30]

QUESTION 3:

Sir Philip Sidney – Astrophil and Stella

Read the poem below and answer the question that follows.

Sir Philip Sidney - Sonnet 1

Loving in truth, and fair my love in verse to show,
That the dear she might take some pleasure of my pain
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win and pity grace obtain,
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves to see if there would flow
Some fresh and fruitful shower upon my sun-burnt brain
But words came halting out, wanting invention's stay.
Invention, Nature's child, fled stepdame's study's blows
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
'Fool,' said my muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write'.

Discuss the characteristic features of sonnets with reference to Sidney's sonnet 1 above. How do the characteristics of this sonnet compare and contrast with the characteristics of the Italian / Petrarchan sonnets? [30]

QUESTION 4:

William Shakespeare - Hamlet

Discuss the characteristic features of a tragedy with special reference to Shakespeare's Hamlet.

[30]

QUESTION 5

John Milton – Paradise Lost Book I & IX

Book I and IX of Paradise Lost mainly manifest human folly amidst God's benevolence. Discuss.

[30]