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UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FINAL EXAMINATION, MAY 2012

COURSE TITLE: 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.
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: "The General Prologue" to The Canterbury Tales**

Flattery and pride are the key devices used in "The Nun's Priest Tale". Exemplify this assertion with episodes from the tale. [30]

ANSWER EITHER

QUESTION 2A**Edmund Spenser Epithalamion**

How does Spenser mix pagan, Christian and local lore in Epithalamion? Discuss fully with the aid of illustrations. [30]

OR

QUESTION 2B**Edmund Spenser The Amoretti**

Read the following sonnets from The Amoretti and answer the question that follow:

SONNET V

Rudely thou wrongs my dear hearts desire,
 In finding fault with her too portly pride:
 the thing which I do most in her admire,
 is of the world unworthy most envied.
 For in those lofty looks is close implied,
 scorn of base things, & deigned of soul dishonor:
 threatening rash eyes which gaze on her so wide,
 that loosely they ne dare to look upon her.
 Such pride is praise, such portliness is honor,
 that Bolden innocence bears in her eyes:
 and her faire countenance like a goodly banner,
 spreads in defiance of all enemies.
 Was never in this world ought worthy tried,
 without some spark of such self-pleasing pride.

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SONNET XXVI

Sweet is the Rose, but grows upon a brae;
Sweet is the Juniper, but sharp his bough;
sweet is the Eglantine, but pricket near;
sweet is the firbloome, but his branches rough.
Sweet is the Cypresses, but his rind is tough,
sweet is the nut, but bitter is his pill;
sweet is the broome-flowre, but yet sore enough;
and sweet is Molly, but his root is ill.
So every sweet with sour is tempered still,
that make it be courted the more:
for easier things that may be got at will,
most sorts of men doe set but little store.
Why then should I accoumpt of little pain,
that endless pleasure shall unto me gain.

SONNET LXXXVII

Since I did leave the presence of my love,
Many long weary days I have outworn:
and many nights, that slowly seem to moue,
their sad protract from evening until morns.
For when as day the heaven doth adorn,
I wish that night the joyous day would end:
and when as night hath us of light forlorn,
I wish that day would shortly rescind.
Thus I the time with expectation spend,
and fine my grief with changes to beguile,
that further seems his term still to extend,
and make every minute seem a mile.
So sorrow still doth seem too long to last,
but joyous hours doo fly away too fast.

Question

What does Spencer in *The Amoretti* say about the following:

- a. Pride: Sonnet V
- b. Hard work vs. disinterest: Sonnet XXVI
- c. Separation: Sonnet LXXXVII

QUESTION 3

Philip Sidney Astrophil and Stella

How does Sidney present Astrophil's character and personality in the sonnet sequence? At the same time, how does he present Stella's character and personality? [30]

QUESTION 4

William Shakespeare Hamlet

Discuss how the following characters contributed to the theme of "revenge" in Shakespeare's Hamlet:

- a) Hamlet
- b) Laertes
- c) Fortinbras

[30]

QUESTION 5

John Milton: Paradise Lost Books I and IX

"Milton's epic deals with the major opposition between good and evil." Discuss this statement with special reference to Books I and IX. [30]