

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SECOND SEMESTER EXAMINATION

MAY, 2014

TITLE OF PAPER : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

COURSE CODE : IDE-ENG 104

TIME ALLOWED : TWO (2) HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Answer any TWO questions.
2. Each question carries 30 marks. The total marks for the examination is 60%.
3. Do not repeat material or write about the same text at length more than once.
4. Candidates are not allowed to bring any reading material into the examination room.
5. 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

Define irony. Discuss **three** ironic portraits in the "General Prologue" of *The Canterbury Tales*, showing clearly how these incidents are ironic. [30]

Question 2

Spenser brought the Greek classical tradition into the context of the Irish people in the "Epithalamion". How well does this tradition fit the Irish culture of Spenser's contemporary? [30]

Question 3

Read the following poems and answer the questions that follow:

"London, 1802"

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

"Sonnet LIV"

Of this World's theatre in which we stay,
My love like the Spectator idly sits,
Beholding me, that all the pageants play,
Disguising diversely my troubled wits.
Sometimes I joy when glad occasion fits,
And mask in mirth like to a Comedy;
Soon after when my joy to sorrow flits,
I wail and make my woes a Tragedy.
Yet she, beholding me with constant eye,
Delights not in my mirth nor rues my smart;
But when I laugh, she mocks: and when I cry
She laughs and hardens evermore her heart.
What then can move her? If nor mirth nor moan,
She is no woman, but a senseless stone.

"Sonnet LXXIII"

That time of year thou mayst in me behold,
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed, whereon it must expire,
Consumed by that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well, which thou must leave ere long.

Questions

- i) Identify the types of the above sonnets. (3)
- ii) Comment on how the study of the form of a sonnet is primary in comprehending the subject of sonnets. (5)
- iii) What is a volta? Identify the volta in all three poems. (4)
- iv) Discuss the subject presented in each poem. (12)

(Language use and literary conventions) (6)
[30]

Question 4

“While both Sidney in *Astrophil and Stella* and Spenser in the *Amoretti* are victims of love; the latter is redeemable and the former is not.” Support this view with evidence from some sonnets in their sonnet cycles. [30]

Question 5

“Shakespeare warns his reader to be very careful of appearances in Hamlet.” Discuss. [30]

Question 6

“Swift, in his last voyage, is overwhelmed to realise that human nature operates on ID.” Discuss. [30]