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UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION

JULY, 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.**

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Question 1

“Through characterization, Chaucer successfully depicted some of the social ills of his society.” Support this claim with evidence from “The Miller’s Tale” and “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale”. [30]

Question 2

The groom has obviously idealised the bride and the wedding in “Epithalamion”. Support this claim with clear evidence from the poem. [30]

Question 3

Read the sonnets below and answer the question that follow them:

1

Loving, and wishing to show my love in verse,
So that Stella might find pleasure in my pain,
So that pleasure might make her read, and reading make her know me,
And knowledge might win pity for me, and pity might obtain grace,
I looked for fitting words to depict the darkest face of sadness,
Studying clever creations in order to entertain her mind,
Often turning others’ pages to see if, from them,
Fresh and fruitful ideas would flow into my brain.
But words came out lamely, lacking the support of Imagination:
Imagination, nature’s child, fled the blows of Study, her stepmother:
And the writings (‘feet’) of others seemed only alien things in the way.
So while pregnant with the desire to speak, helpless with the birth pangs,
Biting at my pen which disobeyed me, beating myself in anger,
My Muse said to me ‘Fool, look in your heart and write.’

2

Love gave the wound, which will bleed as long as I breathe,
But not at the first sight of her, nor with a chance shot,
Rather her established worth tunnelled away for a time,
Until, little by little, it achieved a complete conquest.
I saw her and liked her: I liked her but did not love her yet:
Then I loved her but did not immediately obey Love’s demands:
At length under duress I agreed to Love’s commands,
Though complaining about the unfairness of my fate.
Now even that step on the ladder of lost freedom
Is vanished, and like a Muscovite born to love slavery,
I call undergoing tyranny something worthy of praise:
And now I make use of what is left of my intelligence
To convince myself that everything is well,
While with sensitive art I depict my self in hell.

6

Some lovers, when inspired by their Muses,
 Speak about hopes created by fear, and of who-knows-what desires,
 Of the power of heavenly rays infusing hellish pain,
 Of living deaths, dear wounds, fair storms, and freezing fires:
 One of them dresses his poems with Jupiter and Jupiter's strange tales,
 Embroidering them with bulls and swans, sprinkling golden rain:
 Another humbler poet writes about pastoral shepherd's flutes,
 But often hiding royal attitudes in the rural similes and metaphors:
 To some poets a sweet sadness allows their sweetest style,
 While they use tears for ink, and breathe out their words in sighs,
 And pale despair is their paper, and pain moves their pen.
 I can speak what I feel, and feel as much as they do,
 But I think that I show everything I can of my state of mind
 When my trembling voice utters its love for Stella.

Question

"It is painful to love someone who will never return your love." Examine how this thematic issue has been portrayed by Philip Sidney in the above sonnets from his sonnet cycle, *Astrophil and Stella*. [30]

Question 4

"Swift is a passionate satirist." Support this view with clear illustrations from *Gulliver's Travels*. [30]

Question 5

Bring out the characteristic features of revenge tragedy with special reference to *Hamlet*. [30]