

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FINAL EXAMINATION 2012

COURSE TITLE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

COURSE CODE: ENG 104

TIME ALLOWED: TWO HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Answer TWO questions.

2. Your answers should not exceed three pages.

3. Do not repeat material or write about the same text more than once.

4. Correct use of English and literary conventions will be rewarded and the reverse will be penalized.

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

The Canterbury Tales Chaucer

1. In what way is "The Nun's Priest's Tale" a fabliau? [30]

Selections from Amoretti Spenser and Astrophil and Stella Sidney

2. Read the following sonnet and answer the questions that follow.

mind
impartial
throng

more lifelike

Come sleep! O sleep the certain knot of peace,
 The baiting place⁸ of wit,⁹ the balm of woe,
 The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
 Th' indifferent⁹ judge between the high and low;
 5 With shield of proof⁹ shield me from out the prease⁹.
 Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:
 O make in me those civil wars to cease;
 I will good tribute pay if thou do'st so.
 Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
 10 A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
 A rosy garland, and a weary head:¹
 And if these things, as being thine by right,
 Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me
 Livelier⁹ than elsewhere Stella's image see.

8. Resting place on a journey.

9. Proven strength.

- (a) What is the subject of this sonnet? (2)
- (b) How is sleep characterized in the sonnet? (15)
- (c) Discuss the structure of the sonnet (8)
- (d) What is its rhyme scheme? (5)

3. Situate the dialogue within its context and comment on the thoughts and feelings of the speakers. [30]

GERTRUDE O Hamlet, speak no more.
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
And there I see such black and grainèd spots
As will not leave their tinct.

HAMLET Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamèd bed,
Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty—

GERTRUDE O, speak to me no more.
These words like daggers enter in my ears.
No more, sweet Hamlet.

HAMLET A murderer and a villain,
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord, a vice of kings,
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole
And put it in his pocket—

GERTRUDE No more.

4 HAMLET A king of shreds and patches—

Paradise Lost Milton

4. Read the extract below and comment on how the vividness of description is achieved through the language used. [30]

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
 35 Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
 The mother of mankind, what time^o his pride
 Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host
 Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
 To set himself in glory above his peers,^o
 40 He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
 If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
 Against the throne and monarchy of God
 Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud
 With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
 45 Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
 With hideous ruin and combustion down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In adamantin^e chains and penal fire,
 Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
 50 Nine times the space² that measures day and night
 To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
 Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
 Confounded though immortal: but his doom
 Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
 55 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
 Torments him; round he throws his baleful^o eyes
 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
 At once as far as angels' ken^o he views
 60 The dismal situation waste and wild,
 A dungeon horrible, on all sides round
 As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
 No light, but rather darkness visible
 Served only to discover sights of woe,

Gullivers's Travels Swift

5. Using three examples from the text discuss how Swift uses size to denote power and powerlessness. [30]