

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2003

COURSE II

PAPER A3 (b) LANGLAND AND GOWER

Thursday, 29 May 2003, 9.30 am – 11.30 am

Time allowed – Two hours

Answer *one* question. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

You may write on Langland or Gower *or* on both of them in comparison with each other *or* on *either or both* of them in comparison to Chaucer.

***Do not* turn over until told that you may do so.**

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1. The nobles grow indolent, the clergy are dissolute, the cities are quarrelling, and the laws are unjustly severe (Gower: *Vox Clamantis*).

Discuss the use of estates satire in *Piers Plowman* **and/or** one or more of Gower's works. You may make comparison with Chaucer's works if you wish

2. What contribution do penitential structures make to *Piers Plowman* **and/or** *Confessio Amantis*?

3 Discuss the genre 'handbook for princes' as underpinning the strategies and outcomes of *Piers Plowman* **and/or** *Confessio Amantis*.

4. Discuss *Piers Plowman* **and/or** *Confessio Amantis* as 'royalist' texts.

5. Discuss the reliance on sermon techniques or structures in *Piers Plowman* **and/or** *Confessio Amantis*.

6. These faders auncyente [Chaucer and Gower]
Repen the feldes fresshe of fulsomnes
The flours fresh they gadred vp & hente
Of siluer langage / the grete riches
Who wil it haue.
Muste of hem begge / ther is no more to saye
For of our tunge / they were both lok and kaye.
 (*Booke of Curtesye*, 1477)

Consider Gower's qualifications to be a 'fader auncyente'.

7 'I trowe, in all this world to seche,
Nis womman that in dede and speche
Woll betre avise hire what sche doth,
Ne betre, forto seie a soth,
Kepe hire honour ate alle tide' (*Confessio Amantis*)

'The most significant representations of virtue in *Confessio Amantis* are female'
Discuss

DENB 2406

8 Things worth remembering have not been heaped together in confusion, but a variety of subjects of different authorship and diverse dates have been arranged to form, so to speak, a body (Macrobius: *Saturnalia*).

Is the material in *Confessio Amantis* 'heaped together in confusion', or does Gower succeed in forming a coherent 'body'?

9. Inescapable parallels are drawn between Amans and the wilful, impetuous, youthful rulers of world history, whose sexual and territorial rapacity exposes the menace of pathological submission to desire (James Simpson) Discuss.

10. 'For Nature is under the Mone
Maistresse of every lives kinde'.

Discuss the role of Nature in *Confessio Amantis*.

11. 'For it is noght my comun us
To speke of vices and vertus,
Bot al of love and of his lore,
For Venus bokes of nomore
Me techen nowther text ne glose'.

Does Genius successfully discharge his dual roles as servant of Venus and priest in *Confessio Amantis*?

12. 'Forþi is loue ledere of þe lordes folk of heuene'.

'Lerne to loue', quod Kynde, 'and leef alle oþere'.

Does *Piers Plowman* succeed in defining what Langland means by 'love'?

13. 'I shal cessen of my sowyng', quod Piers, 'and swynke noȝt so harde'.

To what extent does *Piers Plowman* reject the value of work(s)?

14. 'And so boweþ forþ by a brook beþ-buxom-of-speche'.

Discuss the range and effectiveness of allegory in *Piers Plowman*.

15. If lewed ledes wiste what þis latyn meneþ,
 And who was myn auctor.

Discuss the problem of 'authority' in *Piers Plowman*

16. 'When Y ȝut ȝong was, many ȝer hennes
 My fader and my frendes foende me to scole'.

Discuss the importance of school/clergy/learning in *Piers Plowman*. You may make comparisons with Chaucer if you wish.

17. In spite of copious attention to moral structures, does Langland achieve moral clarity?