

DENB 2402

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2005

COURSE II

PAPER A2 ENGLISH LITERATURE 1100-1530

**Wednesday, 18 May, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm
2005**

Time Allowed – Three hours

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

TRINITY TERM 2005

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

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

1. 'Much that characterises the literary culture of the period is the result of certain kinds of antiquarianism...of a certain self-consciousness about writing in language and in literary forms that are no longer current' (S. LEHRER). Discuss.
2. 'Lazamon use[s]...a rhythmical mode substantially similar to that employed by Aelfric in his *Homilies*. Here we are dealing with a species of composition which combines elements traditionally associated with one or other of those forms ["verse" or "prose"]' (E. SALTER). How helpful do you find it to relate Lazamon's work to the practice of earlier English writers of either verse or prose?
3. 'Gravity is set against gaiety, permanence against transience' (J. BURROW and T. TURVILLE-PETRE). Consider *The Owl and the Nightingale* and / or any other text(s) in the light of this quotation.
4. '*Formosa deformitas* [beautiful deformity]' (ST BERNARD). Is this a good definition of the grotesque as we find it in the literature of the period?
5. 'L. P. Hartley's statement that "The past is a foreign country : they do things differently there" would be truer if for *do* we read *feel*.' How different from those of our own time do you find the feelings expressed or represented in the writing of this period?
6. 'þenç 3et on oþer half: hwet is word bute wind?' (*Ancrene Wisse*). Examine some attitudes in the period to the power and / or weakness of language.
7. 'What allegory teaches is ultimately only that discourses struggle with one another, that interpretative systems collide' (WILLIAM ROGERS). Explain what you think allegory 'teaches' with reference to one or more examples.
8. 'Authority accrues to authors not by identification, but rather by representation: authors impersonate the authority of their source texts or patrons' (JAMES SIMPSON). Discuss with reference to one or two writers of the period.
9. 'Truth meant something very different from the scientific "truth" on which we place so much reliance today; to the medieval mind truth had to correspond to the ideal norms' (A. GUREVICH). Discuss with relation to some works of this period.
10. 'þat lond...is full of serpentes, of dragouns and of cokadrilles, þat noman dar duelle þere' (*Mandeville's Travels*, ch. 22). Consider, in relation to one or more works, whether 'medieval writers' ignorance of facts served to liberate rather than shackle their creative powers'.
11. 'The hevene is ferr, the world is nyh' (*Confessio Amantis*, Prologus). How 'worldly' is Middle English literature?

12. 'Loue is a desire betwix two, with lestingnesse of thoghtes' (RICHARD ROLLE, *Form of Living*). Discuss in relation to any one or more types of writing on love, secular or sacred, that you have found of interest.

13. 'This is not a poetry of precept, but of experience; that is why it teaches so successfully'. Discuss the works of the poet(s) of MS Cotton Nero A. x in the light of this comment.

14. 'Al þe whiles þat þe soule wonip in þis deedly body, euermore is þe scharpnēs of oure vnderstanding in beholding of alle goostly þinges...medelid wiþ sum maner of fantasie' (*The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. 8). What place does *fantasie* play in the work of one or more of the Middle English 'Mystical' writers?

15. 'The notable thing is the difference from Chaucer' (J. A. W. BENNETT). Discuss in relation to one or more 'Scottish Chaucerians'.

16. A clerkes custom is, whan he endyteth
Of wommen, be it prose, or ryme or vers,
Sey they ben wikke, al knowe he the revers (HOCCLEVE).

How true do you find this from your reading in the period?

17. 'Instead of speculating endlessly on the origins of Alliterative Poetry, we would do better to try to understand the variety and accomplishment of the works themselves'. Discuss.

18. 'Its meaning only becomes clear when it is studied as text'; 'It cannot be understood unless it is experienced in performance'. Discuss one or both comments on medieval drama, with reference to a selection of works.

19. 'Hit is some noyous nycete of the newe iette' (*Mum and the Sothsegger*). Do you find late medieval literature 'uniformly conservative and resistant to change'?

20. 'Modern readers experience this literature in edited texts. Medieval readers had to take what they could get'. How has it affected your understanding to study one or more manuscript(s) in which Middle English literature has been preserved?

21. 'Malory's interpretation of the Arthurian stories is one that privileges the human and plausible above the marvellous and the supernatural' (HELEN COOPER). Discuss.

22. 'Skelton's posture of vatic obscurity mak[es] from polyglot allegories a zone of liberty for himself and his art' (C. BURROW). Discuss.

23. 'Caxton is important not only in the history of publishing but in the history of English literature'. Consider whether and in what ways this might be true.

24. 'Despite their being preserved in a late and often corrupt form, the Ballads are the only truly "popular" poems of the medieval period'. Discuss.

25. 'Tudor literature may be what C. S. Lewis called "drab"; but this is a positive relief after the excesses of late-medieval "aureation"'. Discuss in relation to any one or two works or writers.

26. Write an essay on the literature of this period in relation to one of the following: the Ages of Man; birds; clothing; *courteisye*; feasting; gardens; heresy; kingliness; preaching; rape.