

DENB 2408

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2005

COURSE II

A5 The History of the English Language to c. 1750

Tuesday, 24 May, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

2005

Time allowed – Three hours

Answer question 1 and *two* others. You may use the same text in more than one answer, but you should not repeat material. In the course of your three answers you must show knowledge of all three periods (Old English, Middle English to c.1500, early modern English c.1500-1750). You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the question.

Trinity Term 2005

Do *not* turn over until told to do so

Answer question 1 and *two* others. You may use the same text in more than one answer, but you should not repeat material. In the course of your three answers you must show knowledge of all three periods (Old English, Middle English to c.1500, early modern English c.1500-1750). You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the question.

1. Either (a) Choose two of the passages (i) to (iv), and comment on the changes of language (inflection, syntax, vocabulary, word order, semantics, orthography, and phonology) between them;

Or (b) Choose two of the passages (v) to (viii), and comment on the language (inflection, syntax, vocabulary, word order, semantics, orthography, and phonology) of each, making such comparisons between the passages as seem useful:

(a) (i)

- 5 Ða æfter syx dagum nam se hælend petrum and iacobum and iohannem and lædde hi sylfe onsundran on sumne heahne munt and wearð beforan him oferhiwud: and his reaf wurdon glitiniende swa hwite swa snaw: swa nan fullere ofer eorðan ne mæg swa hwite gedon; þa ætywde him helias mid moyse and to him spræcon; Ða andswarode petrus him and cwæð: lareow god is þæt we her beon and uton wyrcan her þreo eardungstowa: þe ane. and moyse ane. and helie ane; Soðlice he nyste hwæt he cwæð: he was afæred mid ege; And seo lyft hi ofersceadewude: and stefn com of þære lyfte and cwæð: þes is min leofesta sunu gehyrað hine; And sona ða hi besawon hi nanne hi mid him ne gesawon buton þone hælend sylfne mid him; And þa hi of þam munte astigon he beað him þæt hi nanum ne sædon þa ðing þe hi gesawon buton þonne mannes sunu of deaðe arise.

Late West Saxon Gospels.

(ii)

- 5 And aftir sixe daies Jhesus took Petre, and James, and Joon, and ledde hem bi hem silf aloone in to an hiȝ hille; and he was transfigurid bifor hem. And hise clothis weren maad ful schynynge and white as snow, whiche maner white clothis a fuller may not make on erthe. And Halie with Moises apperide to hem, and thei spaken with Jhesu. And 10 Petre answeride, and seide to Jhesu, Maister, it is good vs. to be here; and make we here thre tabernacles, oon to thee, oon to Moyses, and oon to Halie. For he wiste not what he schulde seie; 15 for thei weren agaste bi drede. And ther was maad a cloude overschadewynge hem; and a vois cam of the cloude, and seide, This is my moost derworth sone, here ȝe hym. And anon thei bihelden aboute, and sayn no more ony man, but Jhesu oonli with hem. And whanne thei camen duun fro the hille, he comaundide hem, that thei schulden not telle to ony man tho thingis that 20 thei hadden seen, but whanne mannus sone hath risun agen fro deeth.

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Wycliffe Bible, Later Version

(iii)

And after. vj. dayes Jesus toke Peter, James, and Jhon
and leede them up into an hye mountayne out of the waye
alone, and he was transfigured before them. And his ray-
ment did shyne, and was made very whyte, even as snowe:
5 so whyte as noo fuller can make apon the erth And there
apered unto them Helyas with Moses: And they talked
with Jesu. And Peter answered and sayde to Jesu: Master,
here is good beinge for us, let us make. iij. tabernacles, one
for the, one for Moses, and one for Helyas. And wist not
10 what he sayde. For they were afrayde. And there was a
cloude that shaddowed them. And a voyce cam out of the
cloude saynge: This ys my dere sonne, here hym. And
sedenly, they loked rounde aboute them, and sawe no
man more, but Jesus only.
15 As they cam doune from the hill, he charged them, that
they shulde tell no man what they had sene, tyll the sonne
of man were risen from deeth agayne.

Tyndale

(iv)

And after sixe dayes, Iesus taketh with him Peter, and Iames, and Iohn, and leadeth
them vp into an high mountaine apart by themselues: and he was transfigured before
them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow: so as no Fuller on
earth can white them. And there appeared vnto them Elias with Moses: and they were
5 talking with Iesus. And Peter answered, and saide to Iesus, Master, it is good for vs to
bee here, and let vs make three Tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one
for Elias. For he wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud
that ouershadowed them: and a voyce came out of the cloud, saying, This is my
beloued Sonne: heare him. And suddenly when they had looked round about, they
10 saw no man any more, saue Iesus only with themselues. And as they came downe
from the mountaine, he charged them that they should tell no man, what things they
had seene, till the Sonne of man were risen from the dead.

King James Version

- (b) Wyrcað eow freonda of ðam unrihtan welan,
 þæt hy underfón eow on eowrum forðsiþe
 to him on ðam ecum eardungstowum eft.
- (v) Se welega man þe hæfde þone túngerefan
 5 is se ælmihtiga God, þe ah ealle þing,
 and he betæhte mannum his micclan welan
 her on þisum andwerdan life, þæt he geuðe us
 andgites and gesceades, swa swa þam englum,
 toforan oþrum gesceaftum, and þærtoeacan
 10 us forgið ure neode on life,
 þurh his micclan cyste; for ðan þe he mancynn lufað,
 þa ðe hine oncnawað and him cyððe to habbað
 þurh soðne geleafan and singalre lufe.
 We synd his gerefan, þe his welan habbað,
 15 and we yfele aspendað his æhta him fram,
 þonne we ure andgit to yfele awendað,
 and ure mennisce gescead to mánfullum leahtrum;
 and we nyllað mid gesceade us sylfum gewissian,
 ne wyrcan his willan þe wyle us habban;
 20 and him nane æhta ne synd swa inmede
 swa him synd to agenne ure sawle clæne.

Ælfric

(vi)

Ther was, as telleth Titus Livius,
 A knyght that called was Virginius,
 Fulfil of honour and of worthynesse,
 And strong of freendes, and of greet richesse.
 This knyght a doghter hadde by his wyf; 5
 No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.
 Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee
 Aboven every wight that man may see;
 For Nature hath with sovereyn diligence
 Yformed hire in so greet excellence, 10
 As though she wolde seyn, "Lo! I, Nature,
 Thus kan I forme and peynte a creature,
 Whan that me list; who kan me countrefete?
 Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and bete,
 Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel seyn 15
 Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn
 Outher to grave, or peynte, or forge, or bete,
 If they presumed me to countrefete.
 For He that is the formere principal
 Hath maked me his vicaire general, 20
 To forme and peynten erthely creaturis
 Right as me list, and ech thyng in my cure is
 Under the moone, that may wane and waxe,
 And for my werk right no thyng wol I axe;
 My lord and I been ful of oon accord. 25
 I made hire to the worshiþe of my lord;
 So do I alle myne othere creatures,
 What colour that they han or what figures."

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Chaucer

(vii)

After dyuerse werkes made / translated and achieued / hauyng
noo werke in hande. I sitting in my studye where as laye many
dyuerse paunflettis and bookys. happened that to my hande cam
a lytyl booke in frenshe. whiche late was translated oute of latyn
5 by some noble clerke of fraunce whiche booke is named Eneydos /
made in latyn by that noble poete & grete clerke vyrgyle / whiche
booke I sawe ouer and redde therin. How after the generall
destruccyon of the grete Troye. Encas departed berynge his olde
fader anchises vpon his sholdres / his lityl son yolus on his honde.
10 his wyfe wyth moche other people folowyng / and how he
shypped and departed wyth alle thystorye of his aduentures that
he had er he cam to the achieuement of his conquest of ytalie as
all a longe shall be shewed in this present boke. In whiche booke
I had grete playsyr. by cause of the fayr and honest termes &
15 wordes in frenshe / Whyche I neuer sawe to fore lyke. ne none
so playsaunt ne so wel ordred. whiche booke as me semed sholde
be moche requysyte to noble men to see as wel for the eloquence
as the historyes / How wel that many honderd yerys passed was
the sayd booke of eneydos wyth other werkes made and lerned
20 dayly in scolis specyally in ytalie & other places / whiche historye
the sayd vyrgyle made in metre /

Caxton

(viii)

When I first collected these authorities, I was desirous that every
quotation should be useful to some other end than the illustration
of a word; I therefore extracted from philosophers principles of
science; from historians remarkable facts; from chymists com-
5 plete processes; from divines striking exhortations; and from
poets beautiful descriptions. Such is design, while it is yet at a
distance from execution. When the time called upon me to
range this accumulation of elegance and wisdom into an alpha-
betical series, I soon discovered that the bulk of my volumes would
10 fright away the student, and was forced to depart from my scheme
of including all that was pleasing or useful in *English* literature,
and reduce my transcripts very often to clusters of words, in which
scarcely any meaning is retained; thus to the weariness of copying,
I was condemned to add the vexation of expunging. Some passages
15 I have yet spared, which may relieve the labour of verbal searches,
and intersperse with verdure and flowers the dusty desarts of barren
philology.

The examples, thus mutilated, are no longer to be considered as
conveying the sentiments or doctrine of their authours; the word
20 for the sake of which they are inserted, with all its appendant
clauses, has been carefully preserved; but it may sometimes hap-
pen, by hasty detruncation, that the general tendency of the sen-
tence may be changed: the divine may desert his tenets, or the
philosopher his system.

Johnson

2. 'Like all divisions in history, the periods of the English language are matters of convenience and the dividing lines between them purely arbitrary'. How useful to your study of language for this paper have been the period boundaries it assumes?
3. **EITHER (a)** 'Anyone wishing to find out about the rise of Standard English who turned to student textbooks on the history of the English language for enlightenment would be forgiven for thinking that the topic is now understood. But the story found there is actually rather contradictory' (LAURA WRIGHT). Discuss.

OR (b) 'It is impossible to provide a full picture of the history of standardisation, at any period in the history of the language, without considering political as well as linguistic factors'. Discuss.
4. 'What people say about language is mostly nonsense, and what they do with it is beyond effective intervention or improvement. Language change, in this view, flows according to strong currents deep within the language; it is a process of impersonal drift' (RICHARD BAILEY). Discuss in relation to any attempt to regulate language in the period covered by this paper.
5. 'It makes one weep to think what English might have been; for in spite of all that Shakespeare and Milton have done with the compound I cannot doubt that no beauty in language can make up for the want of purity. In fact I am learning Anglo-Saxon and it is a vastly superior thing to what we have now' (G.M. HOPKINS). What was Hopkins complaining about?
6. Choose any three examples of how morphological change has taken place in English over any of the periods covered by this paper, and discuss the significance of each.
7. 'It is impossible to say why some types of word formation thrive at some times and others at others'. Discuss.
8. 'There have been no major developments in syntax since Chaucer's day'. Is this true?
9. Mulcaster thought that new words were being introduced into English 'either of pure necessitie in new matters, or of mere brauerie, to garnish it self withall'. Discuss and illustrate this claim, for any of the three periods covered by this paper.
10. Discuss the relationship between any version of the Bible and the state of the English language at the time the version was published.

11. **EITHER (a)** 'The reconstruction of pronunciation during the Old and Middle English periods is based upon a mixture of evidence of greater or lesser value: the interpretation of spellings, the analysis of rhyming practice in verse, comparison with other languages and with later states of the language'. Discuss and evaluate any of these factors.
- OR (b)** What issues are involved in evaluating the evidence of sixteenth- and seventeenth- century orthoepists?
12. 'A Dictionary is a word-book which collects somebody's words into somebody's book. Whose words are collected, how they are collected, and who collects them all influence what kind of book a given dictionary turns out to be and, in turn, whose purpose it can best serve' (KRAMARAE AND TREICHLER). Discuss.
13. 'It is sometimes maintained that an individual writer (e.g. Chaucer, Shakespeare) has uniquely and crucially influenced the development of the English language.' What is the evidence for any such claim, and how does one set about evaluating it? (You may limit yourself to discussion of any single author in any of the periods covered by the paper).
14. 'Developments in technology—classically, the introduction of printing—have always had powerful effects on language and communication'. Discuss.
15. 'No study of the standard language is complete without concomitant study of the dialects that have always existed alongside the standard'. To what extent is this true? What are the other reasons for studying dialects and dialectal forms?