

DENB 2405

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2007

COURSE II

PAPER A3 (a) CHAUCER, LANGLAND AND GOWER

TRINITY TERM 2007

Friday 18 May 2007, 9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Time allowed – Three hours

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

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

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1. "Chaucer's women come with a history, bag ladies who carry their own wardrobe from place to literary place" (Nicky Hallett). Discuss.

2. "To his characters and his authorial persona Chaucer attributes the anxiety-producing knowledge that meaning awaits them and will be retrospectively conferred, and that they have no reason to be sanguine about this process." (Paul Strohm) Discuss.

3. "Chaucer does continually ask us to pretend that something is unwritten, is in the process of appearing before us as we speak". Consider the appearance of spontaneity in Chaucer's work.

4. Chaucer's poetry is a poetry of the voice, of voices creating and re-creating identities for themselves before an audience". (Lynn Staley) Discuss.

5. "We can characterize the *Canterbury Tales*' general attitude to contemporary Christian ideologies as believing, fascinated, quizzical and uncertain." (Nicholas Watson) Discuss.

6. "O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
Thow be my speed fro this forth, and my Muse,
To ryme wel this book til I have do;
Me nedeth here noon other art to use"

Consider (with reference to *any* of his works) how Chaucer's poetic art contradicts his own narrator's assertion.

7. "For out of olde felde, as men seyth,
Cometh al this newe corn from yer to yere"

How "newe" are Chaucer's versions of *any* of his sources?

8. "Beth war, for whan that Fortune list to glose
Thanne wayteth she her man to overthrowe
By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose"

Discuss some instances in which Chaucer's characters or readers either expect, or fail to expect, what is about to happen.

9. How does Chaucer exploit the "gret diversitee / in Englisshe"?

10. *Either* (a) Write on how the arrangements of the *Tales* in their manuscripts affects our understanding and appreciation of them,

Or, (b) What does the reader of any of Chaucer's works lose by not consulting the manuscripts?

11. Write on *one* of the following:
auctoritee; entente; ymaginacioun; sentence.
12. "Medieval prologues are coded messages which rarely mean what they seem to say." Consider *any* of Chaucer's prologues in relation to the text(s) they introduce.
13. "It is extremely difficult to distinguish between the excellence of the tale and the excellence of the teller". Do you agree?
14. "Construeth that as yow lyst; I do no cure".
How much latitude is there in interpreting Chaucer's allegories?
15. "It is certain and establissched by lawe perdurable, that nothyng that is engendred nys stedfast ne stable." (*Boece*).
Write on the functions of change and/or stability in Chaucer's work.
16. "Many men sayn that in sweveninges
Ther nys but fables and lesynges".
How does Chaucer then establish the serious import of dreams in his work?
17. "We wedded men liven in sorwe and care"
"How myghte a man han any adversitee
That hath a wyf?"
Do Chaucer's literary marriages have any common features?
18. "A blissful lyf, a paisible and a swete,
Ledden the peoples in the former age...
They ne were nat forpampred with outrage"
Write on the representation of the past in Chaucer's work.