

DENB 2408

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
2007

COURSE II

A5 The History of the English Language to c. 1750

TRINITY TERM 2007

Wednesday 23 May, 9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

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 two consecutive periods from those covered in the paper (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.

Do *not* turn over until told to do so

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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 any two of the passages (v) to (x), 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)

¹ Eft on þam dagum him wæs mid micel menigu and næfdon hwæt hi æton; þa cwæp he tosomne geclypedum his leorningcnihtum; ² Ic gemiltsige þysse menegu. forþam hi þry dagas me geanbidiað and nabbað hwæt hi eton; ³ Gif ic hi fæstende to hyra husum læte: be wege
5 hi geteorigeað; Sume hi comon feorran: ⁴ and þa andswarodan him his leorningcnihtas; Hwanon mæg ænig man þas mid hlafum on þysum westene gefyllan; ⁵ þa axode he hi hu fela hlafa hæbbe ge: hi cwædon seofan; ⁶ Ða het he sittan þa menegu ofer þa eorþan; And nam þa seofon hlafas and gode þancode: and hi bræc and sealde his leorningcnihtum
10 þæt hi toforan him asetton: and hi swa dydon; ⁷ And hi næfdon buton feawa fixa and he þa bletsode: and het beforan him settan: ⁸ and hi æton and wurdon gefyllede and hi namon þæt of þam brytsenum belaf: seofon wilian fulle; ⁹ Soðlice þa ðe þar | æton: wæron fif þusend and he hi þa forlet;

Late West Saxon Gospels

(ii)

In tho daies eft, whanne myche puple was with Jhesu, and hadden not what thei schulden ete, whanne hise disciplis weren clepid togidir, he seide to hem, I haue reuth on the puple, for lo! now the thridde dai thei abiden me, and han not what to ete; and
5 if Y leeue hem fastynge in to her hous, thei schulen faile in the weie; for summe of hem camen fro fer. And hise disciplis answerden to hym, Wherof schal a man mowe fille hem with looues here in wildirnesse? And he axide hem, Hou many looues han 3e? Whiche seiden, Seuene. And he comaundide the puple to sitte down on the erthe. And he took the seuene looues, and dide thankyngis, and brak, and 3af to hise disciplis, that thei schulden sette forth. And thei settiden forth to the puple. And thei
10 hadden a few smale fischis; and he blessing hem, and comaundide, that thei weren sette forth. And thei eten, and weren fulfillid; and thei token vp that that lefte of relifs, seuene lepis. And thei that eeten, weren as foure thousynde of men; and he lefte hem.

Wycliffite Bible, Later Version

(iii)

In those dayes when there was a very greate companye, and had nothinge to eate, Iesus called hys disciples to hym, and sayd unto them: my herte melteth on this people, because they have nowe bene wyth me iij. dayes, and have nothinge to eate: And yf I shulde sende them awaye fastinge to their awne houses, they shulde faynt by the waye. For
5 dyvers of them cam from farre, And hys disciples answered hym: from whence myght a man suffyse them with breed here in the wyldernes? And he axed them: howe many loves have ye? They sayde: seven. And he commaunded the people to sitt doune on the grounde. And he toke the .vij. loves, gave thankes, brake, and gave to hys disciples, to set
10 before them. And they sett them before the people. And they had a feawe smale fysshes, and he blessed them and commaunded them also to be sett before them, They ate and were suffysed, and they toke up off the broken meate that was lefte, vij. basketes full. They that ate were in nomber aboute fowre thousand. And he sent them awaye.

Tyndale version

(iv)

In those dayes the multitude being very great, and hauing nothing to eat. Iesus called his disciples vnto him, & saith vnto them, I haue compassion on the multitude, because they haue now bene with me three daies, and haue nothing to eat: And if I send them away fasting to their owne houses, they will faint by the way: for diuers of them came from
5 farre. And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfie these men with bread here in the wildernes? And hee asked them, How many loaues haue ye? And they said, Seuen. And he commanded the people to sit doune on the ground: and he tooke the seuen loaues, and gaue thanks, and brake, and gaue to his disciples to set before them: and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed,
10 and commaunded to set them also before them. So they did eate, and were filled: and they tooke vp, of the broken meate that was left, seuen baskets. And they that had eaten were about foure thousand, and he sent them away.

King James Version

(b)
(v)

- Eft æfter þysum hi begunnon ceorian
mid mycelre murcnunge ongean God Ælmihtigne,
for heora geswince þe hi swuncon on þære fare;
ac Gode ne licode na heora geleafleast,
5 ne heora ceorung, ac asende him to
fyr of heofonum, and forbærnde sona
sumne dæl þæs werodes for heora wodnysse.
Ða clypodon hi ealle endemes to Moysen,
and Moyses gebæd þone ælmihtigan God
10 for ðam dyrstigan folce, and þæt fyr wearð adwæsced.
Ðas race we secgað eow nu to rihtinge,
þæt nan mann ne sceole ceorian ongean God
mid dyrstigum anginne, ne his Drihten gremian,
se þe æfre wyle wel þam ðe hit geearniað,
15 and he ða gefrefrað þe his fultumes biddað.
Hi ongunnon eft ceorian and swyðe murcnian,
æfter flæscmettum swyðe oflyste,
and sædon him betwynan, Hwa sylð us flæscmete?
Witodlice we wæron wel on Egipta lande
20 on fisce and on fugele, and on feala estmettum;
nu we naht ne geseoð buton þysne ænne mete.
Ða wearð Moyses micclum astyred,
ac God him cwæð tó þæt him cuman sceolde,
eallum þam folce, na to anum dæge,
25 ac to anum monðe, flæscmættas genoge,
oððæt him wlatode þære gewilnunge.

Ælfric

(vi)

Millesimo c^oxxix^o. On ðis gear sende se kyng to Englaland f. 87^r
æfter þone eorl Waleram 7 æfter Hugo Gerucises sunu; 7 þær
hi gisleden hem; 7 Hugo ferde ham to his agen land to France,
7 Waleram belaf mid þone kyng 7 se kyng him geaf eall his land
buton his castel ane. Siððon, þa com se kyng to Englaland 5
innon heruest, 7 se eorl com mid him; 7 wurðon þa als wa gode
freond swa hi wæron æror feond. Ða sone, be þes kynges ræd
7 be his leue, sende se ærcebiscop Willelm of Cantwarbyrig ofer
eall Englaland 7 bead biscopas 7 abbotes 7 ærceðæcnes 7 ealle
þa priores, muneceas 7 canonicas þa wæron on ealle þa cellas on 10
Englaland, 7 æfter ealle þa þet Cristendome hæfdon to begemen
7 to locen, 7 þet hi scolden ealle cumen to Lundene at Michaelas
messe 7 þær scolden sprecon of ealle Godes rihtes. þa hi ðider
comen, þa began þet mot on Monendæg 7 heold onan to ðe
Fridæg. þa hit eall com forð, þa weorð hit eall of earceðæcnes 15
wifes 7 of preostas wifes, þet hi scolden hi forlæten be Sanctes
Andreas messe, 7 se þe þet ne wolden done forgede his circe
7 his hus 7 his ham 7 neframa nan clepunge þærto na hafde
mare. þis bebæd se ærcebiscop Willelm of Cantwarabyrig 7
ealle þa leodbiscopas ða [þ]a wæron on Englalande. 7 Se kyng 20
hem geaf ealle leue ham to farene; 7 swa hi ferdon ham.

Peterborough Chronicle

(vii)

The millere sittynge by the fyr he fond,
For it was nyght, and forther myghte they
 noght;
But for the love of God they hym bisoght
Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.
5 The millere seyde agayn, "If ther be eny,
Swich as it is, yet shal ye have youre part.
Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;
Ye konne by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of twenty foot of space.
10 Lat se now if this place may suffise,
Or make it rowm with speche, as is youre gise."
"Now, Symond," seyde John, "by Seint Cut-
berd,
Ay is thou myrie, and this is faire answerd.
15 I have herd seyde, 'Man sal taa of twa thynges:
Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he brynges.'
But specially I pray thee, hooste deere,
Get us som mete and drynke, and make us
 cheere,
And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.
20 With empty hand men may na haukes tulle;
Loo, heere oure silver, redy for to spende."
This millere into toun his doghter sende
For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
And boond hire hors, it sholde namoore go loos,
And in his owene chambre hem made a bed,
25 With sheetes and with chalons faire yspred
Noght from his owene bed ten foot or twelve.
His doghter hadde a bed, al by hirselve,
Right in the same chambre by and by.
It myghte be no bet, and cause why?
30 Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.

Chaucer

(viii)

Whan I consydere the condycions and maners of the comyn
people whiche without enformacion and lernyng ben rude
and not manerd, lyke unto beestis brute (acordyng to an olde
proverbe he that is not manerd is no man, for maners make
man), thenne it is requesite and necessary that every man use
good and vertuous maners. And to th'ende that every man
shold have knowleche of good maners, an honest man and a
specyal frende of myn, a mercer of London named Wylliam
Praat, which late departed out of this lyf on whos soule God
have mercy, not longe tofore his deth delyverd to me in
10 Frenshe a lytel book named the *Book of Good Maners*, whiche
book is of auctoryte for as moche as there is nothyng sayd
therin but for the moost parte it is aledged by scrypture of
the Byble or ellis by sayeng of holy sayntes, doctours,
philosophres and poetes, and desyred me instantly to trans-
late it into Englyssh, our maternal tonge, to th'ende that it
myght be had and used emonge the people for th'amende-
ment of their maners and to th'encreace of vertuous lyvyng.
15 Thenne I, at the request and desyre of hym whyche was my
synguler frende and of olde knowlege, have put myself in
devoyr for t'accomplysshe his desyre and have after the lytel
connyng that God hath lent me translated out of Frenshe into
our Englyssh this sayd *Book of Good Maners*;
20

Caxton

(ix)

And because founders of Colledges doe plant, and founders of Lectures doe water: it followeth wel in order to speake of the defect, which is in Publique Lectures: Namely, in the smalnesse and meannesse of the salary or reward which in most places is assigned vnto them: whether
5 they be Lectures of Arts, or of Professions. For it is necessary to the progression of Scyences, that Readers be of the most able and sufficient men; as those which are ordained for generating, and propagating of Scyences, and not for transitorie vse. This cannot be, except their condition, & endowment be such, as may content the ablest man, to
10 appropriate his whole labour, and continue his whole age in that function and attendance, and therefore must haue a proportion answerable to that mediocritie or competencie of aduancement, which may be expected from a Profession, or the Practize of a Profession: So as, if you wil haue Scyences flourish, you must obserue *Dauids* ¹ military
15 lawe, which was, *That those which staid with the Carriage, should haue equall part with those which were in the Action*: else will the carriages be ill attended: So Readers in Scyences are indeede the Gardyans of the stores and prouisions of Scyences, whence men in actiue courses are furnished, and therefore ought to haue equall entertainment with them; otherwise if the
20 fathers in Scyences be of the weakest sort, or be ill maintained.

Bacon

(x)

This is specious, but not always practicable; kindred senses may be so interwoven, that the perplexity cannot be disentangled, nor any reason be assigned why one should be ranged before the other. When the radical idea branches out into parallel ramifications, how can a consecutive series be formed of senses in their nature collateral? The shades of
5 meaning sometimes pass imperceptibly into each other; so that though on one side they apparently differ, yet it is impossible to mark the point of contact. Ideas of the same race, though not exactly alike, are sometimes so little different, that no words can express the dissimilitude, though the mind easily perceives it, when they are exhibited together; and sometimes there is such a confusion of acceptations, that discernment is wearied, and
10 distinction puzzled, and perseverance herself hurries to an end, by crowding together what she cannot separate. These complaints of difficulty will, by those that have never considered words beyond their popular use, be thought only the jargon of a man willing to magnify his labours, and procure veneration to his studies by involution and obscurity. But every art is obscure to those that have not learned it: this uncertainty of terms, and
15 commixture of ideas, is well known to those who have joined philosophy with grammar; and if I have not expressed them very clearly, it must be remembered that I am speaking of that which words are insufficient to explain. The original sense of words is often driven out of use by their metaphorical acceptations, yet must be inserted for the sake of a regular origination. Thus I know not whether *ardour* is used for *material heat*, or whether
20 *flagrant*, in *English*, ever signifies the same with *burning*; yet such are the primitive ideas of these words, which are therefore set first, though without examples, that the figurative senses may be commodiously deduced.

Johnson

2. **EITHER (a)** 'The structural history of a language is quite independent of its social history. The two are related in subtle and complex ways, but the relation is never 'causal' in any philologically respectable sense' (LASS). Do you agree with this statement?

OR (b) How important is linguistic contact for the establishment of standard English? You must refer to at least **TWO** periods up to c.1750.

3. **EITHER (a)** William Labov has advocated 'using the present to explain the past'. How useful do you consider this approach to the historical study of English?

OR (b) 'Linguistic change is inherently dysfunctional since it impedes social interaction'. Discuss.

4. To what extent is English a Germanic language? Illustrate your answer with reference to any **TWO** periods up to c.1750.

5. **EITHER (a)** How important was the role of 'Chancery Standard' in the establishment of standard English spelling and grammar?

OR (b) Discuss the relationship between the elaboration of English and the standardisation of its spelling system.

6. 'It is well-known that written language is not straightforwardly a transcription of spoken language' (SAMPSON). Discuss this claim with reference to the Old and Middle English periods.

7. **EITHER (a)** Is it possible to explain why a sound change happens? Illustrate your answer with reference to any period(s) up to c.1750.

OR (b) 'The problem of what triggered the Great Vowel Shift remains one of the most deeply entrenched differences of opinion surrounding this sound change' (MCMAHON). Discuss

8. Discuss the evolution of the standard English pronoun system.
9. Write an essay describing the process by which English shifted from a synthetic to an analytical structure.
10. 'The development of the *do*-periphrasis in Early Modern English demonstrates the non-teleological nature of linguistic change' (SMITH). How?
11. Compare the methods used to augment the lexicon in any **TWO** periods up to c.1750.
12. **EITHER (a)** How important is homonymic clash as a factor in semantic change?

OR (b) 'The lexicon is the most unstable element in the English language'. Discuss this claim.

13. How useful is the evidence of orthoepists and phoneticians for the reconstruction of Early Modern English pronunciation?
14. **EITHER (a)** What role did Johnson's *Dictionary* play in the regulation and standardisation of the language?

OR (b) How far, and in what ways, did Johnson's *Dictionary* depart from the lexicographical traditions of the Early Modern period?