

DENB 2405

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2006

COURSE II

PAPER A3 (a) CHAUCER

TRINITY TERM 2006

Thursday 18 May 2006, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm

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.

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

1. Thou getest fable noon ytoold for me,
For Paul, that writeth unto Thymothee,
Repreveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse
And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse.
(The Parson's Prologue)

Is such an opposition of 'fables' and 'soothfastnesse' supported by your reading of Chaucer?

2. Can he oght telle a myrie tale or tweye,
With which he glade may this compaignye?
(The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue)

What are the uses and significances of narrative 'merriment' in Chaucer?

3. I lerned nevere rethorik, certeyn;
Thyng that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.
I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Scithero.
(The Franklin's Prologue)

Discuss 'rethorik' in the works of Chaucer.

4. Thus saugh I fals and soth compounded
Togeder fle for oo tydyng.
(*The House of Fame*)

Can one speak of Chaucerian scepticism?

5. And now my penne, alas, with which I write,
Quaketh for drede of that I moste endite.
(*Troilus and Criseyde*)

Discuss Chaucer's presentation of himself as a narrator in his poetry.

6. God loveth, and to love wol nought werne,
And in this world no lyves creature
Withouten love is worth, or may endure.
(*Troilus and Criseyde*)

Why then the palinode at the end of *Troilus and Criseyde*?

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7. Glorye and honour, Virgil Mantoan,
Be to thy name! and I shal, as I can,
Folwe thy lanterne, as thow gost byforn,
How Eneas to Dido was forsworn.
In thyn Eneyde and Naso wol I take
The tenor, and the grete effectes make.
- (The Legend of Good Women)*

What are the uses of the classical past and its *auctores* in Chaucer's poetry?

8. Men dreme, and that th'effect goth by the moone.
But leve no drem, for it is nought to doone.
(Troilus and Criseyde)

If dreams are untrustworthy, what are we to make of Chaucer's dream-vision poems?

9. “‘Woman’ is not a sign that can be emptied of the meaning that has been poured into it for centuries, and Chaucer does not pretend that it can; instead, he crams in even more meaning, to the point where woman is at the centre instead of at the periphery, where she becomes the norm against which all human behaviour is to be measured’ (JILL MANN). Do you agree?

10. 'Poëte hault, loënge d'escuirie [exalted poet, pride of squiredom]' (EUSTACHE DESCHAMPS on Chaucer). Do you find this description of Chaucer relevant to an understanding of his poetry?

11. 'The genius of comedy, insisted Socrates, is the same with that of tragedy' (CHARLES MUSCATINE). Discuss with reference to Chaucer.

12. 'Fifteenth-century English literature is a literature of paradoxes. In its effusive, if not hyperbolic, praise of Chaucer, it establishes a model of literary imitation who is so deft in technique and so unassailable in his official sanction that he becomes, in effect, inimitable' (SETH LERER). Do you agree?

13. The minstre and the norice unto vices,
Which that men clepe in Englissh Ydelnesse,
That porter of the gate is of delices...
(The Second Nun's Prologue)

Discuss the uses of allegory in Chaucer.

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TURN OVER

14. 'I wol yow telle a litel thyng in prose' ('Chaucer' on the Tale of Melibee). In interpreting Chaucer's works, how much importance should we attach to his choice of form? You may refer to his writings in prose **AND / OR** verse.

15. 'Right in his cherles termes wol I speke' (The Reeve's Prologue). Discuss generic self-consciousness in Chaucer.

16. 'In Chaucer's time and for two centuries after his works came to the reader in a manner very different from the way we receive them now' (DEREK PEARSALL). How might a knowledge of manuscript context influence our understanding of Chaucer's writings?

17. Discuss **ONE** of the following in relation to Chaucer:

- a) 'Boece'
- b) St Jerome
- c) 'suffraunce'
- d) hierarchy
- e) penance