

DENB 2402

DEML 2402

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

---

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2010

COURSE II

PAPER A2 ENGLISH LITERATURE 1100-1530

---

TRINITY TERM 2010

Wednesday, 19 May, 9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Time Allowed – Three hours

---

Answer *three* questions. Except where specified, themes can be applied to any work or works of your choice. 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.

1. Now worthie folk, suppose this be ane fabill,  
And overheillit with typis figural,  
Yit may ye find ane sentence richt agreabill  
Under thir fenyeit termis textuall.

(ROBERT HENRYSON)

EITHER

(a) Discuss with reference to any aspect of medieval poetics.

OR (b)

How important is an understanding of typology AND / OR allegory to our appreciation of medieval literature?

2. '[...] in þat he becam man he dede gret worchepe to man. But in þat he took his manhod only of woman withoutyn part of man he dede gret worchepe to woman, for only of womannys kyn he made medicine to þe synne of Adam & to helyn mankende of þe harde seknesse of Adamys synne' (*Dives and Pauper*).

Do medieval authors do 'gret worchepe to woman'?

3. '[...] we mowen to stiryng of deuocion ymagine & thenk diuerse wordes & dedes of him [Jesus Christ] & other, that we fynde not writen, so that it be not a3eyns the byleue' (NICHOLAS LOVE).

Discuss the relationship of devotion and 'imagination' in medieval religious writings.

4. '[...] whan we entren into the derknes that is abouen mynde, we schul not onlyche fynde the schortyng of wordes, bot as it were a madnes & a parfite vnresonabilitee of alle that we seyn' (*Deonise Hid Divinite*).

How do medieval authors try to communicate in language that which is 'is abouen mynde'?

5. 'So, as princes or preestis, and Pharisees ioyned wiþ hem, wolen interprete Godis lawe, aftur hem schal it be takon. And so þer exposicion is more in auctorite þan is text of Godis lawe' (*English Wycliffite Sermon*).

Do you agree with the Wycliffite homilist's strictures on medieval (ab)uses of the Bible, literary or otherwise?

6. Feil of his [Virgil's] wordis bene like the appostilis sawis,  
He is ane hie theologe sentencyus [...]

(GAVIN DOUGLAS)

EITHER

(a) How do medieval authors respond to their classical literary inheritance?

OR

(b) How do medieval authors engage with the notion of the virtuous pagan or the virtuous heathen?

DENB 2402

DEML 2402

TURN OVER

7. 'As for the written text, it was not subject, as it is today, to a judgment of originality; what we call the author did not exist... What we might anachronistically call the *writer* is therefore, essentially, in the Middle Ages: 1. a *transmitter*...; 2. a *combiner*' (ROLAND BARTHES).

Discuss the ways in which vernacular writers of the period transmit AND/OR combine their sources.

8. '[A] holynesse is in ful earnest. Men þanne pleyinge þe name of Goddis miracles as plesyngly [...] þei scornen his name and so scornyn hym' (*A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge*).

EITHER

(a) Discuss in relation to any aspect of medieval drama

OR

(b) Is the comic or the 'pleasing' always inimical to the 'earnest' or the holy?

9. [...] he cam & thorug his poetrie  
Gan oure tonge firste to magnifie,  
And adourne it with his elloquence.

(JOHN LYDGATE)

For though my ryme be ragged,  
Tattered and jagged,  
Rudely rayne-beaten,  
Rusty and moth-eaten,  
Yf ye take well therwith  
It hath in it some pyth.

(JOHN SKELTON)

EITHER

(a) How necessary is an awareness of metre AND/OR rhetoric to an appreciation of medieval poetry?

OR

(b) To what extent and why do medieval authors foreground metrical AND/OR rhetorical self-consciousness?

10. 'The vernaculars [...] were the languages of the secular world: of the family and its perpetuation through marriage, reproduction and the transfer of power and property, and therefore also of practical politics up to the highest levels of imperial rule' (HELEN COOPER). Discuss.
11. Discuss some of the ways in which literature generated by religious AND/OR political controversy exploits 'the radical potential of English' (NICHOLAS WATSON).
12. Was the writing of satire in this period 'a fundamentally charitable act?' (LAURA KENDRICK)?

13. Discuss some of the ways in which the writing of literature in this period was affected by 'conceptions of the poet as divinely inspired *vates* [prophet] or as materially self-interested servant of a prince' (ROBERT MEYER-LEE). You may discuss both categories.
14. 'The prose he wrote is more a vehicle for information than a literary end in itself' (PATRICK HIGGINS on Mandeville's *Travels*). Discuss.
15. EITHER  
(a) Discuss the relationship(s) between English and ANY ONE OR TWO languages in texts from this period  
  
OR  
(b) Discuss the importance of any translation(s) into English during this period.
16. '[A] certeyne thing to lerne' (CHAUCEER). To what extent does dream literature pursue AND/OR frustrate this desire?
17. Are dialogue AND/OR debate a means to an end or an end in themselves?
18. Paul Strohm has classified Chaucer's audience(s) as 'fictional, implied, intended, actual'.  
Assess the value of any ONE OR MORE of these terms as a means of describing relationships between audiences and texts in this period.
19. Do any texts in the period covered by this paper achieve, or even desire, a 'wholly progressive break with the medieval past?' (JAMES SIMPSON)