

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2010

COURSE II

PAPER A3 (a) CHAUCER

TRINITY TERM 2010

Thursday, 20 May, 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.

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

1. Of soules fynde I nat in this register,
Ne me ne list thilke opinions to telle
Of hem, though that they writen wher they dwelle.
(*Knight's Tale*)

Examine Chaucer's attitude to areas of experience dependent on the written 'opinions' of others.

2. 'The Dream Vision poems are exceptional for their self-conscious literariness; Chaucer expects his audience to recognise what he has been reading and take due account of it'. Do you agree?
3. 'This wide-ranging anthology with its raucous frame narrative [...] contained elements distinctly anti-courtly and explicitly critical of Ricardian excesses' (J. M. BOWERS).
How helpful is this comment in accounting for Chaucer's treatment of social or political issues?
4. 'What is bettre than jaspre? Wisdom. And what is better than wisdom? Womman. And what is bettre than a good womman? Nothyng' (*Tale of Melibee*)
Examine some of the ambiguities and ambivalences in Chaucer's treatment of women's superior wisdom with reference to a selection of works.

5. For every wight which that to Rome went
Halt nat o path, or alwey o manere.
(*Troilus*)

With reference to at least TWO works examine some of the narrative techniques OR styles used by Chaucer in handling any ONE subject (e.g. love, war).

6. No man is wrecched but himself it wene,
And he that hath himself hath suffisaunce
(*Balades of Fortune*)

Examine any TWO works that seem to you to challenge or bear out this contention.

7. 'But if ye late hym deyen, I wol sterve –
Have here my trouthe, nece, I nyl nat lyen' (*Troilus*)

Consider Chaucer's use of 'creative mendacity'.

8. In thyn Eneyde and Naso wol I take
The tenor, and the grete effectes make.
(*Legend of Dido*)

EITHER

(a)

What do you find most interesting in Chaucer's handling of material from Virgil OR Ovid OR BOTH?

OR

(b)

Discuss what you think Chaucer means by *tenor* and *grete effectes*.

9. 'Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat'
(*Wife of Bath's Prologue*)
Write on some of Chaucer's uses of animal-imagery OR on what he does with 'talking birds'.

10. Aventure,
That is the moder of tydynges [...]
(*House of Fame*)

Consider the place of 'aventure' OR 'tydynges' in Chaucer's poetry.

11. 'And whan she saughe thise poetical muses aprochen aboute my bed and enditynge wordes to my wepynges, sche [Philosophie] was a litil amoeved, and glowede with cruel eighen.'
(*Boece*)

EITHER

(a) Is there a tension between poetry and philosophy in Chaucer's work?

OR

(b) 'A critical disciple of Boethius'. Does this accurately describe Chaucer?

12. But for the rym ys lyght and lewed
Yit make hyt sumwhat agreeable [...]
(*House of Fame*)

Chaucer, though he kan but lewedly
On metres and on rymyng craftily.
(*Man of Law's Prologue*)

What do you make of Chaucer's references to his *rym* as 'lewed'?