

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
2009
COURSE II

PAPER A 2 ENGLISH LITERATURE 1100-1530

TRINITY TERM 2009

Tuesday, 26 May, 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.
Time Allowed – Three hours

Answer *three* 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. Bone est la pais emprés la guerre,
Plus bele e mielde en est la terre;
Mult sunt bones les gaberies
E bones sunt les drueries.
Pur amistié e pur amies
Funt chevaliers chevaleries.

(WACE, *Brut*)

[Peace is good after war and the land is the better and lovelier for it. Jokes are excellent and so are love affairs. It's for love and their beloved that knights do knightly deeds.]

How far is Sir Gawain's model pursued in the romances of England?

2. Ma tresduce et tresamé
Nyght and daye for love of the
Suspiro.
Soyez permenante et leal
Love me so that I it fele
Requiro.

My most sweet and most beloved

I sigh

Remain unchanging and faithful

I beg

(ANON. c.1400)

EITHER a) 'The lyric is essentially a playful mode, despite its insistent emotional demands'. Discuss.

OR b) Consider how any ONE OR MORE medieval writers responds to multilingual literary cultures.

3. My name ys Mankynde. I haue my composycyon
Of a body and of a soull, of condycyon contrarye.
Betwyx þem tweyn ys a grett dyvisyon;
He þat xulde be subjecte, now he hath þe victory.
Thys ys to me a lamentable story
To se my flesch of my soull to haue gouernance.
Wher þe goodewyff ys master, þe goodeman may be sory.

(*Mankind*)

EITHER a) To what extent is the body represented as antagonistic to the soul in the writings of any one or more medieval author?

OR b) 'The "natural order" is invariably invoked in the context of its having been threatened or overturned.' Is this true of medieval writings?

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4. 'To the intent that you may the better perceive me, or I the better myself, we shall here between us a little more consider the thing, and hardily spit well on your hands, and take good hold, and give it not over against your own mind. For then were we never the nearer.' (THOMAS MORE).

'When More finally insists on the need to come to a firm conclusion, he goes against a centuries-old tradition of the unresolvable, unresolved debate'. Discuss, with reference to any medieval literary debate or dialogue(s)

5. After, whon þou hast in þis Manere seȝen þi Creatour in siȝt of his creatures, put out of þin herte vche bodilyche ymaginacion, and lift þin on entendement a-bouen alle resun of Mon: [&] þer þou schalt fynden so gret swetnesse, and so gret priuite, þat non may felen but he þat hit haþ preued.... And þeiȝ I wrecche hedde I-proued hit, I miȝte not telle wiþ mouþ, no I mihte not þenken wiþ herte; þe þing is so priue þat hit passeþ al-maner þouht. And þerfore I holde my speche, and riht is þat I do.

(ANON. C.1350)

Discuss the tension between the desire to communicate or teach about religious experience, and the inexpressibility and unknowability of the divine.

6. 'For I dare sey,' seyde sir Gawayne, 'my lady, your quene, ys to you both good and trew. And as for sir Launcelot, I dare say he woll make hit good uppon any knyght lyvyng that woll put uppon hym vylany or shame, and in lyke wyse he woll make good for my lady the quene.'
'That I beleve well,' seyde kynge Arthur, 'but I woll nat that way worke with sir Launcelot, for he trustyth so much uppon hys hondis and hys myght that he doutyth no man. And therefore for my quene he shall nevermore fyght, for she shall have the law. And if I may gete sir Launcelot, wyte you well he shall have as shamefull a dethe.'

(THOMAS MALORY)

EITHER a) Discuss the depiction of legal justice in any medieval text or texts.

OR b) 'Medieval literature is incapable of constructing any secular moral system – chivalry, fellowship, good government, the law – which can overcome the pervasive sense that this world is meaningless and corrupt'. Discuss.

7. "Damsel, Jhesu is ded long sithyn." Whan hir crying was cesyd, sche seyde to the preste, "Sir, hys deth is as fresch to me as he had deyde this same day, and so me thynkyth it awt to be to yow and to alle Cristen pepil."

(*The Book of Margery Kempe*)

For hier on erthe amonges ous,
If noman write hou that it stode,
The pris of hem that weren goode
Scholde, as who seith, a gret partie
Be lost .

(JOHN GOWER)

Using EITHER OR BOTH of these quotations, discuss the role of memory and commemoration in any medieval text(s).

8. 'Eue,' quap Adam anon riȝt,
Nouȝt bot do þan what þou miȝt!
Wende to þe water of Tiger anon, [Tigris]
And step in opon a ston,
And whan þou art comen in,
Wad in vp to þi chin
And fond to stond þan al stille
Fourti days to fulfille.'

(AUCHINLECK, *Life of Adam*)

EITHER a) How is repentance represented and negotiated in medieval text(s)?

OR b) Consider the representation of extreme or idealized behaviour in medieval writings of any genre.

9. 'An entire society, Mankind writ large, infected by the profit motive' (JOHN WATKINS). Is profit of one kind or another what is principally at stake in medieval drama?

10. 'Its characteristic rhythm is that of rebellion'. Is alliterative poetry necessarily in rebellion against the religious OR social OR poetic status quo?

11. Beware, Oldcastel, and for Crystes sake
Clymbe no more in holy writ so hie.
Rede the storie of Lancelot de lake,
Or Vegece of the aart of Chivalrie ...
thee applie
To thyng that may to th'ordere of knyght longe!
(THOMAS HOCCLEVE)

Discuss any part of this quotation which interests you.

12. Medieval people lived 'on two temporal planes at once; on the plane of local transient life, and on the plane of those universal-historical events which are of decisive importance for the destinies of the world – the Creation, the birth and the Passion of Christ' (ARON GUREVICH). Discuss in relation to the mystery plays OR to any other Middle English texts.

13. London in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries becomes 'a fascinating convergence of cultural influences and institutional discourses' (SHEILA LINDENBAUM). How do these influences and discourses manifest themselves in the literature of the period?

14. Is fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century literature in England OR Scotland inevitably to be read as a response to Chaucer?

15. 'Examination of the power of the transcendent and its distance from the awkward muddle of human affairs typifies the works of Ricardian writers'. Discuss with reference to the poems of Cotton Nero A x OR any other late fourteenth-century writer.

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16. (a) EITHER Which medieval poet or poets seem to you most skilfully to exploit the resources of the poetic media available to them?

OR (b) Is self-consciousness about the act of writing or composing a pre-requisite for poetic achievement in Middle English?

17. 'The "I" of Middle English life writings ... is an "I" constituted around a reach outward and forward, defined not just in opposition to others, but with reference to others' (NANCY BRADLEY WARREN). Is social plurality the distinguishing feature of personal writing in Middle English?

18. 'And ye shall understand, that of all these countries, and of all these isles, and of all the diverse folk, that I have spoken of before, ...yet is there none of them all but that they have some reason within them and understanding, ... that have certain articles of our faith and some good points of our belief' (*Travels of Sir John Mandeville*). Are medieval responses to the East always shaped in terms of its likeness to the West?

19. How do Middle English authors engage with EITHER the classical OR the British AND/OR the Anglo-Saxon past?

20. 'Vivid realism, biting satire and arresting word-play' (KATHRYN KERBY-FULTON). How typical are these features of any allegorical AND/OR satirical poems you have read in Middle English?