

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

COURSE II

PAPER A3 (b) LANGLAND AND GOWER

TRINITY TERM 2014

Friday, 23 May, 9.30 am – 11.30 am

Time allowed – Two hours.

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

You may write on Langland or Gower or on both of them in comparison with each other or on either or both of them in comparison to Chaucer.

Do not turn over until told that you may do so.

1. 'It is hard to find in the more straightforward *Vox [Clamantis]* and *Mirour [de l'Omme]* any hint of the complex English poem to come' (WINTHROP WETHERBEE).
2. 'De causis vero, ex quibus inter homines talia contingent enormia, tractat [...] secundum distinciones libelli istius, qui in septem diuiditur partes, prout inferius locis suis euidencius apparebit' (*Vox Clamantis*).

[In accordance with the separate divisions of this poem, which is divided into seven parts (as will appear more clearly below in its headings), he treats of the causes for such outrages taking place among men.]

3. R. F. Yeager encourages us 'to see Gower as we seldom imagine him – as an experimental poet, working out principles of his own devising'.

In what ways do you find EITHER Gower OR Langland to be an experimental poet? (You may, but you need not, confine yourself to ONE of the following areas: prosody and verse-form; imitation; wordplay; multilingualism; textual apparatus.)

4. '[Gower] built his poetic around a medieval moralist's imperative to hone his lessons and drive them home' (ROBERT F YEAGER).

(Discuss with reference to EITHER Gower OR Langland OR both.)

5. 'In this work the properties of things, figments of the poets and enigmas of the Scriptures constitute the material, while the application to *mores* [*normative social conventions*] constitutes the form; God then constitutes the efficient cause, while the cure of souls constitutes the final cause' (PIERRE BERSUIRE).
6. 'Nowe for that whiche is written in the I. leafe, concernyng the suppresson of abbayes, the Scripture there alledged, declareth it to be gathered of the iuste iudgment of God, who wyll not suffer abomination to raigne vnpunished' (ROBERT CROWLEY, prefatory epistle to the reader in his 1550 edition of *Piers Plowman*).

7. For by þe lawe of *Levytici* þat oure lord ordeynede
Clerkes ycrowned, of kynde understondynge,
Sholde nother swynke ne swete ne swerien at enquestes.
(*Piers Plowman*, C-text)

