

University of London

**EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS**

For The Following Qualification:–

*B.A.*

**Middle English Literature I**

**COURSE CODE : ENGLN45**

**DATE : 24–MAY–05**

**TIME : 10.00**

**TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours**

Answer three questions: question 1 or question 2 (not both) and two other questions.

Candidates must not present substantially the same material in any two answers, whether on this paper or in other parts of the examination.

1. Write about one of the following passages. You should include such explanations of the language, style and subject matter as seem important for a full appreciation of it.

(a)

I se the world stonde evere upon eschange,  
Nou wyndes loude, and nou the weder softe ;  
I mai sen ek the grete mone change,  
And thing which nou is lowe is eft alofte ;  
The dredfull werres into pes fulofte 5  
Thei torne ; and evere is Danger in o place,  
Which wol noght change his will to do me grace.

Bot upon this the grete clerc Ovide,  
Of love whan he makth his remembrance,  
He seith ther is the blinde god Cupide, 10  
The which hath love under his governance,  
And in his hond with many a fyr lance  
He woundeth ofte, ther he wol noght hele ;  
And that somdiel is cause of mi querele.

Ovide ek seith that love to parforne 15  
Stant in the hond of Venus the goddessse,  
Bot whan sche takth hir conseil with Satorne,  
Ther is no grace, and in that time, I gesse,  
Began mi love, of which myn hevynesse  
Is now and evere schal, bot if I spede : 20  
So wot I noght miself what is to rede.

Forthi to you, Cupide and Venus bothe,  
With al myn hertes obeissance I preie,  
If ye were ate ferste time wrothe,  
Whan I began to love, as I you seie, 25  
Nou stynt, and do thilke infortune aweie,  
So that Danger, which stant of retenue  
With my ladi, his place mai remue.

TURN OVER

(b)

In middis of June, that sweit seasoun,  
Quhen that fair Phebus with his bemis bricht  
Had dryit up the dew fra daill and down,  
And all the land maid with his lemis licht,  
In ane mornyng betuix mid day and nicht 5  
I rais and put all sleuth and sleip asyde,  
And to ane wod I went allone but gyde.

Sweit wes the smell off flouris quhyte and reid,  
The noyes off birdis richt delitious,  
The bewis braid blomit abone my heid, 10  
The ground growand with gers gratious;  
Off all plesance that place wes plenteous,  
With sweit odouris and birdis harmony;  
The morning myld – my mirth wes mair forthy.

The rosis reid arrayit on rone and ryce, 15  
The prymeros and the purpour violat bla;  
To heir it wes ane poynt off Paradice,  
Sic mirth the mavis and the merle couth ma;  
The blossomis blythe brak up on bank and bra;  
The smell off herbis and off fowlis cry, 20  
Contending quha suld have the victory.

Me to conserve than fra the sonis heit,  
Under the schaddow off ane hawthorne grene  
I lenit down amang the flouris sweit,  
Syne cled my heid and closit baith my ene. 25  
On sleip I fell amang thir bewis bene,  
And in my dreame, me thocht come throw the schaw  
The fairest man that ever befoir I saw.

CONTINUED

2. Make a critical comparison of one of the following pairs of passages.

(a) (i) A wylde walterande whal, as Wyrde þen schaped,  
 Þat watz beten fro þe abyne, bi þat bot flotte,  
 And watz war of þat wyze þat þe water sozte,  
 And swyftely swenged hym to swepe, and his swolz opened;  
 Þe folk zet haldande his fete, þe fysch hym tyd hentes; 5  
 Withouten towche of any tothe he tult in his þrote.  
 Thenne he swengez and swayues to þe se bopem,  
 Bi mony rokkez ful roze and rydelande strondes,  
 Wyth þe mon in his mawe malskred in drede,  
 As lyttel wonder hit watz, zif he wo drezed, 10  
 For nade þe hyze Heuen-Kyng, þurȝ His honde myzt,  
 Warded þis wrech man in warlowes guttez,  
 What lede mozt leue bi lawe of any kynde,  
 Þat any lyf myzt be lent so longe hym withinne?  
 Bot he watz sokored by þat Syre þat syttes so hize, 15  
 Þaz were wanlez of wele in wombe of þat fische,  
 And also dryuen þurȝ þe depe and in derk walterez.  
 Lorde, colde watz his cumfort, and his care huge,  
 For he knew vche a cace and kark þat hym lymped,  
 How fro þe bot into þe blober watz with a best lachched, 20  
 And þrwe in at hit þrote withouten þret more,  
 As mote in at a munster dor, so mukel wern his chawlez.  
 He glydes in by þe giles þurȝ glaym ande glette,  
 Relande in by a rop, a rode þat hym þozt,  
 Ay hele ouer hed hourlande aboute, 25  
 Til he blunt in a blok as brod as a halle;  
 And þer he festnes þe fete and fathmez aboute,  
 And stod vp in his stomak þat stank as þe deuel.

(ii)

Heo

þa ant monie ma biheolden þurh an eilþurl as ha bed hire beoden; ant  
 com ut of an hurne hihendliche towart hire an unwiht of helle on ane  
 drakes liche, se grislich þet ham gras wið þet sehen þet unselhðe,  
 glistinde as þah he al ouerguld were. His lockes ant his longe berd 5  
 blikeden al of golde, ant his grisliche teð semden of swart irn. His twa  
 ehnen | steareden steappre þen þe steoren ant ten zimstanes, brade  
 ase bascins in his ihurnde heaued on eider half on his heh hokede  
 nease. Of his speatewile muð sperclede fur ut, ant of his nease-þurles  
 preste smorðrinde smoke, smeche forcuðest; ant lahte ut his tunge, se 10  
 long þet he swong hire abuten his swire; ant semde as þah a scharp  
 sweord of his muð scheate, þe glistnede ase gleam deð ant leitede al o  
 leie; ant al warð þet stude ful of strong ant of stearc stench, ant of þes  
 schucke schadewe schimmede ant schan al.

He strahte him ant sturedede toward tis meoke meiden, ant geapede 15  
 wið his genow upon hire ungeinliche, ant bigon to crahien ant crenge  
 wið swire, as þe þe hire walde forswolhe mid alle. 3ef ha agrisen wes  
 of þet grisliche gra, nes na mucche wunder! Hire bleo bigon to blakien  
 for þe grure þet grap hire, ant for þe fearlac offruht, forzet hire bone  
 þet ha ibeden hefde, þet ha iseon moste þen unsehene unwiht, ne nawt 20  
 ne pohte þron þet hire nu were ituðet hire bone.

TURN OVER

(b)

(i)

And anon there was leyde a table, and so muche meete was sette  
thereon that he had mervayle, for there was all maner of meetes that he  
cowde thynke on. Also he dranke there the strengyst wyne that ever he  
dranke, hym thought, and therewith he was chaffett a lityll more than  
he oughte to be. With that he behylde that jantilwoman, and hym  
thought she was the fayryst creature that ever he saw. 5

And than sir Percivale profird hir love and prayde hir that she wolde  
be hys. Than she refused hym in a maner whan he requyred her, for  
cause he sholde be the more ardente on hir. And ever he sesed nat to  
pray hir of love. And whan she saw hym well enchaffed, than she seyde, 10

'Sir Percivale, wyte you well I shall nat fulfyller youre wyll but if  
ye swere frome henseforthe ye shall be my trew servaunte, and to do  
nothyng but that I shall commaunde you. Woll ye ensure me thys as  
ye be a trew knyght?'

'Yee,' seyde he, 'fayre lady, by the feythe of my body!'

'Well,' seyde she, 'now shall ye do with me what ye wyll, and now,  
wyte you well, ye ar the knyght in the worlde that I have moste  
desyre to.'

And than two squyres were commaund[ed] to make a bedde in  
myddis of the pavelon, and anon she was unclothed and leyde therein. 20  
And than sir Percivale layde hym downe by her naked. And by advent-  
ure and grace he saw hys swerde ly on the erthe nake[d], where in the  
pomell was a rede crosse and the sygne of the crucifixe [ther]in, and  
bethought hym on hys knyghthode and hys promyse made unto the  
good man tofornehande, and than he made a sygne in the forched of  
hys. And therewith the pavylon turned up-so-downe and than hit  
chonged unto a smooke and a blak clowde. 25

(ii)

He fond in the paviloun  
The kinges doughter of Olyroun,  
Dame Triamour that highte.  
Here fadir was King of Fairie  
Of Occient, fere and nyie, 5  
A man of mochel mighte.

In the paviloun he fond a bed of pris  
Y-heled with purpur bis,  
That semilé was of sighte.  
Therinne lay that lady gent 10  
That aftere Sir Launfal hedde y-sent,  
That lefsom lemede bright.

For hete her clothes down she dede  
Almost to here gerdilstede;  
Than lay she uncovert. 15  
She was as whit as lillie in May  
Or snow that sneweth in winteris day--  
He seigh nevere non so pert.

The rede rose, whan she is newe,  
Agens here rode nes naught of hewe, 20  
I dar well say in cert.  
Here here shon as gold wire;  
May no man rede here atire  
Ne naught wel thenke in hert.

She seide, "Launfal, my lemman swete, 25  
Al my joye for the I lete,  
Sweting paramour.  
Ther nis no man in Cristenté  
That I love so moche as the,  
King neither emperoure!" 30

CONTINUED

3. Discuss the relation between the private and public world in medieval romance.
4. Do women not play the greatest role within medieval romance, controlling the narrative, obtaining their ends, satisfying their needs, and finally claiming happiness?

(Jean E. Jost)

Do they?

5. Barbara Nolan characterises fabliau writing as a 'morass of worldly talk with its possibilities for ironic play, riddles, double entendres, punning, scandal, and malevolent gossip'. Discuss any part or parts of this observation with reference to the fabliaux you have read.
6. 'We woll preve hit that he is a traytoure to your person' (Malory). Consider the treatment of treachery in any Arthurian work you have read.
7. Examine the relationship between medieval Arthurian narrative and any later Arthurian literature.
8. Either: (a) Can Layamon's *Brut* be considered as an epic?  
Or: (b) 'The *Brut* tells a story about change, transformation, loss and accretion' (Lesley Johnson and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne). Discuss all or any part of this observation about Layamon's poem.
9. Either: (a) 'We cannot properly appreciate *Sir Gawain* without keeping a grasp on the fact that it is a comic poem' (J.A. Burrow). To what extent do you find the works of the *Gawain*-poet comic?  
Or: (b) Consider the relationship between narrative and homiletic techniques in one or more works of the *Gawain*-poet.  
Or: (c) Is the *Gawain*-poet more interested in human imperfection than in divine perfection?
10. H. A. Kelly argues that *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* presents Arthur as 'only incidentally sinful'. In the light of this remark, consider the treatment of Arthur in *The Alliterative Morte Arthure*, or *The Stanzaic Morte Arthur*, or both.

TURN OVER

11. Either: (a) 'As the Freynshe booke seyth ...' (Malory). Consider the extent of Malory's dependence on his French sources.
- Or: (b) 'The tension between admiration and condemnation of the heroic makes the work richer yet more confused' (A.C. Spearing). Consider this statement in relation to the *Morte Darthur*.
- Or: (c) How important is the Grail quest to any interpretation of Malory's *Morte Darthur*?
12. 'Na mervell is ane man be lyke ane beist' (Henryson, *Fables*). Discuss the relationship between man and beast in any work in the beast-fable tradition with which you are familiar.
13. To what extent is poetry identified with trickery in Middle English beast-fables or in any other narratives you have read for this course?
14. 'Ich cwakie of grisle and grure, ant euch ban scheked me' (*Sawles Warde*). Write on the role of horror in *Sawles Warde*.
15. 'Sexuality is central to the construction of sanctity in the Middle Ages' (Simon Gaunt). Discuss with reference to one or more saints' lives you have read.
16. Either: (a) Discuss the depiction of Genius in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.
- Or: (b) 'The tales remain for many readers both the most accessible and the most interesting portion of the *Confessio*' (Peter Nicholson). Discuss the relationship between tale and framework in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* in the context of this remark.
- Or: (c) Alastair Minnis describes Gower's *Confessio Amantis* as having a 'unifying moral intention'. Would you agree?
17. Either: (a) Discuss the importance of blasphemy to Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid*.
- Or: (b) How would you characterise Henryson's attitude towards authority in his poetry?

CONTINUED

18. Discuss the theme of shame, or deception, or both, in any two or more of the works you have read for this course.
19. For Roland Barthes, 'the narrator' is no particular person, but 'a collective and anonymous voice originating in traditional human experience'. To what extent, in your experience, is medieval narrative told by a collective and anonymous voice?
20. Consider the ways in which direct speech is employed in any one or more of the narratives you have read for this course.
21. Thys ys the story off a knyght, howe he dyd many wurthy dedys be the help off a lady, the qwychyche taught hym to overcome a mervulus dragon, the qwychyche was a .c. [100] fote long.

(John Metham, *Amoryus and Cleopes*: Prologue)

Discuss the role of monsters and the monstrous in medieval narratives.

END OF PAPER