

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For the following qualifications :-

B.A.

Middle English Literature II

COURSE CODE : ENGLN47

DATE : 08-MAY-02

TIME : 10.00

TIME ALLOWED : 3 hours

02-N0114-3-40

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TURN OVER

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)

*Responsio prime uxoris ad viduam**

Than spak ane lusty belyf with lustie effeiris:
‘It that ye call the blist band that bindis so fast
Is bair of blis and bailfull, and greit barrat wirkis.
Ye speir, had I fre chois, gif I wald cheis bettir?
Chenyeis ay ar to eschew and changeis ar sweit. 5
Sic cursit chance till eschew, had I my chois anis,
Out of the cheinyeis of ane churle I chaip suld for evir.
God gif matrimony wer made to mell for ane yeir!
It war bot merrens to be mair bot gif our myndis pleisit.
It is agane the law of luf, of kynd, and of nature, 10
Togidder hartis to strenes that stryveis with uthir.
Birdis hes ane better law na bernis be meikill,
That ilk yeir with new joy joyis ane maik
And fangis thame ane fresche feyr, unfulyeit and constant,
And lattis thair fulyeit feiris flie quhair thair pleis. 15
Cryst gif sic ane consuetude war in this kith haldin!
Than weill war us wemen that evir we war born.
We suld have feiris as fresche to fang quhen us likit
And gif all larbaris thair leveis quhen thair lak curage.
My self suld be full semlie in silkis arrayit, 20
Gymp, jolie and gent, richt joyus and gent.

* The reply of the first wife to the widow.

TURN OVER

(b) Almyȝty God, as liketh his goodnesse,
 Vesiteȝ folke al day as men may se
 With los of good and bodily sikenesse,
 And amonge othir he forȝat not me.
 Witnesse vppon the wilde infirmite 5
 Wiche þat I hadde, as many a man wel knewe,
 And wiche me oute of my silfe caste and threwe.

It was so knowen to þe peple and kouthe
 That counseil was it noon ne not be miȝt.
 Howe it wiȝ me stood was in euery mannes mouȝe, 10
 And þat ful sore my frendis affriȝt.
 They for myn helpe pilgrimages hiȝt
 And souȝte hem, somme on hors and somme on foote —
 God ȝelde it hem — to gete me my boote.

But al þouȝ the substaunce of my memorie 15
 Wente to pleie as for a certein space,
 ȝit the lorde of vertue, the kyng of glorie,
 Of his hiȝe myȝt and his benigne grace
 Made it for to retourne into the place
 Whens it cam, wiche at Alle Halwemesse 20
 Was fiue ȝeere, neither more no lesse.

(c) 'This were a wikkide wey but whoso hadde a gyde
 That myghte folwen us ech a foot' — thus this folk hem mened.
 Quod Perkyn the Plowman. 'By Seint Peter of Rome!
 I have an half acre to erie by the heighe weye;
 Hadde I erylde this half acre and sowen it after, 5
 I wolde wende with yow and the wey teche.'
 'This were a long lettyng,' quod a lady in scleyre;
 'What sholde we wommen werche the while?'
 'Somme shul sowe the sak,' quod Piers, 'for shedyng of the whete;
 And ye lovely ladies with youre longe fynGRES, 10
 That ye have silk and sandel to sowe whan tyme is
 Chesibles for chapeleyns chirches to honoure.
 Wyves and widewes, wolle and flex spynneth:
 Maketh cloth, I conseille yow, and kenneth so youre doughtres.
 The nedy and the naked, nymeth hede how thei liggeth, 15
 And casteth hem clothes, for so comaundeth Truthe.
 For I shal lenen hem liflode, but if the lond faille,
 As long as I lyve, for the Lordes love of hevене.
 And alle manere of men that thorough mete and drynke libbeth.
 Helpeth hym to werche wightliche that wynneth youre foode.' 20

CONTINUED

(d)

Do quap þe Hule, 'Wu schal us seme,
Dat kunne & wille rizt us deme?'
'Ich wot wel,' quap þe Niztingale,
'Ne þaref þarof bo no tale :
Maister Nichole of Guldeforde. 5
He is wis an war of worde.
He is of dome supe gleu,
& him is loþ eurich unþeu.
He wot insizt in eche songe,
Wo singet wel, wo singet wronge ; 10
& he can schede vrom þe rizte
Dat woze, þat þustef from þe lizte.'
Do Hule one wile hi biþozte,
& after þan þis word upbrozte :
'Ich granti wel þat he us deme, 15
Vor þez he were wile breme,
& lof him were niztingale
& oþer wizte gente & smale,
Ich wot he is nu supe acoled ;
Nis he vor þe nozt afoled, 20
Dat he for þine olde luue
Me adun legge, & þe buue.
Ne schaltu neure so him queme
Dat he for þe fals dom deme.
He is him ripe & fastrede, 25
Ne lust him nu to none unrede :
Nu him ne lust na more pleie,
He wile gon a rizte weie.'

TURN OVER

(b)

(i)

Pes king is Iesu, Godes Sune, þet al o þisse wise wohede ure sawle,
þe deoffen hefden biset. Ant he, as noble woher, efter monie
messagers ant feole goddeden com to pruien his luue, ant schawde
þurh cnihtschipe þet he wes luuewurðe, as weren sumhwile cnihtes
iwunet to donne. Dude him i turneiment, ant hefde for his leoues luue 5
his scheld i feht, as kene cniht, on euche half iþurlet. His scheld, þe
wreah his goddhead, wes his leoue licome, þet | wes ispread o rode:
brad as scheld buuen in his istrahte earmes, nearow bineoðen, as þe an
fot (efter monies wene) set upo þe oðer. Pet þis scheld naued siden is 10
for bitacnunge þet his deciples, þe schulden stonden bi him ant
habben ibeon his siden, fluhen alle from him ant leafden him as
fremede, as þe Godspel seið: *Relicto eo omnes fugerunt.*¹ Pis scheld is
izeuen us azein alle temptatiuns, as Ieremie witneð: *Dabis scutum*
*cordis, laborem tuum.*² Nawt ane þis scheld ne schilt us from alle ueeles,
ah deð zet mare: cruned us in heouene. *Scuto bone uoluntatis*³ 15
'Lauerd,' he seið, Dauid, 'wið þe scheld of þi gode wil þu hauest us
icrunet.' 'Scheld', he seið, 'of god wil', for willes he þolede al þet he
þolede. *Ysaias: Oblatus est quia uoluit.*⁴

¹ They all abandoned him and fled.

² You will give your labour as a shield for the heart.

³ With the shield of good will.

⁴ Isaiah says: He was offered because he wished to be.

(ii)

And after this I saw, beholding, the body plentiously bleding in seming
of the scorgyng, as thus: the faire skynne was brokyn ful depe into the
tender flesh with sharpe smyting al about the sweete body; so
plenteously the hote blode ran oute that there was neither sene skynne 5
ne wound, but as it were al blode. And whan it come wher it should a
fallen downe, than it vanyshid; notwitstondyng, the bledyng continues
a while til it migt be sene with avisement. And this was so plenteous to
my sigt that methowte, if it had be so in kind and in substance for that
tyme, it should have made the bed al on blode and a passid over aboute.
And than cam to my minde that God hath made waters plentivous in 10
erthe to our service and to our bodily ease, for tender love that he hath
to us, but yet lekyth him better that we take full homely his blissed
blode to washe us of synne; for there is no licor that is made that he
lekyth so wele to gie us; for it most plentivous as it is most pretious,
and that be the vertue of his blissed Godhede. And it is our kinde and 15
alblissfully beflowyth us be the vertue of his pretious love.

TURN OVER

(c) EVERYMAN
 What desireth God of me?

(i) DEATH
 That shall I show thee.
 A reckoning he will needs have,
 Without any longer respite.

EVERYMAN
 To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave. 5
 This blind matter troubleth my wit.

DEATH
 On thee thou must take a long journey;
 Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring,
 For turn again thou cannot by no way.
 And look thou be sure of thy reckoning, 10
 For before God thou shalt answer and show
 Thy many bad deeds, and good but a few,
 How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
 Before the chief Lord of paradise.
 Have ado that we were in that way, 15
 For, wit thou well, thou shalt make none attorney.

EVERYMAN
 Full unready I am such reckoning to give.
 I know thee not. What messenger art thou?

DEATH
 I am Death, that no man dreadeth,
 For every man I rest, and no man spareth, 20
 For it is God's commandment
 That all to me should be obedient.

(ii) SATAN: Honour? In the devil's way! For what deed?
 All earthly men to me are thrall.
 The lad that thou calls lord in lede
 Had never yet harbour, house, nor hall.

RIBALD: Hark Beelzebub, I have great dread, 5
 For hideously I heard him call.

BELIAL: We, spear our gates, all ill may thou speed,
 And set forth watches on the wall—
 And if he call or cry
 To make us more debate, 10
 Lay on him then hardily
 And gar him gang his gate.

SATAN: Tell me what boys dare be so bold
 For dread to make so mickle deray.

RIBALD: It is the Jew that Judas sold 15
 For to be dead this other day.

SATAN: Oh, this tale in time is told,
 This traitor traverses us alway.
 He shall be here full hard in hold,
 Look that he pass not, I thee pray. 20

BEELZEBUB: Nay, nay, he will not wend
 Away ere I be ware,
 He shapes him for to shend
 All hell ere he go far.

CONTINUED

3. Either: (a) Is *The Owl and the Nightingale* an equal blend of the naïve and the sophisticated?
- Or: (b) What is contributed to *The Owl and the Nightingale* by the presentation of the protagonists as an owl and a nightingale?
4. Does concentration on the imagery of the *Ancrene Wisse* risk an unbalanced view of the text?
5. 'Her perspective is as naïve about his experience as his is about her innocence' (Elizabeth Kirk). Discuss this comment on *Pearl*.
6. What do you think were the attractions of the dream vision form for any Middle English writer who used it? Answer with reference to one or more writers you have read for this course.
7. Either: (a) Is *Piers Plowman* an appropriate title for Langland's poem?
- Or: (b) Is Langland both reactionary and revolutionary?
- Or: (c) Would you agree that we appreciate *Piers Plowman* in spite of, rather than because of, the allegory?
8. Either: (a) What literary implications can we draw from the 1381 rising?
- Or: (b) Examine some of the implications of Anne Hudson's observation that 'literacy begot heresy'.
9. Either: (a) John Burrow talks of some medieval English lyrics as 'poems without context'. What kinds of context can we bring to our reading of them?
- Or: (b) Discuss the adaptation of secular imagery and diction to devotional themes in English lyrics.
10. Either: (a) Discuss the function of repetition in the mystery cycles. You may, if you wish, confine your answer to a single cycle.
- Or: (b) How accurate would it be to describe the mystery cycles as meditations on biblical history rather than explorations of character? You may, if you wish, confine your answer to a single cycle.

TURN OVER

11. Moralities are a struggle between good and evil as much for the attention and loyalty of the audience as for the soul of the protagonist

(Meg Twycross)

Do you agree?

12. Write on visual imagination in the writings of the English mystics.
13. If Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love* were to circulate anonymously, what, if anything, in the text might indicate the gender of the writer?
14. Is there such a thing as women's literature in the Middle Ages? You may concentrate, if you wish, on women as readers or as writers.
15. 'Hoccleve deploys literary tradition to create new models of personality, unauthorised by literary tradition' (James Simpson). Discuss.
16. Discuss the theme of magnificence in the fifteenth-century writing you have read for this course.
17. Write an essay on Skelton's use of word-play.
18. It has been claimed that Dunbar's reputation as a virtuoso performer stands in the way of a recognition of his abiding seriousness of purpose. Would you agree?
19. We must not let terms like 'medieval' and 'Renaissance' get the better of us, by allowing them to simplify situations or to override the complexity of historical actors' self-understanding.

(Paul Strohm)

Discuss with reference to two or more works you have read for this course

20. The humorous effect (and satirical effectiveness) of medieval parody often depends on the reader's reverence for the model, without which the implied contrast would be seriously impaired.

(Martha Bayless)

Discuss.

CONTINUED

21. 'The Middle Ages became a civilisation of copyists' (Roland Barthes). How appropriate is the notion of originality to the medieval writing you have read for this course?
22. 'The certainty of death was made more terrible by the uncertainty of the hour of its coming' (Eamon Duffy). Comment on the treatment of death in any two or more examples of the medieval writing you have read for this course.
23. Who will nocht trowe, thei are nocht trewe:
 Vnto my dome I schalle thame draw
 And juge thame worse thanne any Jewe

(York *Harrowing of Hell*)

Write on religious prejudice in the Middle English literature you have read for this course.

END OF PAPER