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Faculty of Arts
English Department

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A Guiding Model Answer for

Second Grade

History of Literature (Make-Up) Exam

Faculty of Arts

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BANHA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ARTS
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
SECOND GRADE



FIRST TERM
YEAR (2013-2014)
TIME: 1 HOUR
MAKE-UP EXAM

HISTORY OF LITERATURE (MAKE-UP EXAM – DECEMBER 2013)

Answer ONLY FOUR of the following questions:

NOTE: TIME LENGTH FOR EACH QUESTION IS 15 MINUTES AND THE GRADE FOR EACH IS 2.5 MARKS.

1. In medieval literature, the use of allegory was pervasive in Religious and Secular writings. Mention some of these allegories and state the causes of their use in literature?
2. Chaucer's poetry falls into three marked periods. Name and discuss them?
3. Show the difference between morality plays and mystery plays in the Middle Ages?
4. Explain the effect of the religious result of the Renaissance, known as the Reformation, on the literature of the sixteenth century?
5. State the general characteristics of Elizabethan literature and writers?

GOOD LUCK
MOHAMMAD AL-HUSSINI ARAB

ANSWERS

QUESTION 1:

In medieval literature, the use of allegory was pervasive in Religious and Secular writings. Mention some of these allegories and state the causes of their use in literature?

ANSWER:

In medieval literature, the use of allegory was pervasive. Middle Ages men turned to the devices of abstract personification and veiled meanings not only because of their dissatisfaction with their actual life, or their inability to address the deeper issues without the aid of mechanical imagery, but also because of their medieval passion for translating into elaborate and fantastic symbolism all the details of the Bible narratives. Of these allegories are the Seven Deadly Sins of Covetousness, Unchastity, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth, and Pride; the earliest of all, through which Lucifer was moved to his fatal rebellion against God, which gave birth to all human ills. Personified, the Seven Sins dominated medieval literature. Allied with the Seven Sins were the Seven Cardinal Virtues: Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Temperance, Chastity, and Fortitude. Besides, many of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' works are full of allusions to the figure of Fortune with her revolving wheel.

QUESTION 2:

Chaucer's poetry falls into three marked periods. Name and discuss them?

ANSWER:

Chaucer's poetry falls into three marked periods. First is that of French influence, when he drew inspiration from the rich French poetry of the period, experimented with the lyric forms which the French poets perfected, and translated the most important of medieval French narrative poem, the thirteenth century *Romance of the Rose* of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung. Chaucer's second period, that of Italian influence, dates from his first visit to Italy in 1372-3, where at Padua he may perhaps have met the fluent Italian poet Petrarch, and where at any rate the revelation of Italian life and literature must have aroused his intense enthusiasm. From this time, and especially after his other visit to Italy, five years later, he made use of the works of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Dante. The longest and finest of Chaucer's poems of this period, "Troilus and Criseyde" is based on a work of Boccaccio; where Chaucer details the sentiment and tragedy of love, and the psychology of the heroine who had become for the Middle Ages a central figure in the tale of Troy. Chaucer's third period is called his English period because at last his genius, mature and self-sufficient, worked in essential independence. He wrote *The Legend of Good Women*, a series of romantic biographies of famous ladies of classical legend and history, whom Chaucer designates as martyrs of love; but more important than the stories themselves is the *Prologue*, where he chats with delightful frankness about his own ideas and tastes.

QUESTION 3:

Show the difference between morality plays and mystery plays in the Middle Ages?

ANSWER:

Mystery Plays began in the church and then moved out into public places. One of the first mystery plays was the Easter play, in which four priests represented an angel and the three Marys who came to Christ's

tomb on Easter morning. When the Angel asks the Marys whom they are seeking, they respond, "the body of Christ." The Angel replies in Latin, "He is risen," in a joyous refrain which resounds through the church. From these simple beginnings, the play was expanded to show more details, and plays about the rest of Christ's life were developed. Later the major events of the Old Testament were dramatized.

Eventually, the plays became so popular and their entertainment value began to predominate over their religious lessons. In a fully developed cycle of plays, the townsfolk and neighboring peasants could watch dramatizations of all the major events in the history of Christianity, from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden through the Resurrection of Christ, on wagons that were stationed about the town. These were called mystery plays because they showed the religious mystery of God's influence in the world.

Morality Plays differ from mystery plays in that rather than depicting events from the Bible they portray virtues and vices in competition for the soul. In a morality play, each abstract quality, whether it is an obstacle or an aid to salvation, such as idleness or penance, is personified. These characters are set in a plot that depicts the vices' deceitful and sometimes comic struggles to win control of the individual's soul. The religious teaching dominates and leads to a happy conclusion—salvation rather than damnation.

QUESTION 4:

Explain the effect of the religious result of the Renaissance, known as the Reformation, on the literature of the sixteenth century?

ANSWER:

The literature of the 16th century and later was profoundly influenced by the religious result of the Renaissance, known as the Reformation. In 1517, Martin Luther, protesting against the corrupt practices that were disgracing religion, began the breach between Catholicism, with its insistence on the supremacy of the Church, and Protestantism, with its assertion on the independence of the individual judgment.

The movement towards change began when Henry VIII attacked Luther in a pamphlet, which was titled from the Pope as the "defender of the Faith." But when the Pope refused Henry's demand for the divorce from Katharine of Spain to marry Anne Boleyn, Henry angrily threw off the papal authority and declared himself the Supreme Head of the Church in England. He thus established the separate English Anglican church. The struggle went on till Elizabeth ruled in 1558 and gave the final victory to the English communion. Elizabeth's skilful management kept the majority of the Puritans within the English Church, where they performed simple practices. But toward the end of Elizabeth's reign, feeling grew tenser, and groups of the Puritans separated themselves from the State Church and established various religious groups. However, under James I, the breach widened, until the nation was divided into two hostile camps, with results most radically decisive for literature.

QUESTION 5:

State the general characteristics of Elizabethan literature and writers?

ANSWER:

The general characteristics of Elizabethan literature and writers are:

1. The range of literary verse and prose, and variety in mood from Platonic idealism or lovely romance to gross realism.
2. The dominance of the mood of romance.
3. The consistent use of the mood of dramatic action.
4. The frequent display of romantic richness in style by the use of the "conceit."
5. The distinction of being a period of experimentation, where poets tried many poetical actions in dealing with the theological, scientific, and geographical subjects.
6. The continuation of the influence of European literature, which was mostly Italian, and less French, and Spanish.
7. The dominance of the literary mood among male (not female) authors of every class, from distinguished courtiers to unoriginal, clichéd writers.