
Paper One (Long): Epideiktikos

In the early Seventeenth Century, English dramatist Ben Jonson reiterated the ancient Roman and Greek rhetorical ideal of *epideiktikos* concerning authors and public speakers:

We do not require [in the poet] mere elocution or an excellent faculty in verse; but the exact knowledge of all virtues, and their contraries; with the ability to render the one loved, the other hated, by his proper embattling them.”

Almost one thousand years earlier, the English monk, the Venerable Bede, wrote similarly:

Should history tell of good men and their good estate, the thoughtful listener is spurred on to imitate the good; should it record the evil ends of wicked men, no less effectually the devout and earnest listener or reader is kindled to eschew what is harmful and perverse, and himself with greater care pursues those things which he has learned to be good and pleasing in the sight of God.

For Jonson and for Bede, the challenge in reading was not to soak up passively and unthinkingly an advertisement for good, but to exercise one’s judgment. In other words, a reader is asked to make a moral judgment about the manner in which characters conduct themselves.

Using an example from Chrétien, describe how an author “embattles” virtue and vice, and how you, the reader, come to make a moral judgment about a character.

Consider the complexities involved in your choice (get beyond good/bad). Consider images which make your choice complicated. Consider mixed virtue—characters who are brave but greedy, for example.

1500 words. Worth 15%, due **7 October**.