

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION  
EXAMINATION

SUMMER 1970

**Advanced Level**

ENGLISH LITERATURE 1

CHAUCER AND SHAKESPEARE

Three hours

*Answer QUESTION 1 and THREE other questions, of which ONE must be on CHAUCER, ONE on OTHELLO, and ONE on THE TEMPEST.*

*Credit will be given for good English and the orderly presentation of material; candidates who neglect these essentials will be penalized.*

1. Choose THREE of the following passages, one from *The Prologue*, one from *The Clerk's Prologue and Tale*, and one from *Othello*:

- (a) Turn each passage into good modern English.  
 (b) Refer each *briefly* to its context.

### THE PROLOGUE

(i) Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas, *Lawyer*  
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.  
 In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle  
 That from the tyme of kyng William were falle.  
 Therto he koude endite, and make a thyng,  
 Ther koude no wight pynche at his writyng;  
 And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.  
 He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote,  
 Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;  
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

(ii) For this ye knowen al so wel as I,  
 Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,  
 He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan  
 Everich a word, if it be in his charge,  
 Al speke he never so rudeliche and large,  
 Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,  
 Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.  
 He may nat spare, althogh he were his brother;  
 He moot as well seye o word as another.  
 Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,  
 And wel ye woot no vileynye is it.

### THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE AND TALE

(iii) Nat oonly this Grisildis thurgh hir wit  
 Koude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,  
 But eek, whan that the cas required it,  
 The commune profit koude she redresse.  
 Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevynesse  
 In al that land, that she ne koude apese,  
 And wisely brynge hem alle in reste and ese.

Though that hire housbonde absent were anon,  
 If gentil men or othere of hire contree  
 Were wrothe, she wolde bryngen hem aton.

- (iv) Abouten undren gan this erl alighte,  
 — That with hym broghte these noble children tweye,  
 For which the peple ran to seen the sighte  
 Of hire array, so richely biseye;  
 And thanne at erst amonges hem they seye  
 That Walter was no fool, thogh that hym leste  
 To change his wyf, for it was for the beste.  
 For she is fairer, as they deemen alle,  
 Than is Grisilde, and moore tendre of age,  
 And fairer fruyt bitwene hem sholde falle.

#### OTHELLO

- (v) My services which I have done the signiory  
 — Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,  
 Which when I know that boasting is an honour  
 I shall promulgate, I fetch my life and being  
 From men of royal siege, and my demerits  
 May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
 As this that I have reach'd; for know, Iago,  
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
 I would not my unhoused free condition  
 Put into circumscription and confine  
 For the sea's worth.
- (vi) I do beseech you,  
 Though I perchance am vicious in my guess, —  
 As, I confess, it is my nature's plague  
 To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy  
 Shapes faults that are not, — that your wisdom yet,  
 From one that so imperfectly conceits,  
 Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble  
 Out of his scattering and unsure observance.  
 It were not for your quiet nor your good,  
 Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,  
 To let you know my thoughts.

2. 'God saw that the world was good. And God was partly right.' How far does this remark describe Chaucer's attitude to the society of his time as represented by the pilgrims?
3. Show from *three* or *four* passages some of the different ways in which Chaucer reveals his sense of humour in *The Prologue*.
4. 'Whatever other merits *The Clerk's Tale* may have, it does not make its effects through variety or surprise.' How far do you agree with this statement?
5. 'Some readers have been moved to compassion and wonder, others to contempt and disbelief.' After reading *The Clerk's Tale*, into which category would you place yourself, and why?
6. Do you find Othello 'gullible beyond the possibility of belief'?
7. Examine the dramatic significance of *two* or *three* of Iago's soliloquies.
8. 'All of Shakespeare's characters have an unmistakable voice of their own.' Discuss this statement with reference to *two* or *three* characters in *Othello*.
9. Do you agree with the description of Caliban as 'a mere brute'?
10. Show how themes in the main plot of *The Tempest* are reinforced in the Stephano-Trinculo sub-plot.
11. 'How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,  
That has such people in't!'  
Why should Miranda think in this way, and how far is her delight justified?