

ENGLISH TRIPOS ELT2

Tuesday 31 May 2022: 12pm

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Wednesday 1 June 2022: 12pm

Part II Paper 5

CHAUCEER

Answer **Question 1 (Section A)** and any **two** questions from **Section B**.

Do **not** present the same material twice, **either** in this paper **or** in the examination as a whole.

Irrelevant answers, or answers only tenuously related to the question, will be penalised.

There will be a word-count range of 800-1200 per essay, which is intended to approximate to the amount that can be written by hand under normal examination conditions. For papers which include a 'Section A' made up of multiple parts, the word-count for a candidate's responses to Section A as a whole must be within the range of 800–1200 words.

Examination responses should conform to the following presentation requirements: they should be in minimum 12pt type; should use a sans serif typeface (eg Arial or Calibri); should be 1.5 or double-spaced; and should be submitted as a word-processed document (in .docx or .rtf format).

SECTION A

1. Select **any three** of the following passages. Relate them briefly to their contexts (commenting on each passage's function and significance in that context) and elucidate any difficulties that a reader might find. In the light of your knowledge of Chaucer's work as a whole, comment in detail on their thematic and stylistic interest.

(a)

"Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveiaunce
Ledest the world by certein governaunce,
In ydel, as men seyn, ye no thing make.
But, Lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake,
That semen rather a foul confusion 5
Of werk than any fair creacion
Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable,
Why han ye wroght this werk unresonable?
For by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne eest,
Ther nys yfostred man, ne bryd, ne beest; 10
It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth.
Se ye nat, Lord, how mankynde it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodyes of mankynde
Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in mynde,
Which mankynde is so fair part of thy werk 15
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk.
Thanne semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee
Toward mankynde; but how thane may it bee
That ye swiche meenes make it to destroyen,
Whiche meenes do no good, but evere anoyen? 20

(b)

Yit nas the ground nat wounded with the plough,
But corn up-sprong, unsowe of mannes hond,
The which they gnodded and eete nat half ynough.

No man yit knew the forwes of his lond,
No man the fyr out of the flint yit fond,
Unkorven and ungrobbed lay the vyne;
No man yit in the mortar spyces grond
To clarre ne to sause of galantine.

5

No mader, welde, or wood no litestere
Ne knew; the flees was of his former hewe;
No flesh ne wiste offence of egge or spere.
No coyn ne knew man which was fals or trewe,
No ship yit karf the wawes grene and blewe,
No marchaunt yit ne fette outlandish ware.
No trompes for the werres folk ne knewe,
Ne toures heye and walles rounde or square.

10

15

What sholde it han avalyed to werreye?
Ther lay no profit, ther was no richesse;
But cursed was the tyme, I dare wel seye,
That men first dide hir swety bysinesse
To grobbe up metal, lurking in derknesse,
And in the riveres first gemmes soghte.
Allas, than sprong up al the cursednesse
Of coveytyse, that first our sorwe broghte.

20

(c)

And whanne that she unto hire syster Anne
Compleyned hadde – of which I may nat wryte,
So gret a routhe I have it for t'endite –
And bad hire norice and hire sister gon
To fechen fyr and other thyng anon, 5
And seyde that she wolde sacryfye –
And whan she myghte hire tyme wel espie,
Upon the fir of sacryfice she sterte,
And with his swerd she rof hyre to the herte.
But, as myn auctour seith, yit thus she seyde; 10
Or she was hurt, byforen or she deyde,
She wrot a lettre anon that thus began:
“Ryght so,” quod she, “as that the white swan
Ayens his deth begynnyth for to synge,
Right so to yow make I my compleynynge. 15
Not that I trowe to geten yow ageyn,
For wel I wot that it is al in veyn,
Syn that the goddes been contraire to me.
But syn my name is lost thourgh yow,” quod she,
“I may wel lese on yow a word or letter, 20
Al be it that I shal ben nevere the better;
For thilke wynd that blew youre ship away,
The same wynd hath blowe away youre fey.”
But who wol al this letter have in mynde,
Rede Ovyde, and in hym he shal it fynde.

(d)

Oure Hooste saugh wel that the brighte sonne
The ark of his artificial day hath ronne
The ferthe part, and half an houre and moore,
And though he were nat depe ystert in loore,
He wiste it was the eightetethe day 5
Of Aprill, that is messenger to May;
And saugh wel that the shadwe of every tree
Was as in lengthe the same quantitee
That was the body erect that caused it.
And therfore by the shadwe he took his wit 10
That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,
Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on highte,
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the klokke, he gan conclude,
And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute. 15
“Lordynges,” quod he, “I warne yow, al this route,
The fourthe party of this day is gon.
Now for the love of God and of Seint John,
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may.

(e)

Therwith he wax as ded as stoon
And seyde, "Allas, that I was bore!
That was the los that here-before
I tolde the that I hadde lorn.
Bethenke how I seyde here-beforn, 5
'Thow wost ful lytel what thow menest;
I have lost more than thow wenest.'
God wot, allas! Ryght that was she!"
"Allas, sir, how? What may that be?"
"She ys ded!" "Nay!" "Yis, be my trouthe!" 10
"Is that youre los? Be God, hyt ys routhel!"
And with that word right anoon
They gan to strake forth; al was doon,
For that tyme, the hert-huntyng.
With that me thoghte that this kyng 15
Gan homwarde for to ryde
Unto a place, was there besyde,
Which was from us but a lyte –
A long castel with walles white,
Be Seynt Johan, on a ryche hil, 20
As me mette; but thus hyt fil.

(f)

“If no love is, O God, what fele I so?
And if love is, what thing and which is he?
If love be good, from whennes cometh my woo?
If it be wikke, a wonder thynketh me,
When every torment and adversite 5
That cometh of hym may to me savory thinke,
For ay thirst I, the more that ich it drynke.

“And if that at myn owen lust I brenne,
From whennes cometh my waillynge and my pleynte?
If harm agree me, wherto pleyne I thenne? 10
I noot, ne whi unwery that I feynte.
O quike deth, O swete harm so queynte,
How may of the in me swich quantite,
But if that I consente that it be?

“And if that I consente, I wrongfully 15
Compleyne, iwis. Thus possed to and fro,
Al sterelees withinne a boot am I
Amydde the see, bitwixen wyndes two,
That in contrarie stonden evere mo.
Allas, what is this wondre maladie? 20
For hote of cold, for cold of hote, I dye.”

(g)

Also, certes, God ne made nat womman of the foot of Adam, for she ne sholde nat been holden to lowe; for she kan nat paciently suffre. But God made womman of the ryb of Adam, for womman sholde be felawe unto man./ Man sholde bere hym to his wyf in feith, in trouthe, and in love, as seith Seint Paul, that a man sholde loven his wyf as Crist loved hooly chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyde for it. So sholde a man for his wyf, if it were nede./ 5

Now how that a woman sholde be subget to hire housbonde, that telleth Seint Peter. First, in obedience./ And eek, as seith the decree, a womman that is wyf, as longe as she is a wyf, she hath noon auctoritee to swere ne to bere witnesse withoute leve of hir housbonde, that is hire lord; algate, he sholde be so by resoun. 10

2. And whan that hoom was come Phebus, the lord,
This crowe sang, 'Cokkow, Cokkow, Cokkow! (*The Manciple's Tale*)
Write an essay on non-verbal communication in Chaucer's work.
3. 'Virtue has to do with movement, desire pressing itself from within outward into the world, as it intends, bending (or shooting, like an arrow) toward an object'
(MARY CARRUTHERS)
Explore the connection between movement, stasis and virtue in Chaucer's work.
4. Consider Chaucer's work as that of a city **and/or** London author.
5. Consider the ways in which Chaucer's works explore 'the value of books and their potential for truth' (DEANNE WILLIAMS)
6. The statue of Venus, glorious for to se,
Was naked, fletyng in the large see,
And fro the navele doun al covered was
With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas. (*The Knight's Tale*)
Write an essay on the different ways in which Chaucer shows interest in idolatry.
7. But half deed, with hir nekke ycorven there,
He lefte hir lye, and on his way he wente. (*The Second Nun's Tale*)
Consider the dead **and/or** dying in Chaucer.
8. 'Conversion, unleashing... social and political anxieties, runs up against its limit in the physical body. The face that pales enacts not only the instability and impurity of Christianity but also the uncontrollable nature of the human body itself – Christian or Saracen, baptized or not' (CAROLYN DINSHAW)
Discuss any part of this statement in relation to Chaucer's work.
9. Explore Chaucer's use of circular **and/or** repeating patterns.

10. Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
(SHAKESPEARE, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*)
To what extent could the same be said of lovers in Chaucer's work?
11. Retornying in hire soule ay up and down
The words of this sodeyn Diomedee,
His grete estat, and perel of the town,
And that she was alone and hadde need. (*Troilus and Criseyde*)
Reflect on Chaucer's exploration of what is 'sudden'.
12. How satisfying are the forms of 'justice' encountered in Chaucer's work?
13. Discuss Chaucer's 'resistance to, or reluctance for, closure' (DEREK BREWER)
14. Allas, that I ne had Englyssh, ryme or prose,
Suffisant this flour to preyse aryght! (*The Legend of Good Women*)
Explore 'insufficiency' of any kind in the writings of Chaucer.
15. 'A celebration of the opportunities of victimisation, the seduction of betrayal'.
(ELAINE SHOWALTER)
Discuss in relation to Chaucer's work.
16. Explore touch in the works of Chaucer.
17. And whil the organs maden melodie,
To God alone in herte thus sang she:
"O Lord, my soule and eek my body gye
Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be". (*The Second Nun's Tale*)
Write an essay on the connections between song and vulnerability **and/or** inviolability.
18. Adam scriveyn, if ever it thee bifalle
Boece or Troylus for to wryten newe,
Under thy longe lokkes thou most have the scale,
But after my making thou wryte more trewe.
(*'Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, his Owne Scriveyn'*)
Discuss Chaucer's interest in textual transmission **and/or** manipulation.

19. Midway upon the journey of our life I found myself within a forest dark, the right road lost. (Dante, *Inferno* trans. ROBERT M. DURLING)
What use does Chaucer make of the idea of being in the 'middle' **and/or** 'between' in his work?
20. Consider the claim that Chaucer's work evidences someone 'very much in tune with the European intellectual world' (MARION TURNER)

END OF PAPER