

A 1/III

OXFORD LOCAL EXAMINATIONS GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

Summer Examination, 1954

Scholarship Level

ENGLISH, PAPER III

FRIDAY, JUNE 25. TIME ALLOWED—3 HOURS

[Write the number of the paper, A 1/III, on the left at the head of each sheet of your answers in the space provided.]

Answer THREE questions. The questions are to be regarded as subjects for essays, in which the planning and style are more important than mere length. Your essays should be fully illustrated from your general reading in English literature. You are strongly advised not to use again material you have already used in your answers to Paper I and Paper II.]

1. Write a critical appreciation of **one** of the following passages:

(a) Abstract ideas which to us are immediately obvious must have been, for early societies, matters only of the most dim apprehension. For example take the question of number. We think of the number 'five' as applying to appropriate groups of any entities whatsoever—to five fishes, five children, five apples, five days. Thus in considering the relations of the number 'five' to the number 'three', we are thinking of two groups of things, one with five members and the other with three members. But we are entirely abstracting from any consideration of any particular entities, or even of any particular sorts of entities, which go to make up the membership of either of the two groups. We are merely thinking of those relationships between those two groups which are entirely independent of the individual

essences of any of the members of either group. This is a very remarkable feat of abstraction; and it must have taken ages for the human race to rise to it. During a long period, groups of fishes will have been compared to each other in respect to their multiplicity, and groups of days to each other. But the first man who noticed the analogy between a group of seven fishes and a group of seven days made a notable advance in the history of thought. He was the first man who entertained a concept belonging to the science of pure mathematics.

(WHITEHEAD.)

X (b) Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

(HARDY.)

2. Either, (a) 'Any distinction between Shakespeare as poet and Shakespeare as dramatist is impossible; it is the poet who gives the highest effect to the dramatist's greatest moments.' Choose two scenes from Shakespeare's plays which seem to you highly dramatic, and show how far poetry contributes to their effect.

X Or, (b) 'His tragedies have heroes but no heroines, his comedies heroines but no heroes.' How far does your reading in the comedies and tragedies of Shakespeare lead you to confirm this statement?

3. Can the Bible be 'read as literature'?

4. Either, (a) 'It is not the business of the poet to number the streaks of the tulip.' Do you agree with Dr. Johnson that the poet should be concerned with the general rather than the particular?

Or, (b) 'The language of poetry is never the language of the age.' Discuss.

5. 'Performance is the only valid test of a play: to read it is no more than to look at a line reproduction of a painting.' Do you agree?

6. What do you think are the essentials of a good history of literature?

7. 'If a novel does not arouse in you the simple desire to know "what happened next", no depth of ideas, subtlety of characterization or beauty of description can save it from failure.' Do you agree?

8. 'I don't believe in analyzing and criticizing literature—it spoils your enjoyment of it. "We murder to dissect".'

'Nonsense! Analysis and criticism help you to understand a work better, and the more you understand it the better you enjoy it.'

Which side would you take in this argument?

X 9. Write a short essay on one of the following subjects: metaphor; the supernatural in literature; travel books; books by naturalists.