

General Certificate of Education
January 2006
Advanced Level Examination



ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION B)
Unit 6 Exploring Texts

LTB6

Tuesday 31 January 2006 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm

For this paper you must have:

- a 12-page answer book;
- your copy of the Pre-Release Material.

Time allowed: 3 hours (including 30 minutes' reading time)

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is LTB6.
- Answer **both** questions.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- There are 40 marks for each question.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers. All questions should be answered in continuous prose. Quality of Written Communication will be assessed in all answers.

Advice

- You should divide your time equally between both questions.

There are no questions printed on this page

Literary Beginnings

Answer **both** questions.

30 minutes are allocated in the examination to the reading and consideration of the material for this paper.

You may make notes during this time if you wish.

In Question 1 you will be tested on your ability to:

- respond with knowledge and understanding to literary texts of different types and periods, exploring and commenting on relationships and comparisons between literary texts;
- show detailed understanding of the ways in which writers' choices of form, structure and language shape meanings.

- 1 This question refers to *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things* by Jon McGregor and *The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd* by D.H. Lawrence.

Compare and contrast the ways in which McGregor and Lawrence attempt, in the opening sections of their works, to secure the interest of their reader/audience. (40 marks)

In Question 2 you will be tested on your ability to:

- communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression;
- articulate independent opinions and judgements, informed by different interpretations of literary texts by other readers;
- evaluate the significance of cultural, historical and other contextual influences upon literary texts and study.

- 2 Items Two, Three and Four are all concerned with Literary Beginnings and the interpretations of texts. In the light of your reading of this material, write about:

- how far the commentaries (Items Two and Three) on reading the openings of novels have helped to inform your response to the opening of Jon McGregor's *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*;
- the relationship between the reader and the text, showing how far you agree with the authors of Item Four that your response to texts arises out of your own contexts. Illustrate your answer by reference to the literary extracts from this paper and, if you wish, to other literary texts you have read. (40 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

The following passage is the opening of *The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd*, a three act play written in 1914 by D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930).

ACT ONE

SCENE I

The kitchen of a miner's small cottage. On the left is the fireplace, with a deep, full red fire. At the back is a white-curtained window, and beside it the outer door of the room. On the right, two white wooden stairs intrude into the kitchen below the closed stair-foot door. On the left, another door.

The room is furnished with a chintz-backed sofa under the window, a glass-knobbed painted dresser on the right, and in the centre, toward the fire, a table with a red and blue check tablecloth. On one side of the hearth is a wooden rocking-chair, on the other an arm-chair of round staves. An unlighted copper-shaded lamp hangs from the raftered ceiling. It is dark twilight, with the room full of warm fireglow. A woman enters from the outer door. As she leaves the door open behind her, the colliery rail can be seen not far from the threshold, and, away back, the headstocks of a pit.

The woman is tall and voluptuously built. She carries a basket heaped full of washing, which she has just taken from the clotheslines outside. Setting down the basket heavily, she feels among the clothes. She lifts out a white heap of sheets and other linen, setting it on the table; then she takes a woollen shirt in her hand.

MRS HOLROYD [*aloud, to herself*]: You know they're not dry even now, though it's been as fine as it has. [*She spreads the shirt on the back of her rocking-chair, which she turns to the fire.*]

VOICE [*calling from outside*]: Well, have you got them dry?

[*MRS HOLROYD starts up, turns and flings her hand in the direction of the open door, where appears a man in blue overalls, swarfed and greased. He carries a dinner-basket.*]

MRS HOLROYD: You – you – I don't know what to call you! The idea of shouting at me like that – like the Evil One out of the darkness!

BLACKMORE: I ought to have remembered your tender nerves. Shall I come in?

MRS HOLROYD: No – not for your impudence. But you're late, aren't you?

BLACKMORE: It's only just gone six. We electricians, you know, we're the gentlemen on a mine: ours is gentlemen's work. But I'll bet Charles Holroyd was home before four.

MRS HOLROYD [*bitterly*]: Ay, and gone again before five.

BLACKMORE: But mine's a lad's job, and I do nothing! – Where's he gone?

MRS HOLROYD [*contemptuously*]: Dunno! He'd got a game on somewhere – toffed himself up to the nines, and skedaddled off as brisk as a turkey-cock. [*She smirks in front of the mirror hanging on the chimney-piece, in imitation of a man brushing his hair and moustache and admiring himself.*]

BLACKMORE: Though turkey-cocks aren't brisk as a rule. Children playing?

MRS HOLROYD [*recovering herself, coldly*]: Yes. And they ought to be in. [*She continues placing the flannel garments before the fire, on the fender and on chair-backs, till the stove is hedged in with a steaming fence; then she takes a sheet in a bundle from the table, and goes up to BLACKMORE, who stands watching her.*] Here, take hold, and help me fold it.

BLACKMORE: I shall swarf it up.

MRS HOLROYD [*snatching back the sheet*]: Oh, you're as tiresome as everybody else.

BLACKMORE [*putting down his basket and moving to door on right*]: Well, I can soon wash my hands.

MRS HOLROYD [*ceasing to flap and fold pillow-cases*]: That roller-towel's ever so dirty. I'll get you another. [*She goes to a drawer in the dresser, and then back toward the scullery, from which comes the sound of water.*]

BLACKMORE: Why, bless my life, I'm a lot dirtier than the towel. I don't want another.

MRS HOLROYD [*going into the scullery*]: Here you are.

BLACKMORE [*softly, now she is near him*]: Why did you trouble now? Pride, you know, pride, nothing else.

MRS HOLROYD [*also playful*]: It's nothing but decency.

BLACKMORE [*softly*]: Pride, pride, pride!

[*A child of eight suddenly appears in the doorway.*]

JACK: Oo, how dark!

MRS HOLROYD [*hurrying agitated into the kitchen*]: Why, where have you been – what have you been doing now?

JACK [*surprised*]: Why – I've only been out to play.

MRS HOLROYD [*still sharply*]: And where's Minnie?

[*A little girl of six appears by the door.*]

MINNIE: I'm here, mam, and what do you think – ?

MRS HOLROYD [*softening, as she recovers equanimity*]: Well, and what should I think?

JACK: Oh, yes, mam – you know my father – ?

MRS HOLROYD [*ironically*]: I should hope so.

MINNIE: We saw him dancing, mam, with a paper bonnet.

MRS HOLROYD: What – ?

JACK: There's some women at New Inn, what's come from Nottingham –

MINNIE: An' he's dancin' with the pink one.

JACK: Shut up, our Minnie. An' they've got paper bonnets on –

MINNIE: All colours, mam!

JACK [*getting angry*]: Shut up, our Minnie! An' my dad's dancing with her.

MINNIE: With the pink-bonnet one, mam.

JACK: Up in the club-room over the bar.

MINNIE: An' she's a lot littler than him, mam.

JACK [*piteously*]: Shut up, our Minnie – An' you can see 'em go past the window, 'cause there isn't no curtains up, an' my father's got the pink-bonnet one –

MINNIE: An' there's a piano, mam –

JACK: An' lots of folks outside watchin', lookin' at my dad! He can dance, can't he, mam?

MRS HOLROYD [*she has been lighting the lamp, and holds the lamp-glass*]: And who else is there?

MINNIE: Some more men – an' *all* the women with paper bonnets on.

JACK: There's about ten, I should think, an' they say they came in a brake from Nottingham.

[*MRS HOLROYD, trying to replace the lamp-glass over the flame, lets it drop on the floor with a smash.*]

JACK: There, now – now we'll have to have a candle.

BLACKMORE [*appearing in the scullery doorway with the towel*]: What's that – the lamp-glass?

JACK: I never knowed Mr Blackmore was here.

BLACKMORE [*to MRS HOLROYD*]: Have you got another?

MRS HOLROYD: No. [*There is silence for a moment.*] We can manage with a candle for to-night.

BLACKMORE [*stepping forward and blowing out the smoky flame*]: I'll see if I can't get you one from the pit. I shan't be a minute.

MRS HOLROYD: Don't – don't bother – I don't want you to. [*He, however, unscrews the burner and goes.*]

MINNIE: Did Mr Blackmore come for tea, mam?

MRS HOLROYD: No; he's had no tea.

JACK: I bet he's hungry. Can I have some bread?

MRS HOLROYD [*she stands a lighted candle on the table*]: Yes, and you can get your boots off to go to bed.

JACK: It's not seven o'clock yet.

MRS HOLROYD: It doesn't matter.

MINNIE: What do they wear paper bonnets for, mam?

Turn over ►

MRS HOLROYD: Because they're brazen hussies.

JACK: I saw them having a glass of beer.

MRS HOLROYD: A nice crew!

JACK: They say they are old pals of Mrs Meakins. You could hear her screaming o' laughin', an' my dad says: 'He-ah, missis – here – a dog's nose for the Dachsen – hopin' it'll smell samthing' – What's a dog's-nose?

MRS HOLROYD [*giving him a piece of bread and butter*]: Don't ask me, child. How should I know?

MINNIE: Would she eat it, mam?

MRS HOLROYD: Eat what?

MINNIE: Her in the pink bonnet – eat the dog's-nose?

MRS HOLROYD: No, of course not. How should I know what a dog's nose is?

JACK: I bet he'll never go to work to-morrow, mother – will he?

MRS HOLROYD: Goodness knows. I'm sick of it – disgracing me. There'll be the whole place cackling *this* now. They've no sooner finished about him getting taken up for fighting than they begin on this. But I'll put a stop to it some road or other. It's not going on, if I know it: it isn't.

[*She stops, hearing footsteps, and BLACKMORE enters.*]

BLACKMORE: Here we are then – got one all right.

MINNIE: Did they give it you, Mr Blackmore?

BLACKMORE: No, I took it. [*He screws on the burner and proceeds to light the lamp. He is a tall, slender, mobile man of twenty-seven, brown-haired, dressed in blue overalls. JACK HOLROYD is a big, dark, ruddy, lusty lad. MINNIE is also big, but fair.*]

MINNIE: What do you wear blue trousers for, Mr Blackmore?

BLACKMORE: They're to keep my other trousers from getting greasy.

MINNIE: Why don't you wear pit-breeches, like dad's?

JACK: 'Cause he's a 'lectrician. Could you make me a little injun what would make electric light?

BLACKMORE: I will, some day.

JACK: When?

MINNIE: Why don't you come an' live here?

BLACKMORE [*looking swiftly at MRS HOLROYD*]: Nay, you've got your own dad to live here.

MINNIE [*plaintively*]: Well, you could come as well. Dad shouts when we've gone to bed, an' thumps the table. He wouldn't if you was here.

JACK: He dursn't –

MRS HOLROYD: Be quiet now, be quiet. Here, Mr Blackmore. [*She again gives him the sheet to fold.*]

BLACKMORE: Your hands *are* cold.

MRS HOLROYD: Are they? – I didn't know.

[*BLACKMORE puts his hand on hers.*]

MRS HOLROYD [*confusedly, looking aside*]: You must want your tea.

BLACKMORE: I'm in no hurry.

END OF QUESTIONS

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