

General Certificate of Education  
June 2003  
Advanced Level Examination



**ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION B)**  
**Unit 6 *Exploring Texts***

**LTB6**

Friday 20 June 2003 9.00 am to 12 noon

**In addition to this paper you will require:**

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

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 **all** questions.
- You should spend at least **one** hour on the first question.

**Information**

- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.

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Answer **all** questions.

30 minutes are allocated in the examination to the reading and consideration of the unseen material in Question 1.

You may make notes during this time if you wish.

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In this paper 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;
- 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;
- 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 on literary texts and study.

- 1 U.A. Fanthorpe writes about a painting that depicts a legend in “Not My Best Side”, while in Item One Barnes writes about a painting depicting an historic event in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*.

Compare and contrast the ways in which the two writers each make use of a painting to help them convey their ideas.

- 2 Items Two and Three discuss the genre of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*.

Referring to Items Two and Three, discuss how you would categorise *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* on the basis of the two extracts (A and B) in Item One.

- 3 Item Four gives a critical commentary on the chapters concerning *The Medusa*. What critical ideas are presented in this commentary and to what extent do you agree with them?

- 4 Literary texts are labelled in all sorts of different ways (for example, “tragedy”, “crime fiction”, “Metaphysical poetry”).

To what extent have you found such labelling helpful in your study of literature? Refer to at least two texts you have read or studied.

**END OF QUESTIONS**

**Turn over ►**

The following poem is by U.A. Fanthorpe who was born in 1929. It was included in her first volume of poems entitled *Side Effects* (Peterloo Poets, 1978) and takes its inspiration from Uccello's painting of St George and the Dragon in The National Gallery. Uccello was a fifteenth century Florentine artist who developed new ideas about perspective and whose work seems to anticipate some of the abstract art of the twentieth century. The poem is followed by some material to help your understanding of the poem.

### *Not My Best Side*

(*Uccello: S. George and the Dragon, The National Gallery*)

I

Not my best side, I'm afraid.  
 The artist didn't give me a chance to  
 Pose properly, and as you can see,  
 Poor chap, he had this obsession with  
 Triangles, so he left off two of my  
 Feet. I didn't comment at the time  
 (What, after all, are two feet  
 To a monster?) but afterwards  
 I was sorry for the bad publicity.  
 Why, I said to myself, should my conqueror  
 Be so ostentatiously beardless, and ride  
 A horse with a deformed neck and square hoofs?  
 Why should my victim be so  
 Unattractive as to be inedible,  
 And why should she have me literally  
 On a string? I don't mind dying  
 Ritually, since I always rise again,  
 But I should have liked a little more blood  
 To show they were taking me seriously.

II

It's hard for a girl to be sure if  
 She wants to be rescued. I mean, I quite  
 Took to the dragon. It's nice to be  
 Liked, if you know what I mean. He was  
 So nicely physical, with his claws  
 And lovely green skin, and that sexy tail,  
 And the way he looked at me,  
 He made me feel he was all ready to  
 Eat me. And any girl enjoys that.  
 So when this boy turned up, wearing machinery,  
 On a really *dangerous* horse, to be honest,  
 I didn't much fancy him. I mean,  
 What was he like underneath the hardware?  
 He might have acne, blackheads or even  
 Bad breath for all I could tell, but the dragon –  
 Well, you could see all his equipment  
 At a glance. Still, what could I do?  
 The dragon got himself beaten by the boy,  
 And a girl's got to think of her future.

## III

I have diplomas in Dragon  
 Management and Virgin Reclamation.  
 My horse is the latest model, with  
 Automatic transmission and built-in  
 Obsolescence. My spear is custom-built,  
 And my prototype armour  
 Still on the secret list. You can't  
 Do better than me at the moment.  
 I'm qualified and equipped to the  
 Eyebrow. So why be difficult?  
 Don't you want to be killed and/or rescued  
 In the most contemporary way? Don't  
 You want to carry out the roles  
 That sociology and myth have designed for you?  
 Don't you realize that, by being choosy,  
 You are endangering job-prospects  
 In the spear- and horse-building industries?  
 What, in any case, does it matter what  
 You want? You're in my way.

### Some critical views on U.A. Fanthorpe's 'Not My Best Side':

Robin Lane Fox, poetry reviewer for the *Financial Times*, wrote of Fanthorpe's assurance and wit and of her capacity to 'suddenly hit you below the heart'. The critic George Szirtes noted her originality in the comment: 'Her poems are particularly good when they offer unaffected voices from a gallery of human types that do not usually figure in poetry... They speak an often humorous, often painful stoic wisdom.'

In 'Not My Best Side' Fanthorpe gives us a dramatic monologue, a form that has been popular with poets over many years, particularly the Victorian poets, Tennyson and Browning. Fanthorpe's poem is unusual however in that, rather than giving us one individual first person viewpoint, it gives us three. The dragon, the damsel and St George are each given a chance to put forward their point of view, leaving us to decide both why Fanthorpe chose to order the voices as she did and what different effects those voices have on an individual reader. Traditionally, the dramatic monologue form has often been regarded as a device for poets to put across ideas that they would not necessarily want to be seen as representing their personal viewpoint. By offering the voice of a persona, the writer can avoid being regarded as a confessional poet concerned simply with expressing his or her own feelings.

Uccello, by painting 'S. George and the Dragon', was giving his individual perspective on the well-known story of St George slaying the dragon. By including the three figures of the dragon, the knight and the damsel he was able to show his perspective in relation to all three. Fanthorpe, using a quite different medium to convey her late twentieth century view of the complexity of the story, hits on the idea of conveying multiple perspective through the dramatic monologue. Her artefact is a kind of poetic triptych (a triptych is a painting on three panels) and therefore echoes what the dragon describes as the artist's 'obsession with/Triangles...'. The poem gives a comic perspective on a story that is so well-known that only a radical change of tone could persuade us to look at it in a new light.

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Source: 'Side Effects' by U.A. Fanthorpe (Peterloo Poets) 1978

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**Unit 6 *Exploring Texts***

**LTB6/PM**

To be issued to candidates on Friday 13 June 2003 for examination  
on Friday 20 June 2003 9.00 am to 12 noon

**Pre-Release Material**

- To be given out on or after Friday 13 June 2003.
- On receipt of this material, you are advised to check carefully that the booklet is complete and that no pages are missing or illegible. There should be 12 pages. If you experience problems you should consult your teacher.
- You should use the time between receiving this material and the examination to familiarise yourself with its contents.
- You are permitted to make **brief** annotations on the pre-release material. Such annotation should amount to no more than cross references and/or the glossing of individual words or phrases. Highlighting and underlining are permitted.
- You are **not** permitted to bring any additional written material with you into the examination.
- Your teacher is **not** permitted to discuss the pre-release material with you before the examination.
- **You must bring this material with you to the examination.**

**Pre-Release Material****Contents**

- Item One** Two extracts (A and B) from *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* by Julian Barnes, 1989.
- Item Two** An extract from *Understanding Julian Barnes* by Merritt Moseley, 1997.
- Item Three** An extract from an interview with Julian Barnes in *Publishers Weekly*.
- Item Four** An extract from an article by Brian Finney on *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*.

Items One and Two are not reproduced here due to third-party  
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from AQA Publications  
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**Item Three**

An extract from Amanda Smith's interview with Julian Barnes in *Publishers Weekly* 3 November 1989.

**Barnes:** I don't take too much notice of the 'but-does-he-write-proper-novels?' school of criticism, which I get a bit, especially in England. I feel closer to the continental idea – which used to be the English idea as well – that the novel is a very broad and generous enclosing form. I would argue for greater inclusivity rather than any exclusivity. The novel always starts with life, always has to start with life rather than an intellectual grid which you then impose on things. But at the same time; formally and structurally, I don't see why it shouldn't be inventive and playful and break what supposed rules there are.

Just as it begins with life, it also comes down to storytelling. In *A History of the World*, even if you're using art history or straight history or legal history or autobiography, the impulse behind it is to tell a story, and what makes each chapter work is that it has a structure and it has a narrative pulse. It leads somewhere. Even if it's taking facts which you've not invented yourself, what you're doing as a fiction writer is imposing a form and a motion on them.

You come up with a lot of possibilities, and then it's a play between what ideas you can think of and what other ideas you can think of that work as well. The process throws up the next idea. And that's a question of feel.

**TURN OVER FOR ITEM FOUR**

**Turn over ►**

**Item Four**

An extract from an article on Julian Barnes' *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* by Brian Finney, 1999.

So many of the chapters offer versions of the Ark, boats built for human survival against the storms of God and/or nature. Yet these craft are all subject to the caprices of the woodworm eating away at them from within, or of what they come to represent in more general terms – the non-human, excluded forces of our world. Pleasure trips turn into nightmares. Rafts constructed to film a reenactment of a past disaster on the river repeat that disaster. Art becomes confused with reality by Indians and film crew alike, just as historical narrative becomes confused with fictional narrative by writer and readers alike.

The unsinkable *Titanic* sinks. So does the *Medusa*.

Barnes' two-part treatment in Chapter Five of the notorious shipwreck of the *Medusa* in 1816 and the subsequent painting of the survivors on the raft executed by Géricault in 1819 brings many of the themes and motifs of the book together. First comes his dispassionate but carefully shaped account of what happened to the 150 passengers and crew who spent fifteen days on the raft before being rescued. They mutiny and fight among themselves (as Noah's family did). They start eating the flesh of their dead comrades (as Noah ate his animals). Eventually the survivors are forced to make a choice between treating the fifteen healthy and twelve wounded alike, or throwing the wounded overboard to conserve the diminishing provisions. They choose the latter: "The healthy were separated from the unhealthy like the clean from the unclean". We are back on Noah's Ark. Two of the fifteen who were rescued remind the reader of Noah by concluding that "the manner in which they were saved was truly miraculous". But what about the 135 "unclean" who were killed or drowned before help arrived?

In the second section Barnes turns to the way in which Géricault chose to portray this incident. It opens: "How do you turn catastrophe into art?" This is clearly the question Barnes is asking himself throughout his own attempt to turn the catastrophes of human history into meaningful, that is fictional, shape. Géricault had access to the same accounts from the survivors that Barnes summarized in the first section. Yet the painting shows not fifteen but twenty men on the raft, five of them dead. The painter has dragged five of the wounded back from the sea: "And should the dead lose their vote in the referendum over hope versus despair?" Barnes wants to demonstrate the way any artist is compelled to rearrange the facts to give meaning to his narrative composition. Géricault cleans up the raft and restores the survivors to healthy muscularity. Why? In order to shift us as spectators "through currents of hope and despair, elation, panic and resignation". According to Barnes, Géricault is intent on demonstrating the equality of optimistic and pessimistic interpretations of human destiny. So he chooses to depict not the moment of rescue, but the earlier moment when the survivors sight a vessel on the horizon that fails to see them or come closer. Much like Beckett's reference in *Waiting for Godot* to the two thieves crucified with Christ, one of whom is saved and the other damned, as many survivors hope that the boat is coming closer as conclude that it is heading away from them. The painting invites us to read it as "an image of hope being mocked".

Barnes appears to conclude with the observation: "We are all lost at sea, washed between hope and despair, hailing something that may never come to rescue us [. . .] Catastrophe has become art: that is, after all, what it is for". Barnes here targets both artist and historian for their similar proclivity in turning life's disasters into the more satisfying shapes of narrative.

**END OF PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL**



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**Item Three** Interview with Julian Barnes, AMANDA SMITH, *Publishers Weekly*, 236(18), 3 November 1989.

**Item Four** Extract from article by BRIAN FINNEY, 1999 on *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* by Julian Barnes. Copyright Brian Finney 2000.