

General Certificate of Education  
January 2005  
Advanced Level Examination



**ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
(SPECIFICATION B)**

**NTB6/PM**

**Pre-release material for Unit 6: Critical Approaches**

**To be issued to candidates on or after Wednesday 19 January 2005 for  
examination on Wednesday 26 January 2005 1.30 pm to 4.00 pm**

**Instructions**

- 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 any 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 preliminary material. Such annotations should amount to no more than cross references and/or the glossing of individual words or phrases. Highlighting and underlining is permitted. Annotations going beyond individual words or phrases, or amounting to *aides-mémoire* or notes towards the planning of essays are not permitted. Insertion of pages, loose sheets, 'Post-its' or any other form of notes or additional material is **not** 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.
- **Bring the material with you to the examination on 26 January. You will be required to answer all questions in the examination.**

**Anthology of Texts****Topic: Fame**

- Text 1: *Nights at the Circus*, Angela Carter 2003 (Prose fiction)
- Text 2: *Amadeus*, Peter Shaffer 1980 (Drama)
- Text 3: *Dangers of New Ideas*, Ella Wheeler Wilcox 1901 (Prose)
- Text 4: *Celebs who throw strops*, article from *Best* magazine 2003 (Journalism)
- Text 5: *Living Values – Humility*, Diane Tillman 2003 (Websites)

## TEXT 1

An extract from *Nights at the Circus*, by Angela Carter

‘Lor’ love you, sir!’ Fevvers sang out in a voice that clanged like dustbin lids. ‘As to my place of birth, why, I first saw light of day right here in smoky old London, didn’t I! Not billed the “Cockney Venus”, for nothing, sir, though they could just as well ’ave called me “Helen of the High Wire”, due to the unusual circumstances in which I come ashore – for I never docked via what you might call the *normal channels*, sir, oh, dear me, no; but, just like Helen of Troy, was *hatched*.

‘Hatched out of a bloody great egg while Bow Bells rang, as ever is!’

The blonde guffawed uproariously, slapped the marbly thigh on which her wrap fell open and flashed a pair of vast, blue, indecorous eyes at the young reporter with his open notebook and his poised pencil, as if to dare him: ‘Believe it or not!’ Then she spun round on her swivelling dressing-stool – it was a plush-topped, backless piano stool, lifted from the rehearsal room – and confronted herself with a grin in the mirror as she ripped six inches of false lash from her left eyelid with an incisive gesture and a small, explosive, rasping sound.

Fevvers, the most famous *aerialiste* of the day; her slogan, ‘Is she fact or is she fiction?’ And she didn’t let you forget it for a minute; this query, in the French language, in foot-high letters, blazed forth from a wall-size poster, souvenir of her Parisian triumphs, dominating her London dressing-room. Something hectic, something fittingly impetuous and dashing about that poster, the preposterous depiction of a young woman shooting up like a rocket, whee! in a burst of agitated sawdust towards an unseen trapeze somewhere above in the wooden heavens of the Cirque d’Hiver. The artist had chosen to depict her ascent from behind – bums aloft, you might say; up she goes, in a steatopygous perspective, shaking out about her those tremendous red and purple pinions, pinions large enough, powerful enough to bear up such a big girl as she. And she was a *big* girl.

Evidently this Helen took after her putative father, the swan, around the shoulder parts.

But these notorious and much-debated wings, the source of her fame, were stowed away for the night under the soiled quilting of her baby-blue satin dressing-gown, where they made an uncomfortable-looking pair of bulges, shuddering the surface of the taut fabric from time to time as if desirous of breaking loose. (‘How does she do that?’ pondered the reporter.)

‘In Paris, they called me *l’Ange Anglaise*, the English Angel, “not English but an angel”, as the old saint said,’ she’d told him, jerking her head at that favourite poster which, she’d remarked off-handedly, had been scrawled on the stone by ‘some Frog dwarf who asked me to piddle on his thingy before he’d get his crayons so much as out sparing your blushes.’ Then – ‘a touch of sham?’ – she’d popped the cork of a chilled magnum of champagne between her teeth. A hissing flute of bubbly stood beside her own elbow on the dressing-table, the still-crepitating bottle lodged negligently in the toilet jug, packed in ice that must have come from a fishmonger’s for a shiny scale or two stayed trapped within the chunks. And this twice-used ice must surely be the source of the marine aroma – something fishy about the Cockney Venus – that underlay the hot, solid composite of perfume, sweat, greasepaint and raw, leaking gas that made you feel you breathed the air in Fevvers’ dressing-room in lumps.

One lash off, one lash on, Fevvers leaned back a little to scan the asymmetric splendour reflected in her mirror with impersonal gratification.

‘And now,’ she said, ‘after my conquests on the continent’ (which she pronounced, ‘congting’) ‘here’s the prodigal daughter home again to London, my lovely London that I love so much. London – as dear old Dan Leno calls it, “a little village on the Thames of which the principal industries are the music hall and the confidence trick”.’

She tipped the young reporter a huge wink in the ambiguity of the mirror and briskly stripped the other set of false eyelashes.

Her native city welcomed her home with such delirium that the *Illustrated London News* dubbed the phenomenon, ‘Fevvermania’. Everywhere you saw her picture; the shops were crammed with ‘Fevvers’ garters, stockings, fans, cigars, shaving soap ... She even lent it to a brand of baking powder; if you added a spoonful of the stuff, up in the air went your sponge cake, just as she did. Heroine of the hour, object of learned discussion and profane surmise, this Helen launched a thousand quips, mostly on the lewd side. (‘Have you heard the one about how Fevvers *got it up* for the travelling salesman ...’) Her name was on the lips of all, from duchess to costermonger.

**TEXT 2**

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## TEXT 3

‘Dangers of New Ideas’ by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Among the many privileges which the present era accords woman is that of “developing the best within her,” to use her own favorite phraseology.

It was the generally accepted idea in olden times that a woman must keep to her limited domain of wife or spinster, dependent upon husband or relatives for home and occupation, no matter what wealth of talent in other directions cried for utterance in her soul.

The girl who utilized her talents outside of the domestic sphere was regarded as “strong-minded” and masculine, if not worse; and the married woman who dared write, sing, act or recite de-classed herself.

That was one extreme. We now seem to have reached the other.

There is an idea prevalent to-day that it is the duty of every woman to seek to “express” an indefinable something within her which shall establish her individuality.

To make “the most of herself” is every woman’s ideal. It is an excellent one; but in pursuing it she needs to be very certain that her conception of “most” would not be estimated as “least” in the eyes of wisdom.

In America this desire for individuality is so prevalent that domestic obligations are frequently put aside as easily as household furniture is stored, while the wife and mother sets forth in search of “her best self.”

In olden times when a woman forfeited home and its duties for a career, other wives and mothers turned their backs upon her.

But the sex is broadening in sympathy and indulgence, and its charity is covering a multitude of sins.

A woman who has divorced two or three husbands and shifted her maternal obligations upon other shoulders and purses, in order that she may be free and untrammled in her pursuit of her idea, meets with a great deal of consideration at the hands of her sister women to-day.

“She had to pass through just those experiences,” they say, “in order to evolve.”

“What does a husband or a child or two count in the great scheme of self-development?” says another. “A woman must do what is for her own highest good, no matter what sacrifices are made in the process.”

A somewhat conservative lady spoke with regret of a friend who had devastated two homes.

“Don’t think of her in that way,” said another. “She is a woman of talent, and I feel she has a message to give the world yet. She is struggling toward the light through all this experience.”

This liberality of judgment is more commendable than the casting of stones.

But its philosophy is a dangerous one to preach freely to ambitious and not always well-balanced minds.

It is charitable and kind to believe that another’s fall was but a step toward a higher state of development; but it becomes a pernicious and dangerous doctrine when a woman begins to think her own development demands a similar sacrifice of near duties and responsibilities.

There is an elastic tendency to this modern philosophy which enables the woman of lawless impulses to hide her adventurous propensities under its shelter.

The liberal thought of the day regarding woman is full of hope for the erring and remorseful soul; but it is, too, when carried to an extreme, full of danger for the weak and unstable, and it is an excuse for the selfish.

I do not believe “the best” within a woman was ever developed, save through doing with all her might the nearest duties first.

Of course, there may be a diversity of opinions regarding those duties, but one’s own conscience and common sense should be the guide.

It is not a duty to sacrifice life and strength to the service of a brutal, selfish and vicious husband, who has broken every vow he took at the altar, yet insists that his wife shall live up to the letter of hers.

In such a case it is a woman’s nearest duty to get as far away from the man as possible and not lay her future upon the same pyre which has consumed her past.

But the woman who allows her ambition and her vanity to lead her to sacrifice a good husband’s happiness, merely because she feels she can shine on the heights of art with a more effulgent light alone (or with another man) violates a principle which disturbs the harmony of society. When she relinquishes her children for any aim or ambition, however exalted, no matter what her attainments may be, she has but repeated Esau’s bargain of old.

“Look what she has achieved!” I have heard women say of one who had acquired fame and gold. “She had to fling away all trammels and ties in order to become just what she is.”

But on a good man's life and on the lives of innocent children rested a shadow which in some lights seemed to be a stain.

Was her fame and her gold worth the price she made others pay?

There was a man who succeeded in an aim – a petty ambition from our standpoint, but no smaller than the founding of an empire or the winning of immortal fame must seem in God's eyes.

This man wanted the road to the nearest village, three miles distant, to run through his property, because it would bring him an amount of money which seemed like a fortune in his small eyes. The man's property was all hills and valleys.

The Selectman planned to have the road go around these hills, over level meadows.

But the man was strong willed, persistent, scheming. He succeeded and gloried in his success.

That was years ago. To-day thousands of horses become knee sprung and lame and spavined, scores of vehicles break down, wheelmen meet with accidents and the nerves of summer residents and tourists become unstrung because of these hills and valleys which must be traversed to reach the town, the trolley of the train.

Was his success worth to the man the price humanity has paid for it?

Before we lay out any road to the heights of glory or of power, it would be well for us to ask ourselves whose peace, comfort or happiness must be sacrificed by it.

It is our privilege to give up personal comfort and personal happiness, if we choose to do so, in order to accomplish a certain purpose.

It is not our privilege or our right to immolate others upon the altar of our success.

There is no success in any line of art which can repay a woman for the knowledge that her child suffers at the mention of her name.

Let us be lenient in our judgment of such women, but let us not put them upon a pinnacle as beings to be worshipped and emulated.

It is well for an ambitious woman to realize that the subtle fragrance of positive duties well performed is more far reaching and lasting than the pungent odor of the ephemeral rose of fame.

There is no "message" so great for a woman to give to the world as that of a self-controlled and well-lived life.

**TEXT 4**

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## TEXT 5

Extract from 'Living Values – Humility'

In the world today, young adults – and even older persons – often have problems handling fame. This can occur in everyday situations, such as popularity as an athlete or another role in school. Some have shared that they felt the image of who they were was so important that it felt as though nobody knew them anymore. There have been tragic examples of young actors committing suicide because of this. Others have enjoyed brief periods of fame but then felt devastated when the fame disappeared.

Discuss with each other:

- Why do you think some people want fame?
- Once they get it, what are the advantages?
- What are the dangers of fame?
- What are the disadvantages?
- What do you think one gets attached to with fame?

Think about the following Reflection Points:

- The tendency to impress, dominate or limit the freedom of others in order to prove yourself diminishes the inner experience of worth, dignity and peace of mind.
- Pride goes before a fall.

Note: Some young adults have noticed that people are initially stable emotionally but, when they get attracted by the attention they receive, they start to change. It is as though they lose touch with the self and are always looking to others or external things for validation. They become dependent on that to feel good. When that outside attention is not there, the person can experience an immense let-down.

Discuss:

- What kinds of things would help a person stay content during times of fame and its disappearance?  
(Generate strategies, such as having a few close friends who really know you or basing your self-esteem on your inner qualities.)

Homework: Do something kind for someone every day for one week – with the feeling of wanting to do it without needing recognition.

Most of us have to do tasks that are “humble.” How can people enjoy these tasks and still feel full of dignity? How can we maintain self-respect and experience dignity with the value of humility rather than feeling “humbled?” A couple of thoughts on this:

- We all play different roles at different times in our life. We play different roles with different people even within a day.
- Everyone’s cooperation is essential for successful completion of a task. Each role is important.

Discuss:

- Do you ever feel “bad” or “not good about yourself” when you do ordinary or menial tasks? Why or why not ?
- What thoughts or attitudes allow you to feel good and valued?
- Do you ever evaluate the task you have completed in terms of:
  - The value or quality with which you did it?
  - The interpersonal qualities you experienced?
  - The value you were demonstrating?

- When you evaluate things by any one of the above criteria do you think your self-respect would stay stable or increase?
- Can you think of any other value-based criteria on which to evaluate any task?

Some people have an attitude about people who have lower paying jobs. It seems they have somehow decided or been taught that they are better than the other person. There is a story about a professor who included in one of his exams at a university a question on the name of the cleaner who serviced the classroom. One of the students asked if this was a joke. The professor said “no.” He continued, saying that this was a real question important to real life; it is important to know and respect the people that work with you.

Make a list of the values and qualities you think are important in doing any job.

**END OF TEXTS**

**THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS PRINTED ON THIS PAGE**

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TEXT 4 Courtesy of *Best* magazine © National Magazine Company.

TEXT 5 *Source:* extract from *Humility – Living Values Activities for Young Adults*, by Diane Tillman, published September 2003.