



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

Mark scheme

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GCE

English Literature B

Unit LTB6

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Question one:

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.

Objectives tested: AO1, AO2ii, AO3

Possible content:**Key differences resulting from genre:**

Expect students to be aware of differences in language use, register, tone, character revelation and representation, point of view, relationship between reader and subject matter, importance and development of story, setting, structure. Importance of remembering that one text is complete, the other an extract.

Similarities and differences in the subject matter and viewpoint:

Fanthorpe responds to a painting and concerns herself with the possible thoughts of the three figures involved. Dramatic monologue form distances poet from what she’s describing but particular use of it enables her to have multiple first-person perspectives. Barnes both looks at the historical events which he chronicles in some detail and also imagines the process by which those events were turned into art. Fanthorpe is dealing with mythical material. She has to work from a well known story so it is not distorted out of recognition but has no responsibility to historical accuracy as Barnes has. Barnes gives us a dual perspective but all in third person narration. However, although he apparently tries to give an accurate picture of what went on aboard the raft he achieves this (ironically) by fictionalising it. In doing this he establishes a parallel between his own artistic method and that of Gericault which he goes on to consider in the next part of the novel. The subject matter of the painting plays a much smaller part in the poem than in the second extract from Barnes. Clever use of title ‘Not My Best Side’: highlights each speaker’s vanity and capacity to see only from their own myopic viewpoint; also highlights the whole matter of perspective as a facet of art, poetry and so on.

Language use:

Fanthorpe is establishing three different voices so three different types of language use and tone are required. Overall effect to make each of the voices very self-obsessed. **Dragon:** Comic effect of the dragon’s patronising reference to the artist as ‘Poor chap’ and self deprecating ‘I didn’t comment at the time’ only to give himself away with ‘afterwards/ I was sorry for the bad publicity’. Pretentious style through Latinate lexis. Speaking voice comes alive through questions, parenthesis, self-conscious recapitulation of story, ‘I said to myself’. **The girl:** Effectively captures the damsel’s persona through fillers, italicised ‘dangerous’, banal lexis. Bathetic references. Clichés effectively used to capture tone, ‘Still, what could I do?’ Again effective use of rhetorical questions. Euphemisms, ‘hardware’. Bimbo stereotype instantly recognisable, itself perhaps a satirical comment on the painting. **George:** male macho persona evoked through pretentious jargon. Hilarious effect of translating modern business idiom to situation from mythical past. Like the others makes use of rhetorical questions. In each case they comically highlight the egotistical nature of the speakers, their vain self-justifications. Purpose and effect of course satirical throughout. Comes out well through George’s use of language: ‘by being choosy/ You are endangering job prospects/ In the spear- and horse-building industries?’ Frighteningly similar to political posturing and emotional blackmail. While dragon and girl seem to address the wider audience, George apparently addresses the other figures in the picture.

Barnes: adopts a style he considers appropriate to the subject matter, using lexis and word order of an earlier age: ‘Barely a man lay without wounds’; ‘blood washed over the fatal raft’. Heightens emotional effect and therefore undermines the appearance of objectivity. The novel as a whole questions the ‘truth’ of history and his style here bears that out. (Such innate truth as myth might be thought to contain also undermined by satire in the poem). Biblical echoes. Satirical intent in ‘Thirty cloves of garlic’? There may also be satirical overtones in Barnes’s use of ‘On the tenth day...’ etc as an echo of Genesis. NB in the poem the dragon refers to himself as a Christ figure ‘since I always rise again’. Complete change of language use in the second part where the writer takes a twentieth century perspective. Highlights the difficulty for later generations of understanding the events of earlier ones. More colloquialisms. Shorter sentences. Neatly brings together subject of painting and history in the metaphor ‘The painting has slipped history’s anchor’. Builds up maritime imagery to end of passage.

Despite third person narration, second passage reiterates pronoun 'we' which points up the search for a twentieth century perspective as opposed to the earlier section's apparent objectivity.

Overall the poem is comical although it makes serious points; the prose is serious although there is some humour in it. Fanthorpe makes little use of metaphor, partly because it would be unsuited to the speaking voices. Also the genesis in picture makes metaphor superfluous except in the sense that we can see the whole poem as a metaphor. Similarly the account of the *Medusa* is so powerful in itself that Barnes evokes it in simple visual imagery rather than metaphor. Again the point Barnes makes about the metamorphosis of historical 'truth' in the painting into human 'truth' from which we can learn is itself a metaphor. Second half introduces potent image of concentration camp and sea imagery; he is dealing here with the fictionalising process; also involves comparison with television.

Setting:

Poem written as though we are in the art gallery listening to the voices from the painting. The setting itself, however, not specifically evoked: the figures come alive as completely detached from the painting's background; helps to universalise the point of the poem. In Barnes the setting is powerfully evoked, with a lot of precise detail. May to some suggest the ironic parallel of *Robinson Crusoe*. Use of the historical setting to make comparison in second part with the setting used by the artist. As we move from 'historical' account to discussion of painting, we move from the original setting imagined by the novelist to the setting depicted in Gericault's picture and analysed for us by Barnes. Again highlights the multiple perspectives and the impossibility of establishing 'truth'.

Structure:

Tripartite structure of poem makes a poetic triptych. Interesting that each speaker has 19 lines. Free verse. Both aspects highlight the removal of the myth from its normal setting. Use of the speaking voice through lexis, enjambement, caesura also gives this effect. In looking at the Barnes candidates need to remember it is only part of the text. However, structure can be commented on effectively, particularly in view of the two separate parts of the chapter (see earlier comments). Candidates may look at paragraphing, sentence structure etc.

Genre differences:

Mean that where Fanthorpe makes brief references to the picture, Barnes considers it in minute detail. His consideration of the picture is set against the established story that precedes it. Fanthorpe simply assumes a knowledge of the basic story.

Question two:

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.

Objectives tested: AO1, AO4, AO5

Possible content:

Expect candidates to pick out some of the salient ideas about genre from the two passages, eg.

- Fictional history
- Significance of ‘A History...’ and of ‘10½ Chapters’
- The idea of not writing ‘proper novels’
- Short stories
- No characters and plot
- How many novels are purely fictional?
- How many non-fiction works are partly fictional?
- Barnes’s own view: novel as ‘broad and generous enclosing form’
- No reason why it shouldn’t ‘break what supposed rules there are’.

They may address a few of these in detail. The grey area between fiction and non-fiction a likely choice. A lot of relevant material here eg. the ‘historical’ and yet ‘fictional’ account of the events of the sinking of the *Medusa*. Comparisons with other art forms as with painting here, all of which are constructs that mimic truth without being representational.

May give a definition of what they see the novel genre as consisting of. Examples of other types of novel that have similarities to Barnes’s eg. historical novels.

Relevance of arguing that they cannot comment on ‘the broad and generous enclosing form’ because they only have a small part of the novel. However, might write about structure of novels and compare the tightly knit structure of this part of the novel with traditional novel form.

Possible reference to characters. This part of the novel has no developed characters. A shadowy Gericault is as close as we get to that. Events used merely to underpin a philosophical viewpoint but that is not unknown in the novel. May argue that the point of a novel is to reveal ‘truths’ about the world and that Barnes argues the whole question of ‘What is truth?’ Arguable fictional ‘truth’ is more reliable than the supposedly objective ‘truth’ of history.

Question three:

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?

Objectives tested: AO1, AO4

Possible content:

Critical ideas:

- Episode brings together many of the themes and motifs
- The account is 'dispassionate' but 'carefully shaped'
- Barnes attempts to turn historical disaster into meaningful fictional shape
- How and why he does this
- Importance of effect of techniques on us as readers
- 'Catastrophe has become art: that is, after all, what it is for.'
- Similarity between artist and historian.

Candidates may argue difficult to comment on some of these just from the given extracts, but they may refer to them simply to make that point.

A number of them are relevant to the given passage. 'How far you agree' gives a vast range of possibilities. Important point that candidates engage with the ideas, write them in such a way as to show their understanding and relate them to the given text. The aspects most likely to be dealt with effectively are:

- how far account objective: may show by reference to language use
- how far account is shaped: may show by structure or by reference to Barnes's perspective
- what Barnes hopes to achieve and whether he does so here: perhaps along lines of making something disastrous and factual into something meaningful and fictional but at the same time with a different 'truth'
- debate about artist and historian: perspectives are always biased; how Barnes shows this in relation to novelist, artist and historian.

Question four:

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.

Objectives tested: AO1, AO4, AO5

Possible content:

Very much dependent on the individual candidate as to what kind of response is made. However, certain possibilities:

- whichever genre is dealt with there needs to be sufficient to show awareness of what makes that particular genre distinctive
- may deal with one, two or more genres. The question is not dogmatic about how many genres are required. Excellent illustration of one will be acceptable. May deal with genres and sub-genres
- need to be some specific references to chosen texts to illustrate aspects of genre
- need to respond to ‘helpful’. Possibility of a few responses which are completely negative. Likelihood that they will penalise themselves but we need to be able to appreciate honest negative comment.

Brief final answers must be seen in the context of the whole answer. Don’t be tempted to make automatic or specific deductions.

Marks	Skills descriptors	Marks	Content descriptors
0-12 Band 1	<p>AO1 technical weakness which impedes the communication of meaning</p> <p>AO2ii often irrelevant, frequent inaccuracies/misreadings</p> <p>AO2ii little comparison</p> <p>AO3 few (if any) formal/structural/language features identified</p> <p>AO3 very limited (if any) discussion of how language shapes meaning</p> <p>AO4 often irrelevant; little understanding of critical ideas</p> <p>AO4 limited personal response based upon slender evidence/ misreading</p> <p>AO5 very limited (if any) grasp of what constitutes context</p>	0-25	<p>basic understanding of the two extracts</p> <p>passages may well be dealt with separately, with few connecting comparisons</p> <p>a few content points</p> <p>a few general comments on situations and language</p> <p>isolated or unlinked points</p>
13-25 Band 2	<p>AO1 some use of a limited critical vocabulary despite technical weakness</p> <p>AO2ii some focus on the task with general support</p> <p>AO2ii some attempt to compare</p> <p>AO3 recognition of some features of form/structure/language</p> <p>AO3 some awareness of how form/structure/language shape meaning</p> <p>AO4 reference to critical ideas</p> <p>AO4 some evidence of individual response with some support</p> <p>AO5 some consideration of relevant contextual factors</p>		

Marks	Skills descriptors	Marks	Content descriptors
26-38 Band 3	<p>AO1 accurate use of a limited critical vocabulary</p> <p>AO2ii awareness of task in most of the response</p> <p>AO2ii some useful comparison</p> <p>AO3 consideration of some features of form/structure/language</p> <p>AO3 awareness of writers' techniques and their effect on meaning</p> <p>AO4 some consideration of critical ideas</p> <p>AO4 some evidence of an individual response</p> <p>AO5 consideration of some relevant contextual factors</p>	26-51	<p>clear understanding of situations and relationships</p> <p>some clear points of comparison/contrast, illustrated by reference to parallel details from passages</p> <p>contrasts shown by attention to structure and details of language</p>
39-51 Band 4	<p>AO1 appropriate critical vocabulary used</p> <p>AO2ii evidence of knowledge and clear understanding of texts/task</p> <p>AO2ii clear comparisons</p> <p>AO3 recognition of techniques and features of form/structure/language</p> <p>AO3 considers links between purposes/means in choices of form/structure/language</p> <p>AO4 consideration of critical ideas</p> <p>AO4 evidence of an individual response</p> <p>AO5 examines relevant contexts</p>		<p>understanding of genre differences shown by reference to eg differences of form, role of description, different length, scope</p>

Marks	Skills descriptors	Marks	Content descriptors
52-64 Band 5	<p>AO1 critical terminology used accurately in detailed commentary</p> <p>AO2ii detailed critical response to both texts and task</p> <p>AO2ii thorough and detailed comparison</p> <p>AO3 explanation of range of aspects of form/structure/language</p> <p>AO3 understanding of how choices of form/structure/language shape meanings</p> <p>AO4 clear evidence of critical ideas</p> <p>AO4 personal response sensitive and well evidenced</p> <p>AO5 detailed exploration of contexts</p>	52-80	<p>comparison/contrast freely moving between the passages</p> <p>systematic and thorough response, including much of the material in the possible content outline</p> <p>clear overview of differences</p>
65-80 Band 6	<p>AO1 accurate use of appropriate critical vocabulary/concepts</p> <p>AO2ii clear conceptual grasp of issues raised by texts and task</p> <p>AO2ii perceptive comparison</p> <p>AO3 sophisticated analysis of how form/structure/language shape meanings</p> <p>AO3 conceptually and analytically links means/purposes</p> <p>AO4 clear conceptual grasp of critical ideas</p> <p>AO4 perceptive and evidenced personal response</p> <p>AO5 analysis of a range of contextual factors</p>		