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Tasks

RED:

- a. Read all the extracts
- b. Choose TWO extracts and answer the questions that follow.
- c. Choose ONE to write an argumentative response to (see pages 1 and 18 for questions/instructions). Aim for 500-600 words.
- d. Listen to / watch at least TWO podcasts/audiobooks/videos from the list in the pack and write a personal reflection or review

AMBER:

- a. Write ONE short essay of 500-600 words, by choosing either one extract to analyse or two extracts to comparatively analyse:
 - i. *Write a close critical appreciation of one extract of your choice*
 - ii. *Compare and contrast two extracts of your choice*
- b. Listen to / watch a further two podcasts/audiobooks/videos and write a second personal reflection or review.

GREEN:

- a. Listen to / watch most (or even all) of the suggested podcasts/audiobooks/videos on the list.
- b. Read one of the novels we suggest in the reading list at the end of this pack and create your own podcast about it. Be ready to talk about it at the start of next year.

‘Villains...’

Argumentative Writing Task

If you choose to write on one of these extracts, use this question along with these prompts.

Which of these ‘villains’ do you find most engaging and why?

Who do you identify with (!) or sympathise with?

Which character seems most ‘extreme’ or ‘gruesome’ or ‘grotesque’?

Is your character a true villain - are they ‘evil’? If so, how and why?

Are they just a complicated character with certain traits we dislike - more of an ‘antihero’ or an ‘antagonist’?

To what extent *is* your chosen character a villain? 100% villain or is it more complicated?

How does the writer present the villain? What are they like? What do they look like?

1. Iago - From Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603)

Iago is the servant of Othello, a 'Moor' from Venice who has just been rewarded for his victory in battle with a promotion to 'General' in the Venetian Army (in Shakespeare's day, 'Moor' could refer to anyone with dark skin, usually an African). Iago is jealous and plans revenge on his master. In this extract, he tells Roderigo, a Gentleman from Venice, how he will achieve this revenge. First, he will discredit Othello's wife Desdemona, saying that she cannot really love Othello, and will easily be persuaded to sleep with another man. Roderigo says he 'cannot believe that in her', and that is when Iago really goes to work...

RODERIGO I cannot believe that in her. She's full of most blessed condition.

IAGO Blessed fig's end! The wine she drinks is made of grapes. If she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? Didst not mark that?

RODERIGO Yes, that I did. But that was but courtesy.

IAGO Lechery, by this hand! An index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together. Villainous thoughts, Roderigo! When these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, th' incorporate conclusion. Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me. I have brought you from Venice. Watch you tonight. For the command, I'll lay 't upon you. Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you. Do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline, or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favorably minister.

RODERIGO Well.

IAGO Sir, he's rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you. Provoke him that he may, for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny, whose qualification shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires By the means I shall then have to prefer them, and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

RODERIGO I will do this, if you can bring it to any opportunity.

IAGO I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel. I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

RODERIGO Adieu. [*He exits.*]

IAGO That Cassio loves her, I do well believe 't.
That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit.
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too,
Not out of absolute lust (though peradventure
I stand accountant for as great a sin)
But partly led to diet my revenge
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor
Hath leaped into my seat—the thought whereof
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards,
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till I am evened with him, wife for wife,
Or, failing so, yet that I put the Moor
At least into a jealousy so strong
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trace
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb
(For I fear Cassio with my nightcap too),
Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me
For making him egregiously an ass
And practicing upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness.

Lechery - excessively lustful or sexual behaviour

Mutualities - similar feelings

Incorporate - include

Impediment - obstacle

Choler - anger

Citadel - fortress

Peradventure - translates roughly to 'perhaps'

Garb - clothes

Egregiously - in an embarrassing or extreme way

Questions

1. How does Iago try to persuade Roderigo that Desdemona is full of 'lust and foul thoughts'? Give at least two examples.
2. Some critics have argued what makes Iago evil is that his motives for revenge upon Othello are so unclear. What does he say about this in his soliloquy? What do you think?

2. Satan - From Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667)

Lucifer ('bearer of light') was the brightest Angel in Heaven until he became too ambitious and rebelled against God. Defeated, he was thrown down by God into Hell, where he takes his new name, Satan ('enemy'). This extract is from John Milton's epic poem Paradise Lost, which tells the story of two 'Falls': the fall of Satan, and the fall of mankind in Eden, when Eve is tricked by Satan to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Here, Milton's narrator describes Satan's arrival in Eden (1), before Satan himself describes, in a soliloquy (2), his memories of his own fall, his feelings of grief, isolation and rage, and his resolution to take revenge on God by tainting his new creation - Mankind.

1. ...Now conscience wakes despair,
That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad;
Sometimes towards Heaven, and the full-blazing sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower:
Then, much revolving, thus in sighs began.

2. Oh thou, that, with surpassing glory crowned,
Lookest from thy sole dominion like the God
Of this new world; at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
Of Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere;
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down
Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King:
...Me miserable, which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
And, in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
Oh, then, at last relent: Is there no place

Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
Under what torments inwardly I groan,
While they adore me on the throne of Hell.
With diadem and scepter high advanced,
The lower still I fall, only supreme
In misery: Such joy ambition finds.
But say I could repent, and could obtain,
By act of grace, my former state; how soon
Would heighth recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore? Ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.
For never can true reconcilment grow,
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep:
Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
And heavier fall: so should I purchase dear
Short intermission bought with double smart.
This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
From granting he, as I from begging, peace;
All hope excluded thus, behold, in stead
Mankind created, and for him this world.
So farewell, hope; and with hope farewell, fear;
Farewell, remorse, all good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my good; by thee at least
Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;
As man ere long, and this new world, shall know.

Question

1. **At the end of his speech, Satan states that all hope is gone for him: all he can do now is take pleasure in evil and destruction: 'Evil, be thou my good.'** How do you feel about this? Is this evidence of his evil, or can you see some kind of logic in what he says? Use the imagery of the passage to support your answer.

3. Dr Frankenstein from *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley (1817)

Dr Frankenstein is the scientist who, in Mary Shelley's Gothic story, creates a monster by passing electricity through a corpse made up from sewn-together body parts. He is a different kind of villain to Iago and Satan: he feels fear and remorse, which may - or may not! - make him more sympathetic. In this extract, Frankenstein tells the tale of the night when the monster comes to life. Seeing at once how terrible and unnatural his act of creation is, he escapes to his bedroom, but is pursued by nightmares. When he wakes, the monster is standing by his bed...

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude

succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Convulsive - producing violent coughs or jerks

Delineate - outline

Complexion - facial expression and colour

Ardour - passionate desire

Ingolstadt - town in Switzerland where Frankenstein lives

Shroud - a sheet or covering used for human burial

Questions

1. **Look at the imagery Frankenstein uses to present his experiences. Select 2-3 examples and say what the impact of this imagery is on you.**
2. **Do you feel sympathy for Frankenstein, or is it all his own fault? Use evidence to support what you say.**

4. Count Dracula, from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)

In this extract from Bram Stoker's classic Gothic novel, the narrator Jonathan Harker has travelled to Transylvania to arrange the sale of a house in England to Count Dracula. Despite the warnings of the local people, who know Dracula is evil, Harker proceeds to Castle Dracula, where he realises - too late - that he is not a guest but a prisoner. During his imprisonment, Harker tries to work out what Dracula is planning: in this extract, he climbs out of a window to access the Count's room, a place he has been once before, and finds him 'sleeping' in a coffin...

Then a wild desire took me to obtain that key at any risk, and I determined then and there to scale the wall again and gain the Count's room. He might kill me, but death now seemed the happier choice of evils. Without a pause I rushed up to the east window, and scrambled down the wall, as before, into the Count's room. It was empty, but that was as I expected. I could not see a key anywhere, but the heap of gold remained. I went through the door in the corner and down the winding stair and along the dark passage to the old chapel. I knew now well enough where to find the monster I sought.

The great box was in the same place, close against the wall, but the lid was laid on it, not fastened down, but with the nails ready in their places to be hammered home. I knew I must reach the body for the key, so I raised the lid, and laid it back against the wall; and then I saw something which filled my very soul with horror. There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath; the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck. Even the deep, burning eyes seemed set amongst swollen flesh, for the lids and pouches underneath were bloated. It seemed as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood. He lay like a filthy leech, exhausted with his repletion. I shuddered as I bent over to touch him, and every sense in me revolted at the contact; but I had to search, or I was lost. The coming night might see my own body a banquet in a similar way to those horrid three. I felt all over the body, but no sign could I find of the key. Then I stopped and looked at the Count. There was a mocking smile on the bloated face which seemed to drive me mad. This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps, for centuries to come he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to

batten on the helpless. The very thought drove me mad. A terrible desire came upon me to rid the world of such a monster. There was no lethal weapon at hand, but I seized a shovel which the workmen had been using to fill the cases, and lifting it high, struck, with the edge downward, at the hateful face. But as I did so the head turned, and the eyes fell full upon me, with all their blaze of basilisk horror. The sight seemed to paralyse me, and the shovel turned in my hand and glanced from the face, merely making a deep gash above the forehead. The shovel fell from my hand across the box, and as I pulled it away the flange of the blade caught the edge of the lid which fell over again, and hid the horrid thing from my sight. The last glimpse I had was of the bloated face, blood-stained and fixed with a grin of malice which would have held its own in the nethermost hell.

Repletion - fullness

Nethermost - lowest

Questions

1. **Look at the imagery Harker uses to describe Dracula. Select 2-3 examples and say what the impact of this imagery is on you.**
2. **How do you feel about Harker's attempt to kill Dracula? Is he courageous, or are you frustrated that he failed? Why does he fail? Use evidence to support what you say.**

5. Jay Gatsby, from *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald (1925)

In many ways, Jay Gatsby (whose real name is James Gatz) might not be considered a 'villain' at all. The novel tells of Gatsby's rise and fall through the narrator Nick Carraway, who meets Gatsby at one of the lavish parties at Gatsby's mansion. There are many rumours about Gatsby - some think he's one of the richest men in America, others say he's a liar, a criminal, and a fraud. In this extract, Nick describes a ride in Gatsby's expensive car, as Gatsby tells Nick the 'truth' about his past. But the story doesn't sound quite right...

And then came that disconcerting ride. We hadn't reached West Egg village before Gatsby began leaving his elegant sentences unfinished and slapping himself indecisively on the knee of his caramel-colored suit.

'Look here, old sport,' he broke out surprisingly. 'What's your opinion of me, anyhow?'

A little overwhelmed, I began the generalized evasions which that question deserves.

'Well, I'm going to tell you something about my life,' he interrupted. 'I don't want you to get a wrong idea of me from all these stories you hear.'

So he was aware of the bizarre accusations that flavored conversation in his halls.

'I'll tell you God's truth.' His right hand suddenly ordered divine retribution to stand by. 'I am the son of some wealthy people in the middle-west—all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition.'

He looked at me sideways—and I knew why Jordan Baker had believed he was lying. He hurried the phrase 'educated at Oxford,' or swallowed it or choked on it as though it had bothered him before. And with this doubt his whole statement fell to pieces and I wondered if there wasn't something a little sinister about him after all.

'What part of the middle-west?' I inquired casually.

'San Francisco.'

'I see.'

'My family all died and I came into a good deal of money.' His voice was solemn as if the memory of that sudden extinction of a clan still haunted him. For a moment I suspected that he was pulling my leg but a glance at him convinced me otherwise. 'After that I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe—Paris, Venice, Rome—collecting jewels, chiefly rubies, hunting big game, painting a little, things for myself only, and trying to forget something very sad that had happened to me long ago.'

With an effort I managed to restrain my incredulous laughter. The very phrases were worn so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned 'character' leaking sawdust at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne.

Disconcerting - uncomfortable and alarming

Divine retribution - God's justice

Middle-west - the 'midwestern states of the US - Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin

Rajah - Indian prince or king

Big game - lions, tigers, elephant, etc

Incredulous - disbelieving

Threadbare - thin

Questions

1. Why do you think Nick finds the car journey so 'disconcerting'? Can you spot any problems in Gatsby's story of his own life?
2. How do you feel about Gatsby in this passage? Is he a 'sinister' as Nick puts it? If so, why?

6. Cathy Ames, from *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck (1952)

Set in the rich farmland of California's Salinas Valley, this sprawling and often brutal novel by Steinbeck follows the intertwined destinies of two families—the Trasks and the Hamiltons—whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel. In this extract, we meet one of the main protagonists, Cathy Ames, who marries Adam Trask. Beneath her charming, attractive facade, she is manipulative. Here, Steinbeck's narrator describes her in detail...

There was a time when a girl like Cathy would have been called possessed by the devil. She would have been exorcised to cast out the evil spirit, and if after many trials that did not work, she would have been burned as a witch for the good of the community. The one thing that may not be forgiven a witch is her ability to distress people, to make them restless and uneasy and even envious. As though nature concealed a trap, Cathy had from the first a face of innocence. Her hair was gold and lovely; wide-set hazel eyes with upper lids that drooped made her look mysteriously sleepy. Her nose was delicate and thin, and her cheekbones high and wide, sweeping down to a small chin so that her face was heart-shaped. Her mouth was well shaped and well lipped but abnormally small—what used to be called a rosebud. Her ears were very little, without lobes, and they pressed so close to her head that even with her hair combed up they made no silhouette. They were thin flaps sealed against her head. Cathy always had a child's figure even after she was grown, slender, delicate arms and hands—tiny hands.

She was a pretty child and she became a pretty woman. Her voice was huskily soft, and it could be so sweet as to be irresistible. But there must have been some steel cord in her throat, for Cathy's voice could cut like a file when she wished. Even as a child she had some quality that made people look at her, then look away, then look back at her, troubled at something foreign. Something looked out of her eyes, and was never there when one looked again. She moved quietly and talked little, but she could enter no room without causing everyone to turn toward her. She made people uneasy but not so that they wanted to go away from her. Men and women wanted to inspect her, to be close to her, to try to find what caused the disturbance she distributed so subtly. And since this had always been so, Cathy did not find it strange.

Cathy was a liar, but she did not lie the way most children do. Hers was no daydream lying, when the thing imagined is told and, to make it seem more real, told as real. That

is just ordinary deviation from external reality. I think the difference between a lie and a story is that a story utilizes the trappings and appearance of truth for the interest of the listener as well as of the teller. A story has in it neither gain nor loss. But a lie is a device for profit or escape. I suppose if that definition is strictly held to, then a writer of stories is a liar—if he is financially fortunate. Cathy's lies were never innocent. Their purpose was to escape punishment, or work, or responsibility, and they were used for profit.

Question

- 1. How do you feel about Cathy Ames? Does she seem 'evil' to you? Why/why not? Do you feel as if the narrator is trying too hard to persuade us that she is? Use evidence to support your ideas.**

7. Nurse Ratched, from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey (1962)

Nurse Ratched is the 'Big Nurse' in charge of the psychiatric ward at the hospital in Ken Kesey's novel One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest. The story is narrated by one of the patients, Chief Bromden: in this extract he overhears Nurse Ratched talking to a more junior nurse about a new patient, MacMurphy. Though she is not obviously 'evil' like Iago, Satan or Dracula, her love of control - and the very 'pointed' imagery of the needles! - suggests a sinister kind of cruelty...

One of the little nurses, a girl with one wandering eye that always keeps looking worried over her shoulder while the other one goes about its usual business, picks up the little tray of filled needles but doesn't carry them away just yet.

"What, Miss Ratched, is your opinion of this new patient? I mean, gee, he's good-looking and friendly and everything, but in my humble opinion he certainly takes over."

The Big Nurse tests a needle against her fingertip. "I'm afraid" she stabs the needle down in the rubber-capped vial and lifts the plunger - "that is exactly what the new patient is planning: to take over. He is what we call a 'manipulator,' Miss Flinn, a man who will use everyone and everything to his own ends."

"Oh. But. I mean, in a mental hospital? What could his ends be?"

"Any number of things." She's calm, smiling, lost in the work of loading the needles.

"Comfort and an easy life, for instance; the feeling of power and respect, perhaps; monetary gain - perhaps all of these things. Sometimes a manipulator's own ends are simply the actual disruption of the ward for the sake of disruption. There are such people in our society. A manipulator can influence the other patients and disrupt them to such an extent that it may take months to get everything running smooth once more. With the present permissive philosophy in mental hospitals, it's easy for them to get away with it. Some years back it was quite different. I recall some years back we had a man, a Mr. Taber, on the ward, and he was an intolerable Ward Manipulator. For a

while." She looks up from her work, needle half filled in front of her face like a little wand. Her eyes get far-off and pleased with the memory. "Mistur Tay-bur," she says.

“But, gee,” the other nurse says, “what on earth would make a man want to do something like disrupt the ward for, Miss Ratched? What possible motive ...?”

She cuts the little nurse off by jabbing the needle back into the vial’s rubber top, fills it, jerks it out, and lays it on the tray. I watch her hand reach for another empty needle, watch it dart out, hinge over it, drop.

“You seem to forget, Miss Flinn, that this is an institution for the insane.”

The Big Nurse tends to get real put out if something keeps her outfit from running like a smooth, accurate, precision-made machine. The slightest thing messy or out of kilter or in the way ties her into a little white knot of tight-smiled fury. She walks around with that same doll smile crimped between her chin and her nose and that same calm whir coming from her eyes, but down inside of her she’s tense as steel. I know, I can feel it. And she don’t relax a hair till she gets the nuisance attended to - what she calls “adjusted to surroundings.” Under her rule the ward Inside is almost completely adjusted to surroundings.

Question

1. **What do you find most sinister about Nurse Ratched? Select evidence to support your ideas.**

8. Patrick Bateman, from *American Psycho* by Brett Easton Ellis (1991)

Patrick Bateman, the narrator and main character of American Psycho, is a well-dressed, extremely wealthy, super-fit Investment banker who works on Wall Street and lives in a cool Manhattan apartment. He's also a psychopath serial killer. In this extract, he has just been told there are no tables available at his favourite 'trendy' restaurant, Dorsia, for his date that night with Patricia...

Stunned, feverish, feeling empty, I contemplate the next move, the only sound the dial tone buzzing noisily from the receiver. Gather my bearings, count to six, reopen the Zagat guide and steadily regain my concentration against the almost overwhelming panic about securing an eight-thirty reservation somewhere if not as trendy as Dorsia then at least in the next-best league. I eventually get a reservation at Barcadia for two at nine, and that only because of a cancellation, and though Patricia will probably be disappointed she might actually like Barcadia - the tables are well spaced, the lighting is dim and flattering, the food Nouvelle Southwestern - and if she doesn't, what is the bitch going to do, sue me?

I worked out heavily at the gym after leaving the office today but the tension has returned, so I do ninety abdominal crunches, a hundred and fifty push-ups, and then I run in place for twenty minutes while listening to the new Huey Lewis CD. I take a hot shower and afterwards use a new facial scrub by Caswell-Massey and a body wash by Greune, then a body moisturizer by Lubriderm and a Neutrogena facial cream. I debate between two outfits. One is a wool-crepe suit by Bill Robinson I bought at Saks with this cotton jacquard shirt from Charivari and an Armani tie. Or a wool and cashmere sport coat with blue plaid a cotton shirt and pleated wool trousers by Alexander Julian, with a polka-dot silk tie by Bill Blass. The Julian might be a little too warm for May but if Patricia's wearing this outfit by Karl Lagerfeld that I think she's going to, then maybe I will go with the Julian, because it would go well with her suit. The shoes are crocodile loafers by A. Testoni.

A bottle of Scharffenberger is on ice in a Spiros spun-aluminum bowl which is in a Christine Van der Hurd etched-glass champagne cooler which sits on a Cristofle silver-plated bar tray. The Scharffenberger isn't bad - it's not Cristal, but why waste Cristal on this bimbo? She probably wouldn't be able to tell the difference anyway. I

have a glass of it while waiting for her, occasionally rearranging the Steuben animals on the glasstop coffee table by Turchin, or sometimes I flip through the last hardcover book I bought, something by Garrison Keillor. Patricia is late.

While waiting on the couch in the living room, the Wurlitzer jukebox playing "Cherish" by the Lovin Spoonful, I come to the conclusion that Patricia is safe tonight, that I am not going to unexpectedly pull a knife out and use it on her just for the sake of doing so, that I am not going to get any pleasure watching her bleed from slits I've made by cutting her throat or slicing her neck open or gouging her eyes out. She's lucky, even though there is no real reasoning behind the luck. It could be that she's safe because her wealth, her family's wealth, protects her tonight, or it could be that it's simply my choice. Maybe the glass of Scharffenberger has deadened my impulse or maybe it's simply that I don't want to ruin this particular Alexander Julian suit by having the bitch spray her blood all over it. Whatever happens, the useless fact remains: Patricia will stay alive, and this victory requires no skill, no leaps of the imagination, no ingenuity on anyone's part. This is simply how the world, my world, moves.

Zagat guide - guidebook to exclusive restaurants
Scharffenberger - sparkling wine

Questions

1. **What is the most shocking thing about this passage, or about the character of Patrick Bateman, in your view?**
2. **One more subtle way Easton-Ellis shows us Bateman is not right in the head is his obsession with brands and material things. Select and analyse two examples of this from the passage.**

‘Places...’

Argumentative Writing

If you choose to write on one of these extracts, use this question along with these prompts.

Which of these ‘places’ do you find most intriguing and why?

How ‘realistic’ (or unrealistic) is this place?

How do the characters feel about their surroundings? What do they say, and what do they do?

How is the place described? Look closely at the words and images used. Is there a key image or motif that ‘defines’ the mood of the place?

1. *Native Son* by Richard Wright (1940)

In this novel by Richard Wright, a black family living in utter poverty on Chicago's South Side in the 1930s have just killed a rat in their apartment. In this extract, the 'native son' and main protagonist, Bigger Thomas, has a difficult conversation with his mother...

Buddy opened out a newspaper and covered the smear of blood on the floor where the rat had been crushed. Bigger went to the window and stood looking out abstractedly into the street.

His mother glared at his back. "Bigger, sometimes I wonder why I birthed you," she said bitterly.

Bigger looked at her and turned away. "Maybe you oughtn't've. Maybe you ought to left me where I was."

"You shut your sassy mouth! We wouldn't have to live in this garbage dump if you had any manhood in you," she said.

"Aw, don't start that again."

"How you feel, Vera?" the mother asked.

Vera raised her head and looked about the room as though expecting to see another rat.

"Oh, Mama!"

"You poor thing!"

"I couldn't help it. Bigger scared me."

"Did you hurt yourself?"

"I bumped my head."

"Here; take it easy. You'll be all right."

"How come Bigger acts that way?" Vera asked, crying again.

"He's just crazy," the mother said. "Just plain dumb black crazy."

"I'll be late for my sewing class at the Y.W.C.A.," Vera said.

“Here; stretch out on the bed. You’ll feel better in a little while,” the mother said.

She left Vera on the bed and turned a pair of cold eyes upon Bigger.

“Suppose you wake up some morning and find your sister dead? What would you think then?” she asked. “Suppose those rats cut our veins at night when we sleep? Naw! Nothing like that ever bothers you! All you care about is your own pleasure! Even when the relief offers you a job you won’t take it till they threaten to cut off your food and starve you! Bigger, honest, you the most no-countest man I ever seen in all my life!”

“You done told me that a thousand times,” he said, not looking round.

“Well, I’m telling you agin! And mark my word, some of these days you going to set down and cry. Some of these days you going to wish you had made something out of yourself, instead of just a tramp. But it’ll be too late then.”

“Stop prophesying about me,” he said.

“I prophesy much as I please! And if you don’t like it, you can get out. We can get along without you. We can live in one room just like we living now, even with you gone,” she said.

“Aw, for Chrissakes!” he said, his voice filled with nervous irritation.

“You’ll regret how you living some day,” she went on. “If you don’t stop running with that gang of yours and do right you’ll end up where you never thought you would. You think I don’t know what you boys is doing, but I do. And the gallows is at the end of the road you traveling, boy. Just remember that.” She turned and looked at Buddy. “Throw that box outside, Buddy.”

“Yessum.”

There was silence. Buddy took the box out. The mother went behind the curtain to the gas stove. Vera sat up in bed and swung her feet to the floor.

“Lay back down, Vera,” the mother said.

“I feel all right now, Ma. I got to go to my sewing class.”

“Well, if you feel like it, set the table,” the mother said, going behind the curtain again.

“Lord, I get so tired of this I don’t know what to do,” her voice floated plaintively from behind the curtain.

Vera went behind the curtain and Bigger heard her trying to comfort his mother. He shut their voices out of his mind. He hated his family because he knew that they were suffering and that he was powerless to help them. He knew that the moment he allowed himself to feel to its fulness how they lived, the shame and misery of their lives, he would be swept out of himself with fear and despair. So he held toward them an attitude of iron reserve; he lived with them, but behind a wall, a curtain. And toward himself he was even more exacting. He knew that the moment he allowed what his life meant to enter fully into his consciousness, he would either kill himself or someone else. So he denied himself and acted tough.

Abstractedly - vaguely; without focusing

Questions

- 1. The curtain in the apartment is an important symbol. What do you think is important about this symbol? What does it show about this place, and about the family's situation?**
- 2. How do you feel about Bigger Thomas? Do you sympathise with his feelings of anger and despair, or do you feel that he should try to change how he reacts to his situation?**

2. *The Chrysalids* by John Wyndham (1955)

After The Day of the Triffids (1951), Wyndham returned to the theme of a technological cataclysm destroying civilisation. In The Chrysalids, Wyndham brought his writer's imagination to bear on thinking the unthinkable: the aftermath of a nuclear war which has almost wiped out life on Earth. The Chrysalids is set in the far future, a thousand or so years after a nuclear holocaust. By the time described in the novel, the mutations in some species have begun to settle down. Human beings have a fifty percent chance of breeding the "true image" of a human being, that is, a human being that looks like one as we know it. Here the narrator's Uncle Axel explains what the world is like beyond their immediate surroundings...

So you'll keep it to yourself?'

I assured him I would. 'All right. Well, it's this way —' he began.

To reach the rest of the world (my Uncle Axel explained) you start by sailing down river from Rigo until you get to the sea. They say that it's no good sailing on straight ahead, to the east, that is, because either the sea goes on for ever, or else it comes to an end suddenly, and you sail over the edge. Nobody knows for sure. If you make north and keep along the coast, and still keep along when it turns west and then south, you reach the other side of Labrador. Or, if you keep straight on northwards, you come to colder parts where there are a great many islands with not much living on them except birds and sea-creatures.

To the north-east they say there is a great land where the plants aren't very deviational, and the animals and people don't look deviational, but the women are very tall and strong. They rule the country entirely, and do all the work. They keep their men in cages until they are about twenty-four years old, and then eat them. They also eat shipwrecked sailors. But as no one ever seems to have met anyone who has actually been there and escaped, it's difficult to see how that can be known. Still, there it is — no one has ever come back denying it either. The only way I know is south — I've been south three times. To get there you keep the coast to starboard as you leave the river. After a couple of hundred miles or so you come to the Straits of Newf. As the Straits widen out you keep the coast of Newf to port and call in at Lark for fresh water — and provisions, too, if the Newf people will let you have any. After that you bear south-east awhile and then south, and pick up the mainland coast again to starboard. When you

reach it you find it is Badlands — or at least very bad Fringes. There's plenty growing there, but sailing close inshore you can see that nearly all of it is deviational.

There are animals, too, and most of them look as if it'd be difficult to classify them as Offences against any known kinds. A day or two's sail farther on there's plenty of Badlands coast-line, with no doubt about it. Soon you're following round a big bay, and you get to where there are no gaps: it's all Badlands. When sailors first saw those parts they were pretty scared. They felt they were leaving all Purity behind, and sailing farther and farther away from God, where He'd not be able to help them. Everybody knows that if you walk on Badlands you die, and they'd none of them expected ever to see them so close with their own eyes. But what worried them most — and worried the people they talked to when they got back — was to see how the things which are against God's laws of nature flourish there, just as if they had a right to. And a shocking sight it must have been at first, too. You can see giant, distorted heads of corn growing higher than small trees; big saprophytes growing on rocks, with their roots trail-ing out on the wind like bunches of hair, fathoms long; in some places there are fungus colonies that you'd take at first sight for big white boulders; you can see succulents like barrels, but as big as small houses, and with spines ten feet long. There are plants which grow on the cliff-tops and send thick, green cables down a hundred feet and more into the sea; and you wonder whether it's a land plant that's got to the salt water, or a sea plant that's somehow climbed ashore. There are hundreds of kinds of queer things, and scarcely a normal one among them — it's a kind of jungle of Deviations, going on for miles and miles.

Deviational - not normal or standard; deformed

Saprophyte - a plant, fungus, or microorganism that lives on dead or decaying organic matter

Questions

1. **Analyse the style of Axel's description beginning, "And a shocking sight it must have been at first...if it weren't for the Purity Laws and the inspectors." What stylistic techniques does Wyndham use to create the picture for the reader?**
2. **Some readers think dystopian novels are ridiculous. Are there any features of the extract which could be considered ridiculous here, do you think? Give reasons for your answer.**

3. *Empire of the Sun* – J.G. Ballard (1984)

After the attack on Pearl Harbour during World War Two, Japanese troops invade Shanghai and in the chaos Jim, a British schoolboy living in the city, is separated from his mother and father. He returns to his home and waits for his parents to return. In this extract he describes a visit to the house of his school friends...

Trying to keep up his spirits, Jim decided to visit the homes of his closest friends, Patrick Maxted and the Raymond twins. After washing himself in soda water he went into the garden to fetch his bicycle. During the night the swimming-pool had drained itself. Jim had never seen the tank empty, and he gazed with interest at the inclined floor. The once mysterious world of wavering blue lines, glimpsed through a cascade of bubbles, now lay exposed to the morning light. The tiles were slippery with leaves and dirt, and the chromium ladder at the deep end, which had once vanished into a watery abyss, ended abruptly beside a pair of scummy rubber slippers.

Jim jumped on to the floor at the shallow end. He slipped on the damp surface, and his bruised knee left a smear of blood on the tiles. A fly settled on it instantly. Watching his feet, Jim walked down the sloping floor. Around the brass vent at the deep end lay a small museum of past summers – a pair of his mother’s sun-glasses, Vera’s hair clip, a wine glass, and an English half-crown which his father had tossed into the pool for him. Jim had often spotted the silver coin, gleaming like an oyster, but had never been able to reach it.

Jim pocketed the coin and peered up at the damp walls. There was something sinister about a drained swimming-pool, and he tried to imagine what purpose it could have if it were not filled with water. It reminded him of the concrete bunkers in Tsingtao, and the bloody handprint of the maddened German gunners on the caisson walls.

Perhaps murder was about to be committed in all the swimming-pools of Shanghai, and their walls were tiled so that the blood could be washed away?

Leaving the garden, Jim wheeled his bicycle through the verandah door. Then he did something he had always longed to do, mounted his cycle and rode through the formal, empty rooms.

Delighted to think how shocked Vera and the servants would have been, he expertly circled his father's study, intrigued by the patterns which the tyres cut in the thick carpet. He collided with the desk, and knocked over a table lamp as he swerved through the door into the drawing-room. Standing on the pedals, he zigzagged among the armchairs and tables, lost his balance and fell onto a sofa, remounted without touching the floor, crash-landed into the double doors that led into the dining-room, pulled them back and began a wild circuit of the long polished table. The war had brought him at least one small bonus.

chromium: a hard grey metal

abyss: an endless pit

half-crown: a British coin that was used as currency until 1967

caisson: a large watertight chamber in which construction work may be carried out underwater

verandah: a raised, covered platform that runs along the outside of a house

Questions

1. **Look at the imagery Jim uses to present his experiences - the drained swimming pool, for example, or anything else. Select 2 examples and say what the impact of this imagery is on you.**
2. **What do you think has happened to Jim's parents? What do you think will happen to him? Use evidence from the passage to support your ideas.**

4. *The Children of Men* – P.D. James (1992)

Set in 2021, PD James novel imagines a world in which no human being has been able to give birth for 25 years and scientists still do not understand why. Here, the protagonist Theo meets a woman as he walks through the city of Oxford towards Magdalen College...

It happened on the fourth Wednesday in January. Walking to Magdalen as was his custom, he had turned from St. John Street into Beaumont Street and was nearing the entrance to the Ashmolean Museum when a woman approached him wheeling a pram.

The thin drizzle had stopped and as she drew alongside him she paused to fold back the mackintosh cover and push down the pram hood. The doll was revealed, propped upright against the cushions, the two arms, hands mittened, resting on the quilted coverlet, a parody of childhood, at once pathetic and sinister.

Shocked and repelled, Theo found that he couldn't keep his eyes off it. The glossy irises, unnaturally large, bluer than those of any human eye, a gleaming azure, seemed to fix on him their unseeing stare which yet horribly suggested a dormant intelligence, alien and monstrous. The eyelashes, dark brown, lay like spiders on the delicately tinted porcelain cheeks and an adult abundance of yellow crimped hair sprung from beneath the close-fitting lace-trimmed bonnet. It had been years since he had last seen a doll thus paraded, but they had been common twenty years ago, had indeed become something of a craze. Doll-making was the only section of the toy industry which, with the production of prams, had for a decade flourished; it had produced dolls for the whole range of frustrated maternal desire, some cheap and tawdry but some of remarkable craftsmanship and beauty.

A middle-aged woman in well-fitting tweeds, hair carefully groomed, came up to the pram, smiled at the doll's owner and began a congratulatory patter. The first woman, simpering with pleasure, leaned forward, smoothed the satin quilted pram cover, adjusted the bonnet, tucked in a stray lock of hair. The second tickled the doll beneath its chin as she might a cat, still murmuring her baby talk.

Theo, more depressed and disgusted by the charade than surely such harmless play-acting justified, was turning away when it happened. The second woman suddenly seized the doll, tore it from the coverings and, without a word, swung it twice round her head by the legs and dashed it against the stone wall with tremendous force. The face shattered and shards of porcelain fell tinkling to the pavement. The owner was for two seconds absolutely silent. And then she screamed. The sound was horrible, the scream of the tortured, the bereaved, a terrified, high-pitched squealing, inhuman yet all too human, unstoppable. She stood there, hat askew,

head thrown back to the heavens, her mouth stretched into a gape from which poured her agony, her grief, her anger. She seemed at first unaware that the attacker still stood there, watching her with silent contempt. Then the woman turned and walked briskly through the open gates, across the courtyard and into the Ashmolean.

Suddenly aware that the attacker had escaped, the doll-owner galumphed after her, still screaming, then, apparently realising the hopelessness of it, returned to the pram. She had grown quieter now and, sinking to her knees, began gathering up the broken pieces, sobbing and moaning gently, trying to match them as she might a jigsaw puzzle. Two gleaming eyes, horribly real, joined by a spring, rolled towards Theo. He had a second's impulse to pick them up, to help, to speak at least a few words of comfort. He could have pointed out that she could buy another child.

Magdalen - College at Oxford University

Parody - comic version of something

Tawdry - showy, but cheap and of poor quality

Galumphed - walking in an awkward, clumsy way

Questions

- 1. What, for you, is so alarming about this passage? Consider what happens, but also the imagery (eg dolls).**
- 2. This is the opening of the novel. "What sort of story do you expect this will be? What will be some of the key themes? Give reasons for your answer.**

5. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* - Mohsin Hamid (2007)

In this darkly comic thriller by Pakistani author Mohsin Hamid, published in 2007, the narrator Changez tells a nervous American stranger about his love affair with an American woman, and his eventual abandonment of America. The novel uses the technique of a frame story, which takes place during the course of a single evening in an outdoor Lahore café. Here, Changez describes the city of Lahore, ending by comparing it to New York...

WE LOCALS treasure these last days of what passes for spring here in Lahore; the sun, although hot, has such a soothing effect. Or, I should say, it has such a soothing effect on us, for you, sir, continue to appear ill at ease. I hope you will not mind my saying so, but the frequency and purposefulness with which you glance about—a steady tick-tick-tick seeming to beat in your head as you move your gaze from one point to the next—brings to mind the behavior of an animal that has ventured too far from its lair and is now, in unfamiliar surroundings, uncertain whether it is predator or prey!

Come, relinquish your foreigner's sense of being watched. Observe instead how the shadows have lengthened. Soon they will shut to traffic the gates at either end of this market, transforming Old Anarkali into a pedestrian-only piazza. In fact, they have begun. Will the police arrest those boys on their motor scooter? Only if they can catch them! And already they are streaking away, making good their escape. But they will be the last to do so. The gates are now being locked, as you can see, and those gaps that remain are too narrow for anything wider than a man.

You will have noticed that the newer districts of Lahore are poorly suited to the needs of those who must walk. In their spaciousness—with their public parks and wide, tree-lined boulevards—they enforce an ancient hierarchy that comes to us from the countryside: the superiority of the mounted man over the man on foot. But here, where we sit, and in the even older districts that lie between us and the River Ravi—the congested, mazelike heart of this city—Lahore is more democratically urban. Indeed, in these places it is the man with four wheels who is forced to dismount and become part of the crowd.

Like Manhattan? Yes, precisely! And that was one of the reasons why for me moving to New York felt—so unexpectedly—like coming home. But there were other reasons as well: the fact that Urdu was spoken by taxicab drivers; the presence, only two blocks from my East Village apartment, of a samosa- and channa-serving establishment called the Pak-Punjab Deli; the coincidence of crossing Fifth Avenue during a parade and hearing, from loudspeakers mounted on the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Association float, a song to which I had danced at my cousin's wedding.

In a subway car, my skin would typically fall in the middle of the color spectrum. On street corners, tourists would ask me for directions. I was, in four and a half years, never an American; I was immediately a New Yorker. What? My voice is rising? You are right; I tend to become sentimental when I think of that city. It still occupies a place of great fondness in my heart, which is quite something, I must say, given the circumstances under which, after only eight months of residence, I would later depart.

Old Anarkali – a major bazaar in Lahore, Pakistan, one of the oldest surviving markets in South Asia

Questions

1. How does Hamid use setting in this extract to give a sense of cultural differences between America and Pakistan?

2. *Many critics have described the style of this novel as ‘metafictional’, which means that it is not only a story about Changez and his life, but also a story ‘about’ how and why we tell stories.*

Can you find any examples of this in the extract? Is there anything strange or threatening about this narrator? Does his way of telling his story raise any questions that you would like answered?

Audio and Video Material

The first collection of Podcasts on this list are from the BBC's 'In Our Time' series in which university professors discuss literary figures and their texts. All the podcasts below relate to texts that you might study at LAET. The next selection of podcasts examine contemporary writers and issues. I'd advise listening to some podcasts from each section. Don't worry about this division, you will also study some contemporary texts during your A Level course!

Podcasts about books from your course

A fiery podcast in which Melvyn Bragg discusses the enduring popular and academic appeal of Shakespeare and examines whether literary criticism and the academic institution ruins the pleasure of reading.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00545dp>

Melvyn Bragg discusses Oscar Wilde, the Aesthetes and his literary legacy. Was Wilde a reactionary - the last of the romantics - or was he the midwife to modernism?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547m3>

Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss Mary Shelley's story of Victor Frankenstein and the creature he makes from cadavers and then rejects - only for the monster to take his revenge.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00051n6>

Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the inspiration for Shakespeare's Hamlet, the play's context and meaning, and why it has fascinated audiences from its first performance.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09jqtf5>

Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss Emily Bronte's story of Heathcliff and Cathy, of love, hatred, revenge and self-destruction across two generations in a remote moorland home.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b095ptt5>

Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte, first published in 1847.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05y11v8>

Melvyn Bragg discusses whether the work of William Shakespeare is 'not of an age but for all time' or increasingly irrelevant museum pieces embalmed in out of reach language.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546s8>

Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss what inspired the 18th century anti-enlightenment Gothic movement, and examines how it has managed to secure itself a permanent position in popular culture even today.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0054792>

Melvyn Bragg examines the literary and political career of the 17th century poet John Milton, examining work such as Paradise Lost as well as his role as propagandist during the English Civil War.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548bq>

Podcasts about contemporary literature and issues facing literature

The Empire Strikes Back: Britain & The Windrush Generation

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/ep-3-empire-strikes-back-britain-windrush-generation/id1370122551?i=1000411555195>

Lost In Translation: Finding and Reading Translated Books

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/ep-5-lost-in-translation-finding-reading-translated/id1370122551?i=1000413543676>

Maaza Mengiste and Aida Edemariam discuss the recent flowering of authors with Ethiopian heritage writing in English.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2020/feb/18/maaza-mengiste-on-the-ethiopian-women-who-fought-italy-books-podcast>

Special performance by British-born Cypriot poet poet Anthony Anaxagorou, who will hopefully visit the school later in 2020.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/special-performance-for-salon-by-poet-anthony-anaxagorou/id495583876?i=1000455705382>

Kathleen Jamie talks about her latest book of essays, Surfacing. Travelling in Alaska, Orkney and Tibet, Jamie explores a series of landscapes that have been increasingly exposed due to the climate crisis.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/nov/12/nature-writing-kathleen-jamie-and-laurie-lee-books-podcast>

This podcast looks at books as physical objects and how the experience of reading has changed through time. Could modern technologies transform the ways we read our favourite stories?

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/oct/22/history-of-the-book-reading-gilgamesh-guardian-books-podcast>

Is freedom of speech a 'toxic myth'? Plus the top 100 books since 2000.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/sep/24/is-freedom-of-speech-a-toxic-myth-plus-the-top-100-books-since-2000-books-podcast>

Does 'the English canon' still shape what we read?

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/aug/20/does-the-english-canon-still-shape-what-we-read-books-podcast>

Bernardine Evaristo joins us in the studio to discuss her latest novel, *Girl, Woman Other*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/jun/25/bernardine-evaristo-lene-wold-books-honour-killings-podcast>

Two authors who were refugees as children discuss how their experience shaped their novels.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/jun/18/what-is-it-like-being-a-refugee-with-pajtim-statovci-and-dina-nayeri-books-podcast>

Why is it so hard for white people to talk about racism?

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/mar/26/why-is-it-so-hard-for-white-people-to-talk-about-racism-books-podcast>

Are we too reverent with William Shakespeare?

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/audio/2019/apr/23/are-we-too-reverent-with-william-shakespeare-books-podcast>

Lectures on Literature from Youtube

The video material below largely covers contemporary literature and issues, but the three BBC documentaries marked with an asterisk all cover writers who are highly relevant for your A Level Course. Again, I would advise you to explore some of the contemporary talks and some of the documentaries that will introduce you to writers that you may study on at LAET.

Hip-Hop & Shakespeare? Akala

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSbtkLA3GrY>

Sally Rooney author of 'Normal People' Interview: Writing with Marxism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1S5bOdJq3U>

What's the Use of Reading? Literature and Empathy
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nJv8sxpUKU>

James Baldwin speech in Berkeley
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQeicZc4uFM>

The danger of a single story | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>

Understanding Literature through Hip Hop
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kBc6M5XJw0>

This is Shakespeare by Emma Smith
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPfbXhh4_WM

Documentaries from the BBC

*Gothic fantasy horror would be outstripped by real horror as the truth of mechanised warfare dawned on an innocent world in 1914. The language of Gothic would increasingly come to encapsulate the horrors of the 20th century - from Marx's analysis of 'vampiric' capitalism to Conrad's dark vision of imperialism.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b04nqgz3/the-art-of-gothic-britains-midnight-hour-3-blood-for-sale-gothic-goes-global>

Lemn Sissay presents a selection of short films from a new generation of artists who are inspired by poetry and the spoken word.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0008z3f/rhyme-reason-bbc-introducing-arts>

*Angela Carter Of Wolves & Women
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWBP1kxhEa8>

*Novels That Shaped Our World: A Woman's Place
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaYQ_-h3V1k

Not a podcast, but explore free audible books on Audible
<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Reading List

We have selected some classic and recent novels that you should consider reading if you want to 'go beyond' this summer. These are taken from the full Y12 reading list, which follows. Titles in bold are available free online/digitally.

Jane Austen - Northanger Abbey

Mary Shelley - Frankenstein

Edgar Allan Poe - The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Stories

Emily Bronte - Wuthering Heights

Charlotte Bronte - Jane Eyre

George Orwell - 1984

John Steinbeck – The Grapes of Wrath

Kazuo Ishiguro – The Remains of the Day

Margaret Atwood – The Handmaid's Tale

Chimamanda Adichie – Purple Hibiscus, Half of a Yellow Sun

Zadie Smith - White Teeth

Bernadine Evaristo - Girl, Woman, Other

Y12 Reading List

Gothic

William Beckford - Vathek

Ann Radcliffe - The Italian

Jane Austen - Northanger Abbey

Mary Shelley - Frankenstein

Edgar Allan Poe - The Fall of the House of Usher and Other Stories

Emily Bronte - Wuthering Heights

Charlotte Bronte - Jane Eyre, Vilette

Wilkie Collins - The Woman in White, The Moonstone (1868)

Sheridan Le Fanu - In a Glass Darkly

Robert Louis Stevenson - The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr

Oscar Wilde - The Picture of Dorian Gray
Bram Stoker - Dracula

Henry James - The Turn of the Screw
William Faulkner – Light in August, Sanctuary
Shirley Jackson - The Haunting of Hill House

Cormac McCarthy – Outer Dark
Joyce Carol Oates - Mysteries of Winterthurn
Angela Carter – The Bloody Chamber
Angela Carter - Burning Your Boats: The Collected Short Stories
Iain Banks – The Wasp Factory
Toni Morrison – Beloved

Criticism & Contexts

Gothic (The New Critical Idiom) - Fred Botting
The Gothic Tradition (Cambridge Contexts in Literature) - David Stevens
The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction (Cambridge Companions to Lit) - Jerrold E. Hogle
The Cambridge Companion to the Modern Gothic - Jerrold E. Hogle
How to read Literature - Terry Eagleton

Drama

Christopher Marlowe – Edward II, Dr Faustus
William Shakespeare – The Complete Works (edited Stanley Wells)
William Shakespeare – Measure for Measure (Arden)
John Webster - The Duchess of Malfi; The White Devil
Four Revenge Tragedies (The Spanish Tragedy, The Revenger's Tragedy, The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, and The Atheist's Tragedy) (Oxford World's Classics Ed.)
Ben Jonson - Volpone
Richard Brinsley Sheridan - The Rivals
Oscar Wilde – The Importance of being Earnest
Henrik Ibsen – A Doll's House, Hedda Gabler
Eugene O'Neill – A Long Day's Journey Into Night
Samuel Beckett – Waiting For Godot
Lorraine Hansbury – Raisin in the Sun
Edward Albee – Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
Wole Soyinka – Death and the Kings Horsemen

Arthur Miller - The Crucible

Harold Pinter - The Homecoming

Brian Friel – Translations, Dancing at Lughnasa

Tennessee Williams – Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Streetcar Named Desire

Polly Stenham – That Face

Kay Adshead – The Bogus Woman

Criticism & Context

Andrew Gurr – The Shakespearean Stage

Stephen Greenblatt – Renaissance Self Fashioning

Jonathan Dollimore – Radical Tragedy

Frank Kermode - Shakespeare's Language

Stanley Wells - Shakespeare & Co

Poetry

Geoffrey Chaucer – The Canterbury Tales (Norton Ed.)

John Donne – Selected Poems

John Milton – Paradise Lost (Longman or Norton edition)

John Milton – Complete Shorter Poems (Longman Edition)

William Blake – Songs of Innocence and Experience

Samuel Taylor Coleridge – Selected Poems

William Wordsworth – The Prelude (Norton edition)

Lord Byron – Complete Poems

Alfred Tennyson – Selected Poems (ed. Ricks)

Christina Rossetti – Selected Poems

Robert Frost – Poems, Prose & Plays (Library of America)

WB Yeats – Poetry (collected by Seamus Heaney)

T.S. Eliot – Collected Poems 1909-62

W. H. Auden – Collected Poems (ed. Mendelson)

Elizabeth Bishop – Collected Poems

Sylvia Plath - Ariel

Seamus Heaney – New Selected Poems 1966-1987

Seamus Heaney – New Selected Poems 1988-2013

Jo Shapcott – Of Mutability

Criticism & Context

Tom Paulin - The Secret Life of Poems
Christopher Ricks - Milton's Grand Style
Sheila Wolowsky - The Art of Poetry: How to Read a poem
Ted Hughes – Poetry in the Making

Prose

Jane Austen – Pride & Prejudice, Sense & Sensibility
Charles Dickens – Bleak House
Upton Sinclair – The Jungle
James Joyce - Dubliners
F. Scott Fitzgerald - The Great Gatsby
George Orwell - 1984
John Steinbeck – The Grapes of Wrath
Philip Roth – The Human Stain
J.M. Coetzee – Disgrace, The Life and Times of Michael K
Chimamanda Adichie – Purple Hibiscus, Half of a Yellow Sun
Margaret Atwood – The Handmaid's Tale
Kazuo Ishiguro – The Remains of the Day
Ian McEwan - Atonement
Mohsin Hamid - Exit West, The Reluctant Fundamentalist

Criticism & Context

Francine Prose – Reading Like A Writer
David Lodge – The Art of Fiction