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| **Postcards from the Dead**  **Critical perspectives on the**  **GCSE English Literature texts**    *“These ideas are too powerful for naïve pupils […]*  *They are emotional dynamite.”* |

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| **Karl Marx** | **Key ideas:**   * Society is capitalist as it is based on making profit, rather than by the interests of all people. * The proletariat (working class) make money for the bourgeoisie (upper class) who control the means of production. * These two social classes are in conflict which will lead to social unrest until it culminates in [social revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_revolution). | | | **Key vocabulary**   * bourgeoisie * capitalism * conflict * division * hierarchy * inequality * profit * proletariat |
| ‘Macbeth’ | | ‘An Inspector Calls’ | ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | |
| ***Marxist critics*** *would highlight that…* | | | | |
| *……the rank and position of the characters in the play reflects the hierarchical structure of society at the time it was written. The Macbeths’ goal is to climb the social ladder for their own personal gain, not that of the people they would rule. Whilst not about money, their motivation was to gain power and join the ruling elite…* | | *…Eva Smith represents the proletariat, who has been exploited by the bourgeoisie - the Birlings, as part of the capitalist ruling class abuse this for their own profit/benefits.*  *...The Inspector hints at (and is a symbol of) social revolution when he speaks of "fire and blood and anguish" if the bourgeoisie do not change their behaviour- he heralds a social revolution that Sheila and Eric (as symbols of the new generation) support.* | *... Dr. Jekyll is a wealthy man and considered a gentleman- he’s part of the bourgeoisie.*  *…There’s a clear divide in class with Jekyll and his friends and then the servants and poor that surround Hyde’s entrance- they are part of the proletariat.*  *…Example: When Utterson arrives at Jekyll’s mansion the servants are huddled together and trembling in terror. People of the lower class are incapable of taking action without the help of people with higher social standing.*  … *Utterson states that Jekyll would be very disappointed in the state of his help- the lower class is not supposed to let their emotions interfere with their work. ...Stevenson also highlights how the bourgeoisie hide their problems (as both Utterson and Jekyll hide their negative attributes) to maintain rule over the proletariat (reputation!).*  *…Through his clothes and manner, Hyde is suggested to be more working-class- Hyde’s violent rebellion against his oppression/confinement symbolises how the oppression of the proletariat leads to conflict* | |

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| **Carl Jung** | **Key ideas:**   * All people share a ‘collective unconscious’ i.e. a part of our psyche we are not aware of that operates on an instinctual level. * Part of this is symbolic character types – or archetypes. * As we are not directly aware of them, these archetypes can only be deduced indirectly by examining human behaviour, images, art, myths, religions, or dreams. * His theory on personality states that one must embrace oneself to be a whole person. He claims that we all have a ‘shadow’ a darker side. | | | **Key vocabulary**   * archetype * character type * instinctual * psyche * symbolic * unconscious * universal |
| ‘Macbeth | | ‘An Inspector Calls’ | ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | |
| ***Jung’s theory of archetypes*** *would suggest that…* | | | | |
| *…Macbeth represents ‘the (anti) hero’ he fears being seen as weak and his arrogance is a fatal flaw…*  *…Lady Macbeth is ‘the rebel’, she*  *desires power and will break rules, even crossing over to the dark, to achieve it...* | | *...The Inspector takes on a 'father' role for Eva, as he protects her and attempts to keep her safe from the Birlings by keeping her photograph in his pocket and defending her*  *…Mr Birling is also ‘the father’ as he is controlling, stern and powerful conflicts with Inspector- they compete for this role and it is a source of conflict*  *...Mr and Mrs Birling are the cruel 'villains' whose behaviour exploits and hurts others for their own benefit.*  *...Sheila as the 'regular girl' who the audience identifies with and accompanies her on her journey of enlightenment.*  *…Gerald is aiming to be ‘the hero’ as he seeks to save Daisy Renton at first and also tries to rescue her.*  *… The Inspector is ‘the rebel’ as he seeks to overturn the social order.* | *…Hyde is the villain who gives into his dark side/ urges and is devoid of sympathy.*  *...Jekyll is ‘the creator’ as he seeks to experiment and to realise a vision through creativity.*  *...Jekyll gives into his dark side and embraces it to become Hyde*  *…Hyde is Jekyll’s ‘shadow’ that is controlling him.*  *…Utterson is ‘the sage’ as he seeks truth and understanding.* | |

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| **Simone de Beauvoir** | Key ideas:   * Gender is different from one’s biological sex and is a social construction. Society expects each gender to behave in a distinct way. * Women are oppressed as they are only valued for their looks and their societal function as wives and mothers. This is a restrictive gender role. * Women are ‘the second sex’ as they are seen as less powerful and important to men. Society is therefore patriarchal (male-dominated). | | | Key vocabulary   * autonomy * dominant ideologies * dominant/submissive * equality * gender role * liberation * objectification * patriarchy * power * reinforce/subvert * stereotypical |
| ‘Macbeth’ | | ‘An Inspector Calls’ | ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | |
| ***Feminist literary critics*** *might argue that…* | | | | |
| *…Lady Macbeth subverts the dominant ideologies associated with femininity in Elizabethan England. She defies the submissive female stereotype of the time by manipulating and dominating her husband. She rebels from the confines of her gender role and prays for supernatural ‘spirits’ to ‘unsex’ her…* | | *…Eva/Daisy is the victim of a patriarchal society and clearly suffers because of the restrictive gender norms.*  *…Mr Birling enforces the patriarchy whilst the inspector aims to subvert it- look at their differing opinions on how Sheila is treated later in the play (especially after she starts to rebel against her father and supports the inspector’s socialist agenda).*  *...Mr Birling expresses shallow and patronising opinions of women, claiming that clothes are a "token of their self respect", and refers to the women who work for him as "girls", believing that they would not have the resolve to keep their strike.*  *...Gerald and Eric both express a mixture of disdain and attraction to the prostitutes who work in the bar, and objectify them in their descriptions of the older women.*  *...when Gerald keeps Eva in his friends "rooms", she stays for the six months that it is convenient for him; he treats Eva as if she is a commodity, dismissing her when it is no longer easy for him to do so.* | *...the Victorian society that Dr. Jekyll inhabits is inherently sexist, and the lack of women reflects this: the only female character is Jekyll’s maid. In Victorian society, women of the lower classes complete back breaking work, and even the children are sent out to work; women of the higher classes are not allowed to work, and all skilled jobs are fulfilled by men.*  *… women of the lower classes are seen as two-dimensional victims (the girl ‘trampled’ by Hyde) or as those of a ‘romantic’ sentiment who then are reduced to tears by the sight of Carew’s murder (the maid)* | |

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| **Sigmund Freud** | **Key ideas:**   * Freud’s theory of Psychoanalysis suggests that the human psyche ([personality](http://www.simplypsychology.org/personality-theories.html)) has three parts. * The id is with us from birth. This part wishes to satisfy every urge it has immediately, regardless of the consequences. This is why babies cry to be fed, will snatch toys etc. * The ego develops next. It is the decision-making part of our psyche and works by reason and strategy. * The superego develops last. It reflects the values and morals of society which are learned from our parents and others. It is our conscience and means that we experience guilt. | | | **Key vocabulary**   * conscience * ego * Freudian * id * infantile * morals * psyche * reason * strategy * superego * values |
| ‘Macbeth’ | | ‘An Inspector Calls’ | ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | |
| *A* ***Freudian reading*** *would emphasise that…* | | | | |
| *…the Macbeths’ actions are motivated and driven by the id part of their psyche…*  *…the ego is behind Lady Macbeth’s logical murder plans…*  *… it is the superego that eventually drives her to experience guilt and despair as her conscience can no longer cope with what they have done…* | | *…the Birlings’ selfish nature is representative of the id.*  *…the Inspector acts as the superego- acting as a conscience for the family.*  *...Eric's character experiences all three stages: his initial treatment of Eva is the result of his id, he wishes to satisfy his sexual urges without any consideration to Eva's feelings; when faced with the dilemma of unplanned fatherhood, Eric's ego uses logic to steal from his father's work in an attempt to resolve his problems; in the end, when he hears of Eva's death, Eric's superego experiences deep and sincere guilt- unlike that of Gerald or Mrs Birling.* | *…Dr. Jekyll's id and superego split the novel: Hyde is ruled by his id and his desire to satisfy his darkest desires. Dr Jekyll is outwardly ruled by his superego as he is well respected and a pillar of the community. The repression of his id leads to Dr. Jekyll’s demise.* | |

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| **Aristotle** | **Key ideas:**   * A tragedy must have: * a change of fortune from good to bad (peripeteia) * suffering that creates sympathy (pathos) in the audience leading to an emotional release (catharsis) * a realisation of the cause of the misery (anagnorisis) * The main tragic hero should: * be morally good * have excessive pride (hubris) * make a tragic mistake (hamartia) | | **Key vocabulary**   * anagnorisis * Chorus * fortune * hamartia * hubris * misery * pathos * peripeteia * suffering * tragic hero |
| ‘Macbeth | | ‘An Inspector Calls’ | ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde |
| *The writer has drawn on* ***conventions of Aristotelian tragedy*** *as…* | | | |
| *…in Macbeth, Shakespeare creates a tragic hero who suffers a reversal of fortune that, ultimately, leads to his untimely death.*  *…. peripeteia is evident when Macbeth says "I am in blood / Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more’’(3.4). He immediately regrets the murder and realises his ‘success’ is tainted.…*  *…anagnorisis occurs when it is revealed that Macduff was not of ‘woman born’…* | | *...the tragic hero of An Inspector Calls is not an easy one to identify, as Eva has not displayed morally good behaviour, does not display excessive pride, and it is arguably the mistakes of others that she pays the price for.*  *...there is a great deal of pathos for Eva, even though she never appears on stage, her story is told through the accounts of those that hurt her, adding to the impact of the pathos.*  *… the peripeteia occurs when the Inspector arrives and disrupts the family’s celebration.*  *…the moment of anagnorisis occurs across the third act, as the characters start to realise their guilt- though this is not evident for some of them until the end of the act.* | *...Dr Jekyll could be considered the tragic hero, he acts as a source of pathos for the reader, as his suffering increases throughout the novel.*  *...the negative resolution of the novel means that there is catharsis for the audience, the mystery is solved and Hyde finally overtakes Jekyll. Evil defeats good.* |

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| **Nietzsche** | **Key ideas:**   * Life is without objective meaning, purpose, or value. There is no God. This belief is called nihilism. * In the absence of a God, superhumans (the ubermensch) who are willing to risk all to improve society will take his place. * The ubermensch will be able to establish their own values as the way in which others live their lives. | | | **Key vocabulary**   * atheism * nihilism * purpose * recklessness * ubermensch * values |
| ‘Macbeth’ | | ‘An Inspector Calls’ | ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | |
| *In light of* ***Nietzschean philosophy****…* | | | | |
| *…it might be argued that Macbeth’s fatalistic belief in fortune could reflect his own inner drives, he looks to the witches rather than praying to a God to help him, as does Lady Macbeth also. They both demonstrate nihilistic tendencies as they seek out the powers of the supernatural in order to disrupt the Great Chain of Being and revoke the ‘divine right of kings’…* | | *.*  *..Eric's nihilistic behaviour can be justified by the absence of god and therefore no moral guidelines for him to follow. Eric's adoption of this nihilism is a direct rejection of his father's expectations of him, and the oppressive rules of etiquette that prevailed in Edwardian society.*  *...The Inspector rails against this nihilism, and speaks using religious imagery to remind the Birlings of their moral obligations to the poor.*  *…arguably, the inspector acts as an ubermensch in persuading the Birlings to take on elements of his own values regarding responsibility.*  *…the inspector’s use of religious imagery is not used as a threat of hell, rather is a clear warning of the suffering and pain that is to come in WWI and WWII.* | *...Darwin’s theory of evolution had scared Victorian society. Hyde’s animalistic features clearly link to this theory.*  *…Hyde is reckless and challenged society’s values at that time- he risks everything but for his own satisfaction rather than for the good of society.*  *… Utterson show signs of being a superhuman by trying to solve the mystery of Jekyll and Hyde.*  *…Jekyll attempts to become an ubermensch by risking all to change the way humans are constructed but he is unsuccessful. His repeated references to religion (especially ‘hell’ and ‘the devil’) are used as an excuse for his own failure.* | |

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| **Jacques Derrida** | **Key ideas:**   * Language is a system of signs; words only have meaning because of the contrast between these signs. In other words, a concept can only be understood in relation to its opposite e.g. man/woman, white/black. * Within these binary opposites there is hierarchy with one being seen as more important. * A deconstructive reading of a text will try to expose the way these oppositions work and undermine the binary notion of meaning. | | | **Key vocabulary**   * binary pair * commonality * conflict * contrast * deconstruction * hierarchy * juxtaposition * notion * opposite |
| ‘Macbeth | | An Inspector Calls | Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | |
| *A* ***deconstructive reading*** *would highlight that…* | | | | |
| *…Shakespeare presents Macbeth and Banquo as a binary pair in order to generate conflict. Their commonality is evident from the outset; both are promised a future linked to the royal line however Banquo opts to take a moral route whilst Macbeth demonstrates a distinct drive to elevate his hierarchical position…* | | *...within An Inspector Calls we are offered a set of dichotomy with the young set against the old: Eric and Sheila embrace socialist beliefs, whereas their parents and Gerald retain their capitalist beliefs. In this way, Priestly could be suggesting to his audience that for some, change will be impossible, but that the young, will be able to change the world.*  *…Priestley generates conflict through the binary opposition of capitalist and socialist views in the play. He uses the characters of Birling and the Inspector to display this conflict, as they struggle for power.*  *…The inspector seeks to overthrow the established hierarchy, where capitalists have more power in society.* | *...Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde act as a binary pair- they emphasise and amplify the different attitude embodied by each character.*  *...Dr. Jekyll conceals Mr. Hyde. This juxtaposition of the good Jekyll and the baleful appearance of Mr. Hyde emphasises the secret nature of society at that time and the duality of man.*  *…The binary opposition of Jekyll/Hyde and Utterson is used by Stevenson to generate conflict. Though Utterson would seem to emerge victorious through surviving and finding out the truth, the fact that Hyde commits suicide could suggest that he ‘has the last word’ and has a higher place in the hierarchy.* | |

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| **John Locke** | **Key ideas:**   * Locke argued strongly against the idea that people were born sinful or that some people are innately evil. * Instead, he suggested human beings are born with an ‘empty mind’ or *tabula rasa* which is then shaped by our experiences. * He believed that the way children are brought up has a powerful impact on the adults they become. | | | **Key vocabulary**   * immoral * innate * moral * nature * nurture * tabula rasa * upbringing |
| ‘Macbeth’ | | ‘An Inspector Calls’ | ‘Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | |
| *The philosopher* ***John Locke theorised that*** *nurture has a more significant influence on human behaviour that inherent nature. Therefore, it could be argued…* | | | | |
| *…the fact that Macbeth has to be persuaded by his wife to commit Duncan’s murder suggests he was not inherently evil, his wife’s manipulation, challenging his masculinity and pride, served to push him towards committing an act he immediately regretted…* | | *...Sheila and Eric's egotistical outlook can be directly attributed to their upbringing, and the role models their parents offered. However, when The Inspector provides them with an alternative, they are capable of change, and unlike their parents resolve to be better people. Therefore, they shed their old values, proving that their poor behaviour is not innate to them as people.* | *...when Dr. Jekyll gives his full account, he alludes to the seeds of his evil being sown at a young age; therefore, not being innate. He became annoyed by people perceiving him as ‘light hearted’. Jekyll decides to ‘conceal’ all of his ‘pleasures’. There are numerous references to his past actions and the consequences of these throughout the novel.*    *…Jekyll speaks of evil being a small part of man (hence Hyde’s size) and that there are many qualities that make man whole. It is the repression of Jekyll’s desire that leads to Hyde. Jekyll was thus not born sinful but shaped by his experiences.*  *…Hyde is a product of Jekyll’s upbringing and the oppressive society around him- Jekyll was not born with these evil aspects.* | |