

Welcome to English Literature A Level



Calday Grange Grammar School

English Literature Advanced Level

What Happens in Year 12 ?

The main thing to understand is that all your external exam papers and your coursework submission will be in Year 13: in 2020.

There **will** be exams at the end of Year 12 but they will be internal Calday exams.

We will follow the Edexcel English Literature specification (9ET0). [You can view / download the full specification here.](#)

Or visit: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/english-literature-2015.html>

There are four components to the exam:

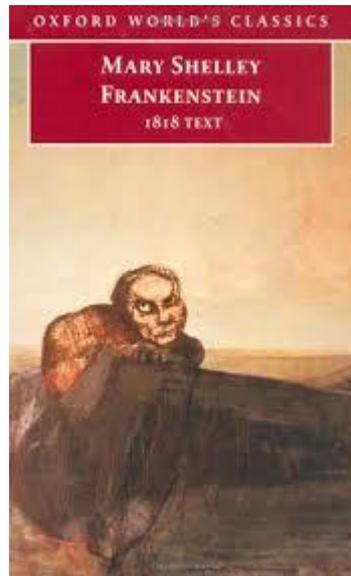
Component 1:	Drama	Study two plays, one by Shakespeare
Component 2:	Novels	Study two novels
Component 3:	Poetry	Study two collections of poetry
Component 4:	Coursework	One essay, comparing two texts

In Year 12 we will concentrate on Components 1 and 2.

- In this booklet you will find a series of tasks and activities that must be complete and submitted **on Monday 10th September 2018.**
- This will help introduce you to the course and give you a flavor of the rigours of the course.
- They are directly related to the texts that you will be studying in the Autumn term of 2018.
- You can print the sheets off and write directly on them or type up your work and print it off.

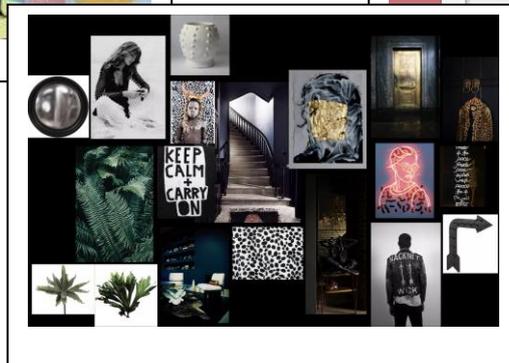
You must bring your completed work to school on Monday 10th September

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley



1. Create a 'mood board'

- Research features of Gothic literature and create a visual mood board to go with your findings.
- Gothic literature includes the supernatural, darkness and shadows (amongst other elements) so find images that represent any feature you find.
- Print of those images and add them to your mood board.
- Include some other Gothic fiction in this mood board as well as the names of the authors.
- You can design it in any way you wish with images, illustrations, key words, links etc.



3. Fill in the table with bulleted points about the following people and the Romantic Movement. Make sure you find out about these two epic poems below in your research:

- ‘Paradise Lost’ by Milton
- ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ by Coleridge

John Milton	Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Jean-Jacques Rousseau	The Romantic Movement

4. Mary Shelley was very interested in scientific advancements at this time. The three scientists she was most interested in were:

- a. Humphrey Davy
- b. Erasmus Darwin
- c. Luigi Galvani

Identify 8 facts about each of these 3 scientists and their beliefs so, as you start to read the novel, you can come back your information and cross reference how they helped to influence Shelley’s writing.

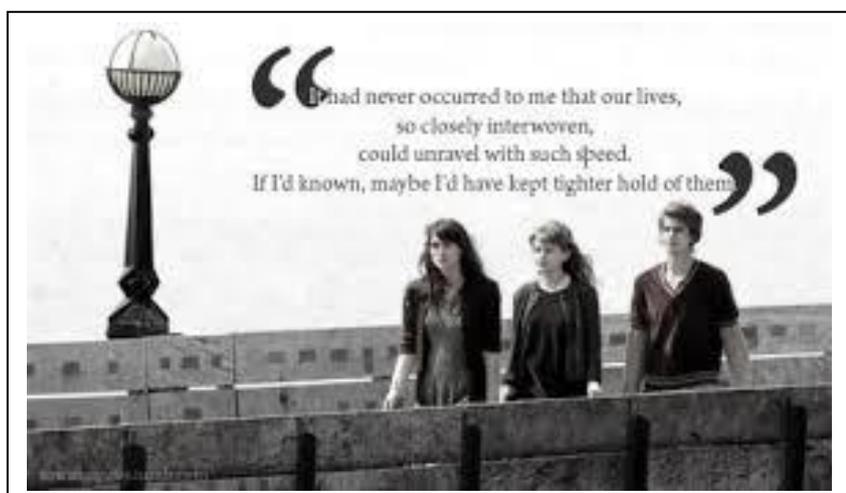
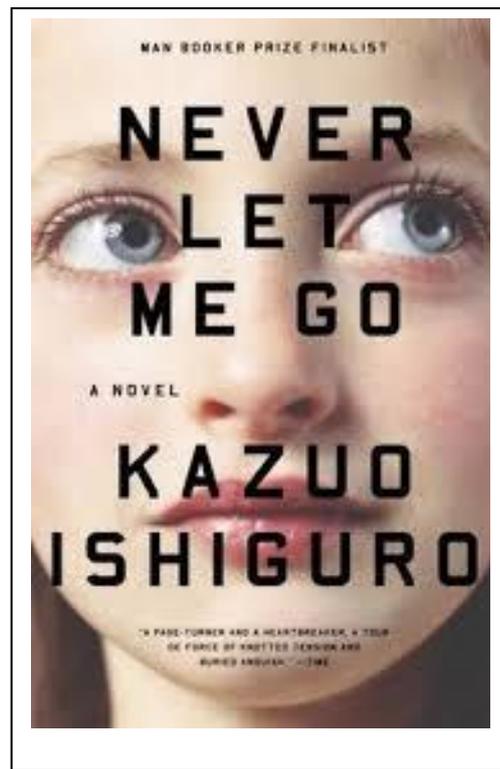
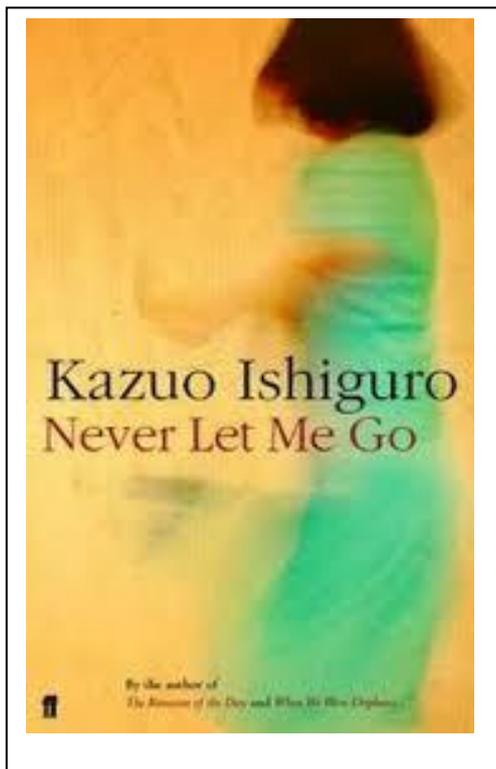
Humphrey Davy:
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Erasmus Darwin:
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Luigi Galvani:
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Never Let Me Go

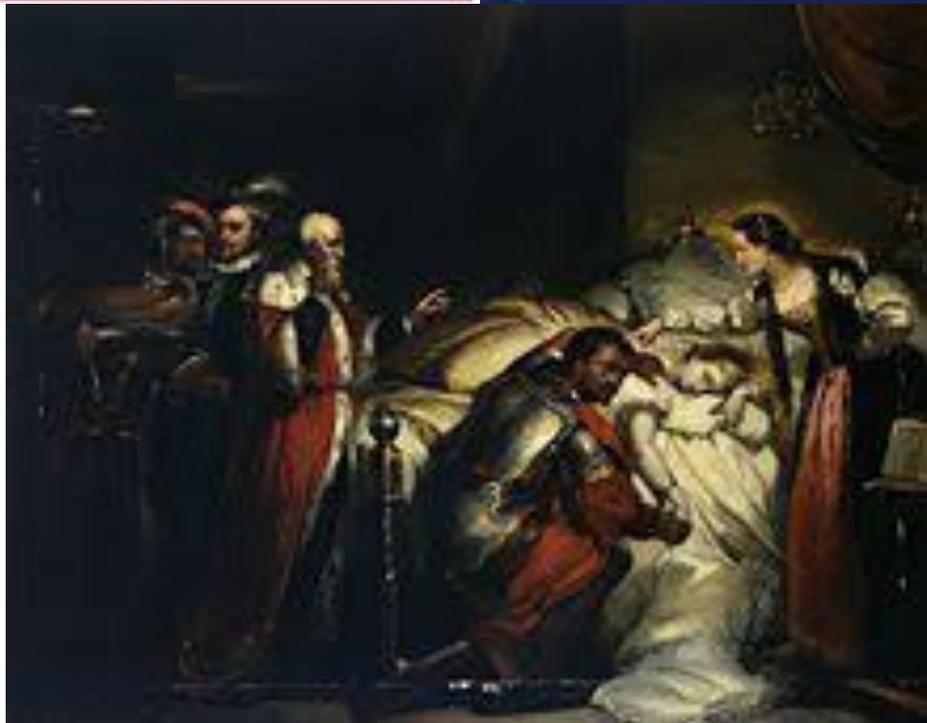
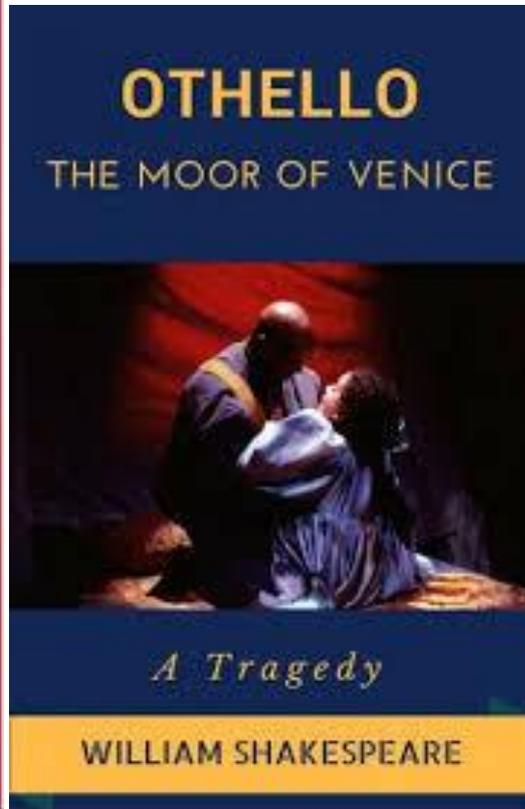
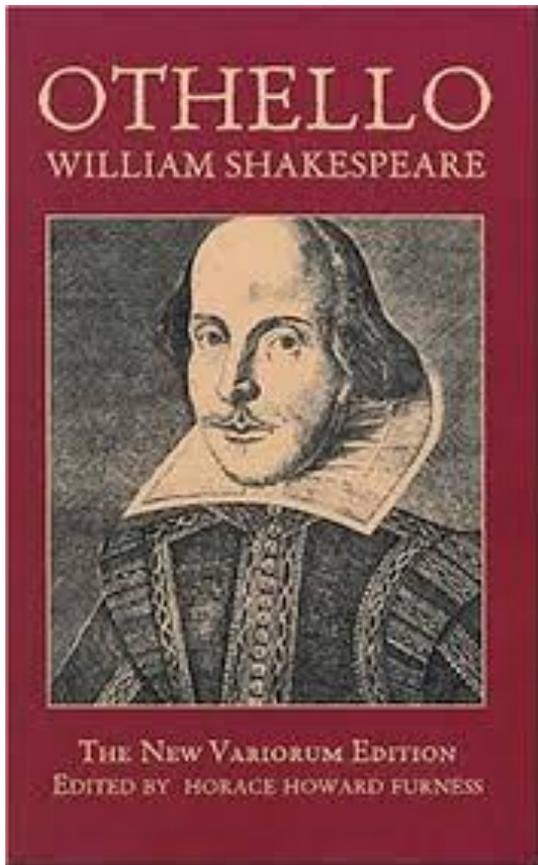
Kazuo Ishiguro



The image shows a screenshot of a news article from The Guardian. The main headline is "Scientists clone adult sheep". Below it, there is a sub-headline "Triumph for UK raises alarm over" and the author's name "Robin McKie". The article text mentions that scientists have created the first clone from a sheep's udder and turned it into a lamb. A red box highlights a question: "Is a ban on GM crops more harmful than growing them?". Below this, there is a quote from the UK's chief scientist: "UK's chief scientist has said GM crops could provide plentiful food with less damage to the environment and at lower costs. But does that mean we should grow them? Karl Mathiesen investigates." Another red box highlights a call to action: "Let us know your thoughts. Post in the comments below, email karl.mathiesen.freelance@theguardian.com or tweet @karlmathiesen". Below the main article, there is a "NEWS" section with a red background and a navigation menu. A sub-headline reads "We can create babies without men, claim scientists". A red box highlights a question: "What connects these headlines? How do you feel about them?". Below this, there is another article headline: "Stephen Hawking warns artificial intelligence could end mankind".

1. Look at the images above of different headlines.
 - Explore issues of cloning, artificial intelligence etc.
 - Prepare a fact sheet on these different topics, including what each is; competing viewpoints about them; as well as facts, figures and statistics about the issues you find out about.
 - Present the information however you wish

Othello by William Shakespeare



Othello – Pre Reading Activity

- Read the two articles about the challenges faced when producing modern interpretations of Shakespeare’s plays.
- Listen to the podcast about structural and institutional racism in the UK.
- Now complete the following task.

‘Shakespeare is misogynistic and racist. Modern directors have a responsibility to update his message.’

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

In your response make reference to:

The ideas raised in the podcast and the articles

A literature text that you feel addresses issues of race or gender successfully (it can be Shakespearean or otherwise).

Write at least one side of A4 and be prepared to share your views in our first lesson in September.

If a Shakespeare play is racist or antisemitic, is it OK to change the ending?

Clarissa Sebag-Montefiore

An Australian production of Merchant of Venice changes the final scene, adding completely new phrases. It’s profoundly affecting – but is it right?

Fri 3 Nov 2017 05.40 GMT Last modified on Fri 3 Nov 2017 22.48 GMT

It’s the last scene of The Merchant of Venice and the Christians are celebrating. They have love, youth and wealth on their side. Best of all, they have outsmarted “the Jew”. Not only does Shylock not get his pound of flesh, but he is forced to convert – his kippah brutally ripped off his head – and sign away his fortune to his daughter Jessica, who has turned her back on her family to elope.

While the group cavorts around the Sydney Opera House stage with giddy, ecstatic abandon, Jessica goes quiet. She bursts into tears, sinks to the floor and asks: “What have I done?”

As she weeps the others look on helplessly, even guiltily. Her husband kneels before her and tenderly tears apart the deed promising them her father’s fortune. Then a translucent light descends. Portia whispers: “It is almost morning.” A new dawn, this implies, is approaching, washing away blind intolerance with it.

It is a beautiful ending. There’s just one problem: it isn’t William Shakespeare’s.

In the original, Jessica has no such qualms about the brutal treatment of her father; this is a woman, after all, who stole money from him and exchanged his turquoise ring, a gift to Shylock from her dead mother, for a monkey. In Shakespeare's play, the last we hear of Jessica is her whispering sweet nothings in Lorenzo's ear. There's no light-bulb moment of recognition, no repentance and no remorse.

With their electrifying production of Richard III and now *The Merchant of Venice*, the Australian theatre company Bell Shakespeare is on the rise after a spell of poor productions. To be clear, I found this *Merchant of Venice* – performed on a spartan stage, punctuated only by a single tree and leaves that fall from the sky like golden stars – profoundly affecting.

But I couldn't help but wonder: does it do a service to dramatically change the Bard's words at such a critical moment? As a Jewish person who has witnessed a rise in antisemitism, I'm not sure it helps to wash over the more rampant elements of prejudice in the play.

The director, Anne-Louise Sarkis, certainly conjures up sympathy for Shylock, helped along by the actor, Mitchell Butel, who plays him with restrained grace and humility. The Jewish character's actions in this version are the result of debilitating hatred, enough to drive any man mad. Antonio spits at him viciously and when the baying Christians coerce him into conversion, Shylock is left spiritually beaten and bent, gripping his now naked head as if it were on fire.

After the court scene Shylock doesn't appear again in Shakespeare's version: a gaping absence. To address this, Sarkis makes the clever move to keep all her actors on stage throughout, sitting on benches. The result is that we can't easily forget this Shylock, a man who, when he holds the knife aloft on Antonio's heart, shakes so hard we wonder if he can go through with it. His silenced, defeated figure – alone on the edges of the action – is still burned in my mind.

Decisions over the way the scenes play out are for a director to make, and Sarkis should be applauded for hers. But adding in completely new phrases ("What have I done?") and passing it off as Shakespeare is another thing altogether. It is particularly worrying that the company doesn't note the change to the text in the program – and yet Bell Shakespeare claims their *raison d'être* is education.

Like removing racist slurs from novels in the literary canon,, rewriting Shakespeare begs the question: isn't it more powerful to accept and acknowledge the prejudice of the past and confront it head on, rather than try to rewrite history?

Allowing Shakespeare to stand as it is – warts and all – has a purpose: it exposes the nastier side of antisemitic society and a past that we, in the 21st century, need to know about to ensure we don't repeat it. This was an era in Europe when the despised profession of moneylending was almost exclusively Jewish, when Jews were thought by some to use the blood of children for rituals, and when many, as in *The Merchant of Venice*, thought Jews were the “very devil incarnate”.

There is no doubt that *The Merchant of Venice* – with its portrayal of Shylock as stubborn, bloodthirsty and merciless – is a problematic play. To combat this, some have resorted to suppressing the Bard's words. In 1981, for example, the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, founded to fight antisemitism, requested that a BBC/Time-Life TV version be shut down. They said the play had “an inherent potential for harm”. In a different letter they described Shylock as an “unhappy symbol of Jewish vindictiveness, malice and hatred”.

Last year the writer Steve Frank argued in the *Washington Post* that the play shouldn't be performed at all. Staging it, he insisted, revived “ancient racial slurs” pounced on by the Nazis (*The Merchant of Venice* was a favourite of the Third Reich). For Sarkis, no doubt well aware of these criticisms and pitfalls, relying on the famous speech: “If you prick us, do we not bleed?” was not enough. To soften the message, and the blow, she changed the text.

For me, that's a mistake. Bigotry won't be beaten by fudging meanings and words from yesteryear that we don't agree with today. Surely the most powerful way to combat discrimination is to embrace old texts, artworks and movies as they stand – unadulterated – as artefacts of their time. Only then can we debate them, disagree with them and, finally, make a decision to accept or reject their ideas. To do anything else feels dangerously like censorship.

Is *The Merchant of Venice* a Jew-hating play? Or is it a play about Jew haters? The jury is still out and it always will be; that's where the genius lies, whatever side of the fence you fall on. Bell Shakespeare has put on a thought-provoking, brilliant production. But please, let's not whitewash the past. At the very least, give the audience a chance to hear and see Shakespeare's ending for what it was. And then let them make up their own minds.

• *Bell Shakespeare's production of *The Merchant of Venice* runs until 26 November at Sydney Opera House*

Interview

Othello as an out lesbian: why Golda Rosheuvel's time is now

By [Lyn Gardner](#)

The actor is set to play Shakespeare's army commander as a gay woman in Gemma Bodinetz's new production at Liverpool's Everyman

@lyngardner

Tue 3 Apr 2018 07.00 BST Last modified on Mon 9 Apr 2018 12.56 BST

When Golda Rosheuvel stars as Othello at the Liverpool Everyman this month it will not be the first time that a woman has taken on the role. In the early 19th century, Mrs Percy Knowles, who also performed Hamlet, was one of several female actors to do so. In 2015, [Smooth Faced Gentlemen](#) staged the play with an all-female cast. But in those versions, the women were playing male roles. Rosheuvel's Othello, in Gemma Bodinetz's production, will almost certainly create waves because her [general is an out lesbian](#).

Before she went to see Bodinetz about joining the Everyman's ensemble to play the role, Rosheuvel knew that – if she got the job – her Othello would not be gender neutral but female. Rosheuvel, who was the best Paulina I've ever seen in [Simon Godwin's 2009 production of The Winter's Tale](#), already has form in this department. Last year she played [a female Mercutio](#) in the Globe's Romeo and Juliet, winning praise for her performance and the subtle undertones it brought to the character's relationships with Romeo and Benvolio in Daniel Kramer's much-derided staging.

Bodinetz, who began running Liverpool's Everyman and Playhouse theatres 15 years ago, when very few women were heading up major British theatres, was also certain that she wanted to put a female Othello centre stage. Playing Othello is "important to me as a black, gay, female actor," says Rosheuvel who moved to the UK from Guyana when she was five. She adds wryly: "just look at how many boxes I can be put in." She and Bodinetz reckon that part of Iago's gripe is that he thinks a black lesbian in charge of the army is "box-ticking at its most ridiculous". Rosheuvel points out that [Othello](#) is a play in which women and their sexuality are a source of fear for many of the male characters, and this ups the stakes considerably.

Golda Rosheuvel, left, as Mercutio with Kirsty Bushell, Harish Patel, Edward Hogg and Ricky Champ in *Romeo and Juliet* at Shakespeare's Globe in 2017. Photograph: Tristram Kenton for the Guardian

"Some men have a terrible fear of women, particularly powerful women," says Rosheuvel. "They would prefer not to see change, and this Othello is part of change. She is a woman who has power over all these men, all that testosterone. How does she negotiate that? Then she goes further and brings her lover – Desdemona – into that arena. It's a scary thing to do."

"I wanted to make a modern audience sit up and feel something of what a Jacobean audience must have felt at seeing a black man commanding an army," explains Bodinetz. "I wanted to make the play feel electric again." But by making Othello female and gay she is not setting out to shock for the sake of it. "We're not doing this despite the text, but with the text," she says. "We are just trying to rub it in our own times, and make it shine for the beautiful dare of it, and in the process come up against some of our own prejudices and our assumptions about what leadership is and who can hold power."

Questions of race, class and gender are currently being much debated in the industry. Why aren't there more women and people of colour running our theatres? Why might it be that the widely admired Rosheuvel is, at the age of 47, only now taking a lead role?

"Look, I've had some great roles and worked with fantastic directors in great venues, but this is the first time I've played the lead. Why is that? I don't know. I could jump on a bandwagon and say it's because I'm black, I'm a woman and gay. But maybe it's also because my career has always been very eclectic. And I love that. I'm always looking for things that interest me, that are different. You don't employ me if you want beige, I'm all about bright colours."

Nonetheless she believes that "there's a problem in British theatre and we wouldn't have [Act for Change](#) and [Time's Up](#) if there wasn't. What I can't ever know for sure is how much it has affected my own career. But I do wonder why it took until last year for me – someone who was raised on Agatha Christie dramas – to be cast in a period drama." It was, she says, a dream come true to be cast in [Lady Macbeth](#), written by Alice Birch.

"There are plenty of black actors, writers and directors out there. There are plenty of women. We just need to be given the opportunities, and the money. That's how real change happens, that's how you crack it open."

A woman playing a female Othello is part of that. Bodinetz, as a female artistic director in what has been a male domain, is particularly interested in the dynamics of power and the stresses faced by women as they climb the ladder of success.

“What can be harder than being a black, gay woman commander in the army? This is a woman who has fought to get where she is, and made sacrifices to do it. It means she has a lot to lose and so what happens and how does she behave when everything is taken from her? All women who rise to power have to navigate the land mines ... We have to deal with the male game-playing and negotiate the structures that men have set in place. It can be exhausting and stressful, and often it means giving up things.”

What have Bodinetz and Rosheuvel given up to get to where they are? “Time with my family,” says Bodinetz quietly. “My ego,” says Rosheuvel. “You have to keep it in check or as an actor you are constantly saying ‘why not me?’. I’ve learned to say: ‘Just relax, your time will come.’” Now, at last, it has.

- Othello is at [Liverpool Everyman](#) from 28 April. Box office: 0151 709 4776.

[WAYS TO CHANGE THE WORLD: A NEW PODCAST S1 • E3](#)

Reni Eddo-Lodge on race, social injustice and quotas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEG-U4TnuDM>