

Unit 2 Coursework Case Study

This selection of work has been taken from a single comprehensive school. It consists of 4 examples of unit 2 work from 3 students. I have included the complete folder from 1 student and a single piece, with the accompanying commentary, from the other 2 students. The primary purpose of the selection presented is to offer teachers examples of work which have clearly been successful. Alongside the exemplar work is an evaluation of it and of the methodology used by the school, in the form of a commentary of my own. The work itself has been partly annotated. The intent here is to help indicate the key aspects which have been noted and considered successful.

A good starting point is re-emphasising the intended 'spirit' of Unit 2. Principal to this, is the fundamental concept that students be given as much freedom and autonomy as possible in creating 2 original, creative texts. To this end, I would certainly recommend an approach which ultimately allows students to choose the title and focus of their final response(s). However, it is important to remember that such freedom and creativity needs to be carefully encompassed within a methodology of guidance and example. Therefore, a detailed study of a central, source text, commonly studied by all students, is a necessity (and indeed a requirement) for this unit. This text needs to be carefully chosen and should allow students to 'access' one of the prescribed thematic areas of study. Clearly, this initial text will form the basis of a study of the literary and language 'techniques' employed by the author. The intent here is that students begin to discuss how the text has been carefully and deliberately crafted. Aspects such as genre conventions, context and authorial intent will all feature in this study.

The demands of the commentary also necessitate close teacher guidance and almost certainly some intervention and advice. The key to a successful commentary is balance. Students must address both the literary and language features of their own texts. They must link key aspects of their work to the text(s) which influenced them. The role of the source text needs to be recognised and discussed; as do other major, creative influences drawn on by candidates. Clearly, an understanding of genre is vital and should be acknowledged here. Important also, is a detailed understanding of the key features of a Reading and Listening audience text.

The exemplar work here reflects an approach to the unit in which the concept of student choice is central. Within the school, students are initially introduced to the 'Gothic' genre, through a class study of Bram Stoker's 'Dracula'. Such a text seems entirely sensible. The accessible plot allows for differentiation and access to the genre for all students. Likewise, by carefully identifying key extracts, the teacher is able to study both literary and language devices, within the firm grounding of a shared literary context. From this initial study students are given a prescribed wider reading list. The advice offered at this stage, by the Teacher, is that students might wish to move away from using Dracula as their main influence, towards another text from the list; Angela Carter's 'Bloody Chamber' for example, offers an alternative but accessible study. The students are expected to complete wider reading and research during their private studies. Class time is devoted to analysing and discussing extracts taken from a wide variety of texts. The centre ensures that each student includes in their research examples of prose, drama and poetry. Emphasis is given to a breadth of study in order to fully expose candidates to literary and language 'devices' at work.

Exemplar 1, is a Dramatic Monologue based on the Gothic theme, for the Listening Audience task. It is worth stating that if a task featuring a Dramatic Monologue is used for this audience, it is important to consider a Reading task which is substantially different. So, advise students to avoid

pairing monologues with, for example, a first person narrative. In this candidate's case, the Reading task was a magazine article; completely different in terms of mode and style and therefore entirely appropriate.

The first aspect of this monologue, which is worth noting here, is its structure. It begins logically, by setting the scene and introducing the central character and narrative voice. Immediately, one is aware of a sense of craft. Simple but effective alliteration and thoughtful atmospheric adjectives create an almost poetic quality to the text. The logical but interesting structure links well to simple, graphological features, intended to sub-consciously register with a reader.

Next, we are introduced to a cohesive device, in the form of 'mouthed' and 'unmounted' narration. It is well worth spending time with students studying how a narrative voice might feature in a text. This is an aspect of creativity which allows candidates to be truly original with their work, as indeed this candidate has been.

The text is successful for many reasons. Perhaps most apparent is the clear sense of purpose and audience. In this centre's case, purpose and audience are always taken as important starting points to consider with all the texts studied. The repetition of such fundamental considerations seem well worthwhile and will help prepare students for all aspects of their studies. This candidate clearly has a detailed concept of Gothic conventions and is unashamedly explicit in the literary and language devices they chose to use. The student has been advised to explicitly echo the Gothic conventions studied and researched in class; he clearly identifies provocative and sensual imagery along with archaic language as central Gothic conventions and reflects these in his work.

This candidate has managed to develop a chilling and provocative plot, while experimenting with various language and literary devices. This is important. The most successful pieces are not overly indulgent or too abstract. It is likely that students will need advice on this point. A focus should remain on the text's ability to entertain and be understood by its intended audience. Conventional techniques, learnt previously by our students, should still be used here. Prior learning will certainly impact on the success of this unit and is always worth reviewing with a class.

The piece is well balanced in terms of apparent craft. Clearly this student has consciously considered which literary and language features they wanted to employ in their own text and has been given the freedom to experiment with them creatively. The result is an original text, which feels appropriate to the Gothic genre.

Accompanying the creative piece is a commentary, usefully including a word count and leading to a detailed and balanced wider reading list. Strengths here include a clear discussion of the source texts and how these have directly influenced their own work. As with the creative text, the commentary is well balanced, dealing in turn with language and literary features. The candidate is able to discuss the features they have included whilst crucially, also, offering reasons for each feature. The explicit reference to how they hope to affect their reader makes clear this student's deliberate crafting of a creative piece. The commentary makes clear that the creative work has been soundly anchored by their study of the Gothic genre. It explains directly how their own interests and wider reading influenced them creatively.

The second example features a student who has created a monologue for the Reading Audience task. This centre explicitly researched the conventions of a number of written forms, including the monologue, within class. They then allowed their students to select for themselves which mode to utilise taking care to ensure an overt difference between both tasks. The interior monologue chosen by this candidate contrasts well with an audio guide chosen for the Listening task.

On reading this piece, one is immediately struck by the candidate's ability to condense so much into a comparatively short text. The structure here is excellent, giving the distinct impression that every word matters and has been carefully chosen. This detailed style leads to perhaps the strongest aspect of the piece; its narrative voice. The chillingly personal voice, draws us in to the apparent heroine and her story, only to be shocked at the implicit violence of the ending. This student has captured excellently a key feature of the texts she has drawn from; underplaying shocking events and creating a subtle and psychological horror in the process. Certainly, the feature which shines through is the sense of a desire to create real horror. To me, this suggests a well read student, thoroughly aware of the genre conventions most relevant to their own text. This is born out by the extensive bibliography included with the folder. This student has fully embraced the task and worked hard to secure their understanding of what will make their own text successful.

Again, this candidate has started with a clear sense of her purpose and audience. It is a point she addresses in her commentary linking her intent directly with the source texts drawn upon. She spends quite some time discussing what she wanted to achieve with her text, suggesting real engagement and enthusiasm, which is a pleasure to see. The actual commentary is well balanced and comprehensive. Her ability to embed short quotations allow her to be succinct whilst ensuring all the required aspects are discussed. Teacher modelling of how to embed quotes allows students to grasp a difficult but essential skill. Embedded quotations are often a differentiating feature of the strongest candidates and is a skill worth revisiting a number of times as the course progresses.

The final folder is included in its entirety. It is a strong folder demonstrating a successful approach to the unit by the student and reflecting a consistent methodology by the teacher. Each text created by students at this centre, shares some distinct similarities. This consistency reflects the structured and detailed guidance the teacher has offered and the rigour they have established within the research process. The teacher ensures that each student has a comprehensive understanding of what the unit requires. Therefore, each candidate explicitly addresses purpose and audience. Each includes a monologue as one of their tasks. Each has a secure knowledge of Gothic conventions and makes explicit reference to these in their discussion of the source texts used. Crucially, however, the folders are manifestly different. Student choice is seen as paramount to this unit. The belief that students must genuinely engage with their study is reflected in the teacher's choice to allow monitored, self selection of tasks. Ultimately, it is the student who has chosen the source texts referred to and the mode of writing employed.

One can see from this third folder, the positive results of preparing and guiding students through the creative process. This teacher ensures a comprehensive student response by creating, as a class, a 'check list' of skills and points which need to be apparent within the creative tasks and discussed in the commentary. This check list approach ensures a thorough and balanced folder. For the creative task, this includes a check sheet/framework approach to including literary and linguistic writing features. For each of the items on the list, time is spent in class seeing it working in context, as used by an established author. It is this insistence on giving students 'real' examples of otherwise theoretical concepts, which allows students to fully understand the impact of devices on a reader. Similarly, for the commentary, a check list approach creates balance, structure and conciseness. Students are helped to explicitly include aspects referred to on the syllabus. They discuss the fundamental importance of purpose and audience. They question how best to explore the influence of other texts on their work. They practice how best to express the relationship between themselves as an author and their intended audience. They spend time understanding how a device they have used might or might not have an affect on the reader/listener. They repeatedly use contextual examples as style models to analyse how both literary and linguistic features work together to create meaning.

What stands out with exemplar 3 is the confident use of appropriate and complex specialist

vocabulary throughout. Interestingly, this is not from a student who had a grasp of such vocabulary previously. Rather, their ability to successfully utilise an appropriate register and vocabulary comes directly through genuine wider reading 'around' the prescribed texts. Teachers are able to monitor this reading, regularly, through targeted questioning in class. Here, one feels is a candidate who immersed themselves in the additional reading available, thus enabling them to mimic the style and presentation of an existing text, and adapt it to suit their own purpose and audience.

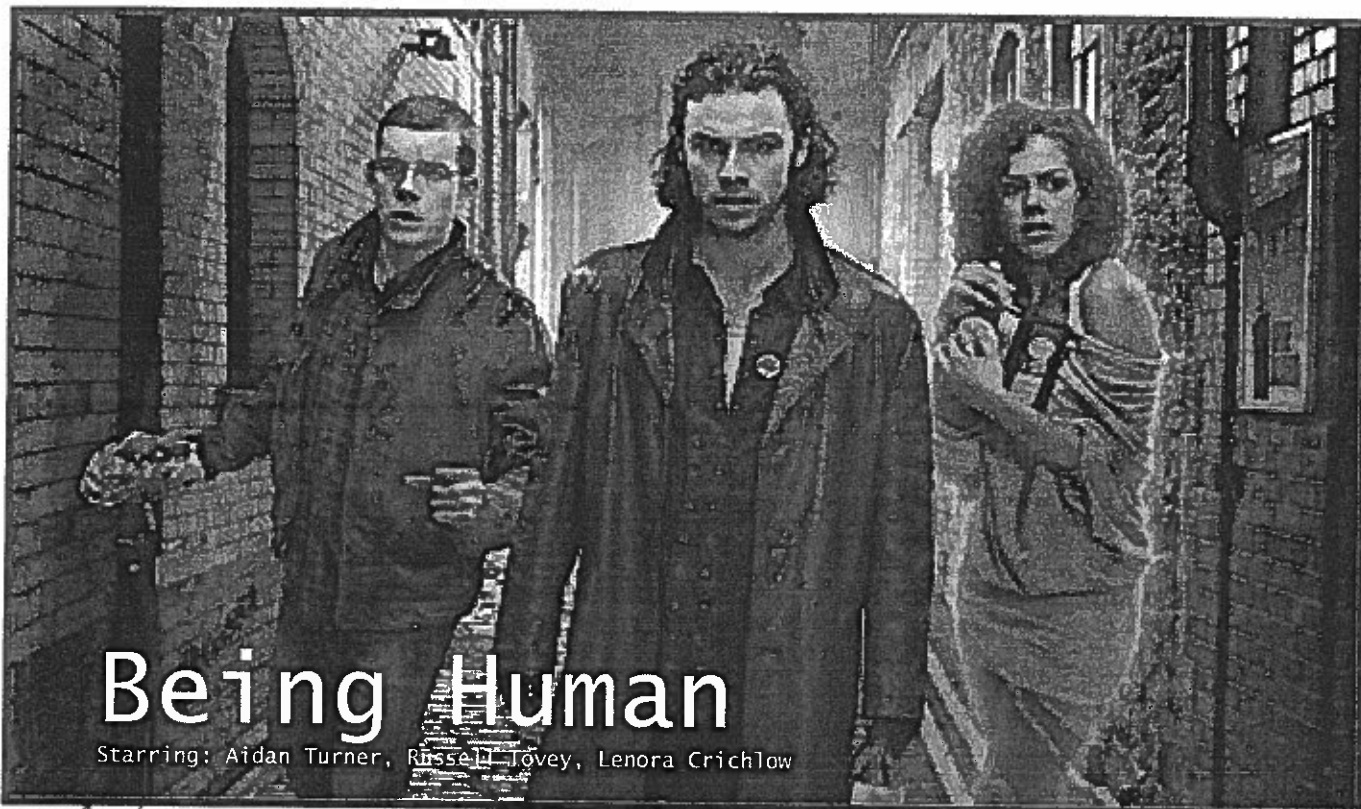
The choice of tasks allows the candidate to clearly differentiate between the intended audience of each piece. Again, purpose and audience are a central focus. This candidate has a vision of how they want their audiences to react and is willing to experiment with literary and linguistic devices to try to achieve these reactions. This is apparent when they experiment with a 'tongue in cheek' style of humour. It is pleasing to see a candidate willing to take risks within their work. Candidates should be encouraged to try out ideas, and given credit for doing so, even when not entirely successful.

This article is very successful however. This is partly due to the obvious care given to its presentation and sophisticated Lexis. More so, however, it is the humour and style weaved in amongst the factual information which raises it to the highest level. This flair appears to come from the candidates absolute awareness of his chosen genre and mode, along with a clarity regarding his intended purpose and audience. Having these fundamentals established, he then had the confidence to allow him to try out ways of creating humour through his choices of language, syntax and imagery.

Likewise, the monologue works well. Here, it is the attention to genre convention which supports a strong narrative voice and a suitably 'Gothic' storyline. This piece is a good example of not over complicating things. Its linear structure, supported by narrative description allows the candidate to focus on the aspects they wish to emphasise, such as iconography and imagery. The language of the text feels crafted. One gets the impression the student enjoyed experimenting with their language, secure in the knowledge that the structure, voice and plot were sound and in place.

Overall, this folder, like the others, is clearly supported by a secure knowledge of the Gothic genre. This, primarily, has come from each of the students willingness to read widely across the genre, learning and mimicking the aspects they found most striking in their personal reading. It is this process more than any other which has allowed these candidates to excel

There are certainly many ways of approaching the delivery of this unit with a class. The methodology noted here is not meant in any way to suggest that it is the way forward for every centre. Teachers know their students best and will always work in ways which best suit their learners. Clearly, even within a class, there will be a wide variety of learning styles present. I hope, however, that in detailing some of the ideas and approaches taken by a centre which has raised the attainment of students significantly and produced consistently strong folders, it might give a vision for others to adapt as best suits them. The great thing about this unit is that it offers students the genuine opportunity to write creatively and be rewarded for their craft. This is an opportunity for students with a passion for literature, to become writers themselves. It is very apparent, that those students who embrace this task, reading widely and extensively through their chosen genre, are best equipped for the process of creating a text.



Being Human

Starring: Aidan Turner, Russell Tovey, Lenora Crichlow

Gothic drama has long been the territory of the Christopher Lee-esque vampire, the bloodthirsty, remorseless lycanthrope, and the malevolent, enraged poltergeist. Ever since the days of Stoker, Shelley and Poe, among others, these three archetypes have formed the hallmark of the innately pretentious, elaborate art form that is the Gothic.

As of late, you may have noticed, this Gothic stereotype has been blemished by the tendency to replace ancestral, predatory members of the Nosferatu with sulky, pubescent quasi-vampires with a penchant for young girls, and to replace savage, carnivorous werewolves with well-groomed teen heart-throbs, complete with mandatory rippling six-pack to ensure swooning (we're looking at you, *Twilight*...)

This ghastly attempt to merge what are arguably two opposing ends of the movie spectrum, the classy Gothic horror and the tacky chick-flick, into one, is the scourge of the modern Gothic.

However, like a tiny, under-funded,

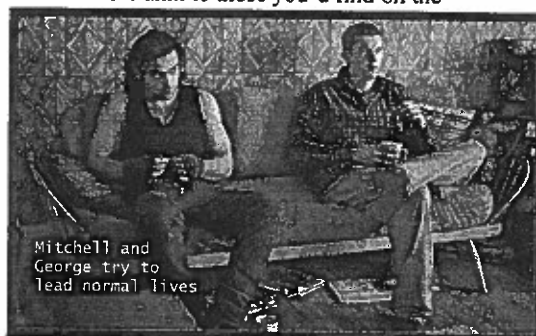
and underappreciated light in the darkness, we have Toby Whithouse's slick new series, *Being Human*. The show slots perfectly into a television niche-market, taking the midground between traditional and modern iterations of the Gothic, and providing us with a refreshing new perspective on what was slowly becoming a tedious exercise in mediocrity. However, it would be foolish to attempt to confine *Being Human* to one genre. Much of the appeal of this new series is that it feels no pressure to conform to the sectarian nature of modern television, confidently straddling the line between amusing sitcom, visceral horror, and compelling drama.

However, this isn't where the cunning of *Being Human* ends. Where traditional Gothic work places the emphasis on monsters being monstrous, and strives to portray them as supernatural and inhuman, *Being Human* breaks out of this convention.

The characters are conscious and resentful of their loss of humanity, and this, as the title suggests, is a theme which runs throughout the programme. Whithouse constantly reminds us that the 'monsters' are, in some respects, less monstrous than some of the humans.

The characters are also, despite their obvious supernatural conditions, achingly normal, and this is what

makes the show so refreshing. They would be more at home in front of you in the queue in the chippy on a Friday night, than drinking blood in a grimy back-alley, and their personalities are more akin to those you'd find on the



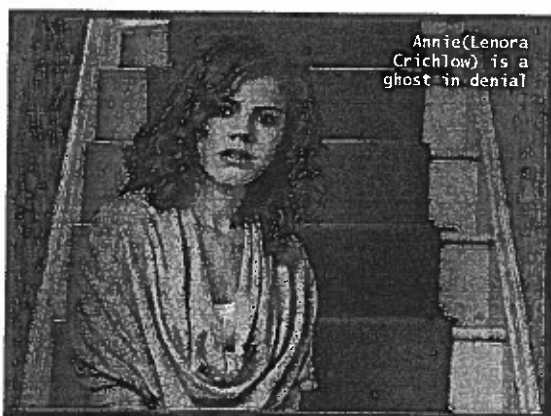
Mitchell and George try to lead normal lives

rival team during pub quiz night. They're instantly likeable, instantly relatable, and

"The show slots perfectly into a television niche-market"

endlessly humorous.

The drama revolves around the three supernatural protagonists: Mitchell, a vampire, George, a werewolf, and Annie, a ghost. Whithouse, however, has cleverly reversed the audience's expectations of these characters. Traditionally, Gothic horror has cultivated sympathy for the victims of the supernatural. In *Being Human*, however, our sympathies lie with the monsters themselves. Mitchell and George struggle to contain the 'other' them - Mitchell desperate to overcome his dependence on human blood, and



Annie (Lenora Crichlow) is a ghost in denial

George distancing himself from his lupine self, exclaiming 'it's coming!' and 'it's almost here!' when the transformation is close, refusing to accept it as a part of himself. The same can be said of Annie, who is not portrayed as the malicious, anarchic, 'fear me or I'll throw your teapot across the kitchen' type of ghost that the Gothic is so fond of. Instead of being preoccupied with her effect on the living, Annie is instead fixated on her effect on them, worrying endlessly about the fact that some people cannot see her, and becoming euphoric when she manages to conduct a normal conversation with a (somewhat puzzled) pizza delivery boy. Indeed, Annie is actually much less frightening than her abusive ex-boyfriend, Owen, whose manipulative ways are chillingly realistic.

"Annie is not a 'fear me or I'll throw your teapot across the kitchen' type of ghost"

This reversal of traditional Gothic values is a theme that runs throughout the show. The more typical vampires, those who embrace their condition, and make no effort to contain it, are led by Herrick (Jason Watkins), an ancient vampire masquerading as a police officer, while the vampires less accepting of themselves are represented by Mitchell, whom Herrick is desperate to have on his side. Herrick's masterplan is for vampires to rule the world, taking it by force, but he needs Mitchell out of the way before he can get to work. This makes for a gripping plot, with Mitchell not only fighting the temptation to prey on the innocent, but



Herrick & Co, unusually joined by arch-rival Mitchell (far right)

their preying on terminally ill hospital patients, or their desire to rule the world. Instead, the real terror comes from the fact they are so impeccably disguised as trusted and respected societal figures – policemen, hospital workers, soldiers, and ironically, funeral directors. The ease with which they blend into the community is what is truly startling about them. This, of course, is not to say that their vampiristic side is not well depicted – for a low-budget BBC production, the special effects are remarkably good.

The sound effects accompanying George's transformation are as revolting as any I've heard, and the scenes of Mitchell or Lauren feeding on an innocent member of the public are as convincingly gory as anything Romero has to his name.

Despite these new, pioneering takes on a stagnating genre, *Being Human* has not lost the dark, classy edge that sets the Gothic apart from other genres.

Dracula fan-boys should not give up hope on modern Gothic just yet, as *Being Human* still retains many of the features that made classic Gothic horror so appealing. The theme of alienation is arguably the root of all

Gothic, and *Being Human* incorporates this skilfully. Annie, George, and Mitchell, we find out through flash-backs interspersed throughout the series, were originally alone. Confused, scared, and not knowing how to deal after having lost everything they loved and understood, they

lived nomadic lives, trying to cling to what scraps of humanity they had left. George worked behind the counter in a dingy café, until he was targeted by a pack of hunting vampires. His unlikely saviour was Mitchell, living a nomadic life, staying wherever he could find shelter. After saving George, the two rent a small terraced house, which

Annie is 'haunting'. The three develop an unusually strong relationship, turning to each other to try and suppress the alienation from normal life that they are suffering.

"Dracula fan-boys should not give up hope on modern Gothic just yet"

Whithouse also makes a point of paying homage to several of the Gothic's more subtle touches – when vampires sneak into the hospital, they remain undetected by CCTV, and Annie is able to use a sort of telekinesis to move objects, like a poltergeist – Whithouse has fortunately not forgotten to honour the progenitors of the genre.

No doubt the fantasy scene will be ecstatic at this new lease of life. Let's face it, season after season of *Battlestar Galactica* and *Buffy* was becoming, well, stultifyingly boring. So forget your preconceptions about modern Gothic – this is no *True Blood*. Turner, Tovey and Crichton have collectively succeeded in beating Edward Cullen back into his cheap, modern imitation coffin.

What Whithouse has produced, with a tiny budget, a startling imagination, and some incredibly talented actors, is quite fantastic. *Being Human* is a triumph ■

1214 words



also the temptation to surrender to Herrick and fall in line with his contemporaries. It would appear that what Mitchell still has, unlike the other vampires, is a functioning sense of morality.

Strangely, the frightening aspects of Herrick and his accomplices stem not from their craving for human blood,

Review Commentary

- For my review, I looked at several reviews from newspapers and magazines.
- For example, reviews in the magazine *SFX*, geared towards a specialist readership.
- This allowed me to adopt graphology typical of a review in my work, and using a range of reviews intended for different readerships allowed me to see how this influences the tone, register, and terminology in a review. I chose to write for a more specialist readership, such as that of *SFX*. The purpose of these reviews is primarily to offer an opinion and to persuade readers, but also to entertain. The review must strike a balance between being informative and amusing. Prior to writing, I had watched several episodes of *Being Human*, and read the script for the first episode.
- I use literary techniques, making my work persuasive and opinionated, whilst keeping the review informative, mimicking the style of a review: intensifiers such as 'achingly' 'instantly' and 'endlessly' are used throughout the review to compliment or derogate aspects of *Being Human*. The hyperbole, such as 'stultifyingly boring' and 'tedious exercise in mediocrity', in the review also serve the same purpose, as well as being slightly humorous. The use of a group of three, 'amusing sit-com, visceral horror, and compelling drama', is also a technique used to make the review persuasive.
- The style of the review combines both the colloquial and analytical styles, incorporating humour: "fear me or I'll throw your teapot across the kitchen" type of ghost', more commonly found in less serious reviews, whilst commenting on the plot and examining the characters for the close analysis of *Being Human*, as a more expert reviewer might do. This balance between the two styles enables the review to be informative and investigative of the subject matter, but still contain an element of entertainment and persuasion. References to other gothic icons, for example 'as convincingly gory as anything Romero has to his name' (also a simile) and 'Dracula fan-boys should not give up hope' are a clear acknowledgement of my own, and readers' expertise.
- The structure of the review continuously juxtaposes the traditional aspects of Gothic drama, and the ways in which *Being Human* breaks out of these conventions. The opening paragraph details, in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, the stale aspects of the old Gothic, and the tacky aspects of the modern Gothic. It then explains how *Being Human* strikes a successful compromise between the two, emphasising how *Being Human* differs. My review also finishes with a short conclusion, as you would expect, summing up the stance of the review.
- I use several graphological devices throughout the review, making it look convincing. The use of a dropped capital to start the review, highlighted quotations, and collimated text are typical of a review, as is the incorporation of pictures and captions. The pictures reiterate the two contrasting sides of *Being Human* – the normal lives the characters aspire to, and the supernatural lives they are confined by. The captions also help to link the pictures into the review itself.
- Research
Influences
Audience/
purpose
Intent & Craft
Technique
connotation
specific Ideas
Detail
Context
style & structure
Genre convention

499 words

Le Lac Noir

A01 [A tall, bespectacled man sits in a gilded armchair in the dank library of a rotting manor house. He is wearing a deep black morning coat, and trousers to match. His legs are crossed, he is reading a letter with a businesslike look on his gaunt, striking pale face, and a crystal tumbler of a deep red liquid in his hand. His eyes are a milky white, like those of a blind man. The sender of the letter is in the wings, reading the letter aloud – as if the recipient can hear her voice. A brass pendulum can be seen swinging from a cracking wooden clock in the corner, and a steady, relentless ticking can be heard.]

Genre
Convention

Appropriate
Style

Highly
Original

Dearest Arthur,

A01 It is done. He is no longer a curse on our family. I did away with him and although we have been long apart, I write you the details so as you can finish the ritual in the correct manner. It is down to you now.

Simple
Vocabulary
Deliberate
punctuation

A04 It would have been dangerous to keep him. It was the eyes that gave him away. There was something wrong about them, Arthur. Something devilish. And his white, glistening skin. I used to find fine strings of it on the floor of his pen, like gratings of the finest alabaster. Everything pointed to it, Arthur. You must have surely known? He made noises at the moon, and had too much hair! Thick, matted hair, the colour of leprosy. Oh, Arthur - he once whined for hours at a silver bowl I tried to feed him with. Foul thing.

Narrative
voice / tone

Plot +
style

A01 [As the letter progresses, the man becomes greyer and seems to wither.]

Deliberate
craft

A04 We had one in the village before. She walked at night, barefoot and bare-chested. After her visits, the hens wouldn't lay, and the milk came sour from the cow. There was a sow born with two tails on old Haggart's farm. They say that was her doing. Her father staked her to a tree and set the thing alight with the paraffin from his lantern. He let her burn through the night, while the villagers cheered, and her body writhed and spat like a live fish in the pan. The birds sang the next day, and those that were sick before were well again. There was no doubt that it was her doing.

Research
evident

A01 [His wrinkles deepen, and his hair thins. This should be visible. Strangely, the ticking of the clock slows, but the audience should feel the passing of an epoch in every breath.]

A04 I am respected in the village, Arthur. We both were. I keep him quiet. Lock him in his room. If it was suspected that our child was some sort of infernal lycanthrope, I'd be staked by the reverend in the night. I knew I must be ruthless...

A04 I thought I would find it hard to do away with him. I didn't. It was liberating. A revolting catharsis. I rose early, to conduct the rituals. I chalked a pentacle on the sombre stone of the sarcophagus, and lighted the place with candles. I burnt the sprig of hawthorn you sent to me, and the words you proscribed were said. I had the courage to do it.

A01 [His exterior decay should represent the interior decay of his lover. The extent of his decay now clearly visible, cracks propagate through his features, and ash seems to fall from his face]

A01
A04
A04
In the early evening I creep upstairs, slide the bolts from his door and lug it open. I did my best to ignore the eyes and the gaunt cheeks that burrowed into me in a weak protest. I told him to walk to the black pool where we took him in his youth, deep in the woods. I told him not to look back. He slithered out of his room, down the stairs. I watched those legs, weakened from years in the dark, slip out from beneath him, and when he walks with the fear of god and the bloody taste of freedom into the kitchen, my heartbeat is synchronised with every footfall. When I hear his bare paws prowl across the slate flagstones, I will rush to the larder. I will seize that grim carving knife, and I will set off after him, in my best dress, with my hair tied up for the task ahead, and a crooked knife up my sleeve.

A01
[Man sips from crystal tumbler – parts of his lips crumble into the glass. Adjusts spectacles – parts of nose fall away. His eyes are glassed over, taking on the appearance of a blind man]

A04
He was quick, on four-paws, Arthur. I run, my white dress trailing in the autumn leaf-litter. I found him, out of breath and shivering, at the banks of the black pool, walking in circles, trialling the water with his coarse paws. Adolescent legs and bald muzzle dripping. I sit down. Collect my breath. I cross myself and unsheathe the carving knife.

A01
[Long pause – as if the final breath is being drawn, aching slowly, before the thing is done. Utter silence, and utter stillness – the audience should ponder whether the man has expired, as his eyes are now completely dull, and his hair barely visible. His delicate skin is stretched taught over his face and throat.]

A04
A04
I walked out behind the mask of my own confidence. With outstretched hand to pet the creature, and carving knife behind back. He whimpers, but remains still – a victim laying his head on the executioner's block. The leaves were blowing, and the last rays of sunlight were dribbling through the skeletal trees. I plunged the crooked blade through his skull and I saw it arrive through the bottom of his mouth. A look of shame swept across his eyes, as if he was sorry for being what he had been. A grim acceptance of what he understood I had to do. At last, he closed his dimming eyes.

A01
[Next sentence said as if from underwater, or heard from another realm]

I waded into the pool, Arthur, and lay him on the silt of the lakebed.

[A whisper]

The rest is up to you now, my dear.

Mina.

A01
A04
[Long pause. A decrepit figure, barely recognisable as the man at the beginning of the scene, stands up from the armchair (whose leather is now cracked and torn), and walks to the bare brick wall. Camera pan to cross section of wall – show half moonlit moor land, half interior of library. Figure floats to wall, transcends into the outdoors, and glides eerily into the distance, wind blowing a trail of ash behind it.]

Monologue Commentary

A03 My monologue is a traditionally Gothic piece of drama, concerning two lovers, and their
A02 lycanthropic son. The title, 'Le Lac Noir' or 'The Black Lake', is suggestive of the themes of the
A03 monologue, due to Gothic connotations of the word 'black' - especially when juxtaposed with 'lake'.

Gothic
Convention

One of my influences was Angela Carter, whose stories display a strong sense of narrative
voice, thus lending themselves readily to adaptation into monologue form. The monologue would be
best suited to being performed on television, and is designed to entertain - it would appeal to
anyone interested in the Gothic genre, or monologues in drama.

Resonance
Audience /
purpose

A03 Alan Bennett's 'Talking Heads' helped me to understand how a monologue could be
A03 dramatic, and not just the protagonist's chain of thought. Angela Carter's short story, 'Wolf-Alice'
A02 formed my contextual basis, and I incorporated a number of literary techniques reminiscent of
A02 Carter's into my writing, such as frequent tense changing: 'I will set off after him, in my best dress', 'I
A03 run, my white dress trailing' (this adds surrealism and does not allow the story to fall into a neat
A03 chronological order); incorporation of folktale and superstition into my writing, a typical feature of
A03 Gothic writing, referring to 'Haggart's farm' (and the unusual events blamed upon werewolves); and
A04 using the reversal of roles (parent as a killer, not a guardian) to explore the theme of infanticide.

Literary
Devices

I employ graphology reminiscent of Carter's own, with isolated sentences forming their own
paragraphs: 'the rest is up to you now, my dear', which suggests the actor should place additional
emphasis on this. The endearment here, and in the salutation, give a romantic, almost sexual
undertone to a story of infanticide, a great taboo. Poe and Perrault also use this technique to
accentuate the natural sensuousness of the Gothic.

Language
Devices
Specific
Intent

A02 I use lexis from the semantic field of vampirism and lycanthropy, such as 'staked',
A02 'sarcophagus', 'pentacle', and refer to a 'silver bowl', which has lycanthropic connotations. Typically
A02/B Gothic figurative language is also used - the simile 'like gratings of the finest alabaster' is an
example.

Specialised
Knowledge
Detail

A02 The monologue begins 'It is done', referring to something that the audience is not yet aware
of. This allows the story to develop dramatically through the controlled release of information.

A03 Berkoff's adaptation of the Poe classic, 'The Fall of the House of Usher' helped me to
A02 cultivate a sense of 'other' throughout the monologue, for example '*the ticking of the clock slows,*
A03 *but the audience should feel the passing of an epoch in every breath*'. These stage-notes help the
A03 actor and director to capture the precise mood of the play, which is paramount, as the voice of the
A03 letter is being read off-stage, and the acting is left down to the man, whose part is quite inert. His
A03 transformation into a ghost displays trademarks of traditional gothic literature - using 'ghosts' is
A03 innately gothic, and the way in which this is suggested (through the director's notes) makes for a
particularly uncanny scene, with the man physically decaying on screen, and the audience being left
to construct their own opinions about the reasons for this.

Read
craft +
Self
awareness
Dedicated
craft.

Bibliography

Monologue

Stories

- *The Bloody Chamber* (collection) – Angela Carter
- *Blue Beard* – Charles Perrault
- *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Fall of the House of Usher* – Edgar Allen Poe
- *Dracula* – Bram Stoker
- *Carmilla* (from the collection 'In a Glass Darkly') – Sheridan Le Fanu
- *The Red Room* – H.G. Wells

Television

- *Talking Heads* – Alan Bennett

Film

- *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

Theatre

- *The Fall of the House of Usher* – Steven Berkoff

Non-Fiction

- *The Gothic Tradition* – David Stevens
- *From Demons to Dracula (Conclusion: A Dark Reflection of Human Society)* – Matthew Beresford

Playscript

- *Cream Cracker Under the Settee* from *Talking Heads* – Alan Bennett

Review

Articles

- *Top 10 TV Shows of the Decade: 4. Being Human* – SFX Magazine
- Reviews from *Culture* magazine from *The Times*

Television

- *Being Human: Episode 1 - 6, Series 1* – Toby Whithouse

Playscript

- *Being Human: Episode 1, Series 1* – Toby Whithouse

STAKING OUT NEW BOUNDARIES FOR THE GOTHIC

In the age of *Twilight* and *True Blood* it was thought the Gothic was all but lost to the ravenous jaws of a gimmicky 'pararomance' clique, adored by teenage girls obsessing over the Pattinson dreamboat - a far cry from anything resembling the original thrills and chills of the genre. But in the darkness there lay a saviour...

Low budget BBC3 drama *Being Human* has exploded in popularity since its first screening in January 2009, and it's not hard to see why. Juxtaposing sensuous gothic aesthetic with jaunty realism, in its simplest form it is a comedy thriller about three creatures of the night living together in a house in Bristol. But the subtleties of the programme work on so many levels, and

address questions that even purists will admit were never quite explored to their full potential by traditional Gothicism.

For example, if a ravenous vampire living his life with the guilt of a thousand murders, and a werewolf enduring monthly invasion of his soul by an uncontrollable wrath, were to form a friendship, what would their favourite daytime TV programme be? (Answer: *The Real Hustle*). And if a beautiful young ghost violently ripped from her life by her fiancé won ten million pounds, what would

she do? (Answer: buy Colin Firth).

You would be forgiven for thinking that with the production of a new TV drama that professes to involve all of the most clichéd fantasy creatures apart from witches and zombies, and be grown-up and convincing, the BBC has finally tipped itself over into madness. But how wrong you would be! *Being Human* somehow manages to be utterly convincing and so gripping, that should you choose

to buy the box-set, you will find it near-impossible to leave your living room until you have devoured every single episode.

Being Human is innovative in that it uses the gothic to explore ordinary human relationships and emotions: the tensions that explode when three friends share a house, the drama and tears that ensue when relationships break down. Each character is a perfectly observed representative of real human personality, unlike the caricatures of beauty or evil that



George, Mitchell and Annie: creatures of darkness; housemates in Bristol



WWI flashback of Herrick, carrying out his dual role of Sergeant Major and recruitment officer.

one can expect to find in the *Twilight* saga and similar.

Alongside this however, *Being Human* is redolent with the scent of the gothic, in a way that is comparable to something like Berkoff's version of *Fall of the House of Usher* – an intense play that explores the decay of the human soul in such a way that, "if successful, should terminate the life of one member of the audience". Of course, it seems unlikely that the BBC would have any such aspirations, but there is intensity here that has not been seen for a long time.

Berkoff's description of

Usher's vampiric, incestuous affliction, as "a screaming confusion of nature at war with a decaying growth upon it that must die and be swallowed up", may seem great expanses away from the suffering of the three 'ordinary guys' in a TV drama, but there are striking similarities here. Despite its seemingly low-brow take on gothic themes, *Being Human* does exactly what it says on the tin: it explores the very essence of what it means to be human. And like Berkoff's play, it achieves this by exploring the condition of diseased humanity.

This works so well not only because the intensity is spliced with comedy, and the phantasmagoria with normality, but also because, unlike *Fall of the House of Usher*, where the main character is wholly disquieting, even disgusting and

fearful, it is the 'monsters' with whom our sympathies always lie. So when we see Mitchell, the vampire, stalking a pretty young girl, or watch George, the werewolf, on the point of transformation wildly running through a forest full of picnickers, we do not fear for those they might hurt, but for the injury that would be caused to their humanity if they were to give in or lose control. For they are not so different from the sinister and pitiful Usher, in that they are fighting a darkness in themselves, and they're screaming and confused.

But as any good TV programme that involves vampires,

werewolves and ghosts should be, it is not without its baddies. And boy, are there baddies! Imagine the smarmiest, slimiest copper in the history of smarm and slime. Add to that the fact that he is a vampire, and you have Herrick, king of the Bristol vampire clan. But he is not a Count style evil lord of darkness;

his chief inspector façade of normality is utterly complete, which is what is so disquieting about him. When he says "that's exactly the kind of left-field thinking we need right now" we almost forget he is talking about a vampire revolution and the subsequent destruction of the human race.

The brilliantly crafted script continues to work on two levels, and the characters talk all the time in euphemistic code: we hear George referring to his transformation as his "time of the month", Mitchell speaking of his bloodlust as if it were an addiction to smoking, and Annie, talking about her death as "this



George: the beast from within

thing that happened to me". This *double entendre* is not only used to convey the characters' disgust for their conditions, but as a dramatic device. The programme's full ability to chill is revealed when we hear Mitchell, on a date with a beautiful young woman, confide "Once a smoker, always a smoker..."

But truly, how does it manage to convince and captivate us? The Gothic tradition has always relied on widely held superstitions and strongly enforced taboos on sexuality, allowing it to convince and shock with relative ease. Take Sheridan Le Fanu's influential story *Carmilla* for example, which has a lesbian vampire as its central character.



Annie: "this thing that happened..."

To an audience of today it is a marvellous period-piece, but no longer the scandalous groundbreaker it was in its time. In an age of sexual freedom and under the disapproving glare of science and logic, how can we suspend our disbelief?

Being Human lightly sidesteps this problem by shifting the focus from exploration of the exotic to portrayal of the everyday. Of course, there are plenty of great scenes that any gothic fan will adore – violent transformations, dark corners lurking mysteries, spurting blood, and an edibly gorgeous female vampire (Lauren) taken over by evil desires to "feel their blood run down my chin". But in many ways, *Being Human*

rejects traditional gothic settings and pathetic fallacy: there are no looming black castles with pointed turrets and windows like glaring eyes, no mist creeping under the window frame, threatening to grip and choke. Indeed, the programme is riddled with mocking

glances at those clichés: the deep, dark forest is depicted full of happy campers, dog walkers, and gay lovers. Even the vampires' hideout, a funeral parlour, is taken by Mitchell and the others with a pinch of salt.

Perhaps that is one of the main downsides of the programme: it is so set in reality that it ceases to truly scare the viewer. But did it ever intend to? Although there are moments that have you on the edge of your seat, or looking away in horror, it relies on the contrast between these moments and the

sparklingly ordinary humour that punctuates the rest of the show. We are prepared to suspend our disbelief because it is not really about the supernatural – its key themes of friendship, fear and temptation are altogether earthly.

Being Human succeeds where most others fail: in not taking itself too seriously. Heavy themes are explored in a light-hearted manner, and fantasy is rooted in reality, but with such smoothness and control that there is no loss of poignancy or excitement.

Bloodlust: Mitchell and Lauren



Review Commentary

The purpose of my review of *Being Human* is to inform, persuade and entertain a readership of those interested in the gothic, or in television drama in general. In order to execute these purposes convincingly, I studied a review of *Being Human* in the specialist magazine *SFX*, and also looked at more TV/film reviews in *The Times* supplement *Play*, endeavouring to write in a similar style. Having watched many episodes of *Being Human*, I studied the script for the first episode, allowing the incorporation of quotations and inferences from screen directions.

Reviews offer an opinion, and to persuade readers of my positive view of *Being Human*, I incorporate persuasive techniques, for example hyperbole, "...has exploded in popularity", and assonance "thrills and chills" – highlighting the sections of the review which praise the programme. Typical of TV reviews, I create contrasts between a literary and colloquial tone, by using both technical terms: "juxtaposing sensuous gothic aesthetic" and hackneyed colloquial phrases: "what it says on the tin". This keeps a balance between critical analysis and chatty comment, so my opinion seems both informed and personal. I use graphology typical of reviews: columns, large headline and captioned pictures, giving a more convincing feel.

To convey the style and tone of *Being Human*, I endeavour to create a style and tone reflective of the programme. This means striking a balance between the serious and the light-hearted which I attempt using various techniques. References to the gothic are often joking: including puns "Staking out new boundaries..." and tongue in cheek metaphors "...until you have devoured every episode", but serious undertones also break through, with more dramatic metaphors: "fighting a darkness in themselves..." The contrast between fantasy and reality is highlighted through the pictures chosen (the three characters sitting on a sofa, then black eyes, claws and bared teeth) and the juxtaposition of the two aspects throughout: "creatures of darkness; housemates in Bristol".

The structure is designed to keep the reader's attention by following an overall argument through the entire text, whilst creating different smaller arguments in each section. This is achieved by allowing each section to flow from the last through anaphoric references used as pointers: "Alongside this, however..." Cohesion is aided by questions answered later in the text: "...how can we suspend our disbelief? ... We... suspend our disbelief because..." As the review is aimed at readers ignorant of its subject, arguments are strengthened by comparison to other popular gothic pieces, which has the effect of seeming to provide empirical evidence for each point of view. For example, Berkoff's stage production of Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* provides a baseline from which to argue that *Being Human* is not as low-brow as it might seem: "like Berkoff's play, it... explores the condition of diseased humanity", whilst Meyer's *Twilight* series provides a contrasting example for this: "unlike the caricatures... in *Twilight*". Aimed at gothic fans are "hidden" references to *Dracula* "...mist creeping under the window frame..." adding interest and increasing the persuasive power by making me appear informed.

503 words

For the Love of The Lady

A wizened old woman in a black dress and white apron, her grey hair in a chignon under a white linen headdress, is climbing a spiralling staircase. The steps are of rough flagstone and the wallpaper peeling and stained, but the handrail is of deep mahogany, as of a back staircase in a grand house. The light is dim and hued red. The crone never speaks, but continues climbing the staircase endlessly: speech is a voiceover of a youthful girl, occasionally mouthed by the woman.

(Mouthed) The stairway is heavy with the scent of roses, so I know she must be dead.

(Un-mouthed) We were beautiful in our day, the Lady and I. She would come down from her high castle into the village and walk, bare feet on sun-hot cobbles, among the rows of cottages. Neat cottages, with tidy kitchen gardens and hollyhocks brightly swaying on the haze of the afternoon. And the people would peer through their shutters or stop and stare in the street, but not come close – they were in awe, or afraid. But not I! No, I would spy her from the yard where I was feeding the chickens, and run through the streets toward the fountain where she stood. My brother shouted after me but I kept running until we were in each other's arms', holding hands, skipping through the village.

(Mouthed) There were always too many roses.

(Un-mouthed) She runs to me and throws her arms around me and we play gaily in the sunlight, for a time. Irradiating happiness, light. She is beautiful. I am plain. She is plainly beautiful, I am beautifully plain.

Pause

(Un-mouthed) And that same afternoon, she took me by the hand and led me deep into the forest. It was then that I knew, then among the silent trees, breathing dank air, bare feet on wet loam, then that I knew why I ran to this stranger, this strange girl, beautifully strange. She in her white dress shining – just shining in the dim light, all dappled from the trees. Yes, I knew then that she was like a rose – her scent drawing me in, pulling me towards the very centre, tightly budded whorl.

(Mouthed) I knew not what she was! I swear, I knew not what she was!

(Un-mouthed) But I knew. Everyone knew. Even my silent simple brother knew how her father had died with a stake in his heart and how it was she who curdled the milk and worried the sheep. And everyone knew who would be to blame when, one by one, village boys and shepherds, millers and priests, fathers and husbands and men of every kind all started to disappear. But none had gone missing yet, so I held her hand and let her take me. She was too beautiful to hurt anything.

(Mouthed) The thorns! The thorns! How they bite!

(Un-mouthed) Her long claws brushed my cheek, and she was on top of me, pinning me down. Then she placed her lips against mine and I felt the forest heave, as if in a great sigh. We lay on a bed of rotting leaves, clothed in shrouds of twilight, the long fingers of the trees reaching out to touch us, and we were one. Slowly, breathing shallowly, she moved her mouth to my neck and made a single, neat incision. The sharp spike of pain drew a sudden breath into me, and it was then, with three fatal words that I made my mistake.

Her back arched, her fangs bared, the forest shakes with the scream of a fighting cat. She dips her head and her whole mouth is inside mine and I'm choking on blood and pain. But she did not drink.

Instead she rolls back and lies beside me, quite calm, and we are separated only by the drenched forest floor and a pulsating lump of flesh. She turns her head, and I see her sweet lips dripping, and her lovely eyes piercing my heart; and I feel each separate point of discomfort – the caress of the hard wet ground, the kiss of the prick at my neck, the grip of the agony behind my teeth;

and I hear the deep breathing of the forest, the roar of my blood and the words she speaks. "Sang d'homme". I knew what I must do.

(Mouthed) I love you.

(Un-mouthed) Sprinting, I was at my door within seconds. He was asleep, curled by the hearth, a little boy. But the stubble on his chin and the stretch of the shirt across his back gave him away and I took his hand as she had mine. Half-sleeping, he stumbled after me to the place where she lay.

(Mouthed) Fee fie fo fum.

(Un-mouthed) The giant-like trees shuddered and the three of us were at one with the decay of the forest floor. All flesh is grass. I watched, as the lovely face that will not, cannot return to dust sated her lust and my own flesh was devoured. My brother, my saviour, my love.

Pause as she stops climbing, visibly tired, rearranges her clothing and catches her breath. She turns and looks at the camera.

(Mouthed) Time fades not the red, red rose.

Sits and rubs her ankles.

Of course, as the ages pass, I grow old and tired while she stays ever youthful. But why should that trouble me? I like it. I like combing her hair, fetching her prey, watching her kill. There is beauty in all that pain – the rhythm of it, the catch and fall, the fascinating swing of death's pendulum.

I only wonder if she ever remembers how I got here, or if we woke up that first morning, both our lips stained crimson, she as queen of the night, and I - another piece of furniture in her ancestral home. But how could she forget that hour of sunshine we shared, the pain we endured – of the light, of the bite: she for blood and I for love?

Sighs, get up, begins to climb again.

And now we both are at the place of annihilation, my cards show that. I knew she'd fall for him, but when the boy on the bicycle arrived, with all his English charm and good looks, I beckoned him to our door and let him in. She is to love, and in loving, die; I must die, and in dying, love.

Pause

Now I climb these final few steps to her bedchamber, the air getting thicker and thicker with the glorious, pungent scent. I will enter the room where she lies, her face a beautiful death mask, and, with a rose plucked from between her thighs, prick my finger and fall.

Reaches the top of the stairway. A gust of wind blows a torrent of rose petals as she opens the door and steps through. Fade to black.

1,153 words

The quality of writing is consistently fluent, coherent and controlled.

Sense of audience and purpose is expertly conveyed.

Choice of character, development of action and use of the original text are all highly creative and literary and linguistic devices skillfully employed to create a compelling piece of drama.

Commentary

The main inspiration for "For the Love of The Lady" was Angela Carter's "The Lady of the House of Love" from "The Bloody Chamber", and my narrative voice is based on the crone from this story. Enthused by the idea of a 'femme fatale' in this and other gothic works (particularly Stoker's "Dracula") I endeavoured to write in a gothic style, also adding Carter-like twists and ambiguity to the narrative content. The resulting monologue is intended for a television audience interested in the gothic or unusual dramatic pieces.

I employ various techniques in order to create a gothic style, including archaic lexis ("bedchamber") and syntax ("But not I!"). The red hue of the lighting mimics both the rose motif and gothic obsessions with the sanguine. Typical of the gothic, I juxtapose aspects of horror with sexual desire, using words from the semantic field of the supernatural and violence ("claws...fangs", "twilight", "choking on blood") alongside those of romance ("her sweet lips...lovely eyes"). Also a gothic technique, I use reoccurring imagery – the rose motif is in "Lady of the House of Love" and I use it to indicate the multifaceted experience of loving The Lady – contrast "...the thorns, how they bite" with "...the glorious pungent scent". Other gothic techniques I employ include biblical references, "All flesh is grass", and the idea of destiny (with a reference to tarot cards).

Inspired by Carter, I create an unreliable narrative, effecting a sense of disconcerting ambiguity, through contradictions – "I knew not what she was... but I knew" and changes in tense that leave the reader unsure of the chronology of the events – "She would come down...", "She runs to me..." and "That same afternoon, she took me...". I was inspired by other stories in "The Bloody Chamber", which draw on fairytales: consequently I use parallelism – "She is plainly beautiful, I am beautifully plain" and groups of three – "She turns her head, and I see... and I feel... and I hear..." The ending draws heavily on "The Snow Child", using the idea of a death by a thorn, which incorporates aspects of fairytales ("Sleeping Beauty" pricks her finger) and is highly ambiguous.

For dramatic effect, I create a narrator the audience relates to, yet is alienated from. The opening paragraph gives the initial impression of an ordinary girl and natural emotion "...from the yard where I was feeding the chickens"... "holding hands, skipping..." but as the events unfold, the narrator becomes further removed from the natural "...clothed in shrouds of twilight". Carol Ann Duffy's collection "Rapture", particularly "Forest" inspired me to use personification to convey intense emotion "I felt the forest heave, as if in a great sigh". The use of a young girl's voice highlights the old woman's entrapment in the past, giving the impression that she has not lived since the events she describes. Her climbing an endless staircase draws on this, giving a sense that time is in flux, whilst directions like "Sits and rubs her ankles" give the performance more credibility by rooting it in reality.

504 words

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AS English Language/Literature

Unit 2: Creating texts

Coursework: Reading audience : Interior monologue

'La Belle Dame'

Two things I knew.

The first, was that I was desperately seeking something. Something - but I couldn't quite lay my finger on *what*. All I knew was that I yearned for it with every nerve in my body. I wanted it more than anything else in the world, more than life itself. The very blood that ran through my veins ran hot for it. And the second thing I knew, was that I went looking for it. Every night my subconscious went searching frantically for it. In vain.

I always woke up as incomplete as before, but hungering, hungry. All that kept me from insanity was the confidence that when I found it, nothing else would matter.

Oblivious to the world around me I slipped past the front door and into the night. The bitterness of winter froze my breath, but I did not feel the cold. I did not feel anything except the unforgiving desire that burned inside me, urging me on. Searching, searching.

I could smell something in the air; it lingered so heavily around me it seemed to veil the rest of my senses. I had never smelled anything like it before, and yet, it seemed familiar somehow. I found the intense aroma almost unbearable, but was drawn to it all the same. I wanted to drink it in, to be surrounded by it, to be suffocated by it even... if this was my last sensation on Earth, I would not be sorry.

I filled my nostrils with the sweet scent and as the intoxicating fumes caressed my throat like honey, they burned me. I tried to follow it; to find the source of this infatuating smell. But it engulfed me and drowned my senses so all I could do was stand and inhale. In out, in out. Drowning in a feeling of ecstasy, I was being pulled under by this bitter-sweetness, and I didn't care. It was bliss, heaven... And then I felt the wind drop, the scent was gone and I was alone, feeling naked and blind, deserted in the darkness that encircled me.

It was then that I saw him. My blood ran cold. I had never seen him before, and yet I felt I knew him. I didn't even know his name. But already I was addicted to him. My past was forgotten, the present became a blur, all I could hear was my heart beat, all I could see was him. How had I lived without him? I wanted to be next to him. To touch his waxen and icy skin that sparkled in the dancing light from the candle that he held. His blood red eyes shone like rubies, glistening, luring me closer, closer still.

Each hair on the back of my neck stood up on end, but not from the bitterly cold air. I felt nothing except his presence and the space in between us. And as my heart skittered inside my chest, I saw him turn his head to look at me. His eyes bored into me, melting my flesh with each second that passed.

And then he was beside me. So close to me I forgot to breathe and I knew that *this* was what I had been searching for.

He was the reason. He was the answer.

The seconds slipped by.

He pressed his cold lips to my neck, and time stood still...

Out here I felt free. The smog from London had filtered away and endless moorland opened out in front of me. Beautifully chilling, it was impossible not to be in awe of this wild expanse. I found the harsh and pitiless surroundings exciting. It was as though the wind that rushed over the heath in torrents, surging and crashing like waves on the rocks, vibrated my very bones.

AS English Language/Literature

Unit 2: Creating texts

Coursework: Reading audience : Interior monologue

Bare, barren, bleak; nothing can survive here. It is far too easy to get lost and disorientated by the perpetual magnetism that this place holds. It will drag you under. This sweeping labyrinth will claim lives every year, it doesn't care whether they are children or grown men. But the open wilderness is not the only thing that hunts around here...

A01

A01

I am the beautiful lady. My arms welcome these lost souls. They think they have been found, that I will return them home to their families. Little do they know, little do they know. The beautiful lady takes no prisoners, she craves the taste of blood on her merciless lips and she will do anything to get it. For what are morals to one who lives off the blood of others?

A01

A01

A01

As I approach I have to fight every nerve in my body. I struggle not to snatch up my victim immediately and let the wait be over. My parched tongue longs for just one drop of blood, one drop of bliss...

I smile. The child looks up. His eyes are wide and frightened and in awe. He perhaps wonders who this angel is with the hair that billows about her, a halo of radiance framing her deadly white face. He whispers her name through trembling lips; he has heard of this woman. They speak of her with venom in their voices. The beautiful lady. I speak in an even and low tone; Do not be afraid, my child, my precious. I open my arms to embrace the child. And finally, the wait is over.

A01

902 words

A01

shows confidence in identifying audience & purpose

8/14

2 the writing is a competent pleasure to read - fluent, coherent, elegant.

A04

2 Shows creativity; demonstrating a clear expertise in the selection of linguistic techniques.

2 Shows insight from the literary & linguistic study.

14/10

A beautifully written piece of work.

TOTAL 24/24

AS Language literature

Unit 2: Creating texts

Coursework: Reading audience: Commentary

*Genre clear
Source text's
referenced*

My monologue 'La Belle Dame' was inspired by the topic 'Gothic and the Supernatural'. Enthused by the themes in Bram Stoker's 'Dracula', Angela Carter's 'The Bloody Chamber' and Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart', I wanted to write a monologue which captured their lurid and nightmarish features. I wanted my narrator to have depth, and the first person narrative of 'The Lovely Bones' and detailed analysis of 'Dracula' provided invaluable source material for this. Much of the sensual description in my story was inspired by Stoker's lavish portrayal of vampirism; however, I also drew on the lyrical qualities of 'The Bloody Chamber'. I imagine that my story will appeal to those already interested in the Gothic, but the dramatic narrative of my monologue is also likely to entertain those interested in contemporary writing. My title "La Belle Dame" not only makes reference to 'Dracula', but also to the vampirish "Belle Dame Sans Merci" by Keats.

*Proposed
audience*

*Language
analysis
Application
of insight
Detailed
+
referenced*

I begin with the striking graphological feature of a simple sentence standing alone: "Two things I knew." This instantly urges the reader to find out *what* it is that the speaker knows. Ellipsis in the continued use of "it" continually holds back the revelation and intrigues the reader. For dramatic effect, I end my first paragraph with an elliptical sentence: "in vain". Contrasting with the compound and complex sentences that precede it, it is unexpected and disconcerting for the reader.

*Genre
+
Context*

As my monologue is set at the same time as 'Dracula', I use archaic language and syntax: "The very blood that ran through my veins". This intensifier "very" is typical of 19th century language, adding to the credibility of the narrator.

*Research
experimented*

A prominent theme in 'Dracula' is the sexual longing that underlines vampire attacks. This inspired the attack on Lucy in my monologue, using the cumulative effect of multiple active verbs in the continuous present tense: "intoxicating fumes", "infatuating smell" – a typical feature of Gothic writing. When describing Dracula, I use lexis from the semantic field of vampirism: "blood-red eyes".

AS Language literature

Unit 2: Creating texts

Coursework: Reading audience: Commentary

Figurative language is common in Gothic literature to portray the luxurious plots and characters. To mimic this, I use the simile "fumes caress my throat like honey" to convey the sensation the narrator is experiencing. The harshness of the moorland is highlighted by the alliterative "b" sounds in "bare, barren, bleak".

Continued use of the device aposiopesis through points of ellipsis: "Time stood still..." suggests the beginning of a gap in time and leaves an unfinished thought hanging in the air. The rhetorical question, "How had I lived without him?", engages the reader, and shows the depth of the narrator's feelings for Dracula whilst repetition of "little do they know" emphasises the ignorance of her victims.

Carter's sudden tense switching in 'The Bloody Chamber' is very powerful, and I try to recreate this. The change to the future tense ("The sweeping labyrinth will claim lives") foreshadows the ending and conveys a sense of inevitability; immediacy is created when the tense changes to the present, for the attack on the child.

[505]

A faultless analysis of how linguistic techniques work in a text of Michael's own creation.

A02

⑧

Comments in detail on a wide range of interest linguistic techniques in the own writing, assessing/evaluating intelligently with stimulus texts/other reading.

Personalised sensitivity + perception in the analysis of the stimulus + language shapes meaning.

A03

⑧

Perceptive explanation of contextual factors in relation to the stimulus + linguistic choices.

Explores + comments intelligently + in detail on the stimulus texts + the influence of these/other reading on the writing.

GOTHIC ECHOES

Hello! And welcome to "Gothic Echoes" at the Hereford City Museum and Art Gallery. This exhibition aims to be educational, enlightening and entertaining and we hope that it will interest you and feed your thirst for all things gothic! Here at 'The Gallery' we take pride in our exhibitions and we strive to make them as enjoyable and insightful as possible. We are especially proud of this Gothic exhibition as we have managed to collect many unusual and celebrated artefacts from all over Britain and beyond to present to you today. We will take you through each exhibit room by room, with each room holding a unique gem from the Gothic tradition. Above every exhibit there will be a number for you to type into your keypad; this will start the specific commentary. If you wish to move on, you can stop the commentary at any time by simply pressing the red circle on your keypad. If you are in need of assistance, please feel free to ask our stewards who are on hand and will happily answer any questions. (2 second pause)

Right, time for the tour. If you follow this corridor down to the end you can begin your gothic adventure. Happy hunting gothic groupies!

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So, we start our tour with Gothic Literature - a vast subject that, unfortunately, we can't cover in its entirety today! However, we have hand-picked the most influential gothic writers from as far back as the 18th century up to this, the 21st century, to present to you today in our 'whistle stop' tour through Gothic literature.

So what actually is gothic literature? Well, Gothic literature was a movement that focused on dark and sinister themes such as ruin, terror, death and decay. The movement began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in response to the many historic changes that were occurring at this time.

But how did it first begin? It is thought that Horace Walpole was the first Gothic author with his book *The Castle of Otranto* which was written in 1764. If you look straight ahead of you, you will see a glass cabinet which holds Walpole's quill pen with which he wrote this classic work. When he published the novel, Walpole claimed that it was a translation of an Italian manuscript, however, in the second preface to the book, he admitted that it was his original work. The themes in the novel came from Walpole's fascination with all things medieval, with romance providing a framework for his novel. The novel was very popular and introduced many of the conventions which

characterise the genre: an intricate plot, supernatural occurrences, ruined castles and suppressed sexuality. ✓

Talking of castles, what's the picture of in front of me? The backdrop of the cabinet is a painting of Walpole's Gothic villa, Strawberry Hill, which he built in Twickenham. It was painted using oil on canvas in the late 1750s by Johann Heinrich Muntz. In building this inspirational piece of architecture, Walpole revived the Gothic style. He incorporated turreted castles with battlements, and used details from Gothic cathedrals with arched windows and stained glass. ✓

And the letters? The two original letters you see were written by Horace Walpole and were recovered from his Strawberry Hill during restoration of the house in the 1990s. ✓

The first letter you see, dated 28 January 1754, was written to his friend Horace Mann, an Englishman then living in Florence. In fact, it is in this very letter that the word "Serendipity" was first coined by Walpole: ✓

"IT WAS ONCE WHEN I READ A SILLY FAIRY TALE, CALLED *THE THREE PRINCES OF SERENDIP*. AS THEIR HIGHNESSES TRAVELLED, THEY WERE ALWAYS MAKING DISCOVERIES, BY ACCIDENTS AND SAGACITY, OF THINGS WHICH THEY WERE NOT IN QUEST OF: FOR INSTANCE, ONE OF THEM DISCOVERED THAT A CAMEL BLIND OF THE RIGHT EYE HAD TRAVELLED THE SAME ROAD LATELY, BECAUSE THE GRASS WAS EATEN ONLY ON THE LEFT SIDE, WHERE IT WAS WORSE THAN ON THE RIGHT—NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND *SERENDIPITY*? "

(NB: The above is to be read in a different male voice.)

The second letter you see, to the right of the first, dated 16 August 1766, is written to Anne, Countess of Ossory. It is from this letter that the often quoted witticism; "This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel," is derived. ✓

Okay, but surely Walpole is not the only writer of Gothic literature? No, on the contrary. Walpole merely succeeded in opening the floodgates as the 18th century reading public demonstrated an evermore voracious appetite for gothic fantasy. As these novels became increasingly 'fantastical' and nightmarish, they became the subject of increasingly vitriolic criticism – culminating in Jane Austen's 'Northanger Abbey'. Following on from Walpole in the nineteenth century were Edgar Allen Poe, Bram Stoker and Robert Louis Stevenson, whose works demonstrate both the transformation and the influence of the Gothic. The fascination with horror, terror, the supernatural, vampires and werewolves continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and indicates the power the Gothic continues to exert. ✓

They seem to be all men, did any women write Gothic? Of course! Perhaps surprisingly there were a vast number of gothic authors who were women. Mary Shelley is a prime example with her most famous work "Frankenstein", written in 1818, which holds great importance in the Gothic tradition. The serenely modest painting you can see on the wall in front of you is Richard Rothwell's portrait of Mary Shelley, painted when she was 43 years old. This beautiful oil on canvas painting was first shown at the Royal Academy in 1840.

As well as Shelley, Emily Bronte's 'Wuthering Heights' is a fine example of a Victorian 'female gothic' novel encapsulating many of the features which create a gothic novel.

You have now entered the most up-to-date exhibit in our "Gothic Echoes" exhibition. It is apparent that although Walpole started the tradition for Gothic literature a very long time ago, it is by no means dying out. In fact, the 'Twilight' saga by Stephanie Meyer has sold over 42 million copies worldwide with translations into 37 different languages. They incorporate popular elements of Gothic literature - werewolves and vampires- and are based around romance and thrill. The books illustrate perfectly the idea of suppressed sexuality that is so often found in Gothic literature.

The first of the "Twilight" saga by Stephanie Meyer was released in 2005 and more recently than that, has been turned into a box office hit. If you walk to the large cabinet on your left, you can see part of the original script for the film. The screenplay for Twilight was written by Melissa Rosenberg, and as you can see in this hand-written first draft of the script, she has made quite a few mistakes! Unfortunately, the scene illustrated in this script was edited out of the film, however, despite this we managed to get the scene to show to you today. If you walk over to the big screen and press the green 'play' button, you can be one of the first to view this exciting unseen footage.

Welcome to the most gruesome and exciting room of this exhibit. An idea which surrounds the Gothic is the idea of death, and so in this room, we present to you the most grisly and ghastly artefacts we could find for you to sink your teeth into!

Perhaps the most famous Gothic character is Vlad the Impaler (Vlad Tepes) - the real man Dracula was based on! This 15th century sadist is still known today for the exceedingly cruel punishments he imposed as ruler of Wallachia. Tepes imposed death by impalement - this was slow and agonising, and

victims sometimes endured it for hours or even days. The corpses were often left decaying for months as a potent warning to his enemies. ✓ A04

If you look in the far corner of this ornate room, inside the stone coffin, are the bones of one of Vlad's victims. It is unknown who this unfortunate individual was, however, it is suspected that he suffered and died in the siege of the Transylvanian city of Sibiu during the 1460s. It is thought that 10,000 others were also impaled during this conflict. ✓ A02

The large and gruesome image on the wall in front of you is a woodblock print of Vlad the Impaler attending a mass impalement. He sits dining in majesty, while his victims die in excruciating pain, impaled on long stakes. The pole would often push through the body at the top of the sternum and stick against the lower jaw so the victim couldn't slide downwards. On top of this, the victim was hoisted into the air after partial impalement to let gravity and the victim's own struggles cause them to slide down the pole. Horrible, isn't it! ✓ A04 A01

You have reached the end of the Gothic exhibition here at Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. We hope you've enjoyed your journey through the echoes of the Gothic era, and that this exhibition has left you with a newfound desire to find out more. ✓ A01

Before you leave, please place your headsets in the red box by the door. Thank you and goodbye. ✓ A01

(* 'Magnus Liber Organi' by Leonin plays *)

[1551]

A01

conveys a keen awareness of audience at all times, writing in a way which is appropriate for purpose.

She writes in an appropriate register

writing is coherent, fluent, accurate

A04

A creative & intelligent piece of writing.

She demonstrates expertise in her selection of literary & linguistic features / techniques

demonstrates clear insights - drawn from her wider reading & independent research

8/8
16/16

AS Language literature

Unit 2: Creating texts

Coursework: Listening audience: Commentary

Commentary for audio guide

My audio guide was based on the topic "Gothic and the Supernatural" and is a guide to a Gothic exhibition which showcases both literary and artistic items. The audio guides at the Roman Baths provided invaluable source material and I found the informal register and chatty tone of Bill Bryson's narrative more interesting and engaging than the factual and intellectual version. I was inspired to recreate this in my guide. I aim to educate those who have never encountered the Gothic before, however, I have purposely included more unusual artefacts to entertain and interest those who already have knowledge of the Gothic.

I wanted to steer my guide away from the dull and boring scripts you sometimes find in museums, as I wanted to enthuse and excite my listener. I therefore used the prosodic feature of exclamation marks ("Happy hunting, gothic groupies!") to make the script sound stimulating for the audience and to create a rapport with the listeners. Another prosodic feature I use is the underlining of "is" in "What actually is Gothic literature?" This instructs the reader to stress the word, emphasising the ignorance of this narrator.

Instead of having just one narrative voice throughout the exhibition, I use two contrasting narrators; a knowledgeable narrator to inform, and a less experienced narrator to ask questions: "But how did it first begin?" The principal narrator is an expert in the Gothic and speaks with a formal register to inform and relay information. The second narrator speaks using a much more informal and colloquial register ("Okay"). This is light relief for the audience contrasting with the intense and factual narrative that precedes it. I also put this second narrator in the position of the audience: "What's the picture of in front of me?". This contrasts with the almost omnipotent narrator who answers the questions. To give the narrator a personality, thus enabling the audience to relate to the narrator, I use the rhetorical question: "Horrible, isn't it!". By starting my guide with the cheerful interjection and salutation: "Hello!" I create an instant bond between the audience and narrator.

I use signposting ("The backdrop of the cabinet is a painting of Walpole's Gothic villa") to straightforwardly show the audience what to look at, however, rather than using straight imperatives, I put "if" in front of the directive utterances: "If you look straight ahead of you". This lessens the commanding tone and is friendlier. I also use the verb "please" for politeness: "please place your headsets in the red box".

Use of an asyndetic list ("fascination with horror, terror, the supernatural...") conveys information to the listener rapidly and therefore efficiently. When describing exhibits in the

AS Language literature

Unit 2: Creating texts

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gallery I use adjectives which portray them as unique and unmissable ("gem" and "celebrated"). This makes the artefacts seem exciting to the audience, and encourages them to look at them in detail rather than simply pass them by. ✓

A02

A02

I use discourse markers: "So," and "Right," in my narrative. These are typical of spontaneous speech, and I make use them in my audio guide to create a definitive start to the next topic, and to show the audience that the topic is moving on. ✓

A02

[528]

A02 : • Discussed an interesting - wide range of linguistic & literary techniques in her own writing, using explanatory quotation in support of her points.

- Demonstrates perception & sensitivity in discussing how genre, language effect meaning, showing critical understanding.

Band 4 : 8

A03 : • Shows awareness & explores sig of contextual factors.

- Offers some detailed comments on the influence of stimulus texts.

Band 3 : 6

Bibliography

- 'The Lovely Bones' by Alice Sebold
- 'The Bloody Chamber' by Angela Carter
- 'The Tell-Tale Heart' by Edgar Allan Poe
- 'The Yellow Wallpaper' by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- 'Twilight' saga by Stephanie Meyer
- 'Northanger Abbey' by Jane Austen
- 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker
- 'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Bronte
- Extracts from 'The Castle of Otranto' by Horace Walpole
- 'Carmilla' by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu
- 'The Woman in Black' by Susan Hill
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vlad_III_the_Impaler
- 'Talking Heads' by Alan Bennett
- 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' by John Keats
- 'The Raven' by Edgar Allan Poe
- 'The Listeners' by Walter De La Mere
- 'The Pot of Basil' by John Keats
- Bill Bryson audio guide at Roman Baths