

THE BOOK SUPPLEMENT



Dear reader,

Welcome to *Nouse's* Book Supplement. With exams behind us, summer beckoning, and the imminent decay of our carefully nurtured minds over the long summer months, there is no better time to pick up a book. I hope there is something in here to suit everyone's tastes: from prison literature to trashy holiday reads by the beach; or from the brilliant nostalgia of children's literature to the darkly informative choices of non-fiction for summer reading.

Rose Troup Buchanan

The Tiger Who Came to Tea
by Judith Kerr



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Can you teach someone to write? We speak to an undergraduate at the prestigious UEA

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Kamila Shamsie discusses her unintentionally international latest work

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The importance of being informed. What to read in the summer months.



Laura Hughes

Every Man in this Village is a Liar
by Megan Stack.

A collection of illuminating stories centred around individuals and the consequences of misguided American intervention, Stack's writing is a factual, evocative and a compassionate personal observation of a world of which we should know better.



Brandon Seager

Wuthering Heights
by Emily Bronte

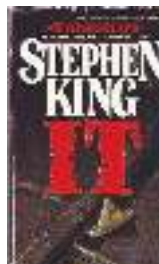
The raw, brutal dynamic between Heathcliff and Catherine never fails to fascinate me. Bronte doesn't compromise on her characters, keeping them flawed, conflicted and provocative - a truly gripping read.



Mary O'Connor

Lolita
by Vladimir Nabokov

Nabokov's style is beautiful - his playfulness with language is set against his precise and immaculate sentence construction. The story is shocking to the modern day reader, and yet he makes it beautiful.



Philippa Grafton

It
by Stephen King

The way it is written both thrills and terrifies me - I couldn't read it at night or on my own.

Contributors:



Rachel Banning-Lover

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit
by Judith Kerr.

It is one of the most compelling books I've read - exploring the impact of the war through a child's eyes, it offers a unique insight into how children can adapt better than most when faced with the most horrific events.



Alex Slingsby

Picture Perfect
by Jodi Picoult.

An absolutely stunning account of two lives torn at the seams. *Picture Perfect* is not the be all and end all in life, but it ranks pretty close.



Tom Witherow

Ficciones
By Jorge Luis Borges.

Beautifully whimsical Philosophy. Stories covering the nature of dreams, the universe, the winding nature of time, etc. Disappear into literary microcosm - philosophy degree not required.



Helena Parker

Molesworth: How to be Topp
By Geoffrey Williams and Ronald Searle.

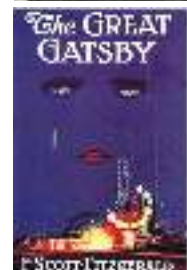
This book had me in fits on a crowded train of commuters last week. They were unamused, but I was with Molesworth; "grownups are wot is left when skool is finished" - boring.



Hana Teraie-Wood

Collected Short Stories
by E M Forster.

Reading them is like experiencing brief dreams.



Emily Ross

The Great Gatsby
by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

A classic that everyone loves, full of glamour and a must-read before the film comes out.



Poppy Bullard

The Time Traveller's Wife
by Audrey Niffenegger.

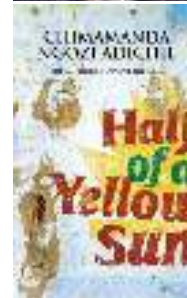
It plays with the quest of personal fulfilment in the face of determinism, whilst remaining overwhelmingly romantic.



James Metcalf

New Grub Street
by George Gissing.

It portrays the trials people are willing to put themselves through for their art.



Alex Swadling

Half of a Yellow Sun
by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

It's refreshing not to be reading the voice of a shrivelled European man. It's emotionally raw, but also funny at times and obviously, because it's my favourite, it's pretty good.

The course of new young writers

The University of East Anglia has created a course of literary legend. Since its birth in 1971, the department of Creative Writing has been honing the skills of some extraordinary authorial talent by tutors of high literary calibre. Past members of staff include Patricia Duncker and Angela Carter with Naomi Alderman, Joe Dunthorne, Ian McEwan and Kazuo Ishiguro on the list of alumni.

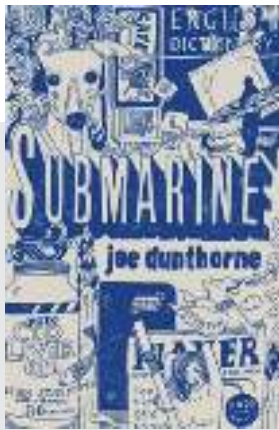
The department's 40th anniversary sparked a flurry of pensive journalistic pieces, tussling with the question of whether great writers can truly be 'made'.

Frank Palmer, now 20, is completing his second year as an undergraduate of their English Literature and Creative Writing Bachelor of Arts programme and he spoke about the process of writing, the essence of being a young writer and the available inspirations at an institution so heavily lauded with success.

We start off by discussing which success story made UEA so appealing. "The one who really turned me onto it was Joe Dunthorne, who wrote *Submarine*". Dunthorne was an exceptional student who was allowed to move straight from the undergraduate to the master's course, a move rarely permitted at UEA. "They tend to tell you to take a few years out to live a little, which I can appreciate as an idea. But in reality I don't know what they expect you to do for two years. I don't think I can afford to live a Bohemian dream and go travelling. I suppose you just end up working in Waitrose for a year."

Submarine - Joe Dunthorne

Follow Oliver Tate as he struggles with adolescence, the breakdown of his parents' marriage, and his inability to understand the people around him. In a funny way.



Since being there, the work of PhD students Sam Riviere and current "poster boy" DW Wilson have become inspirations, the latter being the youngest ever recipient of the BBC National Short Story Award with his 2011 piece *The Dead Roads*.

Yet the Department tends to brush success stories aside. The BA doesn't quite hold the dazzle of the famous Masters, and a strange dynamic exists whereby the tutors, who aren't necessarily as esteemed as those teaching the MA, give off a collective "weird, jaded voice". "They like to constantly reiterate that the chances of you succeeding in writing are near non-existent. I think you have to be pretty

"In the second and third years you workshop stories. You email your story around, and then everyone prints it off and lays into it."

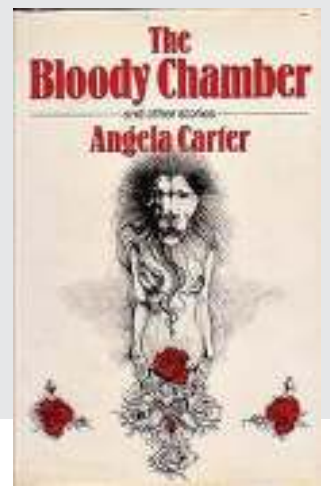
stubborn and pretty strong minded to not let that stuff get to you."

The course itself sounds like a pressure cooker of ideas. "In the second and third years you workshop stories. You email your story around, and then everyone prints it off and lays into it." The students then meet to air their criticisms one by one, whilst the writer remains silent in order to receive the judgements neutrally. It's the "out there" content which tends to split the class. "If you listen too hard to the criticisms then there's a risk of ironing out anything that might be interesting, anything that might stand out on the

The Bloody Chamber - Angela Carter

A series of unsettling gothic tales, re-imagined from their saccharine modern incarnations by Carter in 1979.

Dark and multifaceted, these short tales are worth a read.



page. Bret Easton Ellis once said

that the most valuable skill that he received from a creative writing course was learning how to separate genuine criticism from bullshit. You find yourself criticising things that in another context you might be commending."

UEA is often critiqued for its rather laconic "house style", a trace of the institution's influence that flecks its graduates' work as a reminder of its - dare we say it - hand in the writers' development.

"It's a good environment to be in, one in which people are encouraged to indulge in things that hold nearly no prospect for employment. I'm dubious about how much can be taught beyond certain ground principles, but it's the same as an Art degree in the sense that they give you a space and a time slot to practice. That's a pretty valuable thing to have". [HT-W.](#)

Atonement - Ian McEwan



Set during the 20th Century, McEwan explores the devastating consequences of a single thoughtless action.

Poignant, emotional and you don't have to watch Knightley pout for two hours.

HUN-CHUN CHEN

Precocious talents

Nick McDonnell

Aged just 17, McDonnell appeared on the literary scene in 2002 with his critically acclaimed novel *Twelve*. A heady mix of privilege, wealth, and drugs set in Manhattan's Upper East Side, the book follows privileged drug dealer White Mike as he sells to fellow rich kids, culminating in a party where things, to say the least, get a little out of hand.

Translated into more than nine languages, published in 23 countries to date, and made into a film starring Kiefer Sutherland, and Ellen Birkin, *Twelve* made McDonnell's name.

He has since published two novels, as well as covering the Iraq conflict for *Time* magazine.



Zadie Smith

White Teeth, published in 2000, was Smith's first novel, completed whilst in her final year at Cambridge. Its publication was greeted with critical acclaim, winning awards, including the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction.

Spanning generations it follows the lives and children of two wartime friends, the Bangladeshi Samad Iqbal and the thoroughly British Archie Jones. Set in London, Smith charts the eclectic characters through their lives, tying a l l together in a thoroughly memorable conclusion.

Smith has since published two other novels, *The Autograph Man* and *On Beauty*.



DAVID SHANKBONE

Christopher Paolini

Paolini became a *New York Times* bestseller aged 19, with his fantasy novel *Eragon*, part of the Inheritance Cycle. Comprising four books when completed, the Inheritance Cycle is an epic good vs. evil battle set in a mystical world involving dragons, dwarves, and elves.

Written by Paolini when he graduated from high school aged 15 (he was home-schooled), *Eragon* was first published by his parents' company. The series has since sold more than 33.5m copies worldwide, with *Eragon* being made into a feature film starring Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich, and Djimon Hounsou in 2006.



"I write this sitting in the kitchen sink." I Capture the Castle, Dodi Smith, 1948 M

Not hiding.

Erwin James, convict and author, talks to [Alex Swadling](#) and [Mary O'Connor](#) about life on the inside.



“You just put my name into Google - you’ll find all sorts of crap in there.”

The very idea that before prison, Erwin James Monahan was in his words “a dangerous and dysfunctional individual” seemed unbelievable on meeting the mild-mannered and good-humoured gentleman sat before us.

Having suffered continuous abuse from an early age, James’ life quickly spiralled downwards. With his first conviction at 11, he found himself between various care homes. By 15, he was living an equally nomadic and destructive existence on the streets. In 1982, James met his co-accused in a squat and their criminal activity eventually culminated in the murder of two men. James was released in 2004 after serving 20 years behind bars. During the final years of his sentence, he was asked to write a column in *The Guardian* newspaper on prison life and still writes for the paper today. Lis-

tening to James speak to us so calmly and movingly, one wonders how such a transition was achieved - from a “rock-bottom” life in prison to becoming a successful writer with two published books (*A Life Inside* and *The Home Stretch*) to date.

James, who has a notably humble way about him, gives no pretence that he is an “exceptional” individual, but instead pays tribute to a handful of much needed “champions.” One such champion came in the figure of the prison psychologist, Joan. During a bleak moment of James’ life, it was Joan who convinced him that he had worth. “She said to me ‘none of us are thick, we are all born with potential.’ She really hammered that down my throat. She persuaded me that I had some value,” he tells us with evident emotion. Gradually, James became reacquainted with education - something he speaks passionately about. “Education is the last bastion

for rehabilitation. If we believe in rehabilitation for prisoners, we’ve got to start with education.”

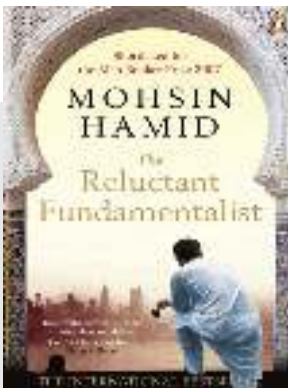
James unearthed his childhood penchant for writing and enrolled in an English course in prison before going on to complete an Arts degree, majoring in history. “In a few months I was top of the class,” he beams with pride, before wryly adding, “but it’s not hard to be top of the class in prison, in any subject really.” Although James claims to be unexceptional, to succeed in the “prison soup” is difficult. “Prison was all about crushing, dehumanising, disempowering, dehumanising, all the negative things about being a human being, prison was that” he reflects. “You have to operate within a very negative hierarchy...it’s dangerous. If you say ‘Oh I’m going to read books’, you’ll get stabbed - I’m not joking. If you’re going to further yourself in prison, you have to do it in a way that is acceptable

Mohsid Hamid
The Reluctant Fundamentalist

Born in Pakistan, Hamid’s second novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, debunks his apparently ordinary upbringing through the narrator and possible protagonist, Changez. Hamid extrapolates his own life into a ‘what-if’ scenario.

Changez is a ‘possible’ protagonist because Hamid wishes the protagonist to be the reader. The narrator addresses the reader characterised as an American, potential tourist, potential spy, in Lahore. We are made to analyse our feelings as the American stays largely silent, and the Pakistani voice is heard.

What Mohsin Hamid forces his inevitably English-speaking reader to ask is this: how much do we have ourselves to blame for the number of Muslim fundamentalists in the world today? And how precarious is that tipping point, how slippery that slope, from normality to extremity?



Danny Scheinmann
Random Acts of Heroic Love

Scheinmann’s ancestry takes him out of the ordinary. His grandfather was a German prisoner of war taken to a Siberian work camp during WW1. He escaped and travelled for a phenomenal three years across the bleak snow plains of Russia to get home. Although few details exist of his escapades, Scheinmann has “taken interesting truths and used them as coathangers on which to hang fiction”.

Running alongside this narrative is Scheinmann’s own harrowing story of his grief, guilt and very slow recovery from his girlfriend’s death following a bus crash in 1992. His only novel is a graveside promise to make something as a celebration of their love.

A superb one-off from an inspirational author which makes every ensuing book pale into insignificance for at least a month after. [HP](#).





to the hierarchy [...] but I decided to overcome these negatives.”

Unsurprisingly, these problems stirred when James – known on the landings for “writing a good letter” – began writing for *The Guardian*. “It was dangerous in one respect because of ‘the tall poppy’ syndrome - you’ve got to be subtle about your achievement,” he explains. “Suddenly *The Guardian* wanted me to write for them, and my heart was bursting, wanting to tell the whole world that a national newspaper wants me to write from them.” But James was discreet and after much campaigning he eventually began writing under the pen name Erwin James. “I thought, this was something worth doing. I could have just not bothered; I could have just crawled into a hole and disappeared” he insists. “The prison didn’t want me to write for *The Guardian*, they told me it wasn’t going to happen - they don’t like prisoners in the media.” James recalls an incident when he was accused of criticising the Home Secretary in his column and was called in front of the prison governor. “He said to me, ‘I’ve been told, to tell you (I was due my parole hearing at 18 years) any more of that, and when it comes to your parole hearing, we might just turn the page and let you wait a couple more years.’” We look at James wide-eyed, open-mouthed. “I swear to God that’s what he said. I said to him, ‘If you want to keep me in prison for a bad thing, you keep me in as long as you want. But you keep me in prison for a good thing ... I mean, are you threatening me? I’ve never written the disparaging things I’ve could have written, I’ve just been authentic and truthful and I’m going to carry on doing that in my writing.’”

So you faced issues of censorship?
 “I was self-censored” he states definitively, describing how he avoided the governor’s bowdlerizing hand. “I used to write my copy and read it over the phone [to *The Guardian*], with a big long queue behind me. So I’d be whispering, because I might be talking about drugs, or an escape, or prison politics and they might think I’m a snitch. It was dangerous. I had one guy come to my cell one night and ask, “Do you work at *The Times*?” I said “Yes I do”. I didn’t, but I thought,

that’d put them off the scent!” he laughs.

It’s these kinds of anecdotes that remind us of the significance of James’ writing as a prisoner; a convict locked away in an unknown and marginalised place. Some criticised *The Guardian* for giving a criminal such an outward platform, yet James wanted nothing more than to “open a little window into what it was actually like”. “I had no issue about being a prisoner - I knew I deserved all that came to me. I wasn’t innocent, I wasn’t protesting” he explains. “But when I read that I was in a holiday camp, eating steak and lobster, I thought that’s

“If you say ‘Oh I’m going to read books’, you’ll get stabbed - I’m not joking. If you are going to further yourself in prison, you have to do it in a way that is acceptable to the hierarchy.”

not fair. I’ve got victims out there, family, friends, who think that people like me are inside having a great time playing pool with my mates. It’s just not true.”

James’ honesty provided a much needed human antidote to these distorted images and allowed James to be not just a convict, but a writer. On the landings he was ‘Big Jim’, and in print Erwin James, a name he chose as “a sort of mechanism - not revealing too much, but not hiding either.” James’ work received largely positive feedback, but the speculation of ‘Who Did Erwin James Kill?’ reached boiling point in 2009 in a *Daily Mail* exposé after James tweaked information in an article he wrote about his time spent in the Foreign Legion in order to conceal his identity - a decision he remains apologetic about.

While hardly an exemplary moment of James’ character, his evident frustration and embarrassment underlines for us what is most striking and admirable about him - his overwhelming spirit of self-improvement: “My whole life is an apology really, I live an apology” he tells us firmly. “I knew I owed it to my victims to live the best way I could. If I’d come out of prison and just gone off quietly and become a plumber, I could have put this whole thing behind me. But because I chose this path, there is always a cloud over my head - I think about my victims every day.”

JAMES WILL BE SPEAKING ON JUNE 21ST IN BERRICK SAUL, AS PART OF THE PRISON FICTIONS PROJECT.

Imprisoned Literature

A Sicilian Romance By Ann Radcliffe

Ann Radcliffe’s second novel was truly a mini-masterpiece in which she exercised the characteristics that would epitomise her success and popularity, one of which was the imprisonment of women that spoke to the feminist leanings held by her subjugated readers at the end of the eighteenth-century. This occurs in a variety of ways in almost all of her major works, but perhaps most poignantly - and decidedly most neglectfully - in *A Sicilian Romance*. The Marquis Mazzini locks his wife away in the labyrinthine passages in the furthest extent of his Sicilian castle, and is haunted by his ravaging guilt which grieves him all the more as he sees the Marchioness reflected in the eyes of his daughters.

New Grub Street By George Gissing

New Grub Street is a book about the difficulties of living as a man of letters at the close of the nineteenth-century, but more than that, it links directly to the ways in which such men construct mental artificial prisons for themselves, either to maintain what they believe to be an artistic integrity, or to seek a brighter future by trading this sense of creative uprightness for a more lucratively remunerative, if slightly sham existence. Edwin Reardon sacrifices his wife and his home for the sake of his art, refusing to write what he considers to be a sensationalist novel that would please the public and accrue a little money, while Jasper Milvain forgoes his inventive need to give voice to his imagination to become a man of society. Both men, strikingly realistic and exceedingly well-drawn, might act as a warning of the ways in which society imprisons the hearts and minds of men.

Eleven Kinds of Loneliness By Richard Yates

When the American Dream was fresh in the minds of 1950s society, its hollow ring could faintly be heard in the voices given to Yates’ short stories in this compelling collection. As a prison in itself, the dream constructs an unattainable life of fruition without work, and work without difficulty, and while this sense of social confinement is explored rigorously from a variety of perspectives, including taxi drivers, yearning women, and thwarted writers, the wider resonance of the vaguely moralistic tales is given over to the realisation that the dream - however glossy it seems in the hazy light of idealistic propaganda - is a form of mental incarceration that gives nought but toil and trouble to the American man and his frustrated house-wife.

JM.

“He never sleeps, the judge. He is dancing, dancing.” *Blood Meridian*, Cormac McCarthy, 1985

Taikoo Books

I walked straight past this first time around, and had to double back on myself and pay more attention to the road and less to the book I bought in Ken Spelman. In a relatively residential area, this bookshop specialises in books on Africa and the Orient. Some beautifully illustrated books and a fascinating selection, many of which I was assured are out-of-print and very hard to come by. Although not my area I found myself admiring the beauty of the books all the same. Very useful if this is an area of your degree.



46, Bootham, York, YO30 7B
Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm

In a word: Intriguing



8 Minster Gates, York, YO1 7HL
Open 7 days, 10am-5.30pm

In a word: Useful

Minstergate Books

Previously unexplored, I was pleasantly surprised. Adjacent to the Minster, a well lit, small and amazingly dust-free shop with small rooms dividing up the sections. The front room is undoubtedly the most exciting, with well-cared for first editions of well-known books, and leads into another room of old prints and drawings. Downstairs has publishers' overstock and new books, mostly fiction, heavily discounted, and upstairs holds a variety from history to literature. A good selection although eclectically organised, and particularly useful if you are looking for more modern second-hand books.

The far reaches of Micklegate are not much frequented by students in daylight hours, but Ken Spelman is a good reason to go. Although slightly out of the way, it is efficiently run, and has a homely feel. The sections are well

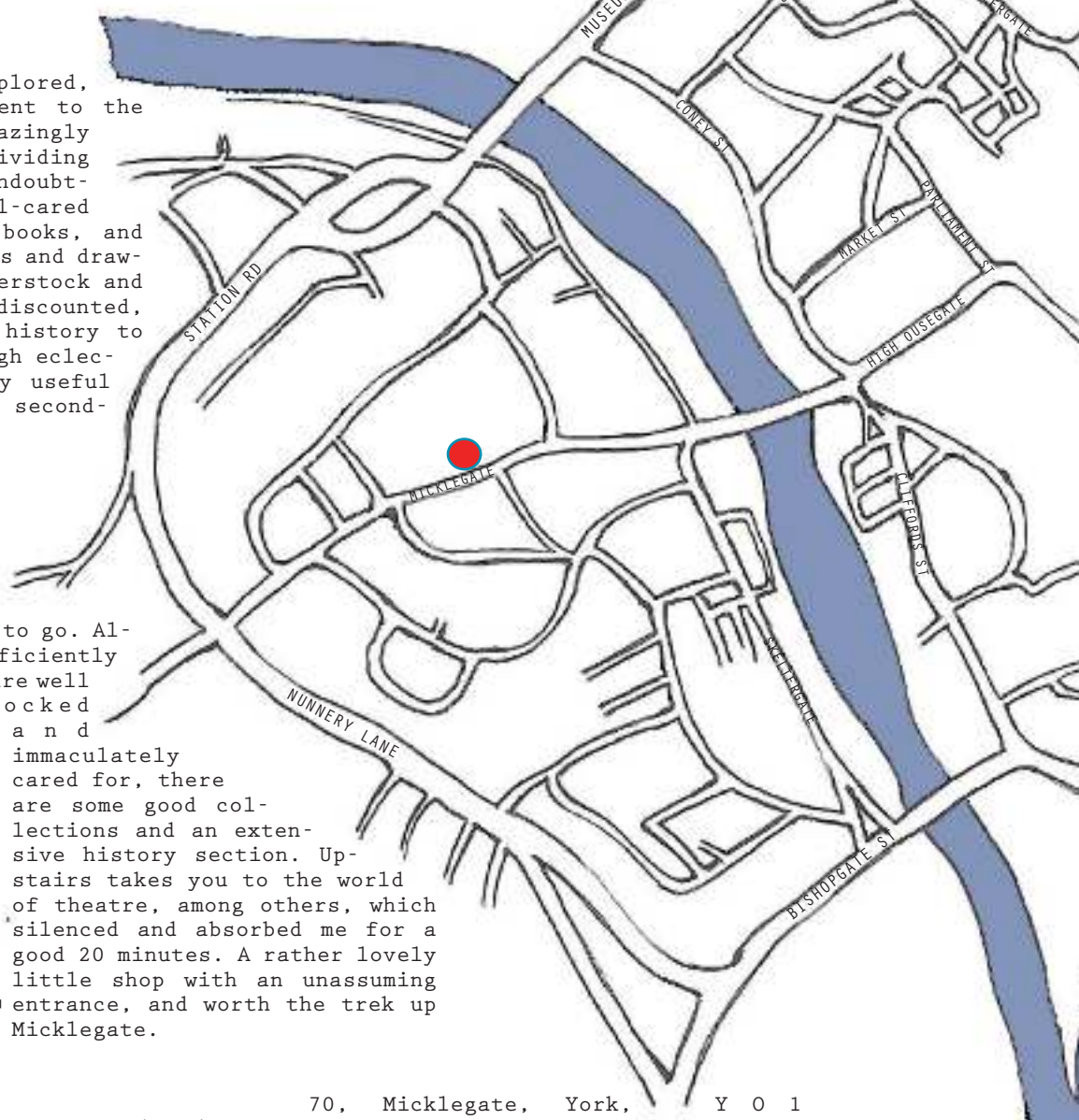


Ken Spelman books

and immaculately cared for, there are some good collections and an extensive history section. Upstairs takes you to the world of theatre, among others, which silenced and absorbed me for a good 20 minutes. A rather lovely little shop with an unassuming entrance, and worth the trek up Micklegate.

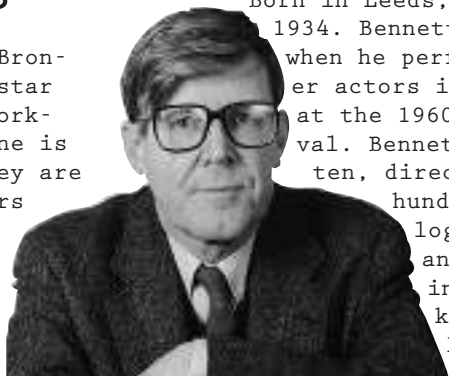
70, Micklegate, York, YO1

In a word: Classy 6LF



Local authors

We all know about the Bronte clan; they are the star attraction as far as Yorkshire's Literature scene is concerned. However, they are not the only high-risers in the world of books. Meet some more of our local talent, all born and bred in Yorkshire. AS.



Alan Bennett

Born in Leeds, West-Yorkshire, in 1934. Bennett won instant fame when he performed alongside other actors in *Beyond the Fringe* at the 1960 Edinburgh Festival. Bennett has since written, directed and performed in hundreds of plays, monologues, short stories and films, resulting in him being offered a knighthood and countless other honours.

Joanne Harris

Joanne Harris was born in 1964 in Barnsley, Yorkshire, spending her childhood in her grandfather's sweetshop. Her novel *Chocolat* (1999) brought her to mainstream attention, and a film adaptation starring Johnny Depp. She is now published in over forty countries and lives with her family less than 15 miles from the place she was born.



First impressions are of just another Oxfam shop with paperback thrillers and cheap glittery ornaments littering the shop. Venture further into the maze however, and you leave behind the initial shiny veneer and generic shop music, and enter a musty world of second hand military, aviation, and historical specimens that would entertain many a fanatic for hours. A few familiar faces greet me unexpectedly: Thomas Hardy, Winnie the Pooh, a whole shelf of leatherbound Dickens, scattered between other sections. There is neither rhyme nor reason to the organisation of some parts, but an excellent browse with extensive sections on Yorkshire, military and aviation history.

Barbican Books



24, Fossgate, York, YO1 9TA
Open Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm

In a word: Surprising

This single-room shop is more expensive than most, however if you're just there for a look it contains incredibly rare first editions and

plete set of Shakespeare published in 1930s: she was given short shrift. The other issue is that such a small room is rather spoilt by the bookseller crashing around with Radio 2 in the background. You slightly lose the lovely sense of library that settles on so many bookshops. Not a frequent hangout for students due to prices, but despite that a great place to find a one-off present for book-loving friends or family.

41, Fossgate, York, YO1 9TF
Open Tues-Sat 10am-6pm

In a word: Snooty

Lucius Books

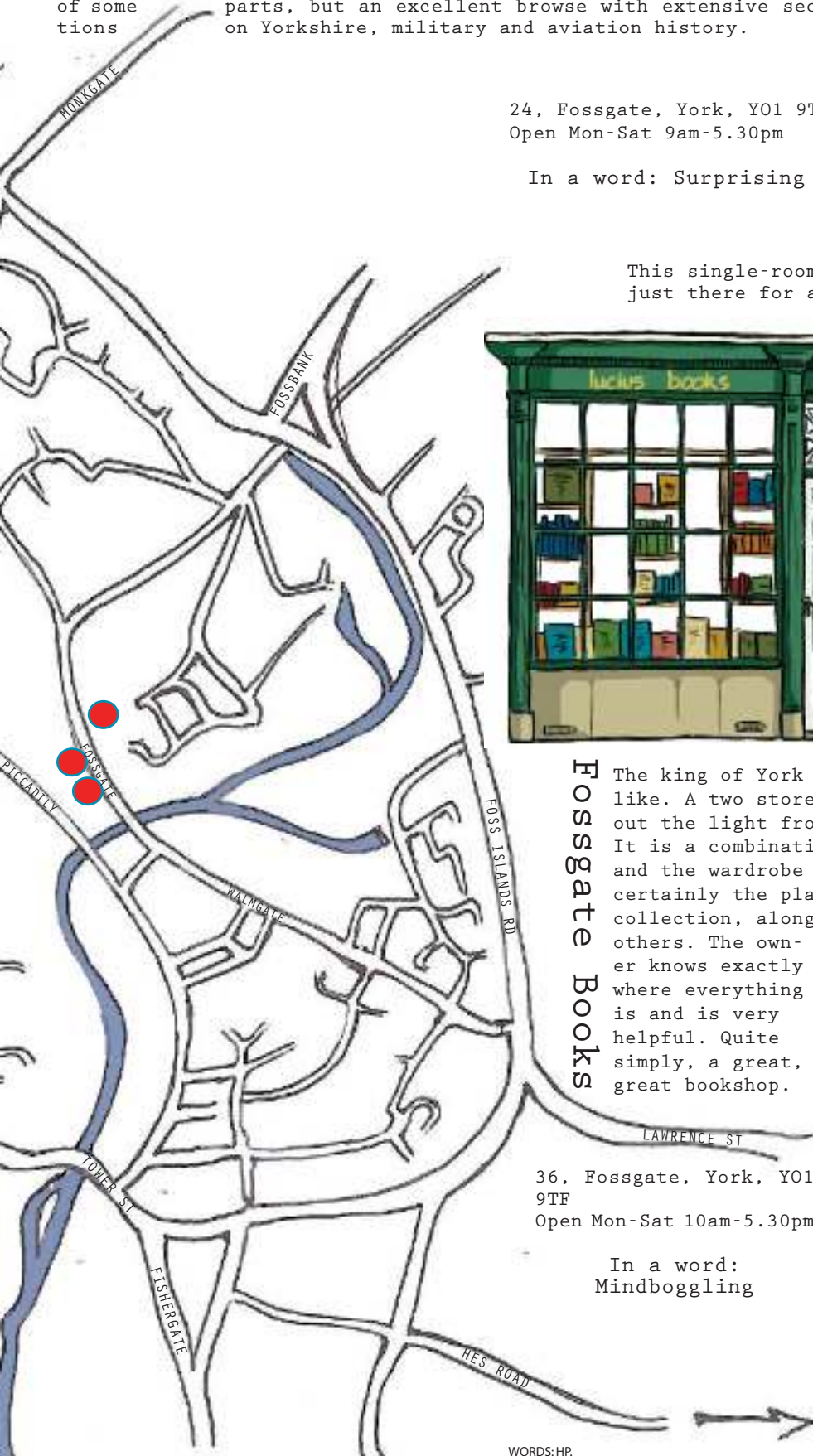


Fossgate Books

The king of York secondhand, this is what all bookshops should be like. A two storey emporium of books piled floor to ceiling, blocking out the light from the front window and nigh on obscuring the owner. It is a combination of your grandparents' attic, an Oxford library and the wardrobe to Narnia - if you have a day to lose this is most certainly the place to do it. There is an extensive Folio Society collection, along with history, sports, literature, military and many others. The owner knows exactly where everything is and is very helpful. Quite simply, a great, great bookshop.

36, Fossgate, York, YO1 9TF
Open Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm

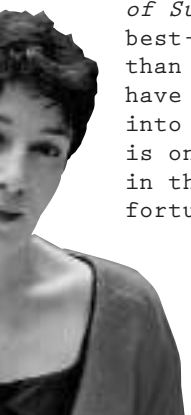
In a word: Mindboggling



WORDS:HP.
CARTOONS:BS.
MAP:RTB. TO UNIVERSITY

Born in Leeds. Her first novel, *A Woman of Substance*, ranks as one of the top-ten best-selling novels of all time. More than 88 million copies of her novels have been sold, having been translated into more than 40 languages. The author is one of the top forty richest women in the UK, with an estimated personal fortune of over £145 million.

Barabara Taylor Bradford



Susan Hill

Born in 1942, she lived in Scarborough, Yorkshire, and is most famous for *The Woman in Black*, a novel written in 1983 and later adapted for the stage. Hill has written over forty novels, short stories and non-fiction pieces, and now owns her own publishing firm. *The Woman in Black* is full to the brim with images of haunting and loss, and references often alluding to Dickens' *Great Expectations*.



"It was the kind of library he had only read about in books." *The Uncommon Reader*, Anan Bennet, 2007

Jane Eyre

Turns out, once they take the romance and the darkness out of gothic literature, there's not much left - who knew?

Beowulf

Need we say more?

The Time Traveler's Wife

Well acted, but badly handled.



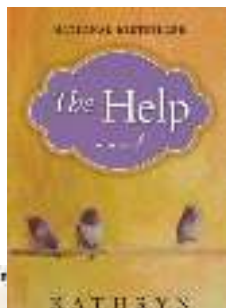
MISS THE FILM:

WATCH THE FILM AND READ THE BOOK:

The Help

The Shawshank Redemption

Sophie's Choice



Page-Turners to Screen-Burners

The curse of the book to film adaptation.

The *Hunger Games* again proves the power of the novel-clutching pubescent looking for their latest post-Potter fix is not to be ignored. Earning an estimated £42.9 million on its opening day, Collins' dystopian saga became the highest grossing non-sequel film ever released, and was met with critical acclaim. The transfer from page to silver screen was almost inimitably faithful plot-wise, and the casting choices near perfect, yet I emerged from the cinema disappointed. What then, did it lack?

The Hunger Games is too wholeheartedly loyal to the storyline, losing much for those of us perfectly content to sacrifice an event or two for the sake of a better film. Most disappointingly the moments of the film with the most potential were those that involved some of this 'liberty taking', perfectly illustrating the more political, human side to the otherwise boom-pow-adrenaline-rush action/romance centred story. Katniss' emotional volunteering, the three fingered kiss-salute and rebellion of District 11, and the entirely original opening scenes that portray the sense of Panem are poignant in their cinematography - impossible on a page.

If book-to-film adaptations can fail by being too faithful or by being not faithful enough, then which is preferable? Is it fair for people who have read the book to complain about it not giving them something new, or complain that it takes too many liberties with the plot? And therein lays the problem: is it possible to please or even serve both audiences?

The degree of faithfulness to the written word shouldn't even enter into the equation. The two should be considered as completely separate entities. In other words, a book is a book, and a film is a film - and whenever the latter serves merely as a visual representation of the first, it's a failure of an adaptation and the most that can be hoped for is a more instant gratification.

One of the best book adaptations is Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. The 2007 film has an entirely different feel and focus to the novel but loses less than it gains for doing so. The book is wordy and intricate, and much of its strengths lie in the complexity and nuances of internal monologue and the unreliability of the 1st person narrative. Short of a continual narrative accompaniment, director's cut style; there is no conceivable way of adapting this for the screen. The film's script-writers don't attempt to do so. The idea of perspective is addressed in the shooting of a scene twice - from different perspectives. For every count of particular verbosity in the

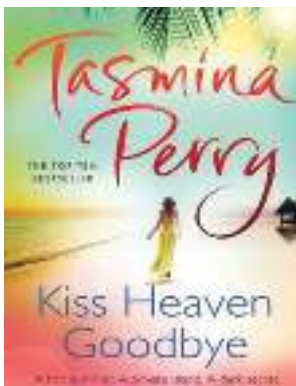
text, the film is starkly silent. The film possesses a sense of urgency and tension the sprawling, emotionally exploratory book lacks. The cinematography is breathtakingly beautiful, and like the soundtrack, help to drive the scenes by giving them a taut, crisp energy, especially when nothing's being said.

The discerning audience member here, contrasted with *The Hunger Games*, has a reason to read the book and see the film. Baffled by that opening shot of a parade of plastic animals lined up across the floor? Wondering what the whole story is really trying to say, on a thematic rather than a strict narrative level? Read the book. Want stunning cinema and tour-de-force acting? Watch the film. ER.

“If book-to-film adaptations can fail by being too faithful or by being not faithful enough, then which is preferable?”

HOLIDAY READS . . .

Whether interrailing this summer or jetting off to party in Marbella, here's to hoping 'living the dream' with friends won't turn out quite like it did in this novel. Four over-privileged teenagers get more than they bargained for when a young American's body is washed up on the shore of their private island. Unable to remember the full events of the night before, the lives and careers of the four are forever tainted by fear of what really happened. 30 years later they are forced to return...



The California Club follows the tale of 20-something Lara off to visit her friend Helen (a chef at a fancy Californian hotel) with several of her best friends, including the handsome but wimpy Elliot, who she is secretly in love with. Unfortunately, Elliot's horrendous fiancée is also in tow. However, the tables are turned when the gang are enticed into joining the mysteriously cult-like California Club, and voila, each is granted one wish. Things go a awry as their wishes are misinterpreted with pleasingly hilarious consequences. RB-L.



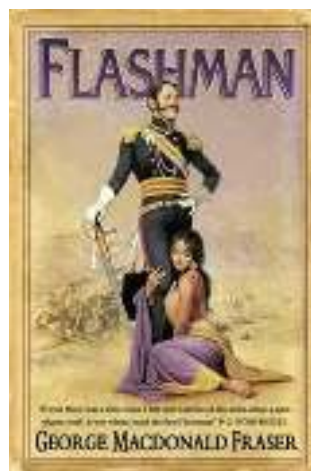
FOR THE GIRLS



"My name is Tucker Max and I am an asshole." Max's sordid anthology charts his inebriation and general attitude to life and women. Chapters include the requisite Las Vegas experience, in which Max impersonates a Christian rapper, shunning sleep and sobriety for 72 hours. 'The Blow-job Follies' or 'Tucker tries buttsex; hilarity does not ensue' are obvious in their crudity but rescued by Max's writing. Each episode is a well-constructed vignette of 21st century calibre, which will equally entertain and appall.

FOR THE BOYS

Taken from Tom Brown's *School Days* Flashman was reincarnated by Fraser who sets him in a variety of richly drawn historical situations, where, despite confessing to be "a scoundrel, a liar, a cheat, a thief, a coward—and oh yes, a toady" he manages to emerge from every situation with his honour intact and reputation improved through a combination of cunning, low morals, and complete disregard for the respectable course of action. Ideal holiday reading. RTB.



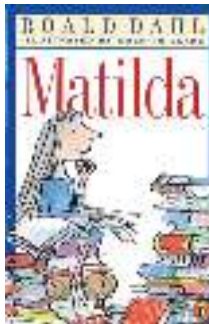
Childish pleasures

There cannot be many pleasures more universally appreciated than that of being read to. Storytelling is, in its own right, an art, which goes back hundreds of generations and spans continents. The breed of storytelling that almost certainly shapes every childhood is that of the Bedtime Story: teeth are brushed, hair combed and lights dimmed; the battle between drooping eye-lids and the revelation of chapter 12 be-

gins. But what of the storyteller? Let's face it, the parent in question has undoubtedly left a half-finished glass of wine on the table and is sacrificing precious child-free minutes to perform this ritual, so why bother? Wouldn't it be far easier to press play and leave an audiobook running? No, there must be something beyond the thrill of the story that keeps parents worldwide intent on maintaining this quotidian joy. PB + TW.

Matilda - Roald Dahl

The story: fiercely intelligent six-year-old discovers psychokinetic powers and gives her corrupt parents their comeuppance by using said powers. Realises her power to restore good extends beyond familial ties. Reduces tyrannical Headmistress to laughing stock, and liberates oppressed niece, consequently adopted by niece in a bizarre happily ever after.



Worth re-visiting because: parenting guides have a far less amusing plot line, and virtually no memorable characters. There are many drabber places where one might learn how to treat a child and, possibly more importantly, how to avoid having one's house burgled and hair bleached by an enraged prodigy: never underestimate children.



Winnie-the-Pooh - A. A. Milne

The story: Loveable bear in adventures aplenty with '100 Aker Wood' pals Piglet, Rabbit, Eeyore et al. Many misdemeanours with Heffalumps, Woozles and Jagulars, but the reassurance of Christopher Robin on hand to save the day.

Worth re-visiting because: Milne is a wordsmith, and Disney ruined everything. Pooh is not the ditzy bear so regularly portrayed by Disney. He is a well meaning and self-confessed Bear of Very Little Brain placed in a world of voluptuous punnery, nostalgic plots and childhood awe. Look out also for Pooh's charming poetry. And Pooh-sticks.

Black Beauty - Anna Sewell

The story: beautiful black foal born to loving mother. Proceeds to be handed around a variety of different owners (an Earl, cab driver, farmer, and finally sold to three gentle ladies) some of whom are kind, and others extremely cruel, all told in first person from the horse's perspective.



Worth re-visiting because: everyone needs a basic understanding of the Victorian class system. Thankfully horses, unlike human narrators, aren't able to foster inherent class prejudice so the working through to the upper are surveyed with a wonderfully impartial eye, and moral meritocracy wins out. Be nice to horses, they might be writing a novel about you.



A Bear Called Paddington - Michael Bond

The story: Marmalade-loving bear is found in Paddington Station, with label 'please look after this bear' round his neck. The Browns lovingly take him in, having been told he is a stowaway from Darkest Peru. They are as charmed by his manners, as their children by his messy antics.

Worth re-visiting because: Paddington combines the innocence of a child with the sophistication of an adult. As an immigrant and an outsider to British life, he is able to provide great amusement in pointing out our little island's oddities, or simply blundering into the traps of custom. Michael McIntyre can eat his heart out.

Where the Wild Things Are - Maurice Sendak

The story: Boy named Max, sent to bed without supper, allows his imagination to transform his bedroom into a forest of magical creatures, in which he is king. After dancing the rather Bacchic 'wild rumpus' with the monsters, he is left homesick and lonely and returns home to supper, hot as when left.

Worth re-visiting because: Beside this picture book's superb illustrations, the author explores young Max's management of his sentiments (danger, boredom, fear, frustration and jealousy), each of which is represented by a 'Wild Thing.' The ecstasy of youth comes crashing down - life's realities revealed. The 2009 film adaptation is well worth a watch too.



Fables for our Time James Thurber

Cartoonist, humorist, and satirist, Thurber's short stories and artwork filled *The New Yorker* magazine from the late 1920's. *Stories and Fables for Our Time* is a pocket-sized look at modern life and its eccentricities.

Thurber tackles issues such as war, justice, and over-loud love making alongside fables like: "The Little Girls and the Wolf", which provide an amusing twist on a popular tale. The intelligent morals function as punch lines to stories that are cute, accessible, and startlingly perceptive. EH.

The Man Who Planted Trees

Jean Giono

An allegorical tale, first published in 1953. It follows a young man hiking across the Alps in 1910 who meets a lonely shepherd in a desolate wilderness. This shepherd, Elzéard Bouffier, makes holes in the ground and drops acorns into them, in the hope of reforesting the barren land. The narrator is subsequently called away to fight in the First World War, after which he returns to visit the shepherd. It is 1920, and the young man is now a deeply scarred individual, yet when he returns to the previously desolate lands they have become lush forests. Emotional and evocative, a lovely tale to reaffirm your faith as you drift off to sleep.

Books before bed

Jonathan Livingston Seagull

Richard Bach

Deceptively simple story, the narrative follows seagull Jonathan as he searches for more. Bored by the daily occurrences in his flock, he pushes himself to fly harder, eventually resulting in his expulsion from his group. An outcast, he continues to seek the pure joy he gains by flying, meeting other seagulls like himself, and discovering more than one simple existence.

Beautifully written, this book can be picked up and returned to at any point. You'll often find yourself reading it in a single sitting, as you are engrossed in the story.



Writing shadows

Pakistani author Kamila Shamsie talks about the international and individual nature of her work

Novelist Kamila Shamsie is a part of an enthralling contemporary wave of Pakistani writers based in Britain. Shamsie's ambitious fifth novel, *Burnt Shadows*, was shortlisted for The Orange Prize for Fiction. Shamsie talked to me about the history at the heart of this story and the influence of her own origins.

Shamsie's ideas evolve as she writes and the author part-envies those who are able to plan out novels before writing them. "My brain doesn't work that way, so it's only as I write that characters and plot emerge. As a result I have to re-write a lot - first drafts are really for getting the skeleton of the story in place."

The novel follows the character of Nagasaki-born Hiroko Tanaka, who in the wake of the atomic bomb, loses her German lover and belongs both everywhere and nowhere. The characters cross continents, encountering the Mujahedeen, the Taliban, and the CIA, whilst the reader is transported from Pakistan, New York and finally Afghanistan in the calamitous wake of 9/11.

Her book was not always going to end up in Afghanistan and New York: "I had no idea when I started it that it would head in that direction. I thought I was writing a book leading up to India and Pakistan's nuclear tests in 1998, but as I was researching Nagasaki at the start of the twentieth century I started to see parallels with the start of the twenty first century and the novel started to move towards that time period."



ROBERT BURDOCK

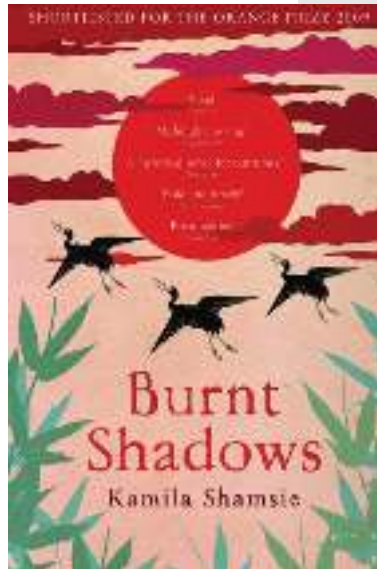
"I was drawn to the idea of allowing the characters to wander into any part of the world that made sense for the story."

Shadows in five different countries. "It's not something I set off intending to do. But once I started writing the Nagasaki section I knew that I didn't want to just return to the familiarity of writing about places I know, for example Karachi, where I originally thought I'd set most of the novel, so I was drawn to the idea of allowing the characters to wander into any part of the world that made sense for the story."

For Shamsie, the parallels between Nagasaki and modern acts of destruction lie in the willingness of civilians in one nation to accept the death of civilians in another: "the acceptable price for victory hasn't changed at all." The end of the novel explores the damage caused by those who exacerbate the idea of clashing civilisations and subsequently foster a culture of fear prevalent today.

Burnt Shadows has been hailed a historical work of fiction. The characters are contextualised amid the evolution of the atomic bomb, the partition of India, and the creation of Pakistan. Yet Shamsie views the novel more as an exploration of the lives of those who lived through the twentieth century; shaped through war, the fall of empires and migration. The history is the context, but it is the characters that bring it to life.

Shamsie spent most of her life in Pakistan, and her country has influenced much of her writing: "it's impossible to separate who I am as a writer and human being from the place itself. At the most basic level it means that so far most of the stories I've been interested in telling have been connected to Pakistan." Shamsie is just about to embark on the second draft of a new novel, set in Peshawar in the early twentieth century. **LH.**



Life and Fate
By Vasily Grossman

Spanning the length and breadth of the Russia superpower during the Second World War, Grossman's novel has been heavily featured on Radio 4 as intellectuals fall over themselves to call him the new Tolstoy. Don't be put off by such accolades: Grossman is an engaging, beautiful writer who conveys both the scope and intensely personal tragedy of the Russian Great Patriotic War.

Wild Swans
By Jung Chang

Wild Swans is a biography, autobiography, and a profoundly moving read. Chang writes of her family, starting with her grandmother and then to her mother, and finally her own story. Set against the turbulent background of China in the 20th century this is a personal narrative of epic proportions and a fascinating read for anyone seeking an insight into recent Chinese history.

To be attempted only when time is not a luxury, these books are huge, decadent, and magnificent examples of writing.

Warning: suitable only for a holiday

A Suitable Boy
By Vikram Seth

Four families' lives intersect in this sprawling and ambitious narrative set in post-colonial India. Seth uses the personal events of each family in order to demonstrate wider truths about the rapidly changing social and economic situation of 1950s India. The broad sweep of this narrative is anchored by the personal relationships elegantly drawn by Seth.

BIG BOOKS

J. B. Morrell eat your heart out. University libraries from around the world show us how it's done:

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

The largest building in the world reserved exclusively for the collection of rare books and manuscripts. Built in 1963, its entire construction was designed for the preservation of its contents: the walls are thin marble, to protect the books from direct sunlight, whilst the glass box in the centre can be filled with fire-suppressing gases should the alarm sound.



LAURA MANNING

The library of the Pontifical Lateran University, Rome

The original library was founded in 1854, and is now a collection of smaller libraries scattered through Rome. This latest installment was completed in 2007, and officially inaugurated by Pope Benedict XVI. It currently contains more than 600,000 volumes.

No lies

The importance of non-fiction

The pervading sense of gloom and doom, kindly facilitated by the presently dire economic situation in Europe, means perhaps we should start taking ourselves and our reading a little more seriously.

Reading fiction is the acceptable pastime of the summer. All year we've had our noses against a paper grindstone as we attempt to absorb multitudes of facts which (let's be honest) will do us little to no good upon graduation and eventual arrival in the 'real world.' Fiction is fun, it can be light, and if you are reading something even vaguely half decent or present in the accepted literary canon, then you can quietly reassure yourself that your brain is not stagnating in a pool of its own juices and is still engaged in a wonderful learning 'experience'.

But reading non-fiction might just be the best thing you do all summer. Reading something like Piers Brendon's *The Dark Valley*, provides eerie comparisons with the turmoil in Europe at present. Brendon focuses on the decade leading to the outbreak of WWII, spending a chapter on each major country involved in the conflict and the social, economic, and political factors which pushed each nation towards such a dark conclusion.

Economically, Niall Ferguson, who with his vast re-

search team releases book after book with alarming regularity, is the standard go-to guy. For a slightly different economic angle Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine* is a broader take on the current economic situation.

Focussed less on the recent crisis and more on the factors which allowed those powers currently embroiled in fiscal chaos to attain such wealth, this is a bleak, powerful book which undermines any preconceptions of the rise of capitalism, and its benefits to society.

Finally, as many of us jet off to far flung corners of impoverished continents, maybe pick up Graham Hancock's *Lords of Poverty*. Although published before some of us were even born (1989) the message contained in this book is more pertinent than ever, and well worth a read. A searing exposé of the inequalities and injustices of the multi-billion dollar industry of international aid, this was the first of such books questioning the ethics of aid multinationals and the aid business. RTB.

The Political Animal BY JEREMY PAXMAN

Paxman, great entertainer that he is, enjoys harassing the Brits for those customs and institutions we hold most dear. Now we can add our mode of government, which he sees as inherently flawed due to the type of person drawn to the political arena. Asking, what seem on the surface, quite banal questions Paxman unravels the internal politics, the ambition, and, above all, the disillusionment. Paxman's characteristic sarcasm fuels these flames, leaving you wondering why we bother at all. The whole system dictated by the whims of the PM and his whips? Who would ever have thought? TW.

Civilisation: The six ways the West beat the rest

BY NIALL FERGUSON

Ferguson returns with the rather controversial thread, running through many his books, that the West's dominance in the modern and early modern era has been the engine of human progression. He analyses six 'killer apps', which he sees as areas where the West has enjoyed comparative advantage:

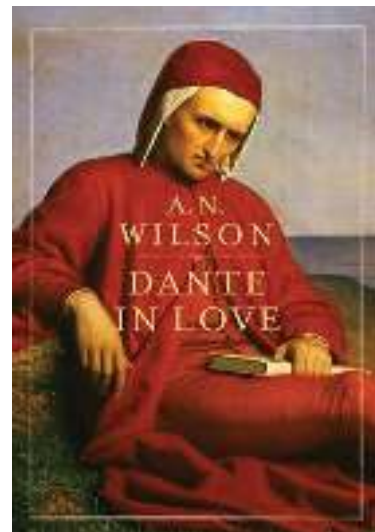
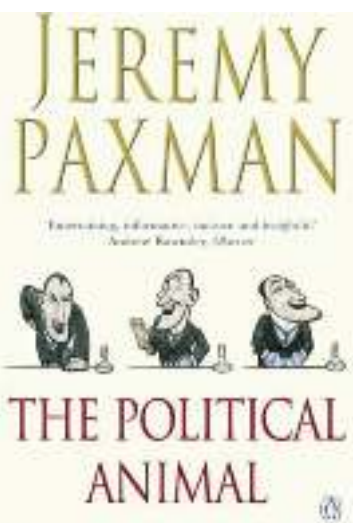
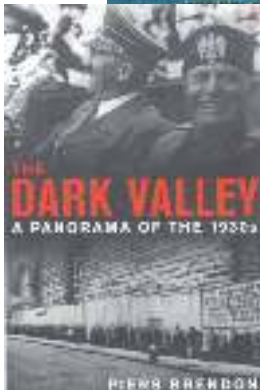
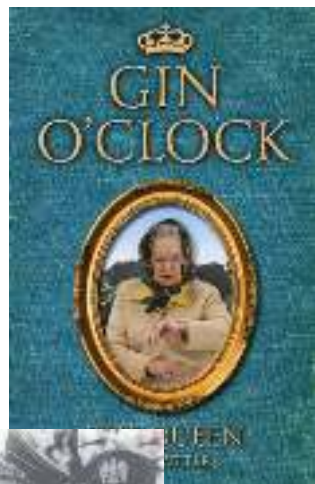
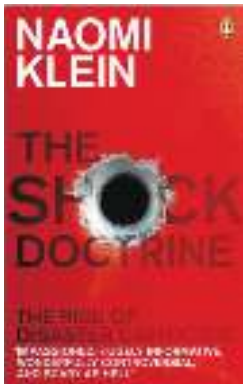
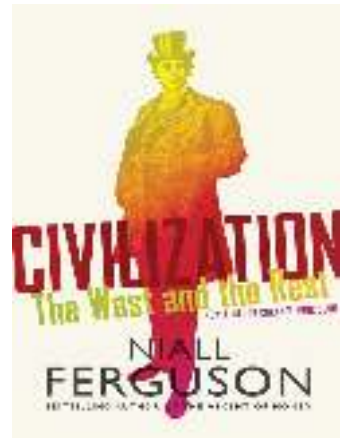
competition, science, property, modern science, consumption and work ethic. He fills his books with anecdote and is intentionally provocative, making for an enjoyable read.

Gin o'clock BY THE QUEEN [OF TWITTER]

An endless stream of highly amusing satire. Characters such as Clegg and Camilla are pursued with relentless witticisms - indeed the entire political class is belittled at her majesty's service. Fantastically British, our octogenarian queen is given the voice she never had as she is shown to be both a thinker and a drinker.

Dante in love ANDREW WILSON

Often a both mysterious and challenging figure, making a start on the world of Dante can seem daunting. But one will find little better place to start that Wilson's book which attempts to get to grips with the life and genius of Dante Alighieri. He is particularly successful in painting a portrait of the master, juxtaposing it with contemporary society. He rightly argues that it is impossible to make a start on Dante's works without an understanding of medieval Florence. This book thus gives the reader an opportunity to return, or in my case embark, on his work with a little shove in the right direction.



PONTIFICAL LATERN UNIVERISTY

Philological Library of the Free University, Berlin

Opened in 2005, the Philological Library was designed to resemble the shape of the human brain, and holds over 700,000 volumes. It is now the centre piece of the Dahlem campus, and has become a Berlin landmark in its own right.



TIMTOM.CH

"I think there's just one kind of folks. Folks." To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee, 1960

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