

## Annotated Topics List: European Studies

### I. Romance of the Deserts: The American Southwest in the British Imagination [1]

#### Primary [2]

- D.H. Lawrence, “Indians and an Englishman” and “New Mexico” (1920s)
- Aldous Huxley, “The Desert” in *Complete Essays*, 1939-1956 (1950s)
- Reyner Banham, *Scenes In American Deserts* (1982)
- David Hockney, *Rocky Mountains and Tired Indians* (1965) [Figure 1] and *Pearblossom Highway* (1986) [Figure 2]\*\*

#### Secondary [3]

- Troy Bickham, “American Indians in the British Imperial Imagination, 1707–1815” in *British North America in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (2013)
- Catrin Gersdorf, “America/Deserts: Postmodernism and the Poetics of Space,” *Anglia* (2008)

1. **Topic:** This is an original and thoughtfully assembled topic that ranges across time periods but coheres around a provocative theme: how is the American Southwest imagined in British culture? The key term in the title is “Romance”: how does this shape the way these different writers and artists think about their subjects?
2. **Primary sources:** There is an interesting variety of sources here, including literary non-fiction, painting, and the observations of an architect – what do they have in common? How do their takes on the American Southwest differ? Do we see change in these perspectives over the course of the twentieth century?
3. **Secondary sources:** The secondary sources here are doing two different jobs. Troy Bickham’s book chapter provides some deep historical context for the primary sources with a particular focus on British ideas about the indigenous population. Catrin Gersdorf’s article, meanwhile, helps theorize ideas of space and the desert.

- \*\* Many of the images included on the topics list appear in an appendix (included at the end of this packet). This allows examiners to look at less common/readily accessible sources, but also provides an opportunity to perform formal analysis of visual images during the exam.

## II. Monuments and Memorials: Reconciling with the Past, Debating the Present [1]

### Primary [2]

- Thomas Browne, *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial, or, a Discourse of the Sepulchral Urns lately found in Norfolk* (1658)
- Percy Shelley, "Ozymandias" (1818)
- Geoff Dyer, *Missing of the Somme* (1994)
- Hew Locke, *Restoration* (2006) [see Figure 3 for two examples]

### Secondary [3]

- James Chandler, "Introduction: Works and Days" in *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (1998)
- Graham Oliver, "Naming the Dead, Writing the Individual: Classical Traditions and Commemorative Practices in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in *Cultures of Commemoration: War Memorials, Ancient and Modern* (2012)

1. **Topic:** Key to the success of this topic is the way it presents memorials as dealing with the past and simultaneously speaking to their moment of creation. This provokes larger questions about how history is made from differently historically-situated perspectives.
2. **Primary sources:** As with the first topic, there are a variety of sources here although this time there is a much bigger time span involved, from the 17th century through to the 21st. This invites questions about how the idea of memorials has changed over this period, and how different genres of monuments do the job of memorializing differently.
3. **Secondary sources:** Both these sources can be used to talk about the larger theme of this topic, but they also have direct connections to specific primary sources (Oliver to Dyer and Chandler to Shelley).

### III. Mobility on London Streets [1]

#### Primary [2]

- A.R. Buckland, "London Street-Life" (published in *Good Words*, Vol. 33, pages 86-94, 240-246, and 468-474; accessible via British Periodicals database) (January 1892)
- Virginia Woolf, "Street Haunting" from *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (1930)
- Paul Gilroy, *Black Britain: A Photographic History* (2007)
- Zadie Smith, *NW* (2012)

#### Secondary [3]

- Lynda Nead, "The Rape of the Glances" in *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (2005)
- Chris Waters, "'Dark Strangers' in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963" (1997)

1. **Topic:** This title invites a number of questions: what is meant by mobility? How is this mobility specific to urban life? And why is London an important city in this regard? The sources assembled display an interest in thinking about how mobility is understood in the context of gender and race.
2. **Primary sources:** The sources here connect to each other in really interesting ways. For example, Smith's novel is interested in blackness in Britain (as is the Gilroy) but is also focused on ideas of modernism and the city (like Woolf).
3. **Secondary sources:** Both these secondary sources explore how mobility could be limited in city life in different periods of London's history, through examples drawn from Victoria era prostitution and postwar immigration.

## IV. Cleanliness and Otherness [1]

### Primary [2]

- Jonathan Swift, "The Lady's Dressing Room" (1732)
- V.S. Naipaul, "Part One" in *An Area of Darkness* (1964)
- Mary Douglas, "External Boundaries," *Purity and Danger* (1968)
- Tracey Emin, "My Bed" (1998) (Figure 4)

### Secondary [3]

- Rosemary Ashton, "Prologue" and "1858 in History" in *One Hot Summer: Dickens, Darwin, Disraeli, and the Great Stink of 1858* (2017)
- Anne McClintock, "Soft-Soaping Empire," in *Imperial Leather* (1995)

1. **Topic:** This topic brings together two underlying dynamics of its theme of cleanliness-- empire and gender--and invites questions about how being "clean" has been used as a tool of othering the colonial subject and the female body.
2. **Primary sources:** The list raises interesting questions about how cleanliness is understood in different types of sources, whether it is literature (Swift and Naipaul), anthropology (Douglas), or conceptual art (Emin)
3. **Secondary sources:** Rosemary Ashton's chapters, which focus on a specific event (the Great Stink) that does not feature in any of the primary sources, invite the question about why it was included and how it might enlighten readings of the primary sources. Anne McClintock's chapter has a clear and compelling thesis about colonialism that fits very well with Naipaul's book.

## V. Real / Imaginary Borders: Constructing the Edge of Great Britain [1]

### Primary [2]

- Richard Ayton and William Daniell, *A Voyage Round Great Britain: Undertaken in the Summer of the Year 1813, and Commencing from the Land's-End, Cornwall* (1814)
- Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach" (written in 1851, published in 1867)
- Newsreel footage of arrival of SS Empire Windrush in Britain (1954) (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9F6lsLRdZ-o> for clips of stories "The "Windrush": First Pictures" and "Pathe Reporter Meets—")
- Jamaica Kincaid, "On Seeing England for the First Time" (1991)
- David Blunkett, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain* (2002)

### Secondary [3]

- Sarah Iltott, "Introduction: Remapping Boundaries – Postcolonial Britain and Literary/Cinematic Genres" in *New Postcolonial British Genres: Shifting the Boundaries* (2015)
- Radhika Mongia, "Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport" (1999)

1. **Topic:** This list offers another great example of an original way to organize a topic about a familiar subject: national identity. The idea of the figurative and literal border of the island of Britain is explored through a variety of sources, including news footage, a policy paper, a memoir and a poem. It is also worth noting that this topic can be connected in interesting ways to, say Topic III, and the question of immigration and mobility.
2. **Primary sources:** The different sources allow the author to talk about how borders are constructed and defined from different perspectives, be it from that of the government (Blunkett), the colonial subject (Kincaid), the immigrant (Windrush), or the national poet (Arnold). Spanning two centuries, this set of primary sources also invites questions about how ideas of the border have changed over time.
3. **Secondary sources:** Sarah Iltott's chapter helps understand what borders mean in a postcolonial context while Radhika Mongia's essay uses the passport to think about the way national identity is constructed by the state. Both sources raise interesting questions about how borders are created and who is included and excluded from the state that is contained within these borders.

## Appendix: Images

Figure 1. David Hockney, *Rocky Mountains and Tired Indians* (1965), 170.40 x 252.80 cm, acrylic on canvas



<https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/603/rocky-mountains-and-tired-indians>

Figure 2. David Hockney, *Pearblossom Hwy., 11 - 18th April 1986, #2* (1986), 181.6 × 271.8 cm, chromogenic print



<http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/105374/david-hockney-pearblossom-hwy-11-18th-april-1986-2-british-april-11-18-1986/>

Figure 3. Hew Locke, *Restoration* (2016), c-type photographs with mixed media



Detail of "Burke" <http://www.hewlocke.net/restoration2.html>



"Edward VII" <http://www.hewlocke.net/restoration2.html>

Figure 4. Photographs of Tracey Emin's "My Bed" (1999), box frame, mattress, linens, pillows and various objects



<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/emin-my-bed-103662>



<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/emin-my-bed-l03662>