Focus group 3 transcription, 11-12 pm, 1/2/24

RY: So again, thanks everyone for coming today. Just to go around to introduce ourselves with the pseudonyms we're going to be using - as I say, Claire and I are not going to be using pseudonyms, so we will introduce ourselves with our real names. So: I am Becky. I'll also share my pronouns: I go by she/her.

Jacob: I'm Jacob.

Walter: I'm Walter.

Anastasia: I'm Anastasia.

Dennis: I’m Dennis.

Richard: I’m Richard.

Chubby: I’m Chub. Chubby.

David: David

Stewie: Stewie.

RY: Ok, great. So, I think we’re going to start with just getting a sense of what Shakespeare plays you've studied before or read in your own time, just to know what the base of plays that we’re mainly going to be talking about are. So, obviously thinking about the violent ones, the tragedies, that kind of thing. Can we just go round and share what we've what we've read or studied?

Jacob: I've done *King Lear*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

Walter: I’ve read *Titus Andronicus, Macbeth, Hamlet, Merchant of Venice,* and I’ve seen *King Lear* and *Julius Caesar.*

Anastasia: I’ve done *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*.

Dennis: I’ve done *Hamlet, Macbeth, Titus Andronicus, Romeo and Juliet, King Lear, Troilus and Cressida, Timon of Athens* and *Pericles*.

Richard: I’ve done *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*.

Chubby: *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

David: Just *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Richard the Third*.

Stewie: *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

RY: OK, great. So it sounds like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are fairly common to everyone, but yeah, I mean, some of you have read some really interesting other ones, so obviously, bring those in if you think that those are relevant to any of the questions, it’s interesting to kind of hear some perspectives on some of the perhaps slightly less well known plays - some of which of course are comedies, but nevertheless contain some quite violent scenes, because it's always one of the things about Shakespeare that just because, just because it’s comic doesn't necessarily mean something terrible doesn't happen to a character in it. OK, so the question I'd just like to introduce to kick the whole thing off is: when I was looking at the questionnaires that you all did a few months ago, or a month or so ago, one of the things that was interesting there was people disagreeing about the question of whether Shakespeare's plays were graphic in their violence. Some people saying it's not graphic, so it didn't bother me, and some people saying no, actually I think the violence is quite extreme and graphic, and I was kind of interested in how people were defining graphic violence, what ‘extreme violence’ means to you, how you felt about the violence in these plays in terms of how it compares to other things. So as I say, maybe that's where we’ll start off. What do you think about the concept of graphic violence? Do you think Shakespeare is ‘graphic violence’?

Anastastia: I wouldn't say so. I think it kinda gives the basis of what violence is. So if you can, you could go on the media now and you could play a game or you can watch a film that's going to show you a lot more graphic murder than Shakespeare does. It's only, he only focuses on mainly like being slain and murdered with traditional weapons that they would use at the time the Shakespeare was alive or before that. And now you could easily have access to something that's a lot more graphic with a lot more graphic weapons.

RY: Hmm. Yeah, well, I suppose it depends a bit on the kind of plays, ’cause some have perhaps stabbings and things like that whereas… for those who've read *King Lear*, *King Lear* has famously a blinding scene, there is on-stage torture in that play.

Jacob: I think it's… I think it can come down to the interpretation of it and how they display it, because some people might not make the violence very like graphic and bloody and stuff in there in the way that they perform it or the way they show it on TV. But some people might go over the top with it.

RY: Which I think, yeah, I think an important issue because there's of course the reading of the plays: how do you respond to the violence? How extreme do you feel that the violence is? How upsetting do you feel the violence is? And there's also the issue of adaptation, of putting it onto the stage or putting it into a film, and then it's going to be the choice of that individual director, the individual production, of quite how much they show, quite how much they bring out the visual effects of it.

David: Yeah, I would definitely agree with that point about the interpretation because, I mean, the last time I - the first time I went to see *Macbeth*, it was very much quite tame and some of the scenes they chose to ignore or do less of, like, I don't know, the murder of Macduff's family, whereas other versions I've seen tend to act up quite a lot. And I mean, you know, when they've got like blood splatter across the stage, things like that you know, that can be quite graphic and it is down to just the interpretation of it.

RY: Yeah, particular staging decisions about kind of what… I'm assuming they think about what effects I might want to have on my audience, do I want to shock and upset them.

Dennis: Because sometimes Shakespeare uses the violence almost as a form of retribution for his characters. So I definitely think that that does kind of weaken sort of the aspect of how graphic it is and how disturbed the audience is, 'cause if you’re waiting for the baddie to be defeated, the only way that that really happens in Shakespeare normally is through the death of them.

RY: Perhaps slightly different interpretations of the concept of being graphic are coming in here. There's the kind of: how much do you see? How much blood is there? What happens perhaps on stage versus off stage? Because again, with Shakespeare, there are some murders, the murder of Duncan by Macbeth, which happens off stage, versus the murder of the Macduff child, which sometimes happens on stage, sometimes happens off, depending on different productions. So it's about what you see, but there's also to the question of *who* gets hurt, how do we feel about the characters getting hurt, which perhaps makes a difference to how we might feel about it.

Walter: I feel like, I guess, like when you watch like quite a few, you like sort of measure it at the point of, like on a scale of Shakespeare level. Like some of his plays, like, someone would say they’re graphic. But to me, like, compared to other stuff he's written, it's, you know, I feel like *Romeo and Juliet* to me is, isn't anything compared to like *Titus Andronicus* or like, or reading, like, *The Rape of Lucrece* and things like that. Like, to me, *Romeo and Juliet*, like, it's that and then it's over, like the end of it. So it's kind of like at the end of… like the amount of graphic it feels to me sort of is in a measure of how much is in his other stuff. So I guess sometimes it's a bit graphic, but something other people have said is graphic, felt like - tame.

RY: I suppose that might lead on to the question of what you expect when you start reading Shakespeare. Are you expecting this to be a violent play? 'Cause I'm thinking about perhaps something like *Romeo and Juliet*, which for the first half is written kind of as a comedy in some ways. It’s about love, it's about young people getting together - and it turns very violent in the second half and perhaps you're not expecting that. But if you do know the play and if you've experienced other Shakespeare plays that are more violent by comparison, it… Yeah, the context, your wider knowledge, makes a difference. Any other thoughts on whether you’d describe Shakespeare violence as extreme, or whether particular types of violence are more, more upsetting than other types?

Dennis: Sexual violence is often very disturbing, even though it’s like few and far between, like, particularly in *Titus Andronicus* and even *All’s Well That Ends Well*, the comedy, there is that aspect of the sexuality of… I can't remember her name at the moment, sorry. But her using her sexual wiles almost as a device to bring down a bad man is not seen as anything that's positive and it is still quite graphic.

RY: Yeah. I mean, in general, violence that’s linked to sex in various ways and scenes of sexual assault or rape - would you say that was more something that could have disturbed audiences than other kinds of violence?

Walter: Yeah. Especially like *Titus Andronicus*. That one's like… That one is something where like… I know we’ll probably touch on it later, but that one's like probably one of the few plays where I would think like you would put, like, a trigger warning before it.

RY: Hmm. I mean, like, *Titus Andronicus*, for those who don’t know, it's a play that's got a… a woman is raped and then her – sorry about this – her hands are cut off and her tongue is cut out in order to stop her from sharing the details of what happened with anyone else, trying to silence her. So, yes, in terms of Shakespearean violence, that is about as bad as it gets. But I suppose, you know, there are other kind of sensitive topics in Shakespeare, there's things like self-harm and suicide. And with the plays that kind of most people have done, with both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, of course, have that as themes. I mean, when you were reading those plays, do you kind of remember finding those aspects at all disturbing the way they were treated? Or did you find them basically fine? What do people think?

Stewie: I just thought like, yes, you've got, like, Lady Macbeth contemplating her death and all that. And you've got Hamlet, obviously, with all his suicide sort of soliloquies. They're all just a bit… I guess to an audience at the time, it would have been a bit like shocking, but now with all the like, modern violence and all the violence we can actually see at any, at any time, it's just a bit tame.

RY: What do other people think about that?

Anastasia: I think they are quite disturbing like if you read it on itself. But if you take part, like we all do, in literature, as you're reading something like that, you're trying to figure out the meaning behind everything and all the different little interpretations that come with it. And I think it kind of blocks out the whole disturbingness when you're trying to find the ‘why’ rather than ‘what's happening’. So maybe if you're not looking for that analysis, so someone is just reading Shakespeare for pleasure in their own time, they can find that quite disturbing. But I think if you're looking more deeply into it, your brain isn't focusing on the surface of the disturbance and it's actually what the reason behind it is.

RY: I think that brings us on to a question I'd like to ask about, which is when your teachers did these plays with you in class, do you remember how they taught the violence? So, I'm partly interested in things like, did they provide a content warning?, but also things like, you know, if there is a scene of say child murder or suicide or something like that, did they focus on that *as* an act of violence or was there more a sense that it was treated as, ‘Let's talk about the themes. Let's talk about the characters. Let's talk about the plot.’

Richard: They didn't give any trigger warnings for any just, not normal violence but just murder and like stabbing and stuff. Because we’re quite desensitised now, because in many books you read, in many films you see, it’s very common just to see murder pretty much in everything.

RY: So, do you remember, if they didn’t give warnings for those, did they do anything for things about, as I say, the violence that is perhaps more linked in some ways to the modern world, self-harm…?

Richard: They did warn us if any of that came up. I suppose we do get some of that.

RY: Right. Anybody else want to jump in with their experiences?

David: There was never any content warning that I had, but I didn't really think it was necessary because it was handled in a way that was quite tactful. Obviously they, you know, they have, you know, caveats to the sentences saying like, ‘Oh, he got murdered’, and obviously we all sort of acknowledge it as something that was, you know, quite graphic and violent in its own sense. But there was never any sort of idea of saying, ‘Oh, you've got to be warned before you read this.’

RY: And when you were working through the play, scene by scene, was there any kind of direct talking about violence as an issue or was it just seen as part of the plot?

David: We certainly discussed it as like as a device to be used to convey messages. But I don't think we ever spoke about it in any way that was acknowledging that anyone might be upset by it or something. I think there was always the assumption that we all knew it was a fictitious story. It was obviously quite distant from what our lives are. So it's quite hard in some ways to acknowledge it as something to be upset by.

RY: There's always that question I think when you're teaching literature of… to an extent, yeah, the plot is obviously it's fictional in a novel or a play, but to what extent do you link it to the real world, to real concerns, and the question of whether teachers do that. It sounds like in your case they didn't, particularly. It was more just, ‘how does this play work within itself?’

Walter: They didn't for me, and I felt like it also didn't seem graphic as you read it, like people have said, like, you knew that someone's died. But I think the whole thing that like really differentiates GCSE English from A-level English is GCSE English is always a word level analysis of the text. Like, it's like: Shakespeare used this word which will make readers and audiences feel this. Like it didn't actually put things, like in my classes, in the context of the plot. It wasn't: Oh, Romeo and Juliet have just had a forbidden wedding and now they're like going to kill them… Like, they were… There was none of this like continuation really. It was always focused on the exam and breaking it down. So it felt like… Even though you know they’re dead, it felt like it wasn't even… It didn't even really register it most of the time because it didn't feel like the most important thing.

RY: Right, interesting. And how did you find that experience of encountering the play, doing it kind of… I mean, you know, it is, Shakespeare's language is difficult. I think, you know, in some ways, understanding what's being said matters. But at the same time, yeah, that kind of sense of it's, it sounds like you're on such a word by word level, you're not in some ways taking in the plot.

Walter: I guess I didn't really like it because, like, I like seeing things on stage and I like following the storyline. It's like what I like the most about Shakespeare. Like he creates such like cohesive stories and everything is linked to something later on. And then when you do it like that, when you study it, like, it kind of loses its meaning. Like I'm sat here like, ‘Oh yes, I can now analyse the psyche of Romeo in the balcony scene,’ but I don't… Like if I'm watching that on stage, I'm not going to care about that. Like, that's not, I'm not sat there in the audience thinking, ‘Romeo's a chivalrous young man who's losing his way because he's in love.’ Like, I'm sat there watching a storyline. Like, I feel like it gets lost when you study it. I don't, I don't really appreciate it that much.

RY: Yeah. Because it's interesting: on the one hand, there’s a way of studying Shakespeare where it's going to really focus on the technicalities of: How is Shakespeare writing? What are the metaphors? How does this develop character? And in some ways, perhaps, that's not as likely to upset you, because you're not focusing on the: ‘It has a story.’ You're not focusing on: ‘This is a story about people.’ And then there's the other way, which is focusing more on it as telling a story. But that does open up the potential, perhaps more for people to get upset by it, because if you start to identify with the main characters… So it's an interesting problem, perhaps, for teachers. You want students to presumably enjoy the plays, but you also don't want people to be upset by them. Would some other people like to share their experiences of studying Shakespeare at school? Do you remember how your teachers approached these scenes?

Stewie: Mainly with *Macbeth*. We read it and then with my school at least, we watched the new version with… Can't remember the actor.

RY: Is that the Denzel Washington version? Yes, that's the most recent one.

Stewie: That’s the one. Yes, watched that one. And that was very… I thought a bit weird. And then obviously, they were like, ‘Oh, yeah, and if anyone feels uncomfortable, you can go step outside if you want.’ But no one really did because they were just… They just didn't really, didn't focus on things. We just watched it, never paused it, never stopped it. We just watched and we didn't focus on any of the violent scenes. We focused more on the bits like, like Lady Macbeth’s soliloquy and that's the bits we need for the test.

RY: And how do you feel about that? I mean, did you feel you'd have liked to talk more about the violence or have more of a chance to process it or think about it?

Stewie: I think that, like overall that they need to analyse it all and like, not just skip to the bits that are important. Like you need to have an overall view of the actual play. It would have been good to focus on.

RY: Yeah. I mean there is a sense that I'm getting from at least a couple of you about the experiences you’ve had, which sound like… Yeah, not, not very positive experiences with Shakespeare because it… yes, perhaps so focused on test taking that, yeah, you lose the sense of it as a drama.

Chubby: For violence wise, our generation is probably more desensitised to it now. So we don’t care as much if it's depicted in a, I don't know, violent way. But in terms of, I don't know, domestic violence, say, between Hamlet and Ophelia, they’re more pressing things of concern for our generation because there's more awareness around it now and people are probably more affected by that in our sphere than actual like stabbing violence, let's say, like war.

RY: Yeah, the context of it. I mean, yeah, because I think when it's Macbeth and he's a soldier and you kind of expect him to be doing violent things. But when it's violence that's more close to home and, as you say, closer to the life that most of us lead: domestic violence, sexualized violence, the things that, that you feel might affect you, that does perhaps make it rather different.

Jacob: I feel like when you’re studying things like *Macbeth* in high school, the violence is just kind of completely ignored because it's kind of just written as a stage direction. Like this person stabs this person and they die. Like… no one… like they don't focus on the violence, they just focus at the fact that he's dead. Like there's no analysis on the violence or why it’s there.

RY: Right. Yeah.

David: I think there were definitely other things that we studied in literature, like, especially regarding things like the unseen poetry where, where we'd read it and that would have more of an emotional impact than most of the Shakespeare that we read and there were definitely poems that I remember having content warnings, and I don't ever remember that with Shakespeare.

RY: Just as a quick straw poll of the room: who does remember having…? Can you put your hands up: who does remember having content warnings with Shakespeare? Does anyone? Right, just one person out of the eight. And do you remember what the content warning involved?

Anastasia: It was like… it was not when we did, when we first studied it. So we studied it obviously start of year 10 and then we then revised it in year 11. And it wasn't until year 11 when I switched teachers that that teacher mentioned the content warning. I think it was around Mercutio's death, when we watched the film. And it was more briefly over like… I remember her saying, ‘I just need to mention it just in case like anyone does feel that way.’ It wasn't a sort of, she had a concern that this needed a content warning, it was more that they felt, ‘OK, we just need to do this just to be careful and just in case.’ It wasn’t because they felt it was necessary.

RY: So you'd been studying the play before with a different teacher and then your new teacher came in? So you were kind of halfway through?

Anastasia: Yeah, when I first had the first teacher, they never did a content warning for anything, even that scene. And then I switched teacher and it was then they decided, ‘I will give you a content warning.’ But they weren’t too bothered about it.

RY: So had you read the whole play before?

Anastasia: Yeah.

RY: Before you had the second teacher?

Anastasia: Yeah.

RY: And did the second teacher give a content warning for some of the other bits as well, like the suicide scene, which is probably…

Anastasia: No, it was just Mercutio’s death.

RY: Just Mercutio’s death?

Anastasia: Yeah.

RY: Was that because you were watching it, do you think?

Anastasia: We were watching it, yeah. But I don't think… We watched the whole thing and it wasn't for anything else either.

RY: Right. Yeah. Yeah, it's interesting that the particular bit…

Anastasia: Yeah, it’s very specific.

RY: Who knows, but it's interesting that none of your teachers seem to have thought that this was a necessary thing. [There is a brief interlude here while RY fixed her laptop’s power source]. And interesting that only one person got that content warning. Maybe that leads us on to the next question I'd like to ask about, which is: if you were a teacher working on these plays, how do you think they should be taught? Because it does sound like some of you have some slightly unsatisfying experiences, treating the plays just as some words to be deciphered, not really thinking of them as stories that might potentially be interesting. But of course, the more you start thinking them as stories, with people that you might sympathise with, identify with, and so on, at that point, potentially some of the violence becomes more disturbing because if you like a character, it can be bad if they’re thinking about suicide or bad if they get hurt in some way. So what do you think? You know, if you're a teacher and you were teaching the violent plays of Shakespeare, do you think do you think you’d provide content warnings? Do you think you would want to address the violent issues a bit more directly than it sounds like most of your teachers have done in the past?

Jacob: I don't think that like a lot of the violence in Shakespeare's play, like if you're studying it for an exam, is necessary to focus on. But obviously you have to read the whole play, and you'll probably watch them as well. So I think like content warning wise, I think if there's like sexual violence, there should be a content warning. And like, if we're going to watch an adaptation of it, like in theatre or in like film form, I think that if there's like bloody gore or something like that, then there should be a content warning for that. But like, just a general warning, like warning people might die in this play, it’s like, obviously they will, it's a Shakespeare play.

RY: There are Shakespeare plays where people don't die. It’s not inevitable but yeah, I think we might come in a minute to talk about watching it versus, versus reading it and think about, you know, if there are films that you've seen in class and we might talk about that. But what do you think about teaching these plays? What would be the ideal…?

Walter: In general, I think teachers need to do like a lot more on context, which it kind of annoys me that exam boards don't prioritise knowing like the context of Shakespeare, like the importance of like… Like when we do *Romeo and Juliet*, the only context we touched on was like this idea of courtly love, which is obviously like what the relationship between Romeo and Juliet follows. But like we have no focus on like the issues of suicide in a religious society and we don't have any focus on, like, the other things that matter in the context. Because Shakespeare didn't just have them kill themselves for the fun of it, like it was a shock factor and it was a message that was delivered and the violence of it mattered as much as them being dead. And I think, like, context would help flesh that out for students. But then, like, *Merchant of Venice* is one that you can study at GCSE. I don't agree with that. But if I was doing that, I would like probably want to put more trigger warnings for that than I would for a gory play. Because like, I feel like *Merchant of Venice*, the fact that it's taught at GCSE is kind of strange to me. But if I am teaching it at GCSE, it's got like issues that like people in like the younger generation especially that are going to study it like in the near future care a lot more about, like the issues of like race, religion and like gender in society, like those were like so important. And like when I had students in other classes in my school doing that play, they didn't sort of touch on it at all. And I was like, how are you…? Like, how can you read a play with Shylock in and not touch on it that much? Like, it just sort of… There are some plays where I'd probably put more warnings than others but context in general, I think, matters more than exam boards and teachers realise.

RY: Yeah and just for those of you who don't know, *The Merchant of Venice* is an interesting one because it's a comedy but the main villain is a Jewish character called Shylock and he's really demonised within the play. Most of the characters are Christians and they racially abuse him, spit on him, call him names and he decides to get revenge and therefore he enters into this plot to murder one of the main characters, the best friend of the play’s hero, insofar as this play has a hero. So yeah. And in the end of the play, the Christians win, Shylock gets his money taken away and he gets sent away in shame and disgrace. So yeah, it just seems a really problematic play in terms of, you know, is it reinforcing ideas about anti-Semitism. And of course... Did *Othello* come up at the start? Has anyone encountered *Othello* before? A couple of people have encountered *Othello*. I mean *Othello* is another one where… *Othello* is a tragedy, there's more violence in *Othello*, but it’s about an interracial marriage, a Black Man and a white woman and it ends up with him murdering her and some people again found that a very problematic subject. There's lots of racial abuse of Othello within the play. Some have worried that it reinforces negative stereotypes of Black men as violent, the idea of white women as victims of Black violence, that kind of thing. So yeah, the interesting ways in which violence and racial stuff can interact as well, and reinforce stereotypes. I think certainly if you're kind of dealing with those plays, the ideas of content warnings for racism as well might be good. What do other people think though? I mean, I know we haven't all read *Othello* or *The Merchant of Venice*, but in terms of plays you have read, what do other people think about how you would teach these plays?

Dennis: I think that part of it's just talking about the tropes of the different kinds of play that Shakespeare writes. Like, for example, if you were gonna cover a tragedy like *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, I think violence has to come up anyway. And it's maybe just stating at the start of maybe that introductory lesson that, ‘This play is violent. If you feel uncomfortable at any moment, feel free to either stay behind or to leave the classroom or anything.’ Wherein if you feel uncomfortable, you may be able to leave.

RY: Yeah. Do you want to respond to that?

David: I don't really think I'd ever teach it in a way to have some sort of announcement that it's going to be violent, because I think a lot of the time, the violence is, you know, if you handle it in a tactful, mature way, it can… It's not… I mean mostly just when it's written down, obviously it might be slightly different when it's filmed. Films have age ratings for a reason. But it's kind of that idea of just accepting it in a way that's not glorifying the violence. It's not going over the top talking about it too much, it's just acknowledging that it's part of the play but being mature and trusting students to you know be able to handle a fictional story.

RY: Hmm. I guess part of the question is how much do you expect of students? Do you expect that this is a Shakespeare tragedy, it will have violence and can we take that as read? Or, you know, is there the sense that, well, some people might not realise or they might want to be warned about specific types of violence, particularly we were talking about the types of violence like sexual violence or self-harm or things like that, which might be seen as more personal topics.

Anastasia: It’s kind of along the same lines but I think if I was teaching, I wouldn't give it any sort of content warning to the students. I think if… You don't read *Hamlet* like before GCSE, you don't study it… Well, some people kind of do, but in my experience I didn't at school. Like I never studied *Hamlet* before I had to at exam level. And I think if you haven't got that level of maturity by then, then it's more telling of what you need to learn and I think you can learn a lot through Shakespeare about society itself, that you need to adapt that to yourself. But I wouldn't think you should warn people about it. I think you should be mature anyway, especially if the first time you do it is at A-level – which would be right, you shouldn’t have done it at GCSE – but you are at an age that that's just… It should be normal to understand.

RY: What do you think?

Walter: I think there's no harm in giving out a warning like I would do it, even if, even if I myself am sat here and like people should expect it, I don't see the harm in giving that warning, especially because, like, if we look at *Hamlet*, like one that all of us here are studying, the relationship between Polonius and Ophelia – in some adaptations, that's a horrible father-daughter relationship. Like in some adaptations, it's like near emotional abuse, and there are students in the class who might have home situations like that, and I would see less harm in, say, ‘This does have depictions of a bad parent-child relationship’ or ‘This does have depictions of sexual violence’, which again Hamlet has adaptations with. I see less harm in giving a warning to prepare someone because it's not always about maturity. Sometimes it's like experience. I see less harm in that than the harm that can come from not warning a student and just being like, ‘You should accept it as it is.’

RY: Yes, so some interesting disagreements about they're not necessary versus what is the harm in using them?

Jacob: I think it's less, it's less about like, like, ‘Oh, you need to be mature by this age.’ And the fact that some people have had things happen to them that they can't control or some people are just like, are like sensitive. It's not that they're not mature. It's just that sometimes they need a warning, so they know that they're about to read something that might be disturbing and they're not thrown straight into it and like, that might be upsetting to them. Or they can leave before like, before like it happens.

RY: Yeah. That's two people now who have talked about stepping outside the rooms. We might come back to that as an idea - whether that should be allowed, whether it should be encouraged for students to do that - but maybe see what you have to say first?

David: I think you definitely have to acknowledge, I mean this about A-level versus GCSE… By the time you're choosing it to do it as an A-level, you should have some understanding of what's going to be in Shakespeare. I mean, I'm not sure about all of the plays that are available to the GCSE, but at least the ones that I know usually have examples of violence in them. And I think that there should be an understanding that by that age, you should be prepared, having gone through that first experience, you should be able to… I mean, if you're starting to study it in year 9 for example – I think it’s year 9 or year 8 when you start it – maybe you should at that point be given some warnings or maybe, you know, it should be handled in a sensitive way. But I do think by the time you’re choosing it at A-level, you should have that understanding of what's going to be in it for you.

RY: And again interesting, I think, that there are some people thinking kind of, ‘What's the harm, at least it could help some people’, and your kind of argument, ‘It's not necessary.’ I mean, do you feel there would be a negative side to providing warnings?

David: Well, I don't really see any negatives to it. I mean, yeah, I don't think it would be something that would be necessary, but it's like, you know, if you have a cliff with a sign that says, ‘Don't jump’, you know, some people, most people won't jump anyway. But you know the sign’s not hurting anymore. The sign that says don't jump might just be a useful reminder, just in case you didn't know that cliffs weren’t fun to jump off.

RY: I suppose there's that spectrum of opinion with content warnings - some people saying, you know, they think they're absolutely necessary. Some people saying… A lot of people in the questionnaires said, ‘yeah, I don't particularly need them for myself, the plays don't really bother me, but I would like them for if there was somebody else in the class who'd had personal experience and they might find a particular subject difficult, I want it for them.’ And there were some people who were sort of ‘well, you should be prepared that Shakespeare is going to be violent, you should kind of know.’ And there's that range of views there.

Jacob: I think that another thing is, it's compulsory to study English in high school. So like, if you're… Fair enough, don't give, don't give content warnings if you don't want to if, like, you choose to study English literature at A-level because you've chosen that and you know, like that books have, and like Shakespeare plays have like bad content in sometimes. But when it's like GCSE level, you have to study that. And if you're not given a content warning with something you’re uncomfortable with, I feel like that's unfair because you don't really have a choice but to listen to it.

Walter: I was just gonna say, like, even if… I think even if someone has chosen to study a subject and you sort of think that comes with the like, the assumption that they'll have some understanding. I think, again, not very much harm in pointing it out. Because like the thing with like trauma is like from literally purely like a psychological standpoint, it can be triggered by things that you won't always anticipate it’ll be triggered by. So you can think ‘I want to study English, I know this has it’ and then like, well randomly, one day, your teacher’s like, ‘Oh, we’re gonna start Sylvia Plath, and we're gonna start this bit,’ and like it's one of her really depressing poems, or ‘We're gonna do this scene in *Hamlet*.’ And you're now doing it. Like sometimes you can think you're ready and you're not. And having a warning just at the start of the lesson has that, like… You’re ready to prepare yourself throughout the lesson for it. Like I don’t... It's like, trauma isn't always something you can understand. And if there’s a person saying… people can like prepare for it, even if it's just one sentence at the start of a lesson.

Anastasia: I think if you’re putting a content warning on, it's that idea that what you're going to see is bad and it can harm you, whether mentally or whatever it is. But in a way then why aren't we putting a content warning on everything? Everyone's gone through different things in life. And that could even be a play that's around comedy or love, yet what if you have got a bad experience that relates to something to do with love? Then technically, you should have a content warning on that because then that… the possibility that a child could want to walk out because of the love that they're watching rather than the violence that they're watching. In a way, we should treat it as, if we need a content warning, then we're going to warn of everything. Because I think a violence warning is more traditional, back in older days the violence was something that more people focused on to be bad in society, whereas now there are so many different things that we see in plays that you can think, ‘OK, children of all different ages have got such different experiences and everything else and they should be warned about everything, if that's how we're going to treat it.’

RY: Interesting.

David: I think I would definitely agree with that bit about how by that standard, you’d need to have a warning on everything. You know, if that means having 5 minutes at the start of every lesson to explain every little sentence that could possibly upset someone. I mean, that is quite a lot of pressure on limited time, especially at GCSE. Maybe less at A-level, where I feel like maybe we have more time to spare talking about sensitive issues. But I think when it's a very tight schedule, I mean, to say that you need to factor in for every single student… You know, there's thirty students, they could be upset by anything. And I think it is, you know, maybe it's more important to look at it and say, if someone gets upset, maybe they can speak to the teacher afterwards. You know, and it's about that teacher being able to talk… I mean, I mean, I said a point about being mature earlier. And I think it's more about the teacher being able to talk in mature way, in a way that is respectful of how that student may be feeling. And if someone does get upset and walks out, maybe the teacher then takes 5 minutes after the lesson to sit them down and be like, ‘Right, well, you know, you’ve kind of got to study it.’ Because also there are going to be people who might not want to study *Macbeth* at all because of how they feel. And you can't just not study it at all, you've got to, you've got to do your GCSEs and it's… Unfortunately, there's no other option of going off to something else. So you've got to look at it and, say, just handle it with a tactful, respectful way of looking at it, without needing to have censors on everything.

RY: I suppose that ties into the question of both your points about if you do provide a content warning, what do you say in that? Because just, ‘Contains some material that some people might find disturbing,’ is very vague, but as you say, you can get incredibly granular and to some extent, it's always going to be a bit unpredictable about whether there are specific things that people are bothered by.

Jacob: I feel like the fact that like… Like, if you start putting content warnings on things and then you feel like you suddenly have to put a content warning on everything. I feel like if you're a mature adult who's teaching a Shakespeare play that might be upsetting, you know the difference between, ‘Content warning: this contains love’ and ‘Content warning: this contains suicide and sexual violence.’ Like, I feel like there's a stark difference. And obviously some people may be upset by the fact that there's love in it if they've recently been through a breakup. But I feel like that's a lot different to someone who might have a trauma response to the violence within it.

RY: What do you think about, say, a content warning that was optional for students? Cause I think usually when people do get content warnings, they're just verbal. The teacher will say, ‘This could be upsetting’ or ‘This contains this type of material.’ And I'm wondering about the possibility of content warnings where, say, the teacher gives you access to a resource where you can find out content warnings about what it is you're going to be studying if you want to, because that would kind of… I don't know if that could solve some of these problems where, if you are somebody who is sensitive towards particular topics and you can read a little bit more about what you're going to be reading, if you think it's unnecessary, you don't have to have that. What do people think in general about that idea? It'd be nice to hear from a few of the people down the other end of the table. We’re having a very intense discussion down this end and some people at the end are being a little bit quieter maybe. Any thoughts off that end of the table about…? Optional content warnings: yes or no? Would you think they’d be a good idea? How would you feel about having them in that form?

Dennis: I think it's just sort of maybe just uploading maybe materials for the class before the lesson. So people who maybe think maybe because we're studying the Shakespeare play that has already contained X amount of violence or X amount of sexual abuse or X amount of racism that they can be able to go on to that thing and see, ‘Oh, so this happens, this happens, this happens. I can now be prepared maybe for that.’ Instead of just being thrown into the deep end and at the very start of that lesson, just saying, ‘This contains racism, this contains this, this contains that.’

RY: Yeah, that idea of when you get the content warning is an interesting one, I think: is it just before you study something or do you get it a day or two in advance? And I think that's again something we might possibly come back to thinking about.

Jacob: I think it's a… I think that's like a really good idea, like providing a place where you can search out content warnings like… Am I allowed to mention websites or not?

RY: Ah, yes, I think so.

Jacob: Ok, so there's a website called, ‘Does the dog die?’ where basically like it contains like: ‘Does this book or film contain this violence? Does it contain like vomiting or something?’ And you can scroll through and people have written whether it does or not. And I feel like that's, that's a really good resource that like is important to be made known, especially to maybe high school students who have to learn the thing. Like there's some resources like that which I think teachers should definitely invest in looking for.

RY: Yeah.

David: I think I'd definitely agree that, if you are able to provide something rather than having a teacher who has to sit there and you know, work out how 30 different students are going to have their own individual content warnings, you know, just give every student the ability to take the initiative to search for what they might be upset with and what they need to handle, because I guess they do need to learn the content and I definitely agree with that point.

RY: One of the other things that came up in a few people with the questionnaires was people saying… You know, I was asking: are there any negatives to content warnings? And I think a few people talked about spoilers saying, you know, ‘If I read a play, I want to read it for the story, for the drama. I don't want to know that there's a suicide or I don't want to know that there's this particular act of murder in the play.’ And again, it feels very difficult as a… if you're a teacher, how do you balance the students who want to be surprised and are perhaps not that bothered in general by violence, perhaps have read lots of other violent things and feel comfortable with it versus the students who may have personal experience or may just be in general sensitive towards that material. Again, it's come up a couple of times: you've got a classroom full of maybe 30 different people with different needs, different things that they want from the text. In terms of content warnings in general, if a teacher does give a verbal content warning… As I said earlier, a couple of people brought up being able to step outside the room. In general, is that something you're allowed to do in your classes and were you allowed to do it at high school? Were you allowed to step outside if something came up that you found upsetting or you just needed a minute to process?

Walter: I know that there was one time. It was literally… It was like year 8 and we were studying this book where a dog died. And literally like the night before my dog had died, right? And we were reading it and we got to the bit where the dog died. And I was – I keep saying it now [laughs] – but like that really, like, upset me because, like, it's this kind of like idea, like you can visualise what's happening, which is why I think I disagree a little bit with like, you need a content warning for everything. Because visualising a rape is different to visualising someone being in a relationship I guess. But back to the point. Yeah, I left because I was crying like, I think like, we were allowed to leave the room, but then I do think like that was different because it was a book we were reading just as general practice. I think when it comes to like knowing a play, if you step out of the room then a teacher could maybe put like 10 minutes into making like a quick summary resource of like the important annotations I guess.

Richard: I know with our school, our English teacher, she was very understanding. And it wasn’t specifically stated whether it was allowed or not allowed to step out. But, if you needed a moment, she was helping, she’d step outside with you, have a chat when you needed it.

RY: It does seem to vary a lot whether teachers are happy for students to do that versus whether they say, ‘Well, no, everyone would take advantage of it and just go out whenever they feel like it.’ And that’s something that's probably quite difficult for teachers to balance. I mean, in general with content warnings also… Because we talked a little bit about *when* they come, if you get them. Because obviously, if it was a web resource or something like that, you could look it up whenever you liked in advance. But if a teacher was going to give a verbal content warning, what would you say was the difference between getting it right before – you know, ‘Today, we're doing this particular act and this happens in this act’ – versus being alerted a day or two in advance? Do you have any preference, do you think, about when you get a warning, if you were going to get a warning at all?

Jacob: I think it's better to warn people like maybe a day or two in advance because I feel like if, if you walk into a lesson and it's really early in the morning, first thing is like, ‘OK, we're going to be reading about a rape today.’ It's like, that's not really good. But if you're warned a few days in advance, then you'll know what's coming and you'll know whether you need to, like, take some time to process it or like whether you'll need to step out of the lesson or something.

David: I think if there was going to have to be one, then it's probably better to do it in the introductory lesson. And I think it's probably best to just say, you know, ‘This play’s gonna involve some sensitive things’, especially because you know every single lesson is going to involve references to different parts of the play and, you know, spoilers for the end, you know, it's not necessarily going through the play in the most linear sense. You sort of bounce back and forth, which, you know, you've got to acknowledge I think in the first lesson, you know, just say, ‘These are the issues that are gonna come up’, and maybe give some time to discuss because I think discussion is possibly the most valuable part of it. Having people express their opinions of the issue rather than having a blanket warning.

RY: Yeah, the question of having a content warning in advance versus the chance to talk about things afterwards is an interesting one. Yeah?

Anastasia: I think if you give a group of children like 5 minutes before saying, ‘OK, we're going to look at violence today’, it comes across very immediate and very urgent. And for them to respond in a way that, ‘Ok, this must be really bad.’ And then with how the brain works, you're going to then see that violence and then characterise it in a way that's a lot potentially more violent than actually it is. But if you give someone a content warning a day or two before then they’re gonna process that, think about it, and then by the time they come back to it and the teacher says, ‘We're doing that bit of violence today’, they're gonna go, ‘OK. Yeah. You told me that ages ago.’ And then you're gonna watch it and see it for what it is. It's not got that emergent, like immediate attachment to it. So you're not going to witness it in a worse way than what it actually is.

Walter: I think like content warnings in an introduction lesson are like great. But like like imagine you’re like… Take *Romeo and Juliet*, where, like the first half of the play, nothing that traumatising happens. And what, you're just gonna expect a content warning from like, 15 lessons ago to apply and be remembered by a student when you're gonna do like the suicide scene like or when you're going to do the scene with the stabbings and stuff like that like… I think, yeah, do one in the introduction lesson, great, like, ‘This deals with sensitive topics. Let’s discuss what you think about these.’ It engages the students. It's great. But then I also do think like a warning a day or two before you're doing the actual scenes that contain that is what actually makes the impact on how safe a student can feel in your classroom.

RY: Yeah, because I suppose there's a difference between doing it right at the moment, ‘We are going to do this scene right now’, versus right at the start of the lesson…

Walter: Yeah.

RY:…maybe weeks before. You know: ‘We're coming to the end of this act, which hasn't contained much upsetting material. We're going to be moving on to this other act…

Walter: Yeah.

RY: …the day after tomorrow and which will contain this other thing.’ So I suppose there's different kinds of point where you could bring in content warnings if you want students to have the chance to prepare themselves a little bit. I'm also interested in this idea of talking through… your idea of mature talking through of the issues rather than just a warning at the start. And again, back to that question about how *you* would teach these plays. Do you think it would be useful for students? Because I think you talked about kind of historical context: What did this mean at the time? How did people think about, I don’t know, duelling and honour and suicide and all those kinds of issues? But I'm also, I suppose, as some of these are issues that are still around in modern life… I mean, perhaps not exactly the same form… The duelling of *Romeo and Juliet* or *Hamlet* is not quite what we do nowadays, but, you know, still the idea of rivalry and gang violence and things like that. And of course, suicide, sexual assault, self-harm, all that, all those kinds of things are still in some sense very much part of our modern world. Do you think linking the plays to the modern world is a good idea? Because in some ways it moves away from the kind of stuff you were talking about, the ways you were taught the plays, of, ‘This is Shakespeare, this is old, this is complicated language.’ It's analysing it as a literary, historical thing as opposed to thinking about what it might have to say to modern readers, modern students. Do you think it's a good thing or a bad thing, or somewhere in between to, to think about modern violence alongside these plays?

Walter: I think modernising plays in general, like whether it's Shakespeare or some other really old play, I think is like a great idea. I think it engages like young audiences in something they can relate to. How many of us can sit here and relate to having a duel in the middle of a battlefield for our honour? Like not many of us. Whereas like you can relate to something like this idea of like a rivalry where you feel like you've got something at stake, because we have that in like friendships and social settings. Like, modernising a play doesn't always mean taking it out of the context that it was born in, but it means making it something students can find enjoyment in. Because there are so many people in my English class who hated Shakespeare because he was such an old playwright. Like they can't understand the language, they can't understand what the scenes of it are, they can't really understand why this guy's randomly got people stabbing each other in the street. Whereas, like, when you modernise it and you turn it into something like the movie of *Romeo and Juliet,* where it was turned as like a gang rivalry instead of the household rivalry… That was… A lot of people like that movie and not just because Leonardo DiCaprio is in it. Like, I think modernising things can be really good engagement material and it makes people understand Shakespeare in a way that's like more accessible so that you can then go into it in a context situation with a lot more like eagerness or like understanding or like stuff like that. Because emotions like change over time and like, with like in literature and in people. So when you can link them together and you can understand these things like Hamlet’s grief for his mother, that's like a universal, like – father – is like a universal thing. So it's like something that links it to modern audiences, like can matter a lot and can help engagement.

RY: Yeah, I think there are two things in what you're saying there. Because there's one, the idea of, you know, a production modernising it, bringing out what's the modern equivalent of the thing in Shakespeare. But I suppose also what I was thinking of is, when you're teaching it, even if you're not working with an adaptation or a film or anything like that, but thinking about… There's a character that commits suicide in, you know… Ophelia’s suicide, say, do we link it to kind of modern mental health and suicide, self-harm? Obviously, we feel it's not quite clear whether she even meant to die, whether it's just an accident, but certainly her mental collapse after the death of her father and all of the things that have happened to her. And whether it’d be a productive way of approaching the play, to think about mental health and modern concerns. In some ways, it risks making the violence more *real*. But the question of whether that's kind of a good thing to, to talk about: I don't know what people think?

David: I think it's quite an interesting idea of modernising it. I think there are a lot of people that don't like it because it is very much stuck in the past. And it's that idea of like, you know, ‘I would like it if they ditched the language.’ But it's those things that I think… I think it is very much important to view things in the context. Because I mean, we… There's obviously, really, there's no literature without history. And it's kind of impossible to look at it and just say this is the modern lens and we can't… Because it is a mental exercise to try and go back and try to view it as someone from that time period would. And I think that is a very important sort of mental jump to make when you're going to look at a play that isn't something like what you see in every day life, films or whatever. And I think it's… I mean, I think things like… Obviously, *Hamlet* is about humanity, I suppose, really isn't it? It's a human story. Same with *Macbeth*. It's about ambition. And I suppose those sorts of things you learn to relate to the character rather than the situation, I think is what I would say. And so it's important to look at it in the context that it came from rather than bringing it necessarily always into a modern… Although modern can be a useful comparison, it doesn't necessarily have to all be brought into some sort of modern lens.

RY: Yeah, well, I think I wasn't suggesting, you know, we ditch historical context entirely because I think you made the point earlier that it's important to understand, for the play's plot, what did these things mean at the time? But more I was suggesting an addition to that, of also thinking about to what extent is that… These are, these are depictions of people and in some sense they are dealing with some of the same issues as we are: grief over the death of a parent, romantic loss in, say, the case for Ophelia, all those kinds of things, which, again, might make the thing a bit more relatable to us.

Walter: I think like, on the note of like the mental health, like related to modern mental health, I think: yeah, because… Well, a lot of people don't realise like Shakespeare was quite forward thinking in the way he portrays mental health. And also, like, he has like… In a lot of his plays, there’s a surprising like feminist undertone. I think like, you know, if you want to get, like, really nitpicky, like, feminism and mental health are quite interlinked subjects that are both relevant in Shakespeare's work, that he was sort of like a forward thinker on. Like, how many other… Like, not many other playwrights at the time were confident enough to stage things like a suicide on stage because it's taboo. But then when you can link that to, like, what we know now through like psychology and through studies about mental health, it makes the characters more human where, like David was saying, you can relate to them on a personal level and not just on the level of a story. Like, I think maybe modern mental health can actually make it more understanding in the context, I guess.

RY: I think it's interesting that one of the things we keep coming back to is partly, you know, we're talking about content warnings, we're talking about making sure people aren't upset by these plays, but it's quite interesting, we're coming back a lot also to just making the plays more enjoyable to study. That kind of sense of, that… It sounds like some of you have had not great experiences with Shakespeare up until now, which is a shame. Right, OK. I think we're beginning to come towards the end of our time. I just have a final question I'd like to throw out to you. Basically, if there was one thing you could change about the teaching of Shakespeare at school - perhaps particularly teaching the Shakespeare tragedies? Can we go around, maybe make some suggestions about just anything specific you'd like to change? Take a moment to think about it if you'd like. [pause]

Stewie: It's obviously a lot more prevalent at A-level, but in GCSE I'd much rather like obviously read the play, but also watch like an adaptation of it in some form because it's… Obviously when you're reading a play, it's a lot more different than when you're actually seeing it.

RY: Yeah. Maybe interesting to just quickly see with people… In general could you - show of hands: who has been regularly shown films of the plays they've studied? So, some of you, but you’re saying you haven’t always or…?

Stewie: At GCSE, we watched one version once and that was it. And we just kept reading it and reading it. And yeah, we had people like acting out parts of it but it's a lot different.

RY: Is yours a response to that point?

David: It's quite similar really. I was just going to say in mine, you know, I think we occasionally switched on to the Sir Ian McKellen version of *Macbeth*. Just to see, I think it was mostly because my teacher was quite interested in the drama side of it as well. So, she liked to talk about how, I think… I mean obviously we didn't really look at it at GCSE much, but the sort of the stagecraft and perhaps that sort of bit. And so we did cover it a bit, but not nearly as much. You know, the idea of having different interpretations of the play wasn't something we'd really encountered until A-level, which would, it would have been interesting to look at it as something that you can view from several different perspectives.

RY: Yeah, getting away from it just being words on a page – that sense of: yeah, this is a story, these are characters, these are people you might like, dislike, identify with, have some feelings about. It sounds like some of the ways you’ve been studying – you didn’t really feel like they were realistic people at all.

Jacob: I think, especially because English is compulsory at GCSE, I think there should be like a wider range of options that like, the children that have to participate in the lesson are allowed to choose from to study and everything. Because I think I think like prescribing like a play, whether the children are interested or not or, whether they need content warnings, regardless of all that, I think the teacher just deciding on whichever play to do is just like counterproductive to the interests of the class and it's just causing more problems for the teacher as well because no one's bothered. People are bored and uninterested.

Walter: I mean, I actually support context and like sensitivity, I'd bring more of that into it, because, like, Shakespeare uses violence to be shocking. Like I'm not going to be surprised if some of the students would be shocked by what we’re studying. And so I guess like the sensitivity, the context, but also something where, like, you're not just reading words on the page, like engagement tasks - but even if you're not watching a movie and there's not like, oh make a mind map or make a poster of what you know from this act or whatever, like something that engages students and they can have discussion tasks - about the violence or about anything else in it that maybe you didn't cover as much when you were, you know, doing text analysis.

Anastasia: I think it’s down to time, 'cause obviously we don't have a lot of time in the teaching at GCSE, but I think there's so much more in a play than like the five themes that you cover. So I think if I was to teach it, I'd focus more on everything in the play and the little things that actually they would embed into the theme, if you actually focused on them, rather than just five things that stand out that you might need in an exam.

RY: Interesting.

Dennis: I think ways to engage the students as well is asking them to see how they would portray maybe the acts of violence in the plays and how they themselves would stage, and act out, and maybe just take an hour, maybe every term or something, to take the students who’re studying the Shakespeare to say we can do maybe an act of Shakespeare today that we'll be able to act out maybe.

RY: Yes, I think the performance element of it is interesting. And of course all that becomes: we're going to be using the actual bodies of students, and they're performing, making you think about the violence perhaps in different ways.

Jacob: I suppose it's kind of down to like the individual high school and obviously the funding for the school. But I feel like there should definitely be a lot more - like it's kind of extending on Stewie's points - that there should be more adaptations watched. And I especially think that we should be able to go and see it, maybe like a few times if, if not just once, like a few times in like actual theatres. Because when I studied *Macbeth* in high school, we watched the Michael Fassbender version once. But then we never went to see it like in real life and stuff. And I think seeing how different people interpret and how different people want to portray it is important for you to understand the text more clearly and for you to form your own opinions on it.

RY: Alright, thank you. And what do you think about how teaching Shakespeare might be improved in schools, or particularly perhaps the violence in Shakespeare?

Richard: I agree with Dennis’s point, about the visual aspect and acting it out so that you get more of the stage directions which helps.

RY: I'm getting, from quite a few of you, that interest in the performance aspect, whether that’s students actually acting it out themselves or that's seeing it. Just ‘he stabs him’ on the page, it’s just - you may not feel anything with that. Thinking about it as people, bodies, is a way of engaging with it.

David: I think basically building on that, there was something quite interesting I remember reading about when he says ‘tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow’, I always read that in a very same way. But then when you watch like the Sir Ian McKellan version, or the other versions, they do different emphasis on the different words. And that wasn't something I'd ever factored into the meaning of the phrase. So, some of them put more emphasis on the ‘and’, some of them put more emphasis on, you know, the ‘tomorrow’, and even that simple short line - there were so many different interpretations. It never really occurred to me that

it wasn't just what the teacher said it was, which was very much, you know, a very specific meaning.

RY: Yeah. And I think this is going to be the last comment - last but very much not least.

Chubby: For studying at A-level, there wasn't not much representation in terms of adaptation, which doesn't give education of Shakespeare as much breath as it should have in terms of

giving students enough content to form their own opinions on the stories or plays.

RY: Interesting. OK, great. I think given the time, we'd probably need to finish up there, but just a couple of things that we want to say to you before we go. So, I just need to thank you for coming along today. It's been really great hearing your views. This will really help Claire and me with the project, the work going forwards. Hopefully you're happy with everything we talked about, didn't find any of it uncomfortable, didn't feel anything wasn't done right. If you do have any complaints about anything, then you can tell me directly as everyone is filing out of the room, but also you've got my e-mail address on the information sheet so you can you can send me comments if you if you think in future I should do anything differently. If there is anything that can upset you about the conversations today - obviously some sensitive material came up - do make sure you talk to a trusted adult, which could be a teacher at the college or an adult at home or something like that. And of course, you can always phone ChildLine if you if you want to talk to an anonymous person and you can find out the number for that online. As I said, everything you’ve said will stay anonymous, confidential. Please don't talk about these discussions as you after you leave so people can keep their privacy. Last point: if you decide as any point in the next two weeks that you said something that you don't want to be included in the final transcript, or you want to withdraw for the project altogether, you can still do that even though we've just had the focus group and what you need to do for that is let me know, contact me, and say this is the pseudonym I used and I would like to be removed from the transcript and we can do that if necessary, so, that is an option. Otherwise, though, I hope you've enjoyed today. Hope you found it interesting and hope you have a good rest of the day. Thank you.