**Read these three extracts. How do they develop your own argument? Do they change your mind? Do they give you evidence? Can you argue against them?**

**Use these critical questions to help guide your reading and discussions:**

* Who is the author? Significant?
* What is the main argument?
* Which methods are used?
* Strengths and limitations?
* How is it relevant to this essay?
* What does it suggest for this essay?
* Does any other literature agree?
* Does any other literature disagree?

**Dominic Sandbrook, *The Daily Mail* (2015)**

After pressure from a rag-tag band of student activists who, with revealing pomposity, call themselves ‘Rhodes Must Fall’, the Oriel College (Oxford University) authorities have announced they intend to remove the plaque and are considering pulling down the statue of Cecil Rhodes. The campaign against Rhodes’s statue represents a ludicrous exercise in intellectual and historical vandalism and the statue should remain in place. As a fervent imperialist, Rhodes believed that the British were ‘the first race in the world, and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race’. Yet Rhodes was no monster. Far from being some purple-faced reactionary, he was a keen Liberal and supported freedom for Ireland and Dutch equality in South Africa. A complicated human being, then, with a complicated legacy, but…the activists’ manifesto makes for truly laughable reading. Whenever people walk past the statue, they claim, it ‘legitimises . . . celebration of a murderous white supremacist’. Yet by today’s standards he was far from alone. Part of the point of studying history is to understand that people in the past were different. Not better, not worse; just different.

**David Olusoga, The Guardian (2016)**

The Rhodes Must Fall movement has been accused of being antihistory, of wanting to whitewash Rhodes and the British empire out of our history. I suspect students who have committed three years of their lives to full-time study, putting themselves tens of thousands of pounds into debt for the privilege, tend not to be ideologically opposed to the acquisition of knowledge. Lost in that analysis is the overarching aim of the movement. Their declared goal is to “decolonise” university campuses and curricula. By this they mean to increase representation of minority students and staff and to challenge the narrowness of courses that marginalise the experiences and histories of non-white non-Europeans. The statue of Rhodes is in some ways their chosen metaphor for the historical unwillingness of Britain and many of our institutions to address the darker chapters of our colonial past. At its most nuanced, Rhodes Must Fall is asking us not just to condemn Cecil Rhodes for being a 19th-century racist but to ask ourselves if we really want to be a society that uncritically memorialises a 19th-century racist. However, in setting out that nuanced manifesto the campaign has played into the hands of its opponents. Those laudable aims have too often been concealed behind the opaque and unwieldy term “decolonise”, a phrase that is lost in translation between the worlds of academic debate and popular journalism. What’s worse, by building that manifesto around calls for the fall of statues, those ideas have often been distorted into a simple right-wrong, yes-no statue debate. For what it’s worth, I’m opposed to the removal of statues, but passionately in favour of what heritage practitioners call contextualisation…. I’m after more history, not less, and not just for Rhodes.

**David Olusoga, The Guardian (2020)**

Edward Colston was a board member and ultimately the deputy governor of the Royal African Company. In those roles he helped to oversee the transportation into slavery of an estimated 84,000 Africans. Of them, it is believed, around 19,000 died in the stagnant bellies of the company’s slave ships during the infamous Middle Passage from the coast of Africa to the plantations of the new world. The bodies of the dead were cast into the water where they were devoured by the sharks. This is the man who, for 125 years, has been honoured by Bristol.

The crowd who saw to it that Colston fell were of all races, but some were the descendants of the enslaved black and brown Bristolians whose ancestors were chained to the decks of Colston’s ships. Ripped from his pedestal and lying flat, Colston seemed smaller. It was when the statue was in this position that one of the protesters made a grim but powerful gesture. By placing his knee over the bronze throat of Edward Colston, he reminded us of the unlikely catalyst for these remarkable events.

What repulsed many about the statue was not that it valorised Colston but that it was silent about his victims. Those who are appalled by what happened on Sunday, need to ask themselves some difficult questions. Are they genuinely unable – even now – to understand why those descended from Colston’s victims have always regarded his statue as an outrage and for decades pleaded for its removal? Whatever is said over the next few days, this was not an attack on history. This is history. It is one of those rare historic moments whose arrival means things can never go back to how they were.