

## The Jellyfish Theatre Event

### Panel discussion entitled - City Lives: International Ties

Sara Wajid (chair) / Paulette Randall / Ben Yeoh / Lindsay Johns

Chair Sara Wajid introduced the panellists. Each panellist then read something that was relevant to the discussion.

**PR** read 'Still I Rise' a poem from Maya Angelou.

**SW** read from an article from her website 'London Calling – How Black and Asian Writers Imagine the City'.

**BY** read an extract from his play *Yellow Gentleman*.

**LJ** read from his provocative article in the *Evening Standard* where he wrote about the play *Off the Endz*.

**SW:** There we have four different offerings from the panel about City Lives: International Ties.

I noticed when I was watching Tamasha's most recent production *The House of Bilquis Bibi* at Hampstead Theatre this summer, I was watching the audiences coming in and one of the things that hit me was that there was a substantial, big, confident, a really large middle-class Asian theatre audience turning out for this play, night after night and filling seats in Hampstead Theatre in August, and that doesn't always happen at Hampstead and I realised that this was really exciting and not something I'd not seen when I was growing up. I was always the lone face at the National with my mum when I was small, and although I'd noticed this gently happening over the years it really hit me over the summer at the Hampstead Theatre and I thought that this is a real shift in the cultural landscape.

How do you feel the cultural landscape has changed? What sort of things jump out at you in your lifetime in terms of the changes that have happened?

**PR:** I remember a time, maybe twenty-odd years ago where there was a debate saying that anything that black people did, that if they got up and read their address book they got five stars in *Timeout*. And now we're in another time where no matter what we do people have their own voices and can say what they want to say. No one was

criticizing it when CLR James wrote *The Black Jacobin* and those overtly political, intellectual plays were being done, no one criticized that, so it's interesting for me to see that this voice at the moment that is the dominant voice is the one that's being criticized but we have to look at the whole of the culture. It's not just in theatre you have to look at music. What we are producing as young black and Asian people is what's carrying the swing, it's the same in theatre it's the same in lots of other areas, so for me it's a positive thing, it's very, very positive.

The fact that people like me, I'm still here, there's load of us that have been here for a long time and will continue to be so. At the moment I think yeah, it might not necessarily be my thing. But I remember that there was a time when we had a huge debate about a theatre company from Jamaica - Blue Mountain and everyone was saying this was disgusting because it was all farce, it was all sex, but there's room for that too. And absolutely get on with it, fantastic. Not my kind of thing, I don't want to do it but it should be there, it should be allowed. We shouldn't start censoring because that's what happened to us in the past and we shouldn't be doing it too ourselves.

**SW:** So what you're saying is that there should be a bigger diversity and cultural expression within black theatre practice.

**PR:** Yeah.

**BY:** There's definitely room for more voices, whether it's more diverse than it has been, I don't know. Like you say you seem to have a voice which is dominant for an art-form or a style, maybe now more than a few years ago. There seems to be more noise about specific stuff...like guns, drugs, sex, they've been around for a while.

**SW:** But in your extract your character is drawing a direct comparison between his generation and his father's generation. I just wondered as a practitioner is there an echo of that? Do you write to a generation before you, are you conscious of that?

**BY:** I guess as a writer you always write through the lens of yourself. I guess I see the problems of my dad's generation, there may have been more of a pressure to conform to a certain thing to do with money or marriage or stuff which maybe the generation that grows up here as opposed to somewhere else might have less of. But I don't know if I would go so far as to say that that's a definite trend.

**SW:** Can you see a progression? Were there a plethora of theatre companies you worked with around years ago?

**BY:** I wouldn't say there was a plethora. There were around two. I think there are non-white theatre companies that I'm aware of now that I wasn't aware of when I was growing up.

There's a schism slightly between audience, writers, plays, what you want to put on, how you want to express, and then the kind of money, investing, gate-keeper production side of things, in the sense that a writer writes through the lens of themselves, they put on what they want to put on and that's all good but maybe there's a little bit more of that happening. But considering the funding or the investment side, I think that there are arguments that for twenty, thirty years there's been under investment in these other voices that may be starting to be readdressed in the last few years, but still seems to be under-invested.

**SW:** Lindsay?

**LJ:** In my spare time I work as a volunteer mentor in a youth leadership programme in Peckham with young people aged between 14 and 18. Out of principle the scheme tries to get the kids to expand their cultural horizons outside of the confines of SE9, SE15. I like to try and take them to the theatre every couple of months. Out of principle I will not take them to see, what I call, one of the ghetto, hoody plays. Personally, I think they can get that down the barber shop for half price half the time. I don't think that by showing them guns and drugs and negative stereotypes on stage, I don't think that's doing them any good. I don't think that's doing their self-esteem any good.

Having said that, it also saddens me that with one or two exceptions the majority of the best black plays that I've seen in the last ten years have been written by African-Americans. Susan Lori-Parks with her play at the Royal Court in 2003...the African Company's *Richard III* by Carlisle Brown at the Riverside Studios in 1998 and again last year, an absolutely top drawer play. I think this leads onto the fact that, in my opinion, unfortunately because of history we have a nascent black British class in this country. It's developing but the plays that are coming up are being put on, in the most part they are not touching the gate-keepers. They need to reach a certain milieu. In terms of audiences, have we seen a parallel shift in audiences. Something which depresses me, my father's family are from Cape Town and

there's a history of apartheid in South Africa. You couldn't go to certain places, the beach, the theatre. You couldn't live in a certain area if you were a particular colour. I sometimes feel that with great sadness when I go out culturally in London we have a tendency to ghettoize ourselves. That is why I try and take the mentoring kids I work with to go and see Ibsen at the National or Shakespeare at the Globe, we don't just go to see the great black play by dint of it being black. My rationale is that my young people in Peckham if they can get a nineteenth century Norwegian parlour room drama, then they can get anything. They don't have to just have something with people looking like them on stage, talking the way that they do.

In an ideal world, I'd love to take them to see a black play, if it's a good black play. I think we need to have the tendency to get out there and explore all forms of art and not just to contain ourselves to a ghettoizing mentality.

**PR:** There was a time when you'd watch the news and they would say that there was a crime committed by someone and you'd sit there and say to yourself please don't say they're black. I cannot take on the responsibility of other people and what they do. Now the fact that you're making a judgement call on what you think these young people should go and see I guess that your right because you are there doing your mentoring with these young people and I think that's fine but I also think that's denying what's actually happening and that fact is that those people who are disenfranchised, who feel that they are not being taken seriously, their voices are actually out there...that's incredible, it's incredible.

**LJ:** I think you're absolutely right, that any marginalized group, it's great that their voices are out there but to put it back on you, coming from my perspective, I think that the tendency to only give young black kids black relevant literature as it pertains to them is in itself perhaps a patronising...

**PR:** But who's doing that? Are you doing that? Who's doing that?

**LJ:** I think that there's a tendency within the education establishment right now to rush to relevance. To rush to relevance is very pernicious. Just because Hampstead is doing fine for the last five years doesn't mean that hip hop's out.

**PR:** What are you afraid of?...It's like saying you can only do it one way.

**LJ:** We need a multiplicity of narratives. We need to hear a multiplicity of voices.

**PR:** So show them everything, don't just choose one road.

**SW:** What excites me is that a public conversation happens that isn't happening behind closed doors. What excited me this summer was watching people in the foyer who were from completely different backgrounds talking about *Bilquis Bibi*. And when that kind of conversation happens across boundaries I think that's pretty exciting.

But quite often what seems to happen across cultural expression by black, Asian and other minority practitioners in London is that, and I think this goes to your point about ghettoization, is that certain people are listening to certain conversations and certain other people are listening to certain other kinds of conversations and there's much less of the inter-cultural conversations going on about our shared citizenship because some people just haven't got the ears. So for instance when I was looking at the way people responded to this particular play which had some Punjabi dialogue I really noticed younger audience members, say people under the age of 50, it didn't matter what cultural background they were from, they had no problem with it at all. They didn't even notice it, they didn't refer to it, they didn't pick up on it other than to say I like the bit where they were swearing in Punjabi even though they didn't know what those swear words were. But people, including my mother who's over 60, were made quite anxious about the bits of language that she thought the white audiences might not understand, there's a cultural apartheid going on. But what excited me is that audiences were quite ahead of the game, the younger people understand but what worries me is that there's a great swathe of people who are not culturally attuned to this type of theatre who would miss out on the conversation. I wonder if that's partly what we're talking about?

**LJ:** There was a fantastic play on last year at Bethnal Green, a Nigerian play called *Call Mr Robeson*, written by Tayo Aluka. It was historically charged, a poignant monologue, beautifully written, educational. The only problem was, about five people turned up in the audience to watch the play. For me, we're rarely presented with opportunities to go and see such a play. I'm a big fan of old-school hip hop and I went to see KRS ONE last weekend and he coined the phrase edu-tainment, something that can be educational and also entertainment. When we are presented with a play like that I think if

we don't take the opportunity to mobilize and go and see it. And in film, for example, a great art-house film a couple of years back by Isaac Julien, the life of a seminal Martiniquen psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon, and again very few people mobilized to go and see it and *Shank*. I'm not denying what these plays and films do to confront one reality but we need to see more, we need to expand.

**PR:** But the beautiful thing is that it's there. You're talking like it doesn't exist, and that there's this thing that it's only people who can't spell and who don't know how to sit round the table and eat with a knife and fork. It is there.

**Audience [Kristin Landon-Smith]:** I think Paulette is right. Let me pick up on this multiplicity of narratives, they are there and they are being made by black British, British Asian practitioners. They're not just afro-American practitioners. They are being made by black British practitioners, there are lots of them.

You touch on a point that I want to bring into the discussion about gate-keepers. I think from the mainstream there is a tension between what the establishment feel happy about producing and what they feel happy about not producing. So the more nuanced narratives for example *The House of Bilquis Bibi* that we've been discussing, actually is not going to travel to the National [Theatre] because *Rafta Rafta* will be there which is perhaps a narrative and to some extent a narrative that the gate-keeping establishment, and to some extent the mainstream, might be more comfortable with. So those nuanced narratives that are being told are not coming to the surface and in your head those black plays with profiles are not coming to the surface and you're not sensing the multiplicity of narratives and the web of work that is going on in this city by black British practitioners.

**Audience:** I'm finding [LJ's] comments very patronising and very insular. I have two young children coming up, mixed race, one's my 16 year old daughter who wants to be a writer. And it's very patronising to think your kids who you work with in SE15, you wouldn't take them to see a play because they can see people who are like them on stage at the Royal Court Theatre where lots of people who don't know people like them are going to watch and will be educated so therefore will not be so ignorant, so potentially they will get more respect. And also if these people who are running these theatres are not taking writing by black, Chinese, Jewish what can we do? There's a voice for everybody. I think it's very limiting and quite depressing that you should take it upon yourself to be so patronising

to those young people in those areas that you're mentoring. I find it sad.

**BY:** Going back to the gate-keeping, for example my play *The Yellow Gentleman* got read by a lot of white-run theatres and I think it was misunderstood at all of them, because it comes from a space where they don't come from. And you don't necessarily get a face to face meeting with them, so you can't explain a lot of the subtleties and nuances. These white men, they tend to be running these institutions, the BBC, the National Theatre or whatever, yes they're intellectually engaged but they're stretched, or whatever, and then end up putting on a gun and drugs play because it's easier and they think it will sell for audiences. I do think that's a problem.

I actually studied my playwriting at Harvard, and I studied under Adrienne Kennedy, she's almost disappeared, one of the foremost black American playwrights of her time, she started off in the 1950s. And her work doesn't get put on anymore. I find her work difficult myself, it's very intellectual and not that popular, even when I was there, one play was put on in four or five years for one of the leading lights of American playwrights of any colour. African-Americans, they have a slightly longer tradition, they can go back to Langston Hughes, *A Raisin in the Sun* but in Britain we have a different tradition, being slightly shorter.

With *Hamlet* you can do it with hip hop or you can do it with two chairs and a blank screen. And the black British playwright is going through that as well, with some plays staying within our canon because they're good and lasted and maybe some of these sex and gun plays won't last or maybe they will, that's still coming through. Back in the American tradition it seems that Adrienne Kennedy's work probably won't be staged anymore, it's not stood that test of time. Talking of elitism, Adrienne came from a slightly more privileged background and there was a tension between how you came up or not but in the end I think there's a broad agreement that great art does speak to everyone, where you can tell stories through the individual lens or specifics, so the specific and the general or the universal can be told through the specific so it may be understood. It comes back to the gate-keepers that sometimes you may tell something very specific and you just need a little bit of understanding behind that to get what it is particularly driving at.

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**LJ:** I took my mentoring kids to see *Seize the Day* at The Tricycle last year. They saw Jeremy Charles on stage, aspirational, positive, motivational, that's what they wrote in their essays. I make them critique every time they go to the theatre and that's what stuck in their minds. I don't think anybody's ever suffered from being talked up to but having said that I don't think we need to have art which is consciously didactic and sets out to teach you something empowering and motivational every time but to quote from Spiderman: "with great power comes great responsibility."

If your play is in a prestigious venue, use it to say something meaningful. I'd love to take my mentoring kids to see the intellectual pyrotechnics of Michael Frayn or the emotional nuance of Terence Rattigan or a great African-American playwright but I just don't see the great multiplicity of experiences that the lady in the audience mentioned.

**Audience [Topher Campbell]:** Everyone wants to respond to this. I think that the intervention you wrote a few months back was the correct and right intervention as it talks about a moment in time but it's difficult to talk about the whole picture at any one point in time. Myself, Paulette, Felix, Pat and various other practitioners, people in the field, making the work, we've collectively been around for many, many decades and another colleague who has been at the National Theatre creating the National theatre archive. I suggest you and your students take a look at that resource because when you look at the breadth of history in relation to the diasporic work then you'll see that intellectual challenge. But your provocation is a conflation of issues. It's a conflation of what might appear to be the most salient, the most important, critical discourse in theatre around black and Asian representation, but it isn't, there are other discourses going on parallel to that which are just as important and just as impactful in many ways.

There are discourses that companies like Talawa Theatre Company and Nitro have been doing for twenty, thirty years which are just as impactful on the communities they serve and reflect as any other kind of discourse. I'd implore you to take a closer look at that.

In looking for multiplicity of representation we need to look also outside of London because there are productions going on outside London which freelance directors and theatre companies are mounting which are also of that discourse.

I think the other conflation that you have in relation to your particular provocation is that we are in charge constantly of what goes on stage. You look on the Royal Court website and look at the Artistic Directors of the last forty years, they're all white, they're all men, there are no women. The Royal Court is the standard bearer of white, middle-class values, they will only allow a certain kind of production in and that is not the place you go to for this kind of discourse about the representation of black people.

**SW:** Last week I saw a theatre blog where the writer was writing about the depiction of immigration on stage that she's seen recently. She refers to Topher's work *Unstated*, she talks about people being very nice and lots of other works that have dealt with the idea of immigration that have been out in the last few years. And then she goes on to say that "whilst the critique of the immigration system is implicit in these plays there have been no plays that I can think of that tackle the system head on. Meanwhile playwrights like David Hare, Brecht and more recently with Lucy Prebble's *Enron* satirize complex systems of criminal justice or capital crimes, perhaps theatre feels more comfortable exploring these intimate spaces and how these can sometimes skew the institutional forces".

The writer here has her own play coming out soon about immigration and is trying to write about this in an *Enron*-type of way as well as the small, personal and political. I'm just wondering what the panel and the audience think of this, another different sort of provocation, where not so much spanking the wrists of playwrights not writing about immigration in that way, but talking about the fact of these political issues around race are more often than not engaged by theatre practitioners on the personal, on the individual, and how to make this leap, just because today we are talking about how arrivals and departures are reflected in the making of art. Is immigration itself a hot issue?

**BY:** I think tackling an institutional idea or theme, I think tackling a big idea like that, it's very difficult. People like stories, people like stories told in character, I think that's one of the ways of doing it. And *Enron* is very positive with character it has a very charismatic CEO in it and it charts a historical thing, although it satirizes it to some extent. It would be something that Caryl Churchill would be more successful at tackling. And when you do tackle it head on, like David Hare's work, no disrespect to him but it can be a bit boring. So my answer to that is, if there's no brilliant story or characters it fails.

**PR:** I went to see a play and I thought that whoever wrote this has a huge problem with anyone of any colour at all and has little or no respect for any of those people and I think we should be able to write about whatever we want to write about but it has to come from a point, for me, certainly to begin with, from respect, absolutely, otherwise why do it.

I worked on a tv show a couple of years back and the first series was written by a white Scottish guy. And they called me in for the second one saying that they didn't get it quite right so we want to try something different. That's absolutely fine, you can do whatever you want. So we sat in a room me and the writer and a couple of producers and talked about why we felt it didn't work. And I said that it wasn't culturally specific, it didn't come from a place of love and respect so therefore you couldn't really tackle it that way and he said to me are you saying that white people can't write for black people and I said no, I'm saying you can't. You have a responsibility as a writer, if you tackle those things, then you have to take it on responsibly. For me, it's we can do whatever we like but it has to come from the right place.

**SW:** And in terms of audiences, do you have aspirations for your audiences in any way related to race and culture?

**PR:** If we only put on work for people who look like me I'd be on a hiding to nothing. We write plays, I direct plays, because we want people to come and have an experience. I want to take them on a journey, I want to transport them to somewhere else, I want them to go away and think about what they've just seen, what they've just felt. So for me that includes everybody. I think most stories are universal, sometimes they are specific but that doesn't mean that you don't get it otherwise then I can't watch any foreign films, I can't read books from another culture, I can't do anything outside my alleged box, I'm not in a box.

**SW:** I also felt watching *The House of Bilquis Bibi*, one night I was watching with a predominantly Asian women's audience, I felt a huge difference watching it than on the opening night where there were lots of press and dignitaries, and laughing at the jokes with people who got it, was for me, a lovely experience and one that I rarely have in the theatre and I enjoyed watching it with those two different audiences. I also enjoy it when I go to plays where I'm the only brown face in the audience. There is something there with audiences and we can't

pretend that there aren't different kinds of magic with different audiences.

**BY:** There is that shared experience and different audiences are different. For a lot of my plays there's a half and half audience. I don't think necessarily it's culture. On those great nights you just have a mix of audience and they all kind of get it. I've written stuff and you think it's slightly amusing and it's on, boom, everyone gets it, that's a nice reaction. And on another night you thought it played out better and the audience are "no", let's cough, let's wrinkle our crisp packets. So when you feel you're sitting with people who you think are in your zone, laughing at the jokes and maybe they do get them that is a different kind of experience.

**LJ:** Just to concur with what's been said, there is a degree of cultural specificity, shared experience, jokes, whatever. Great writing, great theatre, great art can transcend every strata of social class, religion, if it's good writing that bounces off the page grabs your attention, transports you on a journey, takes you outside of yourself. Horace's famous benedictum; "what's the point of writing great poetry and theatre - to instruct and to delight". If great theatre, great literature can do that, then it's done its job.

**SW:** What is the future of London's audiences? I remember reading recently that in fifty years time 2 in 10 British people will be from an ethnic minority. In London it's particularly marked and it will be very noticeable. We're starting to see that now in boroughs like Harrow and Redbridge. And ethnic minorities are moving from less affluent boroughs to more affluent boroughs. This is a marked shift that we're going to see more and more of within the next fifty years. Now that's the sort of demographic change that we might see as we walk around the streets or I might see in the theatre in Hampstead now do we feel this in the theatre? [Paulette] do you see it in your current production that's on, it's very popular, seats are selling all the time, is that something that you have seen at scale even twenty years ago and do you feel hopeful.

**PR:** Yeah. You have to change and you have to grow. It's about development, whichever way that goes you have to embrace it. When I was a kid I could never figure out why my family lived in the same area, and of course it makes sense if you're coming from somewhere else you go to a place where you know someone. They don't all live in the same area now, we've all done different things and made different choices and we've moved on, that's progress.

**LJ:** There's no such thing as constancy in life. Things improve, things become exciting. The ethnic composition in London is changing, it's exciting.

**SW:** I wonder if the market changes happening now will cause a shift. I wonder if the demographic changes will make this happen.

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**BY:** I wonder if we are entering a time, like in visual art, and also fine art, where artists used to make work to please other people, now they create art to delight themselves. Artists are being very individual in terms of their vision and passion. Some make it and some don't. There's maybe less of that in theatre, but there's still some and they may have smaller audiences, they'll be harder to find, you won't find them at the Royal Court, you won't find people putting their work into the Royal Court. You see it in the fine arts, you see it more in poets, modern poets who really write for themselves and are not interested in audiences. Theatre is interested in audiences.

**Audience [Pat Cumper]:** I just want to pick up on something that was said. At Talawa we invite scripts and we will get 60-80 scripts a year and we read all of them. It's really interesting to watch the shift of what's happened. The subjects are not the ones that we're going to see in the mainstream theatres, we do get some of those, but for the most part we're getting far more diverse and interesting scripts coming in and they also deal with a much wider range of topics. There's also a difference between for example young Nigerian writers and young Caribbean writers or older writers. There are interesting new voices emerging.

There's a kind of panic really, a play that's commissioned only pays you six thousand pounds and it takes eighteen months to write a good play, maybe two years. So what we've actually got is people who come in with some economic vulnerability and by the time they're thirty, thirty-five they can't do it anymore, they literally can't do it anymore, so the intellectual space that they need to be in, where they understand, the thematic control that they have as a writer. I know there's thing that of 'I just put it on the page and it won't mean anything', the act of writing is political, the choices that you make are political. And if they're not in control of what they're writing you get this kind of theatre that appears to be denigrating the people that it's working for. And I think until we've actually got a space and you think about Lori Parks and other writers, they're actually coming out of a

system in which they are allowed to develop their intellectual muscles and I'm not talking about academic, I'm not talking about elitism, I'm talking about an active mind that needs to examine the world and needs the space in which to do that, so from my point of view I understand completely what you're saying, about the gate-keepers, but if I have an anxiety it's about where do we find space so that people aren't royal courted out of their first play and then they disappear. That I think that is wrong, we need to have space and the tools to create these voices because we need to tell our stories.

**Audience:** I have a mixed-race heritage, I'm on the board of Kali and I'm a writer. My question is towards those spaces, we're coming up to 20<sup>th</sup> October, to what, in terms of this government is probably going to be the hardest slash in terms of the developments that we have made, in terms of accessing our experiences from our diverse communities. And it is in that era that as BAME communities, we are not separate from women, we are not separate from LGBTQ communities, we are not separate from disabled communities and yet we are all communities that have been marginalized and it is in the context of Sustained Theatre and "raising the roof" it's about how we will face up to the challenges ahead in terms of unifying our struggles to support our collective and diverse needs, because as we are BAME we are also lesbians, we are also gay men, we are also disabled, we are also older we are also younger and it's about pulling together in times, where I think things are going to be really, really hard and are going to undermine the developments that we have been part of the process of leading.

**BY:** Picking up on that money and space imperative, if you're working within the mainstream then they have a different funding thing but if you want to write what you want then you almost have to have a second career. So for me I have a second career and that insulates me from having to write the type of play has a more commercial imperative or have to write five episodes of EastEnders or whatever you have to write to survive. I don't know if it will move more towards that but I know that there are some people like me who are doing that because the funding hasn't come through. You don't want to be necessarily beholden to someone like the Royal Court who are paying for your play and they want a certain thing. It's quite a personal thing for the writer and I do wonder whether more people will move down that track to insulate themselves.

**PR:** There are two things for me, picking up on what Pat was saying, that because it's flavour of the month or what seems to be attractive,

they don't necessarily nurture and develop those talents that come in, but also there's another fundamental thing that happens in this country is that they don't really respect writers. Writers are supposed to be privileged enough to write so that you come from a particular kind of background where writing is accepted and one of my children will be a writer and one will be a painter and so there's nothing that says that I will value this in any way. It's best if you write whatever you're going to write and go mad and then once you've gone mad then we can put your plays on. That's a kind of attitude that stinks, and actually in America they value writers and they pay you accordingly. That does not happen here, not even in television.

**BY:** I concur. Writers just don't get paid enough to live off, even second or third plays or even those more established.

**Audience [Havana Wellings-Longmore]:** I wanted to pick up on the young people. I have to say that a lot of people are putting me in a box. I've been working in theatre for four years but I still find people are saying to me "you think you're middle-class or you think you're white", so there's still a thing amongst young people under the age of thirty where people specifically ask me "do you have a Jamaican play I can go and see", "do you know where I can see African shows or something about Pakistanis", so even though we all understand that we are multicultural and that we live in a multicultural society we're still specifically looking for shows that speak to us.

I do find that a lot of young people will asking me how they get tickets to *Estate Walls* or the latest young play that's about youth crime, they feel that they want to see themselves projected and the problem is that they don't have a dialogue amongst themselves or in their schools or with their college teachers to talk about what they've seen in terms of reviewing the essay, to look at the stereotypes that are in there and if you talk to the writers of those plays they are able to have a discussion about identity in a way they don't portray in their writing and it's probably reflected in the fact that they're trying to make money and I'm not sure how that will change with the cuts coming up.

It's a worry for me that lots of young people don't know who they are and where they can go and there are a number of media factors telling them this is what is it to be black and this is what it isn't so you don't go bungee-jumping, you don't go skiing, you don't go to the theatre.

**SW:** Unfortunately we have to end this session here but we can continue to the discussion over a drink. Thank you very much to all of our panellists.