

Pilot Theatre/ Octagon Theatre Bolton / York Theatre Royal's

Co-production of



By Ayub Khan-Din

UK Tour Autumn 2005

Education Resource Pack

By Helen Cadbury for Pilot Theatre

## Introduction

Welcome to this Education Pack, which has been designed to support your visit to see Ayub Khan-Din's play *East is East*.

You will find information about the company and the production, aimed at students of Drama, Theatre Studies, Performing Arts, Acting and Technical Theatre. *East is East* is also an ideal text for exploring cross-curricular links, especially PSHE / Citizenship (issues around faith, identity and family see **Discussion Resource: Contemporary Context**.) and Art and Design, see **Designer's Vision** and **Model Box Images**.

There are also workshop exercises for use after seeing the play. They can be a starting point for extended improvisation or a practical approach to post-show discussion and analysis. The nature of *East is East* both in terms of issues of racial conflict and gender conflict means this drama work in class needs to be negotiated with careful ground rules.

If you are interested in booking a workshop from Pilot Theatre, delivered by our education team, before your visit to see the play, please contact the Pilot office on 01904 635755.

As the tour progresses, additional information will be added.

Many thanks to Don Valley High School for sharing ideas with us.

We hope you find this pack useful.

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	2
Contents	3
<b>About Pilot</b>	
Funding and History	4
The Company today	5
<b>About the Production</b>	
Who's who for East is East	7
Director's vision	10
Designer's vision	11
Model Box 1	12
Model Box 2	13
Detailed Image	14
Costume Design	15
Interview with Lighting Designer	16
<b>About the Play</b>	
The Playwright	17
Synopsis	18
Background to East is East	19
<b>Context</b>	
Historical context	20
Discussion resource: Contemporary context	21
<b>Workshop Exercises</b>	
Workshop: Identity	22
Between the Scenes: Acting Exercise	23
Backstory: Writing Exercise	23
Extract1: Identity	24
Extract2: Mother and Daughter	25
Bibliography and ideas for further reading.	26



## About Pilot Theatre

Pilot Theatre is an award winning National Touring Theatre Company based in Yorkshire and currently resident at York Theatre Royal.

### Funding

Pilot Theatre is funded by Arts Council England, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, West Yorkshire Grants and City of York Council.

### Company History

Pilot Theatre Company is a National Touring Theatre Company based in Yorkshire. The Company was launched in 1981 by a group of students from Bretton Hall College and established itself in Wakefield. Throughout the 1980's the Company worked as a devising collective responding reactively to requests for work.

In 1994, the Company appointed a new Artistic Director, Marcus Romer. Between 1994 and 1997 Pilot developed its touring circuit nationally. *Lord of the Flies* was Pilot's first mid scale touring project and reached an audience of 40,000. Collaborating with nationally significant venues, York Theatre Royal and the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, enabled Pilot to reach more young people than ever before, with a full workshop programme available to every tour venue, and teachers resources available to every teacher through the Pilot website. The production was nominated for a TMA award and won the Manchester Evening News award for best touring show in 2001.

1998 saw the publication of *Young Blood* :the first anthology specialising in theatre for young people, which included *Out of Their Heads*( chosen from over 300 play scripts ). *Taken Without Consent* was seen at the Take Off Festival in 1997, and adapted as *Crash Kids* in Germany. It was performed at the Kiel State Theatre in November 1998, with 4 new productions in 2001 and 2002.

Since then Pilot have toured *Rumble Fish*, *Unsuitable Girls*, *Road*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Bloodtide* and *Beautiful Thing*. They co-produced *Mirad*, *A Boy from Bosnia*, *Tale of Teeka* and *Kiss of a Spiderwoman* for the Studio at York Theatre Royal and also commissioned the world premiere of *a/s/? –age sex, location* by Associate Artist, Richard Hurford. Marcus has also directed 2 main house shows for York, *Beauty Queen of Leenane* and *Abigail's Party*. The recent tour of *Beautiful Thing* was a co-production with the Octagon Theatre, Bolton. Pilot are part of a three year project, entitled Stage Exchange, which is funded by the Arts Council to build partnerships between touring companies and building based theatres. Under the Stage Exchange relationship we are delighted to invite Damian Cruden, the Artistic Director of York Theatre Royal, to direct this Pilot/Octagon/York co-production of *East is East*.



## **The Company Today**

The Company currently has three full time core members; Artistic Director, Administrative Producer and Administrator. We engage actors, stage managers, directors, writers, designers, musical directors, movement directors, education practitioners and other artists on a project basis. The core members of staff are:

### **Marcus Romer - Artistic Director**

Marcus is an actor, writer and director. He is currently the Artistic Director of Pilot Theatre. His production of Lord of the Flies received a TMA award nomination and won the Manchester Evening News award for best touring production. He is an established playwright, and his work has been published and produced in the UK, Europe and the USA. His plays Taken without Consent and Out of their Heads have been translated and performed throughout Europe for the last 6 years. He adapted and directed the world premiere of Susan Hinton's cult classic Rumble Fish and his adaptation of the Melvin Burgess novel, Bloodtide, toured the UK.

He has worked as a director with a wide variety of companies including the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, York Theatre Royal, The Swan Theatre Worcester, the West Yorkshire Playhouse, as well as Nottingham Playhouse, Major Road, Red Ladder and Pilot. He has directed several plays for Pilot Theatre at York Theatre Royal as part of the Stage Exchange Programme. These include - Mirad, a boy from Bosnia, Kiss of the Spiderwoman, Beautiful Thing and the world premiere of ASL - Age Sex Location. He directed a new production of Lord of the Flies and Beauty Queen of Leenane for York Theatre Royal in October 2004. In the spring of 2005 he directed Beautiful Thing for Bolton Octagon as part of a new co-production partnership.

He is also on the Management Committee of the European Theatre Network - Magic Net, which works with actors, writers and education staff from 12 European countries. He continues to work as an actor and frequently appears on television, recently as a shady solicitor in Emmerdale.

## Pilot: The Company Today continued



### **Amanda J Smith - Administrative Producer**

A graduate of Exeter University, Amanda has worked in Theatre for over twenty five years in a whole range of jobs including direction, production, education and administration. She worked for the Northcott Theatre, Exeter, Oldham Coliseum and Nottingham Playhouse before deciding to specialize in work for young people. After training and working for several years as a teacher she returned to theatre to work with Nottingham Playhouse Roundabout Company, (Company member 1986-89), Humberside TIE (Artistic Director 1989 – 1992), and Sheffield Theatres (Education Director 1992 - 1999) before taking up a new post of Administrative Producer for Pilot in January 2000. Mandy, along with Marcus, is also on the Magic Net, European project, Management Committee. As Pilot's Admin. Producer has particular responsibility for Education, Co-ordination of European Work and Finance. She has directed and /or produced over 45 shows and will be directing the children's show, *Walking the Tightrope*, at York Theatre Royal this Autumn.

### **Sarah Seddon - Company Administrator**

Sarah studied Drama at the University College of Ripon and York St John, after which she became a Stage Manager, spending two years at the Haymarket Theatre, Basingstoke as their Senior Deputy Stage Manager and touring with companies such as Compass and Lipservice as well as being Pilot's Deputy Stage Manager on *Bloodtide*, *A/S/L?*, and on two productions of *Lord of the Flies*.

Sarah joined Pilot as their Administrator in May 2004

## Who's Who for *East is East*

### The Director

**Damian Cruden** Director of *East is East*. Damian is the Artistic Director of York Theatre Royal . In the past seven years at York, he has directed many productions including: *Hay Fever, Macbeth, A Cloud in Trousers, Brassed Off, Caitlin, A Taste of Honey, Habeas Corpus, Up 'n' Under, Frankenstein, Noises Off, Little Shop of Horrors, Othello, Closer, The Turn of the Screw, Bedevilled, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, Behind the Scenes at the Museum, Bouncers, Kafka's Dick, Man of the Moment, Having a Ball, Romeo and Juliet, Getting On, The Three Musketeers, Les Liaisons Dangereuses, All My Sons, Piaf, Dead Funny, Educating Rita, Frankie and Johnnie at the Claire De Lune, Neville's Island, Multiplex, Abandonment and Private Lives.*

Before coming to York Theatre Royal, Damian worked for various regional theatres as a freelance director and was Associate Director for Hull Truck. He trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama between 1982 and 1986.

### The Designer

**Laura McEwen** trained in Theatre Design at Nottingham Trent University and graduated in 2002. Productions she has designed for Pilot Theatre include *a/s/l? age sex location* and *Beautiful Thing*, both for the Studio at York Theatre Royal and for its complete redesign for the Octagon Theatre Bolton and tour in 2005 (see the design notes in the Beautiful Thing Education Pack at [www.pilot-theatre.com](http://www.pilot-theatre.com) )

She has also designed several shows for York Theatre Royal Studio including *Trainspotting, Disco Pigs* and *Beauty and the Beast*. She works frequently with several Theatre in Education Companies such as Roundabout, Sheffield Crucible T.I.E, Red Earth Theatre and Suffolk T.I.E. As well as designing Laura often works as an artist in education and has been part of the Creative Partnerships in Nottingham.

## The Lighting Designer

**Ciaran Bagnall** trained at the Royal College of Music and Drama in Cardiff and was based at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre for three years. In his time at the Haymarket, Ciaran designed the lighting for *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *Bollywood Jane*, *Bed, Mine, Love in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, *Leicester Comedy Festival 2003*, *Othello*, *Safe Passage*, *Oedipus the King*, *Winters Sun*, *Heroes*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Roses of Eyam*, *Sugar and Slugs*, *Divided We Stand*, *Spiders In Disguises*, *Papa Was a Bus Conductor* and *Nanna's Nightingale*.

Other designs include: *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, York Theatre Royal; *Swansong and Blessed be the Immaculates*, Minerva Theatre, Chichester; *Opera Scenes*, RWCMD, Cardiff; *Hey there!...Boy with the Bebop*, Polka Theatre, London; *Dancing Within Walls*, Contact Theatre, Manchester; *Madam Butterfly*, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, London and the Minack Theatre, Cornwall; *One*, Compound Productions Tour; *Mass*, St David's Hall, Cardiff; *The World Turned Upside Down*, Sherman Theatre, Cardiff; *Judith*, Hungary Tour; and *The Hostage*, Ireland Tour.

## The Cast - biographies will be available in the programme

George	Ernest Ignatius
Ella	Janys Chambers
Annie	Sarah Parks
Dr/Mr Shah	Aftab Sachak
Abdul	Damian Asher
Tariq	Davood Ghadami
Maneer	Chris Nayak
Saleem	John Afzal
Meenah	Rokhsaneh Shahidi
Sajit	Adam Deacon



## **The Staff Director**

**Asha Kahlon** was Movement Director for *Macbeth*, York Theatre Royal, Assistant Director for *Lord of the Flies*, Pilot Theatre and recently made her directorial debut with *The Little Mermaid* at York Theatre Royal and Polka Theatre, London.

Her acting credits include: *Macbeth*, York Theatre Royal; *Bloodtide*, Pilot Theatre/York Theatre Royal; *Unsuitable Girls*, Pilot Theatre, UK tour; *The Witches*, Leicester Haymarket Theatre; *Two days as a Tiger*, M6 Theatre Company; *Red Devils*, Royal Court Young People's Theatre; *O Sweet Sita*, Watermans Arts Centre; and *My Native Land*, Lyric Studio, Hammersmith.

## **The Composer**

**Ivan Stott** is very pleased to working with Pilot again. He is a musician, composer and actor with considerable experience with companies including West Yorkshire Playhouse and York Theatre Royal. As he begins to create a score for *East is East* he will be looking at existing music from the period, analysing the sound quality and production quality of the big hits of 1970. He will then be looking at fusions with traditional Pakistani music.

## **The Education Team**

Pilot works with a regular team of freelance education practitioners, all highly experienced specialists in devising and delivering dynamic and creative workshops to accompany Pilot shows. For *East is East* the team will include, Fateha Begum, Helen Cadbury, Bridget Foreman, Asha Kahlon, Hannah Priddle and Sian Williams. If you would like to book a workshop for your school please contact the Pilot office for further information.

## The Director's Vision

This is a play about a family and about the conflicts within the family, it especially reverberates around families who have a confused notion of identity. Clearly there is a very strong issue about culture and dual heritage and the film of *East is East* goes much further down that path. While the film sets up a clear villain/heroine conflict between George and Ella, the play is more emotionally complex. We feel more sympathy for George and the struggle he has trying to do the right thing, in the way he is bringing up his children, it is easier to see that he is trying to do it with love. This is a play about individuals and the nuts and bolts of their deeper personalities. The autobiographical quality of Ayub Khan-Din's writing makes them seem even more real. I hope that everyone, whatever their culture, will recognize the universal themes. This is a play where anyone, regardless of cultural or racial background, can learn and understand things about both themselves and their families.

In the early part of the design process, Laura (McEwen – the designer) and I talked about the locations of the play and how we would approach them. The play has four settings and two other settings which are only visited once. The challenge was how to put these into a theatrical space when the text of the play is basically naturalistic. When you first read it, it seems televisual or cinematic, but in live theatre the transitions need to happen in real time without holding up the action. The set of the original production was put on trucks which were wheeled on and off. We did not want to go down that path aesthetically, and it would not be a suitable option for a touring production.

The fluidity of the scenes is important, as are the journeys made by the characters from one location to the next (we need to be aware, for example, that George is about to arrive and interrupt the young people eating pork in the house.) The set needs to incorporate islands on which naturalism can float, between which the transitions must be rapid and smooth. The build quality of the set will need to ensure that as the set moves, it does so seamlessly and allows the action to flow.

Damian Cruden July 2005

## The Designer's Vision

The starting point was two frames interlocking. In my research I noticed that in Asian homes in the 1970's walls were adorned by picture frames. The potential brides also are introduced, not as people, but as framed photographs. I felt that George held his family in the palm of his hand and their lives are framed by two different cultures. I also noticed that there was a cross-over between the highly patterned fabric designs of the era and the patterns in Islamic art.

In my notebook, I've used these motifs and repeats and I have experimented with different colour schemes. Eventually, shades of green felt right: the green of Pakistan's flag but also of the canal bank. Damian was keen to avoid a feel of "it's grim up North" so I have just hinted at the red brick of the terraced streets.

The structure of the set includes a central staircase pivoted by the actors, this will move us quickly from one room to the next. I have also hinted at outside space through doorways and gauzes where characters can be seen arriving or leaving. The chip-shop will be a counter trucked in with a gauze panel behind, which will be lit to denote the window out to the street. It is important to create a sense of both an interior world and a world beyond.

Across the back of the space there will be a walkway, where we will see the actors making their journeys, especially between home and the chip-shop – the journeys won't be made in literal time but there will be a sense of a community outside.

The hospital will be suggested by a wheelchair and costumes within the empty space. There will be minimal objects on the set and the decisions about when and how the movable objects are used will be made in rehearsal as the director and actors explore what works best.

In act 2 there is a particular challenge of cross-fading between the spaces: George's parlour, which is the 'best' room in the house and the lounge, which is the children's space. The stairs will need to move even within the scene. For the canal bank we will use the rear platform, lit through the gauze, with the sky-line visible behind.

For the costume design I recognised that not all the characters would have the fashion of 1970. In fact George and Ella's clothes probably echo the late 1950s. Tariq is the most up to date and English. George looks smart all the time and Maneer's costume mirrors his father's as a sign of his loyalty. Sajit's parka is obviously essential and I have been thinking about the contrast of what he is wearing underneath when he finally takes it off. For Mr. Shah's visit, we see everyone at their smartest, more Pakistani in style, to try to impress their father.

Laura McEwen July 2005

## Model Box Image 1



This is a photograph of an early version of the model box for East is East.

It shows the staircase which will pivot to show different spaces inside the Khan home.

The patterns on the floor are developed from Laura's scrapbook ideas, where she has collected examples of Islamic art, tile patterns and 1970s wallpaper patterns.

The walkway is shown behind.

Looking at the set in the theatre, can you see how these ideas have developed and changed?

## Model Box Image 2



In this image you can see the chip shop counter which can be trucked (wheeled) on and off.

Can you see the pattern of brickwork inside the vertical frame? What sort of place does it suggest?

The shelf on the staircase holds a few objects which are essential for telling the story. In rehearsal the actors will explore exactly what is placed where.

**Detailed image from one of the frames**



How many images can you spot inside the whole image?

What do these images suggest about the play and George's world?

## Costume Design



Here are some of the costume designs. What contrasts do you notice?

After you have seen the play, can you name the characters and say when they wear these clothes?

## Interview with Ciaran Bagnall, Lighting Designer

*What inspires you creatively in this play?*

I think the most interesting thing is the relationships between the characters - the different strengths and weakness' of each. The conviction of some to follow their own hearts and the strength of others to follow the path of tradition.

*What are the challenges of lighting this set, in terms of its shape?*

The set is quite abstract, dominated by the frames and extreme patterns of the seventies and Muslim influenced designs. But within this abstract design we still have to portray some very ordinary locations i.e the chip-shop. My challenge is to try to unite the two - complimenting the design and the location.

*How do the colours in Laura's design influence your choices in the lighting design?*

As I mentioned above, with this kind of piece I feel my design has to not only aid the story-telling process but also to compliment the set. Laura's design on the gauze within the frame is very complex and colourful so I'll be trying to use this to our advantage - pulling it into focus matching the colours when we need to but also washing it out at times so that it doesn't pull the focus away from the actors onstage. She's given me a great palette to work from !!

*What limitations are there on your design, in terms of budget?*

The budget for this project is quite generous although the length of the production has a huge effect on how far it can stretch, hiring any equipment no matter how much it costs can soon add up over the months. I'm currently waiting for the reply to my wish list. A budget can be a good thing in most cases - it forces you to think longer and harder on creative decisions.

*In what way is lighting a touring production different from a show in a single venue?*

You have to be a lot more aware of the locations of your lanterns. If your whole design was based on 60 lanterns coming from one direction you'd be in trouble if you toured to a venue that only allowed you to rig 20 of them from that same angle. Front of House positions in general change the most, so you need to try to counter act this within your design. Time scale is quite important - the amount of time you have to re-create the same lighting effects you had at the first venue of the tour is reduced massively when you go on the road. This also has to be taken into consideration with the final design. The design has a little time to grow and evolve during the tech week at the first venue, the sooner this happens the more time you have to prepare the design for the tour – and all the paperwork.



## The Playwright



### Ayub Khan –Din

- Born Salford in 1961, one of ten children
- Father from Pakistan, English mother
- Father ran a chip shop in Salford
- 3 CSEs in biology, religious knowledge and art
- Worked as a hairdresser, “the worst hairdresser in Manchester”<sup>1</sup>
- Inspired by David Niven’s autobiography, *The Moon’s a Balloon*, to become an actor (he has appeared in many films including *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*.)
- Started writing *East is East* when at college.
- January 1997 he developed the script with Tamasha Theatre Company and writers from The Royal Court Theatre.
- First performance of *East is East* 1997, Tamasha Theatre Company
- Wrote the film script of *East is East* , produced by Assassin Films/Film Four/BBC in 1999
- Other plays include *Last Dance at Dum Dum* (1999) and *Noise Falling on Leaves* (2004)

“The parents are drawn directly from my own family. The youngest boy, Sajid, is me as a child.... I was living in a parka. Enoch Powell was always being thrown in my face as a child, and the whole Bangladesh war of independence had a big effect on our household, because what happened in the house always revolved around the TV news. In a way, it was almost as if the disintegration of Pakistan was happening in our house at the same time. It affected everything that was going on.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ayub Khan-Din <http://www.Kamera.co.uk/interviews/ayubkhandin.html>.

<sup>2</sup> As above.

## Synopsis

Khan-Din's *East is East* tells the story of George Khan, a 1950s Pakistani immigrant to Britain who is married to Ella, an English woman. The play portrays a family of dual heritage growing up in 1970s Salford and the challenges faced by the parents and their six growing children within both the Asian community, and the working class British community. George Khan's five sons and one daughter respond in different ways to his sometimes overbearing parenting. Although he has chosen to marry Ella, he is determined that his children will follow his choice for them and marry Pakistani women. Sajit, the youngest at twelve, lives under the hood of his parka and when his father discovers that he has never been circumcised, according to Islamic custom, the arrangements are made for both the marriages and the operation, against the backdrop of the escalating war between India and Pakistan.

## Background to the original production of East is East

In 1996, actor Ayub Khan-Din developed the script for *East is East* at a two-week writers' workshop held by Tamasha Theatre Company in collaboration with writers from The Royal Court Theatre. Since its establishment in 1989, Tamasha's theatre productions have focused around socio-cultural themes and situations prevalent in contemporary Asian life both in the UK and abroad.

This workshop was the first of its kind offered by Tamasha to provide training to British Asian theatre professionals for a particular discipline. The workshop was funded by the then London Arts Board and the Peggy Ramsay Foundation.

The play was subsequently performed at the Birmingham Rep Studio in October 1996, at the Royal Court Upstairs in November 1996 and at The Royal Court Downstairs in March 1997. It then transferred to a West End venue, The Duke of York Theatre.

Link to image of set box for Tamasha Theatre Company's 1997 production of *East is East*, where it was remounted at the Duke of York Theatre.  
[http://www.salidaa.org.uk/salidaa/archiveImage\\_html?id=TT/PRO/EE/5&type=image\\_large&imageNo=0&len=1](http://www.salidaa.org.uk/salidaa/archiveImage_html?id=TT/PRO/EE/5&type=image_large&imageNo=0&len=1)

Link to review of 1996 Royal Court Production  
<http://www.cix.co.uk/~shutters/reviews/96096.htm>

## Historical Context: Key Facts

### Pakistan

- 1947 Pakistan and India became independent from the British Empire.
- Pakistan consisted of West Pakistan and East Pakistan, with India geographically in the middle.
- Up to 1971 the government of East Pakistan was dominated by West Pakistan. Urdu was the official language although most people in East Pakistan spoke Bengali.
- General elections in December 1970 polarized tensions in East Pakistan and civil war followed.
- India supported East Pakistan in its fight for independence.
- This led to fighting in West Pakistan and Kashmir.
- This conflict was the third time there had been war between India and Pakistan.
- December 1971 East Pakistan gains independence and is re-named Bangladesh.

### England in 1970

- Migration from Indian sub-continent began in 1950's, as citizens of former British colonies were encouraged to be employed, particularly in the North of England in textile mills.
- Mixed marriages relatively uncommon.
- Major population centres for Pakistani community include London and Bradford.
- Hit number 1 records for 1970/71 include:  
George Harrison: My Sweet Lord  
Mungo Jerry: In The Summertime  
Simon and Garfunkel: Bridge over Troubled Water  
Elvis Presley: the Wonder of You

## Discussion Resource: Contemporary Context

Can be used before a visit to see **East is East** or for follow up discussions in class.

**East is East** follows the lives of a family of dual English and Pakistani heritage growing up in Salford in the early 1970's, Ayub Khan Din, the playwright, based it on his own life story. We felt it was important to include something in the pack about the life experiences of young Muslim men and women growing up in inner city Britain in the years after the play is set, to contextualise the play for young audiences in 2005 and to explore different life experiences. We were helped in this by two people who recorded their thoughts, in June 2005, as a discussion based on the questions below. S is a professional woman in her early 30s from a Pakistani background, who grew up in a major British city. R is a man in his twenties of Bangladeshi origin who is a community worker in a deprived inner city area. We were very grateful to them both for sharing their thoughts, which are their personal opinions and should not be regarded as representing all British Muslims.

### Discussion points/questions

- 1. The play is set at the time of war breaking out between India and Pakistan (which would lead to the independence of Bangladesh.) George follows events very closely and they affect him deeply. Have there been events from your family's original home country or elsewhere in the world, which have impacted on your life?**

R: There have been, in the early days, when my parents arrived in England after the situation between Bangladesh and Pakistan (1970-1971.) There was one time when my father had a problem because the Pakistani community and Bangladeshi community were having wars, he had two shops and people used to come in and cause problems and one time they came in stabbed my dad.

S: Stabbed your Dad?

R: Yeah, and because of that, in the area there were other problems and one night a lot of shops were smashed up and even petrol bombed, and my Dad was in hospital for about three or four months.

S: So there were inter-cultural differences?

R: Yes, serious ones at the time and although I was very young it affected our family very deeply because we lost the shop... now it happens that we were a Bangladeshi family and we were the victims but some times it was the Pakistanis who were victims. But it did affect our family and a lot of other families.

S: For me personally I can relate to what your saying, and to other events that have gone on in the world, for me it was the big crisis in Bosnia and Kosovo, that was to do with Muslims and I think that gave a sense of solidarity to Muslims within Britain, whereas what you're describing is about inter-cultural tension, I think that did exist in the past. Other events that have happened since, like the war in Iraq, have brought to the surface identity and religion.

R: Absolutely, culturally everyone is different but the religion makes you the same.

S: Because faith unites people. Growing up in this country, being a Muslim, being Pakistani and being a woman has an impact on my life experience and when there's something going on such as the Iraq war that connects with your religious identity, your cultural identity, of course it's going

to affect you. For me, it reminded me of being a Muslim as well as being a British citizen...And I think what's happened in the past, the things that were going on at the time *East is East* is set, well it brings it to the surface that it's happening again, which is the massacre of loads and loads of innocent people unnecessarily.

**2. In the play, George, the father, has taken to using an English name (he arrived from Pakistan in the 1950's.) Is this unusual or was it common practice?**

S: In the 50s certain people did adopted English names, maybe the Sikh community did this more, and that was to do with assimilation. A lot of (English) people found different names extremely difficult to master, but really there are a lot of British names that are difficult to pronounce, but at the time then when the culture was very hostile a lot of Sikh people changed their names, like Rajinder to Ronnie and David instead of Davinder. But now I think actually it's more frowned upon. People now are more into reclaiming their identity and celebrating it.

R: Yes, I've heard of people changing their names... they say that if they put their name, Ahmed, down, they are less likely to get an interview. If they put John Smith, they are more likely to get an interview. Even though there is supposed to be equal opportunities.

S: I've got an example of that, when I was introduced to someone and his name I was told was Colin Jones and in my head I had envisaged a white European man and when I actually met Colin Jones he was a Pakistani Muslim and I said, "Hang on a second, your name's not Colin Jones, it's Tariq Iqbal." He said, "Yes, I am Tariq Iqbal, but Colin Jones is my business name." I said, "Why's that?" and he said, "I was an engineer and I was trying to win big contracts with the government and international agencies and no-one would speak to me when they read my name was Tariq Iqbal. As soon as I changed name, business-wise, I started to get contracts". And he has still maintained his business name, Colin Jones, today and he's a multi-millionaire and he believes that is down to not having an Asian name because people discriminated against him or didn't want to work with him. So really its down to racism and prejudice, isn't it.

**3. Two of the brothers are having marriages arranged for them by their father, one brother (Tariq) is absolutely opposed but the other brother (Abdul) is more accepting, however, their marriage chances are not improved by coming from a mixed heritage background. What factors have affected your marriage choices or chances?**

S: I can talk about my marriage. Marriage in my family is traditionally arranged, but what it meant to be arranged a few years ago for me and my sister, or in the time of my parents, is very different to what it means now. There's a big distinction here to be made between culture and religion. I think this is a big misconception about arranged marriages, especially if you compare it to Victorian times when all marriages were arranged in Britain, so it's not such an alien concept. For me, what affected my marriages choices was, yes, the tradition I was coming from but also more specifically, the background I was coming from. I married a Muslim Pakistani man, but of a different caste. His family were from a different part of Pakistan and my family felt that would be difficult. I didn't want to believe them but they were right, we did have very different cultures. So it was a mixed marriage in a way. Backgrounds can be totally different even if the culture seems the same.

R: It's very different now.

S: Yes, in the past you didn't see your husband until your wedding night, but now you are encouraged to go out and get to know them, because that's your Islamic right. But, you know, I think if you love a person you can move beyond whatever cultural differences you may have.

**4. Most of the young people in the play are disengaged from their father's faith and go to the Mosque reluctantly. Do you feel this is still the predominant attitude amongst young people?**

R: Some young people are every disengaged but then at a certain age they might get interested.

S: For me, I was always interested in religion when I was younger and I say the prayers five times a day. My daughter goes to Arabic instruction after school every night but she goes to a Catholic school. As a Muslim Mum it's my duty to teach my daughter about her faith. I think although there has been a lot of disengagement among young people there's also a lot who have gone back to Islam because of this identity issue. Religion is part of a person's identity, so the community is offering supplementary schools to learn about their own faith.

R: I think when I have children, I'll do my best to encourage them, but then at a certain age, if they want to go their own way, then that's up to them.

**5. You've seen the film of *East is East*, does it ring true in your experience?**

S: I think some of it is very real, I mean I got ostracised for marrying someone of the same nationality and language but a different caste, so mixed marriages like George and Ella's would have been really difficult, these are some of the issues and some of the challenges which people have to face. Some of the issues are pertinent today but you must not generalise because everyone is different.

R: Yes, everyone is different, and within each household there is a different way of adapting Islam.

S: I really like the film of *East is East*, it's very funny. There are moments when George really reminds me of my Dad, especially now they want me to get married again, because I'm divorced, I come home and there's another guy sitting in the living room they want me to meet. I'm allowed to turn them down, fortunately. I thought the artist son coming home with a model vagina was a bit unrealistic, I can't imagine that happening today in any household. But I liked the family occasions and the whole family getting in the van, in the film, and going to the cinema, it still happens. Some of the wallpaper in the house, that was real! It captured some of how I felt as a teenager, quite frustrated and quite angry like when my father was being very strict. Although eating pork in the house could be seen as quite offensive to Muslims.

R: I think it was good and showed how life was, because it has changed a lot. But some of the problems around westernisation, are still there in families and I'm dealing with them in this area everyday.

## Workshop: Identity

Tariq follows the lifestyle and fashions of a British young person in 1970. He denies the Pakistani side of his heritage wherever possible.

1. What aspects of our identity do we disguise in front of our friends?
  - a. Create two freeze frames, from your own experience, about a young person leading two different lives showing the contrast between home and friendship group.
  - b. Bring the freeze frames to life with one line spoken by each character.
  - c. Use movement to slowly blend from one freeze into the other.
  - d. Observe how symbolic gestures emerge from the movement sequence.
2. Using extract 1 **Identity**, create a scene about Tariq when he is out with his friends, showing the events which Maneer describes in this extract. How can you stage this scene to show whether or not George is aware of Tariq's friends?
3. Using non-naturalistic techniques: freeze the scene at an appropriate moment and add in some of the lines from the extract, Maneer's voice acting as Tariq's conscience.

## Between the Scenes: Acting Exercise

1. Read extract 2: Mother and Daughter
2. Create a scene without words, which builds up the tension between Meenah and the other girls in the van, up to the point where Meenah is about to hit out. Think about how you create the stage picture of this scene, if all the girls are facing forward, where do you place Meenah's character for maximum effect?
3. How can add language? Think about using as few words as possible to maximum effect.
4. What other events are talked about in the play but not seen? Each group could choose a different episode and re-create it as it described in the dialogue.
5. After this exercise, it might be appropriate to see the film of *East is East* and see which of your students' choices of extra scenes are actually included in the film.

## Back Story: writing exercise

Ayub Khan-Din has based the play on his own family, he knows the "backstory" of his characters very well.

1. Choose George or Ella and choose a moment from the play, imagine it is that day and they are looking back over their life.
2. Write a monologue about their thoughts at this point.
3. Now choose someone you know. Is it possible to do the same exercise? You can start to invent things to help the story of the monologue.
4. When writing about memory, include the colours, smell and sound, this will bring your writing to life.



## Extract 1 Identity

TARIQ: Me dad say owt to you yesterday...?

MANEER: No...

TARIQ: You wouldn't tell us if that Paki said owt anyway.

MANEER: You don't have to call him that Tariq.

TARIQ: It's what he is isn't it?

MANEER: What does that make you?

TARIQ (*dismissively*): Oh, fuck off Maneer.

MANEER: No, I won't. I've seen you with your friends taking the piss out of him on the road behind his back and it's not right, and it's not fair, (*he starts to get a bit upset.*) 'cause it's me dad you bastard! They're not your friends, they're just laughing at the stupid half-caste laughing at his own dad...

TARIQ: Oh stop whinging you soft twat.

SALEEM: I thought we were Anglo-Indian.

MEENAH: We're Eurasian.

SALEEM: Sounds more romantic than Paki I suppose.

TARIQ: (*pointedly at Maneer*) We're English!

MANEER: We're not Anglo-Indian, not Eurasian and not English.

TARIQ: Look Maneer, if you want to be Pakistani, go live in Bradford, and take me dad with you.

SALEEM *and* MEENAH *laugh*.

MANEER: No one round her thinks we're English, we're the Paki family who run the chippy, and as for our religion...

TARIQ: And you're well in with me dad on that one aren't you?

MANEER: It's my choice, I like it, I wouldn't force it on anyone, I don't think me dad should either. He's wrong to do that. But being Pakistani is more than just a religion, Tariq, you hate me dad too much to see it.

## Extract 2 Mother and Daughter

MEENAH: Can I go to the school club tonight with Judy and Mary? Mary's mam said she'd take us and bring us back?

ELLA: I don't know why you're asking 'cause you know you're going to the mosque later.

MEENAH: Oh, Mam it's not fair.

ELLA: And you can put that bleeding lip away as well lady.

MEENAH: But these Pakistani girls always get me into trouble in the van.

ELLA: Well if you stopped to think before you hit them, you'd save yourself a lot of bother. Now get your breakfast eaten and look sharp.

## Bibliography and further reading

### Bibliography

Khan-Din, A *East is East* (Nick Hern Books, London) 1997  
Khan-Din, A *East is East Film Script* (FilmFour Books) 1999  
Khan-Din, A *Last Dance at Dum Dum* (Nick Hern Books 1999)  
Khan-Din, A *Notes Falling on Leaves* (Nick Hern Books 2004)

### Useful websites

<http://www.pilot-theatre.com> Pilot's own comprehensive website: regularly updated, discussion, information and info on previous shows. Check out the video of the get in for Abigails Party by following the link to Media.

<http://www.salidaa.org.uk> - digital archive for contemporary South Asian literature and arts in England.

<http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/30/eastiseast.html> - for a review of the film of East is East by Molly Sackler

<http://uk.imdb.com/title/tt0166175/> - very thorough site with information, casting, reviews, company credits about the film version of *East is East*

<http://www.Kamera.co.uk/interviews/ayubkhandin.html>

### Related Literature/Other stimulus

Andrea Levy *Small Island* Headline Review, September 2004

Monica Ali *Brick Lane* Doubleday, 2003

Zadie Smith *White Teeth* Penguin 2004

Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things* Flamingo 1997

Hanif Kureshi *The Buddha of Suburbia* Faber and Faber 1991