

Pilot Theatre Company

ROAD

by

Jim Cartwright

Resource Pack

by

Lucy Clark

June 2002

INTRODUCTION

**Education Pack researched and written by Lucy Clark
Education Director – Pilot Theatre**

‘The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes’ Marcel Proust

Road

Pilot Theatre Company bring their unique style to this classic play, incorporating an original soundtrack, integrated dvd projection and live surveillance cameras around the theatre. Road is a tale of lost souls, repressed dreams and the desire to escape and provides young people of today with an exciting and challenging presentation of contemporary Britain. This resource pack will help you access this production in a dynamic and practical way.

What’s in this pack?

This resource pack includes background information to Pilot Theatre, Jim Cartwright, our interpretation of Road and further stimulus. It includes preparatory and follow up workshops based on the productions themes, style, characters and history. Each of the workshops can be adapted to suit your groups interest and age and covers a range of subject areas, including Drama, PSHE, Media Studies and English.

Keep in touch...

You can keep in touch with Pilot and the production by accessing our regularly updated and interactive web site at www.pilot-theatre.com

Our discussion board allows you to ask questions about any aspect of the production or Pilot’s work and get a personal response from the director, designer, etc. Audio, video and still images of the productions rehearsal and performance are available on-line as well as audience and critics reviews. Join our mailing list on-line to keep posted of our current and future work!

Any suggestions?

We would welcome any comments or suggestions you have concerning our education packs and national education programme and you can e-mail me on lucy@pilot-theatre.com

ROAD RESOURCE PACK

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EDUCATION AND OUTREACH WORK

Led by Lucy Clark, Pilot's Education Director

Core Activities

Pilot Theatre Company develop, create and tour pioneering new theatre work for young people. We are a national touring theatre company based in Yorkshire with over twenty years of experience in working with educational and community establishments. We support all our work with a national education programme aimed to encourage active participation and direct contact with professional artists. This work includes workshops, training sessions for teachers, resource packs, playdays and a thriving youth theatre.

National Education Programme

A full education programme supports all our national touring productions and includes nationally run workshops that take place in secondary schools, colleges, universities, pupil referral units, Special schools and community/youth groups. Pilot support its work by free education packs and video and audio clips that can be downloaded for free from our web site - www.pilot-theatre.com

Training sessions for teachers, post show talks and further chances to contact the company directly are also available for free. Our work links to the following subject areas and relates to Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and further and higher education courses in: Drama, Theatre Studies, English, Personal and Social Education, Performing Arts, Dance, Expressive Arts and Media Studies.

Pilot Theatre Company also designs individual projects for education and community groups, often working with disaffected and disadvantaged groups of young people.

Pilot Youth Theatre

We also run Pilot Youth Theatre for 14-25 year olds who want to work with theatre professionals to experiment with a range of dramatic techniques to produce their own work. These weekly run sessions are heavily subsidised and allow any young person to attend, irrelevant of their level of experience or ability to pay. We run regular theatre trips to local venues that give us reduced price tickets, with Pilot usually subsidising part of the cost of the coach. Our sessions run in Wakefield and in association with Airedale High School in Castleford, West Yorkshire. Pilot Youth Theatre represented Wakefield at The Millennium Dome where 90 young people performed a short piece based on their local area. The youth theatre recently performed Eclipse by Simon Armitage at Wakefield Opera House and worked with some of the same Pilot team that produced our

award winning Lord of the Flies.

www.pilot-theatre.com

Many young people contact us directly through our web site, via the discussion board where ideas are exchanged between Pilot artists and young people. The site also has numerous of reviews of our productions that have been written by young people inspired after seeing the show. The site also includes video and audio clips from current and past productions, text and images and a unique timeline that documents the rehearsal process on-line.

THE WORLD OF ROAD

‘Cartwright has an eye for the grotesqueness of everyday reality’

Michael Billington, The Guardian , 1999

Under the guidance of our narrator Scullery, the audience is taken on an evening’s tour of a road in contemporary Britain. Moving from street corner to living room, from bedroom to kitchen, the inhabitants, young and middle-aged are presented, showing their socially and emotionally wretched lives in this sharp and often funny play. The original production in 1986 captured with bawdy and sometimes obscene precision what it was to be a living reject in an industrial town ravaged by the economic policies of Margaret Thatcher.

‘the manic energy possessed by the inhabitants of this blasted landscape. Here are people with almost no decent economic prospects living in a soon-to-be-ghost town – yet most have enough spirit to resist becoming ghosts themselves’ Sight and Sound, 1998

In a non-linear fashion, Cartwright starts a story, finishes it or doesn’t, has characters crash in on other character’s stories and shows humanity as most people never wish to see it. The audience always remains part of the action.

This could be any town- any where.

Jim Cartwright’s biography

Jim Cartwright lives in Lancashire, where he was born. Road, his first play, won the Samuel Beckett award in 1986, Drama magazine award 1986, was joint winner of the George Devine award 1986 and Plays and Players ward 1986. The TV version won the Golden Nymph award for best film at the Monte Carlo Television Festival. His other plays include: Bed (National Theatre, Cottesloe,

1989) and Two (Bolton Octagon, 1989 and Young Vic, London, 1990) winner of the Manchester Evening News award for best new play 1990. The Rise and Fall of Little Voice won the Evening Standard best comedy award in 1992 and the 1993 Olivier award for best comedy. The movie of Little Voice, directed by Mark Herman was released in 1996

For more information about Jim Cartwright visit:
<http://www.destinyfilms.com>

PILOT THEATRE PRESENT...
Road by Jim Cartwright

7 actors
4 men
3 women
12 stories...

Set in the present, in your town, with your places, your pubs, your road

These people are here, next to us, watched by us all the time. A post big brother reality theatre event...

This is a multi-storey piece on all levels, the large concrete wall. The car park. The urban block... the walkways... The no-man's land between the scar of grass and the new McDonalds & cinema complex...

Specially commissioned video images for each individual venue will be projected and incorporated into the storytelling. Places that are close, recognisable, and familiar to the people watching. Striking chords and uncovering secrets

Live cameras will follow the characters on their journeys, allowing us to see them, watch them...and be right next to them. The whole theatre space will be included. The bar, the foyer, and outside into the night...

Doors open, worlds unfold, private places are on public view. We will use the whole space, the boxes, the levels...Unique to that space, to that theatre on that road...

As we follow the stories from day into evening into night into an early morning sunrise – until we meet Brink...the DJ in his bedsit surrounded by trash – with a pair of gleaming decks and a vinyl collection that is mint...

With a specially composed soundtrack, urban and now. Vinyl re-mix of Otis Redding into a garage beat...with DVD images and clips interwoven into the piece, will ensure that this is a story from and for now

INTERVIEW WITH ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Marcus Romer by Lucy Clark

1. Why has Pilot chosen Road for its next mid-scale production? What Excites you about the prospect of directing this piece?

It is a great show that deserves a new 'outing' bringing it up to date for 2002 and developing the themes of the original work to make them relevant and more 'now.'

2. How does Road fit into Pilot's trilogy of mid-scale work? eg Lord of the Flies, Rumble Fish and Road? What are the common themes you hope to highlight within the production?

Isolation of characters in extreme circumstances. I think all our work has had these themes running strongly through it. The need for characters to find a means of escape, and confronting the difficulty of this when they have limited opportunities

3. When Road was first performed in the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in 1986, it was described as one of the most ground-breaking influential plays of the last 2 decades. 16 years on, do you believe that Road will still have the same impact?

Yes, as it is easy to forget that some people in our society, on the fringes, edges of society still have limited opportunities. Their voice is seldom heard, and a play like Road allows them to be brought to the forefront.

4. Road was originally set in an industrial town ravaged by the economic policies of Margaret Thatcher. How is Road relevant to today's Britain? Will you be updating the piece? Where will it be set?

It will be set in the town where we are performing. It will have an inner city / multicultural feel and not be specifically set in a far away town that has no relevance for where the audience see it. So we are specifically locating it in the town where we are performing with locations and references to that town with new dvd video used to highlight this

5. You recently met Jim Cartwright to discuss your vision of Road. Did you gain any new insights into Road? Have any of your initial ideas change after speaking to him? What is his reaction to his show being given the Pilot

treatment?

He loved the idea of the cameras/post big brother fly on the wall stuff. Jim was very happy for it to be made relevant and updated. It was interesting to talk to him about when he worked as an actor. It was great to meet him and really interesting and useful to talk to him about all the previous productions or Road including the one he directed at Royal Exchange in Manchester in 1996. We talked about casting and about how the world has changed since the first production. People's choices of how to escape have a greater breadth now – not just alcohol but drugs, cyberspace, video games, They have different ways in which to in reach their altered states. Jim and I discussed that this is the world we find ourselves and that in this production we will be exploring new technologies to reflect this.

6. What are the major challenges in directing Road? How do you think you will overcome these?

Getting the right cast and preparing them for a long and gruelling tour! Being truthful to the vision of the writer; finding a design and concept that allows the world of the play to be coherent and adaptable enough to provide the many locations required, without being too obviously literal. The technological challenges include harnessing the technologies (camera, dvd etc) to operate and integrate into the live drama.

7. Could you describe some of the rehearsal techniques you are hoping to employ for Road? How will you produce your vision of Road on stage?

Having fun! Having the set ready on day one will mean we can play on it and invent ways of using it most effectively. Character work, ensemble work and location research. Employing a team of exciting and creative professionals with the skills and vision to make this production a reality.

8. What are you and your production teams ideas for the staging of Road - set, lighting, costume, soundtrack, digital images etc

DVD images/front and rear projection and a complete soundtrack. We will also be using live cameras in the set and the foyer to relay live scenes into the space...we hope! We will have a camera in the foyer, one in the lighting grid and one at the front of the stage which is able to be picked up and handheld.

9. Danny Boyle, who directed Trainspotting and The Beach, has recently shot two BBC Dramas, written by Jim Cartwright, on Digital Video. Boyle said that by shooting "Strumpet" and "Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise" on DV was the best way to capture Jim's world and Jim's characters. How will you be using DV and New Technology in your production? What do you hope to achieve by this? How have you developed these ideas in previous shows - Lord of the Flies and Rumble Fish?

To create a visual language that crosses between cinema and theatre. The difference is that we do it live! Original piece was promenade – making sure that the people live round the corner – familiarity with the location and the characters that they are mingling with. In our production we will be promenading the actors around the whole theatre space

10. Boyle hoped that by using DV it would 'inspire kids out there watching it - an 'I could do that' attitude. He hoped it would give young people confidence in telling their own stories. Why is this connection with young people and their stories important to Pilot?

Its our audience, and I want to inspire the theatre makers of the next generation to work in the industry that allows you to cross media and create work that you can get shown and seen

11. In the original production of Road 'Over the Rainbow' by Judy Garland and 'Try a little tenderness' by Otis Redding were used. Will Pilot use these original pieces? How will Pilot's soundtrack be composed for Road?

The Otis Redding track yes, as it is integral to the piece, but we will adapt it as only our MD Sandy knows how! There will also be a full original soundtrack

JIM CARTWRIGHT AND ROAD

'After Road, writing was never the same again.'

Jim Carwright

'a northern Under Milk Wood, high on pills and booze' The Sunday Times

When Danny Boyle was directing at the London's Royal Court Theatre in the 1980's Jim Cartwright, an unemployed actor who had left school at 16, kept sending in sketches of a play. These unsolicited monologues would eventually become Road, one of the most striking of the 1980's state of the nation dramas.

'uncomfortable and magical, funny and bitter' The Sunday Times

Road represented the theatrical debut of Jim Cartwright, described by The Sunday Times as a *'writer of outstanding talent'*. Road was first performed in the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs in 1986 and was a groundbreaking and influential play that was voted joint 36th place in the Royal National Theatre's survey of the most significant twentieth century plays. It won the Samuel Beckett award in 1988 and launched his reputation as one of the country's most eloquent, radical playwrights.

**'An original, affecting and truly remarkable piece of work,
let alone a superb first play'** Financial Times

Cartwright was overwhelmed by the response. *'It was a wild time. Suddenly I was a writer. I wasn't sure what to do. I had no discipline. It wasn't as if I'd written lots of other plays. There was only Road. I was just caught up in a whirlwind of excitement. If I hadn't gone back up north, I'd have gone off the rails. London is a place for a poet's life.'* Guardian, 1999

Arriving home with a stack of commissions, Cartwright found that the words no longer came as easily as they had. *'When someone starts paying, it's not as fast and flowing. It took me a long time to learn that you just can't wait until the mood takes you, that you have to sit down every day. Writing is like everything else – first sex, first drink, first time abroad – experience takes away the virginity, the edge. After Road, writing was never the same again.'* Guardian, 1999

man. Mari's imposing presence drives the shy Little Voice (LV) into utter seclusion and she spends her time in her bedroom listening to her late father's records. Finally LV gains the courage to speak and sing in her own voice.

Bed – 1989

Play

'Cartwright writes better about old people than anyone I know, except perhaps Beckett. This is an odd, harrowing and hilarious piece, entirely without sentimentality, sturdy but moving.' *The Sunday Times*

Two – 1989

Play

'A sharp, salty quickfire evocation of the surface gaiety and underlying melancholia of English pub life.' *The Guardian*

SPONTANEOUS IMPROVISATION

Lines taken from Road by Jim Cartwright

'Just shout things out. Just say things what come into your head' Road

Whereas prepared improvisation allows young people the time to discuss, devise and rehearse a piece of improvisation, spontaneous improvisation demands an **instant** response from the individuals involved. Improvisation can quicken, train and test responses. Improvisation generates dramatic situations. It allows you to have a sense of what it feels like to be in a particular situation.

By using lines from **Road** it can also develop an understanding of the characters and the situations they find themselves in. The scenes that are improvised may have nothing to do with the plot of the book, but might show characters that find themselves in similar predicaments. These improvisation exercises can be used both before and after seeing the play and it would be interesting to see the difference in response after they have an understanding of the play. Ideally groups should be between two and five for these exercises, which are best done with the young people sitting in a circle.

If a group is not experienced in spontaneous improvisation it is best to build up their confidence first. You can do this by giving them one of the following starting lines and brainstorming as a whole group **who** might say this line, **where** and **why** they might say it. Accept all the ideas and then ask the group to vote for the one they think would lend itself best to an improvisation. Explain how many people are to be used in this improvisation and assign characters to each. Ask for volunteers to take their parts and step into the circle to start the improvisation. If they run out of ideas it is up to the pupils in the circle to suggest ways forward. In this way it is a collective exercise and everybody is responsible for keeping the improvisation running. You can use the lines in the following ways:

a) Invite between two and five pupils into the circle and give them one line.

One pupil must start the improvisation with that line and the rest of the pupils must react immediately and accept any ideas that other members come up with.

- b) Invite between two and five pupils into the circle and ask them to improvise a scene that **ends** in the given line. After thinking, but not discussing their ideas, one member of the group starts and the rest react.
- c) Invite three members into the circle and secretly give each a line that must be included somewhere in the improvisation.
- d) Invite two members of the group into the circle and ask one to start off an improvisation with one of the given lines. Continue the improvisation for about one minute and then shout 'freeze'. Whatever the last line was will become the first line for the next pair who must improvise a totally separate scene.

LINES FOR SPONTANEOUS IMPROVISATION

Everything's not allowed in life

I'm like I am because of you and you're like you are because of who knows what

What can happen tonight

Why do you never go out?

Why do you never stay in?

You're not going back to bed is you, you're there all day and night

You're my mother so what?

You can't escape!

I can't get over it. I can't get over the past, how it was

Fucking hell who's spoiling life, me, us, them or God?

There's no jobs. I was robbed of mine. My future snatched

Look we all feel like this sometime. But life must go on

Every day's the same now

I can't decide who to attack. There's not one thing to blame

And every bastard I meet is just the same

Look, there's something missing. Life can't be just this, can it? What everybody's doing

Just think one day there might be the last job on earth. And everyone will come out to see the last man lose it

Enjoy what you can, while you can, if you can can

Can we not have before again, can we not?

I want somethin' else to happen for a change. It's the same every time

If I keep shouting somehow a somehow I might escape

I don't know what they think you are. They treat you like last week's muck

YOUR LOCAL AREA – YOUR EXPERIENCES

'God it stinks this road. Staleness, rot, sick, sex, drink, blood. Even darkness is different down here, it's all red and black like blood and ink' Curt, from Road

Discuss with a partner your responses to the following questions:

Which places in your local area were important to you as a young child? Why?

Which places did you escape to? Why?

Which places did you avoid? Why?

What memories did you associate with those places?

As a young person now, answer the questions above. Discuss any similarities/differences? Do the same places still exist? Within the group are there common places that you choose to escape to and from?

Choose one of the places that you or your partner escape to/hang out at now.

Using the senses of sight, taste, smell, hearing and touch describe that place in as much detail as possible.

Your road

Sit in your bedroom and close your eyes. What sounds can you hear within your room, however quiet? Still with your eyes closed listen and identify any sounds within the house. Now what sounds can you hear outside of the house – how close are they? which direction are they coming from? Give yourself at least 10 minutes for this full exercise. Now write down everything you heard.

For one week you will identify sounds connected to the road you live on.

Choose the same section of road choosing different times each day e.g. morning, afternoon, evening. Stand for 10 minutes and jot down anything you hear, even passing conversations.

How do the sounds change from a Monday night and a Friday night? When are the noisiest times? What routines happen every day e.g. milk and papers being delivered?

Your road will have its own unique sound. Present your findings to the rest of your group to find out similarities and differences.

After presenting your findings write down four of the sounds you identified on four scraps of paper trying to add a piece of description so 'dog' could become 'stray dog howling' or 'car' could become 'a screech of brakes'. For other ideas read *That's Entertainment* by the Jam which can be found in the lyrics section of this pack.

Walk randomly around the room with the rest of your group and when the leader shouts 'stop' immediately form a line. The person at the top of the line reads out one of their descriptions, then the next person along the line etc. You can do this as many times as you like, changing the order of the line and the description you use and the 'poem' you are creating will always be different. Pick one person who will be the poet who stands outside the group moving people according to their lines until they are happy with the finished choral poem.

Feel free to add some extra words to connect the lines if you feel this will help.

CREATING A VISION OF ROAD USING NEW TECHNOLOGY

To give you an insight into Pilot's style of performance and use of new technology read 'Rumble Fish rumbles on' which follows this workshop in the pack. It would also be useful to refer to the extracts of articles of Danny Boyle's work with Jim Cartwright on two contemporary short films called Strumpet and Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise. These include exciting opportunities of using digital video as a medium for young film-makers. These follow this workshop.

As you can see our work is developed collaboratively into a 'constantly changing 3D space via the interactive application of multimedia technologies and live action.' This multi-layered fusion of video, live projections and pre-recorded video starts with the soundtrack, followed by the images being fitted to the sound and then the lighting and action fits into them. This workshop takes you on the same journey as Pilot and gives you the freedom to be as original and creative as you want!

Soundtrack

Break into smaller groups and give each group a different monologue from **Road**. **Road** monologues follow this workshop in the pack. Please note they include strong language and you may want to check them for suitability for your class.

Whilst one person in the group reads the piece out loud the others immediately jot down any sounds that might fit with this piece – start with the obvious that might help place the scene such as jukebox, a police siren or a Hoover.

What feelings would you want this monologue to evoke? How could pre-recorded music help this?

Remember a character's thoughts do not always stay on track throughout – for example there are

- changes in emotions
- flashes of inspiration
- desperation
- memories
- tangents

returning to reality after day-dreaming

All these things will affect an actors delivery of the monologue and your music should take this into consideration as well.

In small groups create a tape with pieces of music that you think would fit – this could include pop, R&B, classical, world music etc as well as sound cues such as tv, hoover, cries etc.

Present to the rest of the group and also think about the fact that you could have the sound localised in one area of the stage, coming from behind the audience, panning from left to right of the stage, sounding as if it's coming from the foyer area.

Projected images

Whilst one person in the group reads the piece out loud, play extracts of the tape you have recorded underneath. The others immediately jot down any emotions in the monologue. What colours do you associate with these emotions? Where are the changes within the monologue?

Another member reads the piece again. Immediately write down or sketch the images/pictures that come into your head. These ideas should be free flowing – do not try and censor anything even if you think it is not connected! They can also include words, colours, senses, and lines that you connect with.

If you were staging **Road** and had the opportunity to project anything onto stage during this monologue which images would your group choose? Create a storyboard of images/colours/text ripping ideas out of magazines or creating sketches of your own.

Think about the following:

When would you project these images? How long would they last? Would they be immediately recognisable? Does one image replace another? Do they fade in/fade out or is it an immediate cut? Remember the images don't need to fit to the words at the same time – this may be too obvious! Think about using

the images to remind the audience of something that has been said or to introduce a theme before it is mentioned

Does the actor react to the images? Are they aware of them? Can the images trigger a response from the actor – a prompt almost!

Where would you project these images? the set? the floor? the actors body? does it cover the whole set or is it localised?

Remember that Pilot use the images to support the action, create location and move between scenes. Be able to justify why you are using these particular images

Be original and experiment!

Present your ideas to the rest of the group with someone reading the monologue, stopping and starting so you can share your vision and allowing others to ask questions and to challenge you.

Use of pre-recorded or live video

To extend this idea think about the use of pre-recorded or live video. How could you incorporate this in the live action of the monologue? Digital video cameras can capture images organically and unconventionally. Remember both video and projected images can denote a specific location but in a surreal way. For example in Rumble Fish, a projected video grid of 160 tanks of red and blue Siamese fighting fish suggested the pet store.

You can use the following ideas from Pilot for your piece or choose to work completely independent of our ideas:

At a telephone conferencing call between Pilot's director, designers and production managers the following visions/ideas were shared:

The projection would be dramatically interwoven to the dialogue as opposed to serving as a visual backdrop.

Title sequences and end credits would be projected onto the stage as in our previous shows, **Lord of the Flies** and **Rumble Fish**.

Pieces would be filmed outside the theatre and relayed back

Live cameras could be used in the bar

We would like to use the stop motion effect for some of the video sections, giving the effect of CCTV where one picture is taken every five seconds to give the idea of a surveillance camera

Our production of Road should not become solely dependent on the technology. It must be ambitious but still manageable

The set should be made of a material that we can project onto so that all surfaces become projection screens. Holes should be cut to allow lights to be incorporated into the set

The set should give the audience the sense of people living above shops in low-rise apartments with the ability to reveal and pull out of the set pieces of furniture to suggest where we are

RUMBLE FISH RUMBLES ON

Extracts taken from Live! April 2001

The highly visual and violent 1983 Frances Ford Coppola cult movie has always been a favourite of Pilot's artistic director Marcus Romer. Pilot's stage adaptation of Rumble Fish is based on the original novel by SE Hinton, who also wrote the screenplay for the movie.

From the outset, Romer wanted to make the stage play very filmic – in the same visual and atmospheric vibe as he finds the movie theatrical. He had the idea of projecting moving and still images across the whole set and also wanted title and credit sequences. The whole work was developed collaboratively into a constantly changing 3D space via the interactive application of multimedia technologies and live action.

Digital projection specialist Arnim Freiss was commissioned to produce DV images, composer Sandy Nuttgens was asked to produce a pumping soundtrack and also to design the sound.

The soundtrack came first. The images were fitted to the sound, which then came back to Romer who worked with Lighting Designer James Farncombe to fit lighting and action into them. On-stage, they made use of the floor and stage lighting to key light faces without bleaching out the video. What Romer calls the '*crux of the artistic pyramid*' was the pre-designed set by Ali Allen and Marise Rose.

60 minutes of pre-recorded digital projection was used for the 80 minute show, supporting the action, creating locations and moving between them in a pacey and provocative show.

Video was edited and treated by Freiss in Adobe Premiere and masked and shaped in Final Cut before being recorded onto DVD for playback, where it was combined with some of the sound. Other elements of the soundtrack came separately, run from MiniDisc – and both sound and video went through small live mixers. A live 'spy' camera ran for the duration of the show, microwave linked to a receiver in the lighting box, periodically mixed in to transmit real-time live stage action across set and screens, interacting with actors and pre-recorded video.

Arnim Freiss describes how the set becomes '*transformed into a third reality*' via this multi-layered fusion of video, live projections and acting. When video was used to denote a specific location, it was presented in a surreal way, like the fish shop, suggested by a projected video grid of 160 tanks of red and blue Siamese Fighting Fish.

Romer is keen on using presentational technology to get young people stimulated by theatre and wanting to come back for more. '*Theatre makers have a duty to harness technology and give it back*' he comments. He firmly believes they should take a leaf out of club designer's books in combining lighting, moving image, music, sound and narrative into a kicking night out.

**Further stimulus for
'Creating a vision of Road using new technology' workshop**

Danny Boyle continued his connection with Jim Cartwright 15 years on from Road by filming two new screenplays of Cartwrights in 2001. The interesting link for us at Pilot is his use of digital video in an original and exciting way to tell the story with an immediacy that we want in our production of **Road**. The following articles show his passion for encouraging young new film-makers and an actor's point of view of this use of new technology.

A Directors viewpoint

Who are you calling a sucker?

Trevor Johnston

The Independent 2002

Filming with a £900 video camera bought in Dixons, Danny Boyle shot two new single dramas, working on DV to keep costs down, and, as it turns out, totally reinvigorating his own creative juices in the process. Strumpet and Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise are two original screenplays by Jim Cartwright.

Danny believes DV technology will inspire a whole new generation to change the face of British Television drama.

'You hope something like this will inspire kids out there watching it – an 'I could do that!' attitude. I'm so keen to promote the DV angle because it'll give young people confidence in telling their own stories, and they won't need to get a million pounds of someone else's money to do it.'

Worked with Copenhagen based Brit Anthony Dod Mantle, two 75 minute dramas were filmed back to back inside 9 weeks. Eight cameras in total which allowed actor Christopher Ecclestone to film some of the material, Boyle and the producer to head out into local housing estates with another camera in the back of a car, and even one shot be a camera-toting Jack Russell terrier.

He's keen to stress that it isn't an end in itself, just a tool to get even closer to the heart of the characters and their situation. *'Jim Cartwright's pieces are always about people who are hopeful, but stuck. These DV camera's get that better than anything because they're sort of organic to that urban dilemma. We're stuck here, but there's a spirit which can overcome it.'*

Back from the Beach

August 10th, 2001, The Guardian

Interview with Danny Boyle by Rupert Smith:

Reinvention is the name of the game, and Boyle has adopted new techniques alongside new collaborators and a revised artistic manifesto. With two such left-field projects on his hands, the director needed a visual style that would not only capture the spirit of Cartwright's writing, but also bring both films in on his tiny budget. So he shot on digital video – and it's on this subject that Boyle becomes truly evangelical. *'It's such a new medium that there aren't many rules. You can make it up as you go along. That really appealed to me.'*

Boyle drafted director of photography Anthony Dod Mantle, who applied digital video to such stunning effect on films like *Festen* and *Julien Donkey-Boy*.

'Traditional roles don't apply so much with DV,' says Boyle. *'The director of photography becomes the director to some extent, and vice versa. It blurs the edges and frees you up. DV is very liberating for actors as well: the cameras are so unobtrusive that they don't feel they're being watched so much. And you don't have to treat them with the same technical exactness. You don't have to hit your mark in the same way.'*

Digital cameras are tiny, and so Dod Mantle scattered them throughout every set. Dashboards of cars were cut out to house them; they went on undercarriages, in loaves of bread and even inside a Cadbury's Crème Egg box. Every shot could be covered from multiple angles, lending an intimacy and immediacy that conventional film could never capture. The other great advantage of digital video, says Boyle, is that it's cheap. *'The entire budget for these two films would barely have covered the catering on The Beach.'*

'That's why it's such a wonderful medium for young film-makers with no budget. There's no reason to under-cover anything; you can just place your cameras and multi-cover every shot. It gives you a more direct, naïve approach to film-making, which I really like.'

Strumpet and *Vacuuming Completely Nude in Paradise* are clearly a manifesto for digital film-making. *'All the innovation and new talent in film and TV is going to*

come through DV, because it isn't expensive and so people are much more open to originality and experimentation,' says Boyle.

'I'm in the happy situation of being one of those people who can raise money when I announce a project. I want these films to give a high profile to DV work, to show that it's come of age. In five or 10 years' time, more and more people will be working like this. It's the only way we can protect and encourage original voices, like Jim Cartwright.'

An actors viewpoint

Netribution Film and Network Interview with Christopher Ecclestone

'In a funny way it's in the foreground because you know you are working with new technology and it can become quite organic in a way because the cameras can move the way an actor can move.'

'At one point I had a camera strapped to me and my responsibility was to shoot myself but also get Jenna in the background. It was interesting because obviously I was concerned about my own performance, but Danny and Anthony gave me another job, which was to get Jenna framed. I kind of liked that. I liked the responsibility and it made me feel more involved in the whole process.'

'What's important is that Danny chose to shoot on DV in direct response to Jim's scripts and Jim is not a conventional writer, he's not a conventional theatre writer either. I think Danny felt the best way to capture Jim's world and Jim's writing and Jim's characters was with the new technology. I think that's interesting in itself, you know the energy and spontaneity to Jim's writing.'

The thing is, I would imagine that Jim didn't go to the theatre a lot, I would imagine that Jim watched an awful lot of 70's and 80's drama which was writer centric, if that's the right phrase. That was what probably formed Jim, writer led television rather than theatre.'

MONOLOGUES

Molly Dreamy dreamy dreamy dream tu ti tum tum tum tum tum.

Bit o' red. *(She looks in the mirror.)* Bit more o' red. *(She gets up, goes and fills the kettle.)* I'll have some tea in between. *(She starts filling the kettle. She looks out dreaming. The kettle overflows. She stops.)* Oh oh. Imagine that. *(She pours the water away, and puts the kettle on the cooker.)* Dreamy dreamy dream dreamy. *(She lights the gas.)* Dreamy dolly day dream. Where was we. *(She looks around, lost. She goes back and puts a teabag in a cup. She stands waiting for the kettle to boil. She sings.)* Here's me in me likkle house, havin' some tea in between, in between dolling up for a drink, a drink, a drink. I'm standing by me sink. Here's likkle me.

No milk you silly dilk, no sugar you daft likkle bugger. *(She goes back to the table with a teacup. She looks back, sees something below the sink.)* There's milk you silly dilk, you looks round, some is found. Do a little twinkle dance. *(She does a little shuffling dance step as she goes over to it. She picks up the cat's saucer and pours a drop of milk from it into her cup. She puts the saucer down and sits. She starts again on her make-up. She takes an eyebrow pencil out of a box, and looks in the mirror.)* Old eyebrows. *(She starts drawing over her eyebrows.)* Good thing you're a good drawer. You can get round the curves wid your fancy hands. *(She stops, looks up)* He could, that bust-squeezer. He pushed them from the top down this-away. He see'd me through half the war that man. Stroking, silent, never speaking. Did he die? *(She reaches out.)* I can't see his face. *(She hits her temple.)* I need a new aerial. *(She takes a sip of her tea.)* Dreamy one, likkle me, doll dream. *(She carries on. She comes to powder.)* Powder up. *(She puts powder on a puff.)* Alli-up. *(She puts it on her face. It all scatters. She coughs.)* Puts me in mind of Kenny, Kenny Howcroft the homo. With his big white handbag. A sweet 'un. We used to drink gin off each other's fingers down the bar. *(She looks up.)* Naughty nincompoops. *(She sips her tea, crinkles her nose.)* I used to crinkle my nose like this. *(She crinkles her nose. Starts on her hair, gets a brush and combs a strand up.)* Go up hair, up up. Come on now. Go as I say. Curly curly wurly crackle. My mother used to do it hundred times before bed. Long, white it was. *(Looking out, she goes down with her hand as though touching it. She puts her hand lightly at her throat, looking out for a long time. Pause. Still looking. Silence. Still looking. She takes her teacup, sips.)* Tea's coldish. *(She shivers.)* There's a chill in the air. *(She looks out again. Pause.)* I'll git meself ready and turn out. *(She picks up the little mirror and carries on.)*

Blackout.

Professor *(to someone in the audience)* I'm the Professor me. I'm not really a professor, I'm just a nosy bastard who wants to try everything. When I got made redundant I decided to do an anthropological study of 'Road' and go down in history. So I moved in the end house here. But all I did was go down. I lost me wife, me family, half me stomach, everything. Now all I got left is this tape, and this box full of all me records, all I could write really. Long ago I gived up the idea of making a book, and instead, now I just give 'em out to people for the price of a pint or chips. *(He plucks out a piece of paper from the box, clears his throat, then reads the title.)*

'Social Life in Road: Wood Street Drinking Club. An episode that occurred in winter of our Lord nineteen eighty-two. I went in. A woman was crapping behind the piano. Two men were fighting over a pie. A row of prostitutes were sitting there, still made up as in war years. Price tags on the soles of their shoes which they kick up at you as you walk by. I chose the three pounds thirty-two one and bent her over the billard table in the back room. Nobody saw. I could tell she didn't like it so I spoke to her afterwards. She said she had to do it to keep her four kids decent. I told her three pound thirty-two wasn't much, she said she wasn't much and come to that neither was I. That's where we left it.' See how easy you can slip when yous a scientist in the slums.

Skin-Lad Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. He opens his eyes. He sees you. He wants to tell you the story. He feels the need to drift back on the tide of his memory, back, back, back. And I'm the lonely skinhead again. Jogging away, everyday, to be the best, to be the best. And the press-ups. And the sit-ups. And the one-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three. And you've gotta be fit to fight, and I do every Saturday night, with my friends at weekends, fight. Do you know about fighting? No. I'll tell you in my story. And I want to be the best skinhead and I want to give everything, every single thing, to the experience the tingle. I'll tell you about the tingle later. And you've gotta be fit to fight, and practise tactics every night. Do you? I do. (*Practises.*) Do you work in the asphalt factory? I did. (*Practises, stops.*) I'll explain. (*He indicates imaginary opponent.*) My opponent! Anyone you like. City fan, the cunt that shagged Ricky's bird, Ted the foreman. You choose. Targets! (*Indicates down imaginary body.*) Face, neck, beerbag, dick, shin, top of the foot. Top of the foot. Today I want the neck, this vein here. I don't want to fuck Christine Dawson, I don't want my mother's love, I don't want to work at the engineering firm, I want the neck, this vein here. (*Practises.*) Tactics, new techniques. What does he think? What do you think? (*Strikes.*) The neck and that's that. He thought, you thought, the neck and that is that. Now I've told you about the three things you need to get to the experience of the tingle. One fitness, told you. Two, tactics, told you. Three, new techniques, I told you. Now I'll tell you about the tingle. Well it's... You can't say it can you?...It'll come when you're fighting. Sometimes in the middle, sometime beginning, sometime end, but it won't stay...it's like you are there, you are fighting, but 'you' are not there...(*Pause.*) You don't understand. (*Pause.*) Anyway, once you've had it, you need it, and I thought that's all there was until that night, right, should I tell you about that night? No. I'll show you. (*He leaps back on stage.*) I came out the disco, last man to leave, all my lads had gone. I'd been talking to Mickey Isherwood the bouncer. 'See you Jim.' 'Aye, see you Ishey.' Then I saw them. Skins. Bolton boot boys. Skinheads. Some sitting on the wall. Some standing. I moved off to the right. 'Eh, cunty.' 'Eh, git head.' 'Come 'ere.' I looked at the moon. I heard the crack of denim, the scuffle down the wall, the pad and fall of the Dr Martins, pad, pad, pad. I closed my eyes. Pad, pad. As they moved in, pad, pad, I moved out. Pad, pad. I felt their breath... (*Loud cry.*) KIYAA!...lifted one man by the chin...can you imagine it? Magnificent ... they were scattering. Caught one man between thigh and calf, took him round to the ground, fingers up the nose dragged a pace, nuttled, lifted my fingers to pierce out his eyes when to my surprise I saw a figure watching, like a ghost, all pale in the night. Seemed like I'd known him all my life. He was laughing at me. Mocking my whole fucking life. I sprang, when I arrived he'd gone. Too quick for me. No, I saw him disappear down a blind alley. I had him now. I had him now!

Hw was facing the wall in a sort of peeing position. I moved in to strike, my fist was like a golden orb in the wet night, I said it was night, I struck deep and dangerous and beautiful with a twist of the fist on the out. But he was only smiling, and he opened his eyes to me like two diamonds in the night. I said it was night, and said 'Over to you Buddha'. (*Pause.*) So now I just read the dharma. And when men at work pass the pornography, I pass it on and continue with the dharma. And when my mother makes egg and bacon and chips for me I push it away towards the slat cellar and read of the dharma. And when the man on the bus push I continue with the dharma. Ommmmmmmmmm.

Jerry I can't get over it. I can't get over the past, how it was. I just can't. *(He puts his shoes down.)* Oh God, I get these strong feelings inside and they're so sad I can hardly stand it. *(He puts his ties on the ironing board, irons it.)* Oh, oh I can feel one now, it's breaking my heart with its strength and tears are coming in my eyes, and that's just because I thought of something from ago. Oh God. *(He gets down to ironing again.)* Oh they were lovely lovely times though, and such a lilt to them, I go down it when I think. *(He sits down, looking up.)* I hate to mention it, but that big silver ball turning there and all the lights coming off it onto us lot dancing below, and the big band there. And all the lads and girls I knew, all with their own special character. And the way you stood, you know, and you had a cigarette. You even lit a cigarette different then. There was some way, I can't do it now, good thing too, if I could I'd cry me flipping heart out. That's why I never wear Brylcream these days. I can't. National service too, you did. Everybody did it. You never complained much then, you never felt like complainin', I don't know why. National service though, you'd all be there. I was RAF, in that soft blue uniform, beret. *(He touches his head.)* When you had a break you'd lie on your bunk, your mate might say, 'Give us a tab'. *(He puts his hands over his eyes.)* And when you went on leave home. To your home town. The weather always seemed to be a bit misty and you'd be walking around familiar streets in your uniform. And everyone would have a little something to say to you. And you'd go to your girlfriend's factory. And they'd send up for her: 'There's a man in uniform to see you.' And you'd wait outside, take your cigs out your pocket. *(He touches there.)* Light up. Stand there in the misty weather, in your blue uniform. Full up with something. And everyone was an apprentice something. Serving your time. Or you could work for more money in the beginning in a warehouse or the railway, but it didn't pay off eventually. Or be a fly-boy and sell toys and annuals in the pubs. There was so many jobs then. A lot of people would start one in the morning, finish it, start another in the afternoon, finish it, and go in somewhere else the next day. You had the hit parade. Holidays in the Isle of Man or Blackpool. 'Volare.' We all felt special but safe at the same time. I don't know. You know I'm not saying this is right, but girls didn't even go in pubs. They didn't. At the dance, in the interval the lads all went in the pub next door. The girls stayed in the dance hall, then afterwards we all came back. And the girls, so pretty. Oh when I think of them. *(He puts his hands over his eyes.)* And you went courting in them days. You courted. You walked with them and they had their cardigan over their arm. *(He puts his hand to his face.)* And the pictures. You went twice, three times a week. The stars, the music, black and white, the kissing. Sex. When I say the word now, and when I said it then it feels different in me. I know it sounds, you know, but it does. I can't get away from the past. I just can't. But no matter what they say. I can't see how that time could turn into this time. So

horrible for me and so complicated for me. And being poor and no good, no use.
(He looks up, tears in his eyes.) I see 'em now me old friends, their young faces
turning round and smiling. Fucking hell who's spoiling life, me, us, them or
God?

Curt God I feel sick. God I'm frightened if I just turn, it'll be too much. God in here (*He touches his side.*) there's too much floating, too much. I'm not s'pose to drink with what I'm on, but I don't bother now. Enjoy what you can, while you can, if you can can. (*He sniffs.*) God it stinks this road. (*He sniffs.*) Staleness, rot, sick, sex, drink, blood. There's always been something wrong down here. It's where things slide to but don't drop off. Even darkness is different down here, it's all red and black like blood and ink, and you feel it in the throat. I'm ill. (*He starts coughing.*) Oh god I feel like I'm gonna throw. I don't wanna though. (*He wraps his arms tight round the post and holds on, clenching his teeth as though something's passing over him. He stops, looks out again.*) When you've been down for so long, under so much, you get like a pressed leaf, and stay that way forever. Brown, sick-white, and flat. Aw. (*He lets go with one arm and lets himself swing.*) Aw I'm sick of moaning. Be full of good cheer, if not then bad beer. (*He taps his stomach.*) There you go.

Valerie I'm fed up of sitting here waiting for him, he'll be another hundred years at his rate. What a life, get up, feed every baby in the house. Do everything else I can, without cash. While he drinks, drinks it, drinks it, and shoves nothing my way except his fat hard hands in bed at night. Rough dog he is. Big rough heavy dog. Dog with sick in its fur. He has me pulling my hair out. Look at my hair, it's so dry. So sadly dried. I'd cry but I don't think tears would come. And there's nothing worse than an empty cry. It's like choking. Why do we do it? Why do I stay? Why the why why? You can cover yourself in questions and you're none the wiser 'cause you're too tired to answer. Always scrimping and scraping. He just takes the Giro and does what he wants with it. Leaves a few pounds on the table corner sometimes, sometimes. But you never know when and if you ask him he chops you one. That's why I have to borrow, borrow off everyone. I am like a bony rat going here, going there, trying to sniffle something out. They help me, though I'll bet you they hate me really. Despise me really. Because I'm always there an' keep asking, asking and they can't say no. They just open their purses, and I says, thank you, thank you a thousand times till we all feel sick. God I can't wait till the kids are older then I can send them. He'll come in soon. Pissed drunk through. Telling me I should do more about the place. Eating whatever's in the house. Pissing and missing the bog. Squeezing the kids too hard. Shouting then sulking. Then sleeping all deep and smelly, wrapped over and over in the blankets. Drink's a bastard. Drink's a swilly brown bastard. A smelling stench sea. And he's the captain with his bristles wet through. Swallowing and throwing, swallowing and throwing white brown water all over me. Oh what am I saying, it's a nightmare all this. I blame him then I don't blame him. It's not his fault there's no work. He's such a big man, he's nowhere to put himself. He looks so awkward and sad at the sink, the vacuum's like a toy in his hand. When he's in all day he fills up the room. Like a big wounded animal, moving about, trying to find his slippers, clumsy with the small things of the house, bewildered. I see this. I see the poor beast in the wrong world. I see his eyes sad and low. I see him as the days go on, old damp sacks one on top of another. I see him, the waste. The human waste of the land. But I can't forgive him. I can't forgive the cruel of the big fucking heap. The big fucking clumsy heap. *(She startles herself with what she's saying, nearly cries.)* He's so big and hunched and ugly. *(Holding back.)* Oh my man. *(She chokes.)* I hate him now, and I didn't used to. I hate him now, and I don't want to. *(She cries.)* Can we not have before again, can we not? *(She cries.)* Can we not have before again? *(She looks out manic and abrupt.)* Can we not?

Brink I'm full of something nasty tonight. A smelly memory I can't wipe off. I'm s'pose to be strong silent type me but I'm not. It's just a casing, in casing I get it again. Once I fucked an older woman, hated and fucked her hard on the kitchen floor, knees hitting the fridge, dog bowl in her hair, handfuls of old white skin in my mit. After she'd gone I sat on the lino and cried. My first strike since 'No mummy left'. I always keep tight in front of people me, I don't want them in, they stink. HANDS OFF FOREVER! I want to be free. I want to be a cowboy, those dream fellows who died for us. Guns and smoke, one more dead a mouthful of saloon dust. I want cowboy but I'm just cattle, herded, helpless, waiting, aching to be killed, at the mercy of my CUNT-TRAY. Oh God on I crow. Down I go. I lie to myself. I lie to the Pope. I lie on the rug. I lie with my bedtime cheese. I must stop now because I'm crying real tears, but inside. A man cry. I cry through the dole, hole, times in which we live. Them slag's hands I still feel and I don't know why.

Carol Can I say anything? Can I? I'll say this then. BIG BUST. BIG BUST ON ME BODY. BIG BRA BURSTING BUST. MEN LOOK. How's that? CRACK CRACK CRACK the whip on 'em. Crackoh crack, cut men for their sins. POVERTY. Poverty wants me. He's in my hair and clothes. He comes dust on me knickers. I can't scrape him off. Everythin's soiled you know, our house, me mum, the bath. I'm sick. Nowt's nice around me. Nowt's nice. NOWT'S NICE. Where's finery? Fucked off! Where's soft? Gone hard! I want a walk on the mild side. I want to be clean. Cleaned. Spray me wi' somethin' sweet, spray me away. (*Stated.*) Carol has nowt.

Louise It's all gambling this, in't it? Gambling with gabble to see what come out. That record it's so about pure things it make you want to cry. Why's the world so tough? It's like walking through meat in high heels. Nothing's shared out right, money or love. I'm a quiet person me. People think I'm deaf and dumb. I want to say things but it hard. I have big wishes, you know? I want my life to be all shine'id up. It's so dull. Everything's so dulled. When that man sings on that record there, you put the flags up. Because he reminds you of them feelings you keep forgetting. The important ones. Once you wrap 'em up and put 'em away, there's nothing left but profit and loss and who shot who? But it's so hard, life. So hard. Nothing's interesting. Everything's been made ordinary in our eyes. I want magic and miracles. I want Jesus to come and change things again and show the invisible. And not let us keep forgetting, forge-netting everything, kickin' everyone. I want the surface up and off and all the gold and jewels and light out on the pavements. Anyway I never spoke such speech in my life and I'm glad I have. If I keep shouting somehow a somehow I might escape.

Joey I feel like England's forcing the brain out me head. I'm sick of it. Sick of it all. People reading newspapers: 'EUROVISION LOVERS', 'OUR QUEEN MUM', 'MAGGIE'S TEARS', being fooled again and again. What the fuck-fuck is it? Where am I? Bin lying here two weeks now. On and on through the strain. I wear pain like a hat. Everyone's insane. The world really is a bucket of devil sick. Every little moment's stupid. I'm sick of people – people, stupid people. Frying the air with their mucky words, their mucky thoughts, their mucky deeds. Horrible sex being had under rotten bedding. Sickly sex being had on the waterbed. Where has man gone? Why is he so wrong? Why am I hurt all through? Every piece of me is bruised or gnawed raw, if you could see it, my heart's like an elbow. I've been done through by them, it, the crushing sky of ignorance, thigh of pignorance. What did I do! What was my crime? Who do I blame? God for giving me a spark of vision? Not enough of one, not enough of the other, just enough for discontent, enough to have me right out on the edge. Not able to get anyone out here with me, not able to get in with the rest. Oh God I'm so far gone it's too late. I'm half dead and I'm not sad or glad. I'm not sad or glad, what a fucking, bastard, bitching, cunt state to be in. I'm black inside. Bitterness has swelled like a mighty black rose inside me. Its petals are creaking against my chest. I want it out! out! out! Devil, God, Devil, God, Devil, God, save me something. Anything. There's got to be summat will come to help us. If only we can make the right state. If I can only get myself into the right state. This is it. This is why I'm on the diet. *(He looks around, remembering.)* Fucking hell am I in a film or what? Or snot, or what. *(He is tightening.)* Iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii bring up small white birds covered in bile and fat blood, they was my hopes. I bring up a small hard pig that was my destiny. I'd like to bring it all out but bbbbbb but I've gone all constipated on bitterness, it won't remove itself. God give me a laxative if you got one. Ha! AArrrrrgh! Arrrrrgh! Oh AArrrrrgh! *(He's sweating and straining.)* Come out, come out, you tight bastard. Oh no! Death suck me up through that straw inside my spine! No leave me! Oh I'm full of dark frost. Who's done this to me! And why? Oh why? Is it worth that extra bit of business to see me suffer, is it? I blame you BUSINESS and you RELIGION its favourite friend, hand in hand YOU HAVE MURDERED THE CHILD IN MAN! MURDERERS! CUNTS! I'D LIKE TO CUT OPEN YOUR BELLIES AND SEE THE BROWN POUR!

LYRICS WORKSHOP

'That record it's so about pure things it makes you want to cry. Why's the world so tough?...When that man sings on that record there, you put the flags up. Because he reminds you of them feelings you keep forgetting. The important ones.' Louise, Road

Jim Cartwright's work focuses on giving ordinary people a voice. It deals with characters finding their voices for the first time such as LV in Little Voice. After being driven into utter seclusion in her room listening to her late father's records, she gains the courage to speak and sing in her own voice:

'And now you will listen! One time, no! (she screams) There's one. (she screams again) There's another. Can you hear me now my mother! (words rush out) No soap in the dish, no roll in the toilet, no clean blouse for school...I don't know where this is coming from. But it's one after another and I can tell you now. (pause) That you hurt me.' LV, Little Voice

Jim Cartwright's screenplay **Strumpet** is a film about the creative instinct where music and street poetry evolve in a spontaneous unplanned way. Strayman, the main character, writes poetry on the walls of his house in a random and free-flowing manner, spouts John Cooper Clarke poetry in his local pub and teams up with a stray girl who finds her voice by accompanying him by singing the thoughts he has sprawled on the walls.

As with Little Voice and Strayman, some characters in Road find a release from their situation through music:

'You want something different. Stay, I mean it. You know what we do for it. To really get a change. We have a something that we always do when out side gets to you....You drink, you listen to Otis, you get to the bottom of things and let rip' Brink, Road

This is a free-flowing response to their road, their life, their hopes, and their nightmares with no order, no rules and no censorship:

'This is it, you let owt out, show what's below, let go, throw, glow, burn your Giro. I got me suit I got me image, suit, image. (He sings.) 'Who could ask for anything more?' Me! England's in pieces. England's an old twat in the sea. England's cruel. My towns scruffed out.' Brink, Road

Ideas for using lyrics as stimulus for performance

The following lyrics are from songs used in the original production of Road (Try a Little Tenderness and Somewhere over the Rainbow); from Cartwright's screenplay Strumpet (Evidently Chickentown) or of particular interest because of the connection with Road in terms of themes/characters/street culture (That's Entertainment and A Town called Malice and Eminem's Guess What.)

The following ideas are starting points for using the lyrics as stimulus

Who are the characters behind the songs?

Identify and develop characters from one line, such as:

'hundred lonely housewives, hanging out their old love letters on the line to dry'
or look at the dilemmas faced

'cut down on beer or the kids new gear'

WARNING: Evidently Chickentown is a piece by John Cooper Clarke that uses strong language to get its point across. However this is an excellent opportunity to start a debate on the use of language within a piece such as **Road**. Split into two groups and give out the lyrics. One group takes the word 'fucking' out of the piece and performs it; the other performs leaving it in. Which has the strongest effect? What effect do both have on an audience? Find an extract from Road with strong language and remove swearing. Does it flow better with or without? Is the language justified? How do real people on the street talk?

Performance contrast

Perform Evidently Chickentown as a choral piece whilst the rest of the group sing Somewhere over the rainbow underneath. Or if you are concerned with the language use Eminem's Guess What for contemporary street language. Look at how powerful opposing styles can work. Discuss how Road looks at

escape/ dreams of living whilst at the same time facing reality, as happens when both songs are brought together.

Improvisation

Take lines from the songs as starting points for spontaneous or prepared improvisation:

'someplace where there isn't any trouble'
'stop dreaming of the quiet life'
'time is short and life is cruel'
'it's enough to make you stop believing'
'struggle after struggle – year after year'
cut down on beer or the kids new gear'
'a freezing cold flat and damp on the walls'

Contemporary songs

Bring in your own pieces that you think connect with Road and the themes of lost, repressed desires, dreams of living and means of escape

A TOWN CALLED MALICE by The Jam

Better stop dreaming of the quiet life –
cos it's the one we'll never know
And quit running for that runaway bus –
cos those rosey days are few
And - stop apologising for the things you've never done,
Cos time is short and life is cruel –
but it's up to us to change
This town called malice.
Rows and rows of disused milk floats
stand dying in the dairy yard
And a hundred lonely housewives clutch empty milk
bottles to their hearts
Hanging out their old love letters on the line to dry
It's enough to make you stop believing when tears come
fast and furious
In a town called malice.

Struggle after struggle - year after year
The atmosphere's a fine blend of ice –

I'm almost stone cold dead
In a town called malice.

A whole street's belief in Sunday's roast beef
gets dashed against the Co-op
To either cut down on beer or the kids new gear
It's a big decision in a town called malice.

The ghost of a steam train - echoes down my track
It's at the moment bound for nowhere –
just going round and round
Playground kids and creaking swings –
lost laughter in the breeze I could go on for hours and I probably will –
but I'd sooner put some joy back
In this town called malice.

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT by The Jam

A police car and a screaming siren –
A pneumatic drill and ripped up concrete
A baby waiting and stray dog howling –
The screech of brakes and lamplights blinking
That's entertainment.

A smash of glass and the rumble of boots –
An electric train and a ripped up 'phone booth
Paint splattered walls and the cry of a tomcat –
Lights going out and a kick in the balls
That's entertainment.

Days of speed and slow time Mondays –
Pissing down with rain on a boring Wednesday
Watching the news and not eating your tea –
A freezing cold flat and damp on the walls
That's entertainment.

Waking up at 6 a.m. on a cool warm morning –
Opening the windows and breathing in petrol -
An amateur band rehearsing in a nearby yard –
Watching the tele and thinking about your holidays –
that's entertainment.

Waking up from bad dreams and smoking cigarettes –
Cuddling a warm girl and smelling stale perfume
A hot summers' day and sticky black tarmac –
Feeding ducks in the park and wishing you were faraway –
that's entertainment.

Two lovers kissing amongst the scream of midnight –
Two lovers missing the tranquillity of solitude -
Getting a cab and travelling on buses –
Reading the graffiti about slashed seat affairs –
that's entertainment.

Evidently Chicken Town
By John Cooper Clarke

the fucking cops are fucking keen
to fucking keep it fucking clean
the fucking chief's a fucking swine
who fucking draws a fucking line
at fucking fun and fucking games
the fucking kids he fucking blames
are nowhere to be fucking found
anywhere in chicken town

the fucking scene is fucking sad
the fucking news is fucking bad
the fucking weed is fucking turf
the fucking speed is fucking surf
the fucking folks are fucking daft
don't make me fucking laugh
it fucking hurts to look around
everywhere in chicken town

the fucking train is fucking late
you fucking wait you fucking wait
you're fucking lost and fucking found
stuck in fucking chicken town

the fucking view is fucking vile
for fucking miles and fucking miles
the fucking babies fucking cry
the fucking flowers fucking die
the fucking food is fucking muck

the fucking drains are fucking fucked
the colour scheme is fucking brown
everywhere in chicken town

the fucking pubs are fucking dull
the fucking clubs are fucking full
of fucking girls and fucking guys
with fucking murder in their eyes
a fucking bloke gets fucking stabbed
waiting for a fucking cab
you fucking stay at fucking home
the fucking neighbours fucking moan
keep the fucking racket down
this is fucking chicken town

the fucking train is fucking late
you fucking wait you fucking wait
you're fucking lost and fucking found
stuck in fucking chicken town

the fucking pies are fucking old
the fucking chips are fucking cold
the fucking beer is fucking flat
the fucking flats have fucking rats
the fucking clocks are fucking wrong
the fucking days are fucking long
it fucking gets you fucking down
evidently chicken town

Under The Influence
By Eminem

I ain't coming in yet, i'll come in in a minute
Aiyo, this is my love song. It goes like this....

Back when Mark Wallburg was marky mark
This is how we used to make the party start
We used to...mix in with bacardi dark
and when it... kicks in you can hardly talk
and by the... sixth gin you gon probly crawl
and you'll be... sick then and you'll probly barf
and my pre-...diction is that you gon probably fall
either somewhere in the lobby or the hallway wall
and every-... things spinnin your beginning to think women are swimmin in
pink linen again in the sink
then in a couple of minutes that bottle of guinness is finished
you have the right to remain violent and start wildin
start a fight with the same guy that was smart rhymin
get in the car and start it and start drivin
over the island and cause a 42 car pile up
Earth calling, pilot to co-pilot, looking for life on this planet sir, no
sign of it
All i could see is a bunch of smoke flyin and I'm so high that I might die if
i go by it.
Let me out of this place I'm outta place, I'm in in outter space, I've just
vanished without a trace.
I'm going to a pretty place now where the flowers grow, I'll be back in an
hour or so.

Cuz every time I go to try to leave (whoa-o-o)
someone keeps pullin on my sleeve (whoa-o-o)
I dont wanna but I gotta stay (whoa-o-o)
these drugs really gotta hold on me (whoa-o-o)
Cuz everytime I try ta tell 'em no (no-o-o)
they won't let me ever let 'em go (go-o-o)
I'm a sucker all I gotta say (whoa-o-o)
is drug's really gotta hold on me

In third grade all I used to do, was sniff glue through a tube and play rubix cube I'm as rude as jude (jude from the jenny show! he was the rudest guest she had ever had!)

Scheme in on the first chick with the hugest boobs

I got no game, and every face looks the same

they got no name, so i don't need game to play

I just say whatever I want, to whoever I want, whenever i want, wherever I want, however I want

However I do show some respect to few

This ecstasy has got me standin next to you

Gettin sentimental as fuck, spillin guts to you

We just met, but I think I'm in love with you

But your on it too, so you tell me you love me too,

Wake up in the morning like "What the fuck we do?"

I gotta go bitch, you know I got stuff to do, Cuz if I get caught cheatin then I'm stuck with you

But in the long run these drugs are gonna catch up sooner or later

But fuck it I'm on one, so let's enjoy, let the ex destroy your spinal chord, so it's not a straight line no more

So we walk around lookin like some wind-up dolls, shit stickin out of our backs like a dinosaur,

Shit, six hit's won't even get me high no more, so bye for now, I'm gonna try to find some more

Chorus

That's the sound of a bottle when it's hollow when you swallow it all wallow and drown in your sorrow

And tomorrow your probably gonna wanna do it again

What's a little spinal fluid between you and a friend, screw it and whats a little bit of alcohol poisoning? and whats a little fight, tomorrow you'll be boys again

It's your life, live it however you wanna

Marajuana is everywhere, where was you brought up?

It don't matter as long as you get where you're goin

Cuz none of this shit's gonna mean shit where we're goin

They tell you to stop but you just sit there ignorin, even though you wake up feelin like shit every mornin.

But your young, you got a lot of drugs to do, girls to screw, parties to crash, sucks to be you

If I could take it all back now I wouldn't, I woulda did more shit that
people said that I shouldnt
But I'm all grown up now, and upgraded and graduated to better drugs and
updated
But I still gotta a lot of growin up to do, I still gotta whole lot of
throwin up to spew
But when it's all said and done before I know it I'll be forty wit a 40 on
the porch tellin stories
with a bottle of Jack, two grandkids on my lap, babysitting for Hailey, while
Hailey's out gettin shmashed.

Chorus x 2
drugs really gotta hold on me
really got a hold on me
drugs really gotta hold on me
they really got a hold on me

Somewhere over the rainbow
Lyrics by E Y Harburg

Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high
There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby.

Somewhere, over the rainbow, skies are blue,
And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true.

Someday I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far behind me,
Where troubles melt like lemon drops
Away above the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me.

Somewhere over the rainbow, bluebirds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow,
Why then, oh why can't I?

If happy little bluebirds fly
Beyond the rainbow

Why oh why can't I?

(Spoken) Someplace where there isn't any trouble
Do you suppose there is such a place, Toto?
There must be.
It's not a place you can get to by a boat or train
It's far, far away
Beyond the moon
Beyond the rain

Someday I'll wake and rub my eyes
And in that land beyond the skies
You'll find me
I'll be a laughing daffodil
And leave the silly cares that fill
My mind behind me

Try a Little Tenderness

Words and Music by Harry M Woods, James Campbell and Reginald Connelly

She may be weary,
Women do get weary,
Wearin' the same shabby dress,
And when she's weary
Try a little tenderness.

You know she's waitin'
Just anticipatin'
Things she may never possess

While she's without them
Try a little tenderness.

It's not just sentimental,
She has her grief and her care,
And a word that's soft and gentle,
Makes it easier to bear.

You won't regret it,
Women don't forget it,
Love is their whole happiness,
It's all so easy,
Try a little tenderness

ESCAPE WORKSHOP

'If I keep shouting somehow a somehow I might escape'

'Jim Cartwright's pieces are always about people who are hopeful, but stuck. "We're stuck here, but there's a spirit which can overcome it"'. Boyle, Independent, 2001

Road is a play about lost souls, repressed desires and how some people's lives can be lived without ever coming to fruition. The characters in **Road** search for escape from their lives through black humour, alcohol, the comfort of strangers, living their life through others, fighting, daydreaming and sex.

Use the following lines, the monologues included in this pack Road to explore:

What each character is escaping from

The means of escape and whether they work for the characters

What it is each character is actually fighting for

As well as discussing you can create still images for each character to show the above responses. Now do the same for yourselves.

Louise

Louise Why do you never go out, you?

Brother Can't afford it. Why do you never stay in?

Louise I can't stand it

Lane

Lane Where'd you get that devil kiss?

Scullery The tropics

Lane Ooooooh take me round the world snog by snog start with France

Lane Life's a spree, Prof. Me and Dor we get our mouth rounds life and have a chew. Sometimes there's nowt, sometimes it's sloppy, but we keep on snoggin' through

Skinhead

Skinhead I don't want to fuck Christine Dawson, I don't want my mother's love, I don't want to work at the engineering firm, I want the neck, this vein here

Skinhead Now I'll tell you about the tingle. Well it's...you can't say it can

you? ...It'll come when you're fighting. Sometimes in the middle, sometime beginning, sometime end, but it won't stay...it's like you are there, you are fighting, but 'you' are not there...Anyway once you've had it, you need it...

Joey

Joey Seeing what will take place in our heads

Clare But we might die

Joey We might not. We might have some secret revealed to us

Joey Look there's summat missing. Life can't be just this, can it? What everybody's doing

Carol

Carol You two seemed a bit interesting, a bit unusual like. I thought I might find something else here...I want something else to happen for a change

Brink

Brink You drink, you listen to Otis, you get to the bottom of things and let rip

Claire

Claire To have a destination...Now I'm saggy from head to toe. Every day's like swimming in ache.

Molly

Molly Dreamy dreamy dreamy dreamy dream tu ti tum tum tum tum tum...He see'd me through half the war that man. Stroking, silent, never speaking. Did he die? (she reaches out) I can't see his face. I need a new aerial

Professor

Professor When I got made redundant I decided to do an anthropological study of 'Road' and do in history. So I moved in the end house here. But all I did was go down. I lost my wife, me family, half me stomach, everything. Now all I got left is this tape, and this box of

all me records, all I could write really

BRITAIN IN THE 1980'S

'I feel like England's forcing the brain out me head. I'm sick of it. Sick of it all. People reading newspapers: 'EUROVISION LOVERS', 'OUR QUEEN MUM', 'MAGGIE'S TEARS', being fooled over and over again.' Joey, from Road

The early 1980's saw Britain in the grip of recession. Miners clashed with police in strikes against pit closures, riots broke out in several cities, stock markets suffered one of the biggest collapses in history and Britain dispatched a task force to recapture the Falkland Islands.

This was the backdrop to Jim Cartwright's play. Road captured what it was like to be living in an industrial town ravaged by the economic policies of Margaret Thatcher.

The following information focuses on some of the major events and changes in politics in the 1980's, which are shown in Road.

If you are familiar with Road it would be useful to raise the following ideas/ questions:

What did Road mean to an audience in 1986?

What does Road mean for an audience of today?

Why have the youngest characters, Joey and Claire, have no hope? Is this the same for young people today?

How are the old people in Road treated? Is this the same today?

Identify in **Road** the characters that represent unemployment, the young, the treatment of the old

What are the social, economic and political parallels with **Road** in contemporary Britain? Search local and national newspapers of today that could still be relevant to the characters and their situations in **Road**

Do you think Blair's Britain is as divided as the Thatcher-devastated world of **Road**?

Margaret Thatcher

The Iron Lad of British politics, Margaret Thatcher was the longest continuously serving prime minister since 1827. Her conservative politics led to the implementation of such radically conservative policies as the poll tax. The Falklands was fought during her tenure. When her party leadership was challenged in 1990, she resigned, later also retiring from the House of Commons. During her time as prime minister unemployment rose to 3 million and her government continued to attempt to lower taxation and public spending, curb trade union power and follow a policy of privatisation.

Miners Strikes 1984/85

The Miners' Strike 1984/85 was a fight for a number of basic rights: the right to work, the right to live in a community of one's choice, the right for a future for oneself and one's children. The miners knew that when a works closes down, the community dies.

'What the miners, like most of us, mean by their communities is the places where they have lived and want to go on living, where generations not only of economic but of social effort and human care have been invested, and which new generations will inherit. Without that strong whole attachment, there can be no meaningful community' R Williams, 1985

Jean Heaton, a miners wife said 'Now I am 32 I suppose I'm just a housewife still

to look at me from the outside. But inside I'm a very angry person, and I shall stay angry until we've got rid of this rotten Government and the rotten system it makes us live under.'

Falkland Islands

A British crown colony (since 1892) in the South Atlantic Ocean, comprising two main islands of West Falkland and about a hundred smaller islands. From 1764 France, Spain, Britain and Argentina founded settlements and laid claims to the islands. Great Britain and Argentina fought a short undeclared war over sovereignty of the islands in 1982. Following the Argentine invasion of the island in April, Britain quickly sent a task force to protect the 1,200 inhabitants. The islands were recaptured in June when the Argentine force surrendered, after fighting in which more than 1,000 lives were lost (about 300 British and 700 Argentine.) It is the 20-year anniversary of the Falklands war this year (2002).

Community Charge

This was the poll tax that replaced domestic taxes as the local tax and was introduced in Britain in 1990. It was to be paid by all adults at a fixed rate; the tax was exceptionally unpopular and there were unusually high levels of unemployment. It was associated with Margaret Thatchers administration.

Privatisation

The sale or transfer of public or state-owned assets or services to the private sector. The policy was adopted by Thatcher's government in the 1980's. The aim was to reduce government spending and to try to create greater efficiency by freeing market forces from government intervention.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPT WORK

Here are some exercises to help your group into script work. All lines are taken from **Road**.

Getting and giving attention - physically

5 members of the group label themselves 1-5 and improvise the following scenes for the rest of the group. No words can be used or miming talking. When the teacher/leader says a number, that number must become the one the audience looks at. This is not an exercise about big gestures or obvious focus pulling, it is as much about the other four members giving the attention as the chosen one taking it. For example in the cinema it may be as small as the chosen one taking a handful of popcorn and eating it slowly whilst all the others are transfixed with the screen.

Improvise scenes that require minimum energy such as a bus stop, a cinema, an exam etc. Always get feedback from the audience.

Getting and giving attention – vocally

With the idea that less is more, as seen from the above exercise pick 5 people to face the audience. Ask them to deliver the line one by one, with the aim of being the one that the audience most wants to hear more from:

'I want something else to happen for a change'

Feedback from the audience on which had the most impact and why. The same five can now deliver this next line from anywhere in the room/on stage three times. This gives them a chance to experiment with body language, eye contact, vocal tone/volume etc. Once again the group votes on who was most watchable and why:

*'He opens his eyes. He sees you
He wants to tell you a story'*

Find what works and repeat the exercise working as a choral. Also start to identify the strong positions on stage and the different relationships you can create with an audience.

What effect do I want my words to have?

In pairs, choose an emotion that you want the other person to feel, or how you want them to feel about you. You could choose pity, love, anger, resentment,

worthless, sorrow, uncomfortable, regret etc. Experiment with how to deliver this line to get the required effect, without going for the obvious, eg to make the person fearful – shouting at them!

*'Just shout out things. That's how I'll test you.
Just say things what come into your head'*

Creation of tension

Split into pairs and label yourselves A and B. Using only the following two lines, create a scene that lasts two minutes. Lines cannot be repeated or added to.

A *'Why do you never go out, you?'*

B *'Why do you never stay in?'*

Perform these for the group asking them to focus on the creation of tension, atmosphere, eye contact or lack of eye contact, body language, spatial awareness etc.

Where do the pauses come? Why are they important? What secrets/character traits are revealed in these spaces? How easy is it to identify the relationship between the two? How many different interpretations did the group come up with?

Repeat the same exercise, bearing in mind what you have learnt, with the following lines: (change mother to father if needs be)

A *'You're nothing to me'*

B *'I'm mother'*

A *'You're my mother, so what?'*

Intention

Choose two people who are confident to experiment in front of an audience. A must be female and B must be male. They should learn the following lines.

A *'You think you're scary but you're just a big lump of it'*

B *'Let's dance'*

A *'You can't dance with your brother'*

B *'I know. Everything's not allowed in life'*

Ask them to deliver it once as neutral as possible. After this each of the pair is briefed secretly as to their intention within the scene or an emotion that should be played. The pair is brought together and the lines delivered. The beauty with

this exercise is the spontaneity that it brings to the lines, as neither of the pair knows what the other is playing. You can experiment with:

Concealed anger
Invading personal space
Fearful
Apologetically
Sexual frustration
High/stoned
Avoiding eye contact
Self-opinionated
Sexual predator
Mocking
Macho

You could also brief the actors with a memory that is triggered by a line, or ask them to have a physical action/gesture that is repeated throughout the scene or a response to the environment they are in. Keep identifying interesting moments with the audience.

Look at other pieces of script from Road and identify for each character:

An objective
A challenge
A tactic you employ

POLITICAL THEATRE

After reading the following article by Michael Billington on political theatre and the accompanying ideas by Augusto Boal and Michael Bettencourt use the following questions for discussion or for longer term projects.

Do you think that political theatre has 'fallen out of fashion'?

What topics do you think British Theatre should be dealing with?

Read and research either one of the following plays and present your findings to the rest of the group. Discuss the relationship between form and content.

The Colour of Justice by Tricycle Theatre (about Stephen Lawrence)

The Bogus Women by Kay Adshead (about asylum seekers)

Credible Witness by Timberlake Wertenbaker (about asylum seekers)

Augusto Boal says that '*all theatre is political*'. Discuss.

Can political theatre change minds and challenge society, or does the world change first to create audiences and stories for political theatre?

What is the relationship between entertainment and political ideology?

What do we want our audiences to go home with? Does Political Theatre still work for today's audience?

'Blarite Britain is just as divided as the Thatcher-devastated world of Road'
Discuss.

Michael Bettencourt writes that ' Theatre can work politically, even though not tied to agenda politics, because it is about the effect a particular political/ historical situation has on the flesh and blood of human beings.'

Discuss this statement in relation to the characters in Road and their situation.

Political Theatre workshop – supporting material

Augusto Boal Theatre of the Oppressed

‘All theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them. Theatre is a weapon. A very efficient weapon. For this reason one must fight for it. For this reason the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theatre and use it as a tool for domination. In so doing they change the very concept of what ‘theatre’ is. But the theatre can also be a weapon for liberation. For that, it is necessary to create appropriate theatrical forms. Change is imperative.’

The evil that men do Michael Billington Guardian June 30th 2001

‘What exactly is political theatre? It can be a means of debating public issues, as in the case of David Hare and David Edgar. It can be a source of information, as with the Tricycle’s docu-drama’s including, unforgettably, The Colour of Justice. But it can also, as Harold Pinter has shown, be a means of creating resonant images of suffering; of checking our tendency, in Pinter’s phrase, ‘to shovel the shit under the carpet’ when it comes to the abuse of human rights’

From Michael Bettencourt’s web site www.m-bettencourt.com

‘A self-definition: to me ‘political theatre’ is theatre that advances progressive/leftist politics, a politics in opposition to a conservative status quo. Second, political theatre aims to convince its audience, both inside and outside the theatre, that the values of the status quo should be changed into the progressive/leftish values in order to achieve some version of social justice and a redistribution of power. In short, ‘political theatre’ is theatre aimed at righting a wrong and creating conditions for liberation. The methods can range from the cool atomising of Brecht to fervid street theatre, but the aim, more or less, is the same: use theatre to move society toward an exercise of power associated with peace, justice and equality.

A more fertile approach to political theatre must begin with the desire of the playwright to use his or her theatre to raise questions about current beliefs and, most importantly, to present possibilities for existential liberation. When the playwright writes from this foundation, then the theatre can ‘work’ politically, even though not tied to agenda politics, because it is about the effect a particular political/historical situation has on the flesh and blood of human beings. It is one kind of action to do an agit-prop presentation on the loss of jobs because of globalization. It is another to do a play about the ‘live reality’ of the effects the job loss has on a family’s ability to care for itself and live out its dreams, where

perhaps the breadwinners, suddenly seeing a broader horizon than themselves, go off to Seattle or wherever to protest the WTO in a move that, for them, proves liberating and refreshing. The theatre is a wonderful way to present these kinds of liberating 'lived realities'. They cannot only honour the present but also convey possibilities/alternatives to that present. Plays like these can have just as strong a political message or argue a point or anatomise a hypocrisy because they present alternate possibilities in the exercise of power in a way that feels lived and earned.'

Michael Billington **Theatre of War**
The Guardian
Saturday February 17, 2001

It's almost like the old days. Political theatre has started popping up . Topical satire in Alistair Beaton's *Feelgood*. Dialectical debate in Camus's *Les Justes*. Impassioned protest and philosophical enquiry in two plays about asylum-seekers, Kay Adshead's *The Bogue Woman* and Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Credible Witness*. Suddenly theatre seems an important activity again rather than a marginal delight.

Obviously political theatre ebbs and flows. It was strongest in Britain in the immediate post-1968 period. *Les événements* in Paris, student revolt, the growth of women's lib, the dispatch of British troops to Northern Ireland - all these, plus the emergence of fringe theatre and the end of theatrical censorship, conspired to produce a frenzied volatility. Even the failures of the left in Britain, and the ability of capitalism to absorb revolutionary impulses, yielded a political masterwork in Trevor Griffiths's *The Party*, premiered at the National Theatre in 1973.

The Thatcherite 1980s also yielded much oppositional theatre. Writers such as David Hare, David Edgar, Caryl Churchill and Alan Ayckbourn attacked the grasping spirit of the times. But political theatre has fallen out of fashion.

Mark Ravenhill and Sarah Kane have registered a moral disgust with the Thatcherite legacy, but theatrical economics militate against state-of-the-nation plays. More crucially, the Blairite big-tent approach has tended to stifle ideological debate. As Max Stafford-Clark said at a discussion at the Bush this week: "In the 80s we all knew who the enemy was. Now we are not so sure."

Does the decline of political theatre matter? Desperately, I would say. I am claiming it is the sole function of theatre to analyse government and society. But if drama withdraws from engagement with the public world, it as drama has privatised experience. You may dislike a theatre that deals with societal violence or ingrained colonialism - as in Edward Bond's *Saved* or Howard Brenton's *The Romans in Britain* - but you can't ignore it.

I'd go further and say that drama is less vital when it ceases to relate private experience to the public world. It's a bit unfair to pick on Simon Gray, a good dramatist whose oeuvre commands respect. But his latest play, *Japes*, proves my point. It offers an insightful study of a sibling relationship over 27 years. But, except for a bilious attack on conscienceless youth, private lives are not influenced by public events. The brothers change but Britain seemingly doesn't, even though the action covers the years from Heath's accession to Major's decline. For all its virtues, the play offers a goldfish-bowl view of life.

If political theatre is to make a comeback it cannot resurrect old forms. The epic, state-of-the-nation play looks to be a dead duck, and not just for financial reasons. How does a dramatist attempt to speak for Britain at a time of governmental devolution, growing nationalism and a massive north-south divide? In recent years, only Peter Whelan has written a big work on an epic subject - *Divine Right* (1996), about monarchy; but that, while admirably adventurous, subverted its own republican premise.

If political theatre is to survive, it has to constantly reinvent itself. One way, in an age top-heavy with opinion, is by establishing the importance of fact. For me *The Colour of Justice*, the Tricycle Theatre's edited version of the McPherson enquiry into the Stephen Lawrence killing, was the most exciting political play of recent years. It took us behind closed doors to reveal not just the police's criminal negligence but the warped racism of the prime suspects. The enquiry's stripping away of institutional evasion also had the contours of Sophoclean tragedy. In short, *The Colour of Justice* showed that documentary drama can be aesthetically exciting as well as crucially informative.

The key to the political drama of the future is information. We want stories, but we also want to feel that the writer is communicating his or her researches. That can come in a variety of ways.

The great strength of Kay Adshead's *The Bogus Woman*, brilliantly performed by Noma Dumezweni at the Bush, is that it transmits the writer's incredulous shock at the operation of the asylum system in this country. Adshead shows the racism of the privatised security guards at Campsfield Detention Centre, the bureaucracy confronting an appellant against deportation and the nightmare of trying to survive on weekly £30 food vouchers. The play is written in anger but rooted in reality.

But information can take many forms. David Hare's *Via Dolorosa* was, on one level, a superb piece of reportage about modern Israel; it was also a philosophical enquiry into the limits of fiction in dealing with political fact. And even when fiction seems the appropriate form - as in *Feelgood*, Alistair Beaton's merciless satire on political spin - a play's strength derives from its intimate knowledge of the system. Only this week it emerged that Labour's new mantra is "the challenge of change", lines that actually come from the PM's proposed conference speech in Beaton's peerlessly prophetic play.

When I talk about the need for more political theatre to directors and dramaturgs, however, I often get the same response: you can't force writers to write the plays you want. Of course not. But the lesson of recent times is that theatres and companies can be more proactive in marrying writers to subjects. It's happened with the Tricycle, who initiated the documentary agenda, and with The Red Room, who commissioned *The Bogus Woman*. When challenged - as I was recently - to name topics the British theatre should be dealing with, I would say they are self-evident: Europe, comprehensive education, the rural revolt, the resurgence of direct action as in the petrol-price protest. The result may not automatically be good plays. But I stick with my original contention: theatre is a place of information as well as entertainment and the more it cuts itself off from society - and relies on a mixture of anodyne musicals and Hollywood-star casting - the more it is doomed to glamorous irrelevance.

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PILOT THEATRE COMPANY HISTORY

Pilot Theatre Company is a national touring Theatre Company based in Yorkshire, celebrating 21 years on the road! The Company was launched in 1980 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. The projects that followed ranged from playscheme activities to workshop sessions to touring issue based work in schools. The Company developed a pattern of work that was to continue until the end of the decade.

In 1994, the Company underwent an internal restructuring with a Management Consultant that resulted in the appointment of a new Artistic Director, Marcus Romer. This has meant significant change and development of the Company. The Company now has a permanent base in the Glasshoughton Cultural Industries Centre in Castleford, West Yorkshire.

Between 1994 and 1997 Pilot developed its touring circuit nationally. The last three schools touring shows, showed an increase of earned income by 600% and an increase in audiences from 5,000 to over 18,000 per tour. *Lord of the Flies*, our first mid scale touring project has reached an audience of 40,000. Collaborating with nationally significant venues the Theatre Royal York and the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, the project has enabled Pilot to reach more young people than ever before, with a full workshop programme available to every tour venue, and teachers resources available through the Pilot website.

The Company has created award winning productions and performed at national and international festivals and conferences. *Taken Without Consent* was

seen at the Take Off Festival in 1997, and adapted as Crash Kids. It was performed at the Kiel State Theatre in November 1998, with 4 new productions continuing into 2001 and 2002.

Our production of Rumble Fish toured - again on the mid scale - to partner venues nationally, having been launched from the York Theatre Royal, as well as Lord of the Flies seeing its third production playing to audiences in excess of 90% at the West Yorkshire Playhouse for 4 weeks. We have received one of the new touring contracts from the Arts Council as a result of the theatre review.

This increase in funding has enabled us to commission 3 new pieces of work, and also allowed us to continue our development with 2 new mid scale projects. These are Road and Unsuitable Girls with collaborative venue partners – including the Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, York Theatre Royal and Leicester Haymarket.

We are also able to develop a new season of studio work with 2 new plays in the autumn of 2002 at the studio at York Theatre Royal, after our critically acclaimed production of Mirad, a Boy from Bosnia by Ad de Bont in York's studio.

Lord of the Flies played for over 550 performances at 40 venues nationally to over 250,000 people. Including 9 weeks at the Lyric Hammersmith and 4 weeks at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. It was nominated for a TMA award for best show for young people and won a Manchester Evening News Award.

This year the Company has raised its profile both nationally and internationally, more than at any other time in its twenty year history. We have attracted national press critical acclaim – and have been awarded one of the 8 National Touring contracts by the Arts Council. Our work will continue in 2003 with an adaptation of Bloodtide by Melvin Burgess and a new commission by Richard Hurford. Our links with Magic-net allows us to work on exchanging ideas on staging classic texts with other international theatre companies.

To keep up to date with our current and future productions visit **www.pilot-theatre.com**