

Eclipse Report

Developing strategies to combat racism in theatre

A one-day working conference held on
two consecutive days
at Nottingham Playhouse: 12 and 13 June 2001

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**an Arts Council of England,
East Midlands Arts Board, Theatrical
Management Association and
Nottingham Playhouse initiative**

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Eclipse

Developing Strategies to Combat Racism in Theatre

‘Institutional Racism consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.’

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry/1999 Macpherson Report

Introduction

Background

The Eclipse conference was organised after discussions between Nottingham Playhouse and the Arts Council of England. The conference, supported by the Arts Council, the Theatrical Management Association and East Midlands Arts Board, was organised by Nottingham Playhouse. It followed a discussion on cultural diversity and the roles and responsibilities of regional theatres at the Theatre 2001 conference held in London in January and organised by Independent Theatre Council (ITC)/Theatrical Management Association (TMA)/Society of London Theatre (SOLT).

Eclipse started from the premise that racism exists within the theatre sector. Delegates were sent a position paper, which provided the starting point for the conference (see Appendix 2). The intention of the conference was to encourage delegates to debate and become actively involved in suggesting solutions to combat racism in theatre. Delegates to the conference, who were mostly board members and senior managers from the regional theatres, had an opportunity to meet African Caribbean and Asian practitioners and companies. The companies and artists displayed publicity material and information on touring productions and a wide range of anti-racist resource material and examples of good practice were also available.

The Eclipse Report

This Report summarises the discussions that took place during the two days of the conference at Nottingham Playhouse. It contains the keynote speeches and a number of appendices, which include suggestions for positive action and opportunities for change from the discussion groups held over the two days. The Report contains a number of recommendations, most of which request action from the funding bodies.

Conference outcomes

As a direct result of the Eclipse conference, some theatre organisations have already taken positive steps. For example, West Yorkshire Playhouse, with the support of the Cultural Industries Development Agency, Yorkshire Arts Board and the Arts Council has put in place a positive action programme to place five bursary holders from four African Caribbean and Asian groups in the areas of marketing, publicity, administration and technical support.

Leicester Haymarket is involved in the Asian Initiative, NATAK, which is funded through the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre. As part of its development of this scheme, the theatre has announced the appointment of Kully Thiarai as Co-Artistic Director, working with Paul Kerryson. The theatre is the first regional theatre in England to be British-Asian led. Nottingham Playhouse has followed up the conference with a research project looking at 'diversity and employment' in theatre. The TMA, a partner in the organisation of both the Theatre 2001 conference and the Eclipse conference, has established a major award for members, which focuses on the development of culturally diverse theatre and good practice in this area. It is anticipated that following the collaboration on the Eclipse conference, TMA will be working with the Arts Council's Drama Department, particularly through the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre. Strategies with theatres will be further developed and good practice in the integration of African Caribbean and Asian theatre work and artists will be shared.

The Eclipse Report will be sent to:

- the Arts Council of England (ACE)
- Regional Arts Boards (RABs)
- senior management of regional theatres
- chairs of the theatres' boards
- Theatrical Management Association (TMA)
- Independent Theatre Council (ITC)
- Society of London Theatres (SOLT)
- Equity
- Bectu
- Department of Culture Music and Sport (DCMS)
- all other conference attenders
- all theatre managers who received an invitation and did not attend.

The report will also be available on the Arts Council's website (www.artscouncil.org.uk).

1 Aims

The aims of the conference were:

- to discuss and devise strategies to combat racism in theatre
- to explore ways of developing our understanding and knowledge of African Caribbean and Asian theatre.

The conference was aimed at the senior managers (chief executives, general managers, artistic directors and board members) of middle to large scale presenting and producing theatres in the English theatre sector. A total of 125 theatres were invited.

Representatives from the Arts Council and the ten Regional Arts Boards were invited, as were representatives from TMA, ITC, SOLT, Bectu, Equity, DCMS and Nottingham City Council.

The conference was supported by the Arts Council of England, East Midlands Arts Board and the TMA, and was hosted by Nottingham Playhouse.

2 Attendance

Of the 125 theatres invited, less than a quarter attended, with the vast majority not responding to the invitation. Chief executives had received a joint Arts Council/TMA letter inviting themselves, artistic directors and board members. RABs had been asked to follow up the initial letter. Nottingham Playhouse and the Arts Council Drama Department made follow-up phone calls. Some theatres had wanted to send education officers or marketing managers, but this was discouraged, as the aim was to target the senior management of organisations.

The following were represented at the conference:

- 30 receiving and producing theatres (1 or 2 delegates)
- 8 RABs (1 or 2 delegates)
- the Arts Council (8 delegates)
- TMA (2 delegates)
- ITC (2 delegates)
- BECTU (2 delegates)
- DCMS (1 delegate).

An additional 20 guests attended either as individual practitioners or as representatives of a variety of African/Caribbean, Asian and Chinese touring theatre and dance companies.

In total, 97 people attended; 49 on the first day and 48 on the second.

3 Format

3.1 Structure and content

The structure for each day was:

1. Keynote speeches
2. Morning workshops
3. Lunch
4. Panel discussion
5. Afternoon workshops
(see Appendix 1).

When the conference was planned, a deliberate decision was taken to have separate workshop sessions for the African Caribbean and Asian artists who participated. This proved to be a successful format; it facilitated valuable discussion and positive recommendations were made. Quotes from these workshops are used within the report.

Keynote speeches

On each day a welcome from the Executive Director of Nottingham Playhouse, Venu Dhupa, was followed by one or two keynote addresses. On both days Sergeant Robyn Williams gave an address, followed on Day One by Dr Vayu Naidu and on Day Two by Tyrone Huggins. On the second day Kim Evans, Executive Director of Arts at the Arts Council joined Venu Dhupa.

Morning workshops

Each of the four morning workshop sessions addressed the same questions: Macpherson's definition of institutional racism and how relevant is it to theatre?

- What is a realistic vision of a truly culturally diverse theatre?
- What do you perceive to be the barriers – (Organisational, staffing, programming, marketing, building?)
- How would you make your theatres more accessible? (Organisational processes and approaches to achieve change; role of funders; staffing – recruitment and retention; management structures; creative processes and programming; outreach and marketing.)

Facilitators for the workshops were:

Jacqueline Contre, Tony Graves, Tracey Anderson, Karena Johnson, Mukesh Barot and Isobel Hawson.

Panel discussion

Each afternoon panel session included personal contributions from a range of practitioners: Femi Elufowoju Jnr (Artistic Director, Tiata Fahodzi); David Tse, (Artistic Director, Yellow Earth Theatre Company); Steven Luckie (Freelance Writer and Director); Anthony Corriette (Development Director, Theatre Royal, Stratford East); Rukhsana Ahmad (Artistic Director, Kali Theatre); Sudha Buchar (Co-Artistic Director, Tamasha Theatre Company) and Hermin McIntosh (Independent Arts Consultant).

Afternoon workshops

The panel contributions were followed by three separate workshops to identify strategies to combat racism and to make positive suggestions towards change. At the end of the conference, delegates and observers were asked to:

- fill in an evaluation form (see Appendix 3) and return it
- include one short-term task that their organisation intended to address.

3.2 Conference resolutions

Some clear resolutions emerged from delegate discussions, which included the following.

- To put issues relating to discrimination and positive action on the agenda of the boards of theatre companies
- To identify strategies and actions that could address these issues
- To raise awareness and understanding of relevant issues amongst participants in order that they can be shared in the wider theatre industry
- To send a written report to all invited theatres and to place it on the Arts Council's website

- To organise regional seminars for targeted groups of theatres to discuss positive action, moving towards the implementation of a national strategy.

Other outcomes were:

- Shared learning from panellists and participants
- Shared acknowledgement of the need for change, particularly in traditional theatre programming.

4 Towards a national strategy

‘When you mentioned that there has been some progress in the employment of actors, the reason why that has happened is that for the people who run organisations, there is no threat in that. The problem arises when your own position is under threat and when you are having to look at the way you think. That is the form of institutional racism prevalent through the theatre. We are nearly all people who find it much easier to spend time with people who feel like us. It is only by stopping and thinking "is this right?" that we can really begin to change.’

Giles Croft – Artistic Director, Nottingham Playhouse

Although racism was the focus of the conference, the workshop discussions quickly moved on to address issues of equality of opportunity and positive action.

Facilitators noted that there was a mixed understanding of racism and a reluctance to accept that racism exists in theatres in England. In some areas, a theatre which reflects its local population does not offer an example of good practice in the area of race relations. However, this does not mean that racism is not an issue; it does mean that it has to be tackled in a different way.

It was apparent that delegates were not fully aware of the new amendments to the Race Relations Act, 2000 and the responsibility it places on them as employers. There was discussion about the differences between positive action and positive discrimination. Again, facilitators observed some confusion over the legal position and what was entailed in the implementation of the legislation. It was agreed that the key issue is the need to challenge racism; people need educating, and theatres in receipt of public funds have an important educational role to play.

The general response from attenders was encouraging. The keynote addresses and the focused workshops provided a clear framework for debate. This, with the addition of insight into people’s experiences in panel discussions, provided the opportunity for real practical solutions for change to be suggested. These have been included in the Positive Action notes (see Appendix 5).

It became clear that these forums are vital for engaging people in quality discussion and debate, as well as enabling them to share their own concerns. To engage in these debates and discussions is to learn. As a number of delegates pointed out ‘mind sets need changing’. Theatres need to address their lack of understanding and enthusiastically to embrace and acknowledge the validity of other cultures,

perspectives and theatrical forms. It is essential that organisational development includes enhancing inclusion, developing Equal Opportunities practice and taking positive action in the workforce. The conference agreed this would lead to an enriched theatrical experience, with the very real potential for revitalising theatres and attracting new audiences.

One of the key recommendations emerging from the need for forums such as this was the need for active follow-up.

As the first step, a regional seminar will be held in January 2002, working through the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre and in collaboration with East Midlands Arts Board and the TMA. The seminar will be based in East Midlands, bringing together the senior management and board members of the four regional theatres to discuss and share methods of positive action and equality in employment. It is hoped that this pilot regional seminar will become a model of good practice which, through a partnership with TMA and ITC, can be rolled out across other regions (Recommendation 19).

4.1 Institutional racism

‘Some venues do not seem to understand the signals they give off when they show a lack of support or interest. Quite often it feels like no-one even knew we were coming. Once you get a bad vibe like that you cannot help but look around for other things to back you up. There are some very negative attitudes in places that sometimes shock you when you realise the high status that they have.’

Artistic Director – National Touring Company

The response to the question of whether the theatre sector is ‘institutionally racist’ was split. Approximately half the workshop participants felt that it was, while half accepted that it was, but expressed reservations. The latter group’s concerns centred on two issues:

- That the theatre sector is not an institution as such and therefore the definition is not necessarily valid
- That most theatres have ‘moved forward’ and that the problem is not what it was.

Some data are available on employment in English theatre, but it is clear there is a lack of hard evidence in relation to the theatre sector. Existing data show that:

- Out of 2,009 staff employed in English theatre only 80 (4%) are African Caribbean and Asian (The Arts Council of England Annual Statistics 1999/2000)
- The Boyden Report found that only 16 out of 463 (3.5%) board members of English producing theatres were African Caribbean and Asian (The Boyden Report on the Review of Theatre in the English Subsidised Sector, 1999)
- An Arts Council of England survey of 19 arts organisations found that out of 2,900 staff, 177 (6%) were either African Caribbean, Asian or Chinese, with 100 of those staff working in the area of catering or Front of House. One was employed at senior management level. (The Arts Council of England 1998).

The African Caribbean and Asian artists' workshops, however, fully endorsed the definition of institutional racism as being relevant to the theatre sector in this country.

Recommendation 1: As a matter of urgency, the Arts Council should develop strategies, involving the ITC and TMA, to gain up-to-date information on the employment of African Caribbean and Asian personnel (including freelancers) in the English publicly funded theatre industry.

Recommendation 2: The Arts Council, together with the Regional Arts Boards, should develop clear strategies to gather qualitative information about the professional aspirations of African Caribbean and Asian employees in the English publicly funded theatre industry.

4.2 Legal imperatives

'It is only a matter of time before someone brings a case of racial discrimination against a theatre which financially could be very expensive for the theatre in question.'

Sergeant Robyn Williams

In the workshops, there was discussion of the new Amendment to the Race Relations Act, 2000, which could have profound effects on all organisations failing to tackle racism. The amendment places a **general duty** on publicly funded organisations to **promote race equality by eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.**

In order to comply with the law, Positive Action is suggested as a way forward.

Recommendation 3: All theatre boards and senior theatre managers should inform themselves fully of the new Amendment to the Race Relations Act, 2000. Senior managers in turn have a responsibility to impart this information to all employees. Information can be obtained from the local Race Equality Commission or through the Commission for Racial Equality (www.cre.gov.uk).

Recommendation 4: This action should be monitored by Lead Officers from the Arts Council and RABs, together with the funded organisations, through formal briefings – eg, annual reviews.

4.3 Equal Opportunities policies/Positive Action

'It is an indictment on the profession that there is not one Black or Asian artistic director of a repertory theatre or producing house in the entire country. To have one or two chief executives from the ethnic persuasion in question is not good enough as we know it takes more to redress the imbalance in staffing and in the programming of Black and Asian work.'

Femi Elufowoju Jnr – Artistic Director, Tiata Fahodzi

(NB Since the Eclipse conference took place the Haymarket Theatre, Leicester, announced the appointment of Kully Thiarai as Co-Artistic Director)

Some organisations found their Equal Opportunities policies and Handbook were effective and central to organisational development. The general consensus, however, was that they were not referred to, apart from in areas of recruitment, interviewing, grievance procedures and staff monitoring. Sergeant Robyn Williams noted that: 'They are worthless and should be thrown away unless they are policed or resourced.'

It was accepted that there needed to be a far more holistic approach to 'equality of opportunities' and there was a need for Positive Action plans to be used in conjunction with refreshed Equal Opportunities policies (see Appendix 4).

It was also recognised that for any change to be effective, not only should all relevant agencies and organisations involved in theatre be consulted and active, ie ACE, RABs, TMA, ITC, Bectu, Equity and local authorities, but also all theatre staff at all levels.

There was clearly some confusion and lack of knowledge from delegates as to the difference between positive action and positive discrimination. There is a need for clarification and guidance on this point (see Appendix 5).

A number of delegates expressed a view that legally binding sanctions should be imposed on theatres that do not implement Equal Opportunities policies.

Despite a majority of delegates recognising the need to review their Equal Opportunities policies regularly, the reasons that were given for not doing so were: workloads; budget constraints; lack of consensus to Equal Opportunities training and lack of expertise. Although these are recognised as difficulties, the implementation and regular review of Equal Opportunities policies are a priority and the time and resources must be found to enable theatres to do this.

It was recognised that in the light of extra funding through the *Theatre Review*, the opportunity exists for proper training, the setting of agreed targets and the full implementation of Equal Opportunities policies across the theatre system.

Recommendation 5: The Arts Council, working with ITC and TMA, should implement a strategy for the development of Positive Action plans that actively develop opportunities for African Caribbean and Asian practitioners in theatre. This strategy and the Positive Action Plans would be included in targets set by the organisation and the funder together; the latter would be responsible for their monitoring.

Recommendation 6: The Arts Council, working with TMA, should implement Equal Opportunities training for all boards and senior managers of publicly funded theatres.

Recommendation 7: The Arts Council should discuss the full impact of the

Eclipse Report with TMA, ITC, Bectu and Equity focussing on their individual roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 8: Senior managers of theatre organisations to review their Equal Opportunities policy annually and report back to their boards of management.

Recommendation 9: In the light of the uplift of funding through the Theatre Review, funding should be identified in annual budgets to facilitate Equal Opportunities training for members of theatre staff. The responsibility of monitoring this positive action would be with the Arts Council and RABs.

Recommendation 10: RABs and other funders should convene meetings with the senior managers of all theatre organisations who did not attend the Eclipse conference to initiate dialogue on this Report and to identify any appropriate action thereafter.

4.4 Social imperatives

‘I wouldn’t trust any theatre to have a moral obligation. Any directives need some serious policing. I bet they have all got paperwork right now that proves how much they are striving to promote equal access. Then you go to the building and check it out. Trust. Are you serious?’

African Caribbean and Asian Artists’ Workshop

A publicly funded organisation has an obvious responsibility to open its work to all communities. However, this should not be the sole reason for arts organisations and theatres to address issues of racial equality and equality of opportunity. One would hope that people would see it as a moral and civil rights issue and therefore a social imperative.

4.5 Financial imperatives

‘There is a lack of culturally diverse programming in many all-white locations. It is as if they do not want to acknowledge what is really happening all around them. It is so important that these places are made to take this seriously. They are damaging the very people they are supposed to be looking after. No wonder the sort of stereotyping and fear that we are talking about can be so easily manipulated still.’

African Caribbean and Asian Artists’ Workshop

There was a range of contributions about the financial/business imperatives behind embracing change. It was noted that after years of standstill funding in the theatre sector, output had contracted and there was a perception of a need for ‘safe’ work; delegates were not, however, convinced there was such a thing as ‘safe’ product these days.

The question was raised as to what evidence exists about the correlation between the artistic programme and the audiences that programme attract. It is often felt these Programmers assume that Cultural Diversity Programming is 'risky'. However, although 'safe' product has failed at the box office, this has not stopped artistic directors from consistently programming in this way. It is the quality of the theatrical experience that is important, coupled with the ability of theatres to attract both new and existing audiences.

It was acknowledged that many new and innovative programmes have been initiated and undertaken by the New Audiences Programme. This has provided groundbreaking opportunities to test a range of marketing and employment activities not previously seen in the theatre industry.

Building on the work of the New Audiences Programme, there is a need for thorough comparative research to be undertaken on attendance figures for all productions programmed, coupled with extensive research into the type of productions that audiences (both existing and potential) wish to see and the main criteria for choosing one particular production over another. The questions would include the following.

- Is it cultural?
- Thematic?
- Form?
- Star actor?
- Known product?

The evidence might show that culturally diverse work did less well than other products at the box office. If this were the case, one suggestion for addressing the issue was the establishment of a Cultural Diversity Adjustment Programme. This fund would be used to subsidise shows, thereby allowing programmers to take risks in the development stages of the work. Theatres would need to show that they had a commitment to programming culturally diverse work on a regular basis. They would also need to have a comprehensive and relevant long-term marketing and audience development strategy.

A number of delegates believed that new audiences can be created with a far more consistent approach to programming, and that embracing new cultural forms offers the potential for making theatre more attractive and dynamic than at present.

A further suggestion was that there could be investment in organisations with a track record of programming culturally diverse work to support them in continuing to do so. This would allow for proper organisational development of the promotion of the work, while remaining consistent to the programming.

Recommendation 11: Working in collaboration with TMA and ITC, the Arts Council should undertake continued comparative research on programme choice and marketing initiatives, in order to test the assumption that certain types of work are high risk. Reference should also be made to the new opportunities that exist through the New Audiences Programme.

4.6 Barriers to change

‘The problems exist way before we even enter the buildings. At the point of programming barriers are put in place... People see us as problems first. We have not got much of a chance when we are automatically seen as this huge problem that they have got to solve. Things can feel so pressurised. Even if some great programmer has made the effort to book you in – then we have got to be worth it and you can feel the pressure on you.’

African Caribbean and Asian Artists’ Workshop

It was clear from the workshops that the majority of delegates were aware of the barriers that exist to change and had no problems in listing them. They identified the lack of funds as the main barrier and pointed to the funding bodies. Of course, another way of approaching the ‘problem’ would be to realign existing resources based on a clear set of priorities, which, in the light of the *Theatre Review*, must be an option.

4.7 Future vision

‘I believe that in twenty years time, when my nieces and nephews have grown and go in search of theatre that tells them something about themselves, they will not look to the best of American playwriting or African playwriting, or Caribbean playwriting. They will hunt to find Black British work. And when twenty years later than that, other generations further detached from our ancestral homelands look for characters that describe their forebears, I hope they will look, and I hope they will find my work and similar work. At least it’s written down now. If it does not come of age in my lifetime, I hope to the gods it will in theirs.’

Tyrone Huggins – Artistic Director, Theatre of Darkness

Few delegates in the workshops had problems listing the areas, which, in their view, constituted a future vision. The only proviso was the need to take into account regional and local factors regarding the size or lack of African Caribbean and Asian communities and how representative their boards, staffing and artistic programme should be.

The problem with this argument is the urgent need to challenge racism and other discriminatory attitudes within the communities the theatres serve, which indicates that theatres should have a broader remit than they currently have.

A delegate questioned why the vision would be an improvement on the status quo. Responses from the delegates stated that:

- theatres are publicly funded and therefore should be as diverse and inclusive as possible
- different artistic cultural influences can only enrich the local community
- given the degree of interaction between the audience and artists it is beneficial to have a heterogeneous audience (age, race, and class). This provides challenges and gives greater satisfaction
- it is the role of the Arts Council and Regional Arts Boards to raise the agenda with all theatres and to facilitate discussions.

4.8 Leadership and champions

‘Many people think they are good managers, but actually they do what I call a partial job, because if you are not developing and supporting all your staff, if you don’t have the breadth of knowledge and experience that diversity brings represented in your organisation, then you are not delivering the best service you can. Leadership is crucial, you need people to champion the issues, to lead by example and it should not, I repeat not, be left exclusively to Black people. It is not a Black issue it is an organisational issue.’

Sergeant Robyn Williams

For many years, promoting change and inclusivity in culturally diverse theatre has been left, in the main, to individual ‘champions’ within arts organisations and theatres. While this has taken theatre some way in the change process, in this day and age it is not far enough. The conference felt that the only way of achieving serious and long-lasting change was from the top down. This could be achieved by consistent leadership from boards of directors, senior managers and the funding bodies.

A substantial number of delegates felt that boards were living in the past that they urgently needed to move into the 21st century and embrace the reality of the multicultural opportunities offered in Britain today. Theatres need to find new structures to attract African Caribbean and Asian expertise on to boards or alternatively to act as advisers. Artistic teams and senior management teams should include, at the very least, an adviser with the relevant expertise.

Recommendation 12: Board training is a key opportunity to change and the Arts Council should set up a national Board Bank and list of advisers in collaboration with Arts and Business. The Arts Council should work actively with RABs to facilitate the sharing of this information with all theatre organisations.

4.9 The role of the funding bodies

‘Again the Arts Council needs to get more directly involved. They have a massive pool of knowledge. They should be acting as brokers for companies. Introducing them to venues, smoothing the process.... It is probably easier for people to go back to their boards and say that the Arts Council is pushing them to get this show or that show into the building. It takes some of the heat off.’

African Caribbean and Asian Artists’ Workshop

On both days of the conference there were discussions about the role of the Arts Council and the RABs and their responsibilities. It was recognised that the Arts Council and some RABs had adopted Cultural Diversity Positive Action plans and were active in their implementation.

Other discussions covered a range of areas:

- sanctions or financial penalties for theatres not embracing change or reaching

- specific targets
- the need for funders to act as brokers between touring companies and theatre building
- quality assessment of product
- funders should be responsible for board training.

The discussion raised the question of how the process of change should be monitored and supported. Some delegates felt that an independent body should monitor funders themselves.

Individuals at the conference raised the question of access points to the funding system and the need for adequate funds to develop work. At the same time many delegates identified Regional Arts Lottery Programmes (RALP) applications as being difficult to complete.

There was a general feeling that funders should be pro-active in identifying opportunities, particularly between touring companies and regional theatres. The Black Regional Initiative in Theatre has been active in identifying opportunities and in helping to set them up, but mostly this has been on the smaller-scale circuit.

The view was expressed that artistic directors of regional theatres possessed little knowledge of the range and quality of African Caribbean and Asian artists who were working, particularly on the small scale. It was suggested that funding regional showcases of culturally diverse work would give artistic directors, senior managers and programmers the opportunity to broaden their knowledge. It was recognised, however, that showcases are difficult to organise because of the small-scale companies' national touring remit within the National Touring Programme.

The support and development of culturally diverse writers at various stages in their development was identified as a clear need. Within BRIT there is a range of developments which could be rolled out across the regions through the implementation of the *Theatre Review*.

It was generally agreed among the African Caribbean and Asian practitioners and companies that the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre was positive and had made an impact through the ring fencing of funds. However, it was acknowledged that culturally diverse work has to be fully integrated into all theatres' operations and programming and should not be seen as an add-on.

Recommendation 13: An independent monitoring group of African Caribbean and Asian practitioners should be established to monitor the progress of theatres as per the recommendations of the Eclipse Report. This group should report back to the Drama, Touring and Cultural Diversity Panel of the Arts Council via the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre Advisory Group.

4.10 Staffing

'On the issues of proportional representation within buildings, I tell you it makes a big difference as guests or service providers when you walk into a national or regional arts venue and the make-up reflects the demography of the community within which it

is based. People blame the dearth of competent Black or Asian technicians, stage managers, actors, directors, for the lack of proportional representation within their buildings. I say be pro-active and seek them out because they are out there and if you are in doubt I am here for two days; stop me and I will give you a comprehensive list for each of these disciplines.'

Femi Elufowoju, Jnr – Artistic Director, Tiata Fahodzi

Delegates clearly felt that theatres generally operate a 'filofax' networking system, particularly with regard to directors. The point was made that *who* you knew was more important than *what* you knew.

The workshops focused on:

- lack of coherent career structure within theatres
- limited number of entry points
- low salaries
- the need for more in-house training and support structures
- the lack of applicants from African Caribbean and Asian communities for vacant positions.

The lack of a coherent career structure and a limited number of entry points face everyone who chooses to work in theatre. It is known that the Arts Council, through the Education and Employment Unit, is looking at Continuing Professional Development. However, it was suggested that a national working party be set up to look at existing career structures in theatre and ways in which they could be improved, with the aim of creating a secure and supportive working environment for everyone based on Fairness, Efficiency, Good Practice and Professionalism.

Discussion took place on the opportunities that can be provided for young directors in shadowing the artistic directors of theatres. It is recognised that a number of opportunities exist through short-term bursaries from the Arts Council Drama Department. Opportunities will arise from the collaboration between the Arts Council Drama Department and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation on developing directorial skills on middle-scale stages, although these bursaries are not targeted specifically at African Caribbean and Asian artists. These bursaries are being implemented from 2001/02.

Given the lack of African Caribbean and Asian managers in the theatre profession, it was recognised that training programmes need to be set up to address this problem. The Arts Council Fellowships, the Drama Department Annual Training Allowances and the ITC Fast Track scheme for African Caribbean and Asian administrators are known. The length of these bursaries and traineeships was identified as being one of the key areas needing further discussion. It was strongly recommended that when recruiting for senior management positions, a commitment to culturally diverse arts practice should be an essential criterion in the job description. There are many reasons why individuals choose not to have a career in the theatre industry. These are mainly: financial, lack of role models, lack of career structure, peer pressure. However, the conference felt that this area needed direct positive action through providing information on job opportunities at career fairs, within culturally-specific

communities and religious festivals. Individual theatres could, if they wished, take action on these.

Recommendation 14: In reviewing the job descriptions of senior theatre managers when vacancies occur, a commitment and knowledge of culturally diverse arts practice is essential. This should be monitored by the funder of the organisation.

Recommendation 15: The Arts Council should re-examine the length of individual bursaries, and future opportunities to direct at a host theatre should be discussed fully prior to completion of the bursary.

4.11 Programming and casting policies

‘I have been here for two years now and this coming season will be only the second time I have invited a Black or Asian director to come and direct a show here. But quite specifically this director has been invited to do a show that would not normally be considered for them. I think that a big part of the job I have is to look beyond the compartmentalisation, which is one of the issues. Why would a Black director direct only Black work? However, there is no doubt that arriving at that point where I made that decision happened because I was asked the question that you are asking me now which is: why haven’t I done this before? Because in the past my assumption was either that these people would only want to direct a certain type of work, or I would go to my mates who I felt comfortable with in the past. Which is part of what you do as an artistic director, you employ your mates.’

Giles Croft – Artistic Director, Nottingham Playhouse

Programming and casting policies were two of the key areas for discussion in the African Caribbean and Asian Artists’ Workshops. They are central to theatre operations and have a strong relationship with cultural value systems and decision-making processes.

There was general frustration about high-quality Black work not going on to the main stages. It was pointed out that if the artistic directors are white Europeans from a traditional theatre background, then their knowledge base and their cultural perspective about what constitutes ‘good’ plays will be biased against culturally-diverse work. Coupled with the fact that most theatres play to a very narrow constituency/audience, this suggests that a radical and cultural ‘mind shift’ is needed.

There was a continuing focus in the discussions on the risks attached to programming culturally diverse work and the uncertainty of whether there was an audience or demand from within the catchment area.

Some key points were made:

- Programming needed to reflect the diversity of local communities and modern Britain; and that having such a diverse programme was a powerful statement regarding the cultural values that a theatre espoused

- Different voices from different cultural perspectives could only enrich the theatrical experience
- Bringing the wider world to our local communities is a positive aim
- There is a need to challenge the perceived model of regional theatres
- Programming is a powerful tool that can be used to challenge the stereotypes that feed peoples' discriminatory attitudes.

It was felt that artistic directors need to be pro-active in identifying and familiarising themselves with Black product, companies and artists and ensuring a balanced programme of work. It is essential that the funding bodies make available to artistic directors and their colleagues a full list of African Caribbean and Asian work that has received funds, either for regional development or national touring.

There is no doubt that African Caribbean and Asian artists, who are often working on the small-scale circuit, have enormous expertise across a range of areas. Ways should be found to make sure that artistic directors of producing and receiving theatres tap into these resources. This could be through:

- African Caribbean and Asian artists advising on artistic programming
- theatres establishing relationships with individual artists
- establishing an ongoing relationship with identified touring companies, developing residencies or collaborations.

The latter would give a touring company a real opportunity to gain greater knowledge and understanding of specific regional theatres and communities.

However, an important point was made in the African Caribbean and Asian Artists' Workshops regarding collaborations and partnerships. There was a perception that funders and theatres do not trust companies; it was suggested that any funding for collaborative work should be attached to the companies rather than the theatres themselves. This would give a greater sense of ownership.

There was a view that Equal Opportunities policies were disregarded when it came to employing actors and creative teams. The question was: 'Why should this be acceptable in theatre when it is illegal in other sectors?' The view of the African Caribbean and Asian artists was that, given the filofax approach of artistic directors, and despite quotas being illegal, some kind of quota system should exist. However, there are positive ways to bring new artists into a theatre by creating opportunities to shadow, and for the individual artist to learn and then feed into decision-making discussions.

Perhaps one of the most radical suggestions for providing a balanced programme was that the classical repertoire should be shelved and that theatres should concentrate on plays written within the last 50 years.

Recommendation 16: Theatres should share examples of good practice and systems should be designed to ensure that this happens through the funding structures or through ITC/TMA.

Recommendation 17: The Arts Council, working with TMA, ITC and Equity, should monitor the employment of African Caribbean and Asian actors in the publicly-funded English theatre industry, over the twelve-month period commencing March 2002. Following receipt of evidence, consideration should be given to setting relevant non-negotiable targets in consultation with artistic directors.

Recommendation 18: Through the Year of Diversity, a database and website should be set up giving details of African Caribbean and Asian artists. This information should be shared with theatre organisations and agents.

4.12 Outreach and marketing

‘SAAG used to meet every 20 days or so, made up of Leicester locals with an interest in theatre, reporting back to the building. It was a very effective way of putting forward the views of ordinary people. They would meet face-to-face with the artistic director and some of the board members; it provided an interface between the policies and the people at the receiving end.’

African Caribbean and Asian Artists’ Workshop

Although audience development was not on the agenda for discussion, a number of useful points were made.

Most delegates agreed that outreach work in both schools and communities was important. It was part of audience development and engaged communities in a theatrical experience, obviously raising the theatre’s public profile. Challenging discrimination can often be done through small projects and touring, particularly into schools.

It was felt that theatres have a responsibility to support and encourage the development of local and regional performers and artists, writers and companies. Nottingham Playhouse’s large-scale community productions were cited as an example. Participants in the productions have been enrolling on the two-year Performing Arts course at the local college. A theatre’s responsibility could be to offer local groups administrative or technical support, skills workshops and performing opportunities. Theatres could also set up youth theatres

A key area of concern was the very few African Caribbean and Asian staff in the marketing departments of regional theatres. This is problematic for the African Caribbean and Asian touring companies and also for theatres which are developing culturally diverse work for their own stages. This is an area in which positive action can be taken through creating bursaries and/or shadowing opportunities.

Over the past three years, many varied programmes of audience development and marketing have been tried out through the New Audiences Initiative. Information on this is available on the Arts Council website (www.artscouncil.org.uk).

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: As a matter of urgency, the Arts Council should develop strategies, involving the ITC and TMA, to gain up-to-date information on the employment of African Caribbean and Asian personnel (including freelancers) in the English publicly funded theatre industry.

Recommendation 2: The Arts Council, together with the Regional Arts Boards, should develop clear strategies to gather qualitative information about the professional aspirations of African Caribbean and Asian employees in the English publicly funded theatre industry.

Recommendation 3: All theatre boards and senior theatre managers should inform themselves fully of the new Amendment to the Race Relations Act, 2000. Senior managers in turn have a responsibility to impart this information to all employees. Information can be obtained from the local Race Equality Commission or through the Commission for Racial Equality (www.cre.gov.uk).

Recommendation 4: This action should be monitored by Lead Officers from the Arts Council and RABs, together with the funded organisations, through formal briefings, eg, annual reviews.

Recommendation 5: The Arts Council, working with ITC and TMA, should implement a strategy for the development of Positive Action plans that actively develop opportunities for African Caribbean and Asian practitioners in theatre. This strategy and the Positive Action plans would be included in targets set by the organisation and the funder together; the latter would be responsible for their monitoring.

Recommendation 6: The Arts Council, working with TMA, should implement Equal Opportunities training for all boards and senior managers of publicly funded theatres.

Recommendation 7: The Arts Council should discuss the full impact of the Eclipse Report with TMA, ITC, Bectu and Equity focussing on their individual roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 8: Senior managers of theatre organisations to review their Equal Opportunities policy annually and report back to their boards of management.

Recommendation 9: In the light of the uplift of funding through the Theatre Review, funding should be identified in annual budgets to facilitate Equal Opportunities training for members of theatre staff. The responsibility of monitoring this positive action would be with the Arts Council and RABs.

Recommendation 10: RABs and other funders should convene meetings with the senior managers of all theatre organisations who did not attend the Eclipse conference to initiate dialogue on this Report and to identify any appropriate action thereafter.

Recommendation 11: Working in collaboration with TMA and ITC, the Arts Council should undertake continued comparative research on programme choice and marketing initiatives, in order to test the assumption that certain types of work are high risk. Reference should also be made to the new opportunities that exist through the New Audiences Programme.

Recommendation 12: Board training is a key opportunity to change and the Arts Council should set up a national Board Bank and list of advisers in collaboration with Arts and Business. The Arts Council should work actively with RABs to facilitate the sharing of this information with all theatre organisations.

Recommendation 13: An independent monitoring group of African Caribbean and Asian practitioners should be established to monitor the progress of theatres as per the recommendations of the Eclipse report. This group should report back to the Drama, Touring and Cultural Diversity Panel of the Arts Council via the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre Advisory Group.

Recommendation 14: In reviewing the job descriptions of senior theatre managers when vacancies occur, a commitment and knowledge of culturally diverse arts practice is essential. This should be monitored by the funder of the organisation.

Recommendation 15: The Arts Council should re-examine the length of individual bursaries, and future opportunities to direct at a host theatre should be discussed fully prior to completion of the bursary.

Recommendation 16: Theatres should share examples of good practice and systems should be designed to ensure that this happens through the funding structures or through ITC/TMA.

Recommendation 17: The Arts Council, working with TMA, ITC and Equity, should monitor the employment of African Caribbean and Asian actors in the publicly funded English theatre industry, over the twelve-month period commencing March 2002. Following receipt of evidence, consideration should be given to setting relevant non-negotiable targets in consultation with artistic directors.

Recommendation 18: Through the Year of Diversity, a database and website should be set up giving details of African Caribbean and Asian artist. This information should be shared with theatre organisations and agents.

Recommendation 19: A pilot project should be established in the East Midlands Region. Through the Black Regional Initiative in Theatre and in collaboration with East Midlands Arts Board and the TMA, a seminar should be held in January 2002 bringing together the senior managers and board members of the four regional theatres to discuss and share methods of positive action and equality in employment.

Recommendation 20: By March 2003, every publicly funded theatre organisation in England will have reviewed its Equal Opportunities policy, ascertained

whether its set targets are being achieved and, if not, drawn up a comprehensive Positive Action plan which actively develops opportunities for African Caribbean and Asian practitioners.

Recommendation 21: The Arts Council's nominated Lead Officer for the development of diversity in theatre in England should maintain an overview of these development, and liase across the funding system and with the TMA, ITC, Bectu and Equity. This work should be seen as a priority for the Arts Council.

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Appendix 1

Programme Tuesday 12 June

- 09.30 Registration and refreshments
 10 Welcome and introduction to the day by **Venu Dhupa** – Executive Director,
 Nottingham Playhouse

Keynote speakers:

Sgt Robyn Williams – Founder member and General Secretary/National Black Police Association 99–2000; Home Secretary Action Group overseeing the recommendations of the Lawrence Enquiry Report 99–2000; currently

member of National Police Training Community and Race Relations Advisory Group.

Dr Vayu Naidu – Freelance Writer/Performer/Director/Lecturer

10.30 Delegates' workshops and African Caribbean and Asian Artists' workshops

11.45 Break for refreshments

12 Delegates' workshops and African Caribbean and Asian Artists' workshops

13 Lunch

14 Introduction to afternoon session + panel discussion:

Femi Elufowoju Jnr – Artistic Director/Tiata Fahodzi

David Tse – Artistic Director/Yellow Earth

Steven Luckie – Freelance Writer/Director

14.30 Questions from floor

15 Break for refreshments

15.15 Integrated workshops

16.30 Closing address: **Isobel Hawson** – Senior Drama Officer, ACE

17 Conference ends

Programme Wednesday 13 June

10 Welcome by **Venu Dhupa** – Executive Director, Nottingham Playhouse

Introduction to the day: **Kim Evans** – Executive Director of Arts (ACE)

Keynote speakers:

Sgt Robyn Williams

Tyrone Huggins – Artistic Director/Theatre of Darkness

14 Introduction to afternoon session + panel discussion:

Anthony Corriette – Development Director/Stratford East

Rukhsana Ahmad – Artistic Director/Kali Womens' Theatre

Sudha Buchar – Co-Artistic Director/Tamasha Theatre Company

Hermin McIntosh – Independent Arts Consultant

16.30 Closing address: **Isobel Hawson** – Senior Drama Officer, ACE

Appendix 2

Eclipse – a working conference

Position Statement

The arts are a joyous, wonderful and flexible route to celebrating, engaging and empowering our diverse communities.

The Arts Council of England has been making significant progress in the area of cultural diversity and is now supporting a working conference that will look at strategies to combat racism in theatre employment and practice. We are inviting chief executives, artistic directors and board members to look at how as a sector we can promote understanding of, and positive discussion about, employment practices and the wealth of artistic work created by African Caribbean and Asian communities.

It is an important initiative because the conference will start with the premise that racism exists in theatre as it does in other areas of our society. No matter how uncomfortable we feel about it racism remains rooted in most of our institutions and organisations. We are not suggesting that theatres are ‘consciously’ perpetuating the problem, but that the traditional role that theatres have played over the centuries in England has helped to perpetuate a eurocentric view of the world. The challenge that faces us in a multi-ethnic Britain, in the 21st century is how to make our buildings and our stages far more inclusive so they reflect that wonderful diversity that is Britain.

We do not wish to rake over old ground by discussing the barriers to affecting change, we all know what they are and there have been a number of conferences about them and papers written about them, without which we would probably not be in a position to organise Eclipse. Eclipse acknowledges that most of us would like to do something about the issue but have never before had the will or the opportunity to work together to develop practical solutions to help shape a national strategy. The important thing is we are doing it now. We invite you to bring along suggestions (even if they are controversial) and examples of good practice that we can share and debate to ensure that progress happens more strategically and faster than is currently the case. If Eclipse is successful then other similar events will be planned for our own and in other sectors to ensure that the momentum for progress is maintained.

We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Eclipse is supported by The Arts Council of England, The Theatrical Management Association, East Midlands Arts and Nottingham Playhouse.

Appendix 3

Eclipse Developing Strategies to Combat Racism in Theatre

Evaluation form

1 Thoughts on the day? Was it useful? How could it have been improved?

2 Action points for your theatre? Short-term and long-term.

3 Is there any specific support that you may require to move forward?

4 Further areas for discussion?

5 Are you committed to attending the follow-up sessions in the autumn?

Name:.....

Theatre:.....

Which day did you attend?

Appendix 4

Equal Opportunities' notes

Equal Opportunities policy

- Recruitment/selection
- Artistic policy – casting and programme
- Social policy – education and community
- Pay and conditions – grievance procedures
- Board representation and selection
- Employment practices – promotion and appraisal
- Retention, training and personal development
- Equal Opportunities statement
- Monitoring/review

The following is an extract from the CRE's website: www.cre.gov.uk

Equal Opportunities policies

The following is a ten-point plan to help employers promote equality of opportunity in their organisations. These are guidance points only and employers should seek further details about each of the areas:

- 1 Develop an equal opportunities policy, covering recruitment, promotion and training.
- 2 Set an action plan, with targets, so that you and your staff have a clear idea of what can be achieved and by when.
- 3 Provide training for all people, including managers, throughout your organisation, to ensure they understand the importance of equal opportunities. Provide additional training for staff who recruit, select and train your employees.
- 4 Assess the present position to establish your starting point, and monitor progress in achieving your objectives.
- 5 Review recruitment, selection, promotion and training procedures regularly, to ensure that you are delivering on your policy.
- 6 Draw up clear and justifiable job criteria, which are demonstrably objective and job-related.
- 7 Offer pre-employment training, where appropriate, to prepare potential job applicants for selection tests and interviews; you should also consider positive action training to help ethnic minority employees to apply for jobs in areas where they are underrepresented.

8 Consider your organisation's image: do you encourage applications from underrepresented groups and feature women, ethnic minority staff and people with disabilities in recruitment literature, or could you be seen as an employer who is indifferent to these groups?

9 Consider flexible working, career breaks, providing childcare facilities, and so on, to help women in particular meet domestic responsibilities and pursue their occupations; and consider providing special equipment and assistance to help people with disabilities.

10 Develop links with local community groups, organisations and schools; in order to reach a wider pool of potential applicants.

Appendix 5

Positive Action notes

‘Positive Action is permitted under section 37 of the Race Relations Act and Section 47 of the Sex Discrimination Act. The Acts permit measures by which people from a racial group or one sex are encouraged to apply for jobs in which they have been under-represented or given training to help them develop their potential and so improve their chances in competing for particular work. However an individual’s race or sex cannot be taken into consideration at the point of selection. Were this to happen it would amount to positive discrimination which has never been permitted under the law.

Positive Action is designed to achieve better and fairer use of all human resources. Associated training and encouragement, which are the fundamental principles of Positive Action can, for example, include:

- A development programme for potential managers
- Training in management or supervisory skills
- Single-sex training to meet the special needs of people returning to work after looking after their families.’

Extract taken from *Equal Opportunities Handbook* Credibility Ltd.

Positive Action plan

- Identify individuals and form coordinating group
- Research and consultation:
 - a) Community
 - b) Theatre – staff/ board/ artists + wider arts community
 - c) Stakeholders – funders/LAs/RABs.
- Action research:
 - a) Commissioning
 - b) Creating work
 - c) Developing partnerships
- Set realistic and justifiable time scales
- Allocate adequate resources.
- Implement
- Review and monitor.

Principles and aspirations

- Equal Opportunities should be at the heart of each organisation
- Proactive and transparent promotion of equality of opportunity throughout the organisation
- A Mission Statement should include how the implementation of Equal Opportunities policy and Positive Action plan is to be monitored.
- Introduce an element of personal responsibility.

Staffing: Recruitment and retention

- Support structures/mentoring for young/new staff
- Prioritise compulsory training for ALL staff ; engage all staff in discussions
- Need for more full-time contracted posts
- More links with the education sector (FE and HE theatre and performing arts courses); more work placements and training.
- Why not try and recruit from the Community Sector?
- Recognition that many skills exist in African Caribbean and Asian communities – need ongoing training initiatives that lead to a job at the end
- Look at recruitment and selection processes: interview panel – make the whole process more accessible and transparent
- Make links with career services; career fairs for school/college leavers; culturally specific community festivals; talks and visits to schools, colleges, and accessible information packs
- Making the language less elitist
- Develop and support less experienced artistic directors; more shadow directors
- Offer opportunities for African Caribbean and Asian performers to move into directing
- Employing a Community Liaison Officer.

Programming

- Research/consultation with communities – make contacts, identify gaps in provision; set up strategic community forums/focus groups
- Programming should look at what the community actually wants to see not what theatres think they want to see
- Artistic directors need to be proactive about finding out what is on offer
- More African Caribbean casting directors and/or white casting directors given a brief to widen their contacts
- Collaborations and partnerships between theatres and smaller companies
- Enduring/longer-term collaborations and partnerships between theatres and middle-scale touring companies – sharing of expertise and utilising specific skills of the companies re- marketing, training, mentoring.
- Developing consortia linked to committed middle scale touring product
- Regular open workshops/ auditions – invite different people from different backgrounds in order to widen the pool
- Care needs to be taken to not sell out to commercialism and reduce ethnic programming to stereotypes and the most popular/lowest common denominator.

Networking and skills sharing

- Create opportunities for sharing good practice with other theatres/sectors
- Recognised that buildings have a skills gap and touring companies have a skills excess. The need to set up partnerships with touring companies which can address training, mentoring, marketing. Touring companies can be pro-active. Could this be done by having African Caribbean and Asian companies as a resident company?
- Networking with African Caribbean and Asian practitioners, directors, designers, etc.

- If theatres have problems re:- knowledge of the cultural mix within their catchment areas why not tap into the police service?

Finances/resources

- The need to realign current resources to support the changes
- The need to adequately resource the development and consultation process.

Outreach, marketing and audience development

- Using community ambassadors to encourage others to attend shows
- Review the start times of performances thereby ensuring 'equality of opportunity' for all sections of the community to attend
- Providing free 'taster' workshops and shows; organising open days, workshops, marketing, directing – youth theatre, volunteering opportunities
- Proactive arts/drama-based projects that challenge discriminatory attitudes within the various local communities
- Sometimes there is a need to target culturally specific groups due to identifiable under-representation from particular sections/communities
- Priority of audience development work as ongoing.
- The 'advocacy' role that Audience Development Agencies can play in brokering relationships with venues, ie how can existing consortiums be accessed/used to support and enhance touring?
- The importance of all printed publicity to be attractive and accessible to ALL sections of the community; review images, style and format of all print; distribution.

Making building's accessible

- Visual Arts and Crafts exhibitions
- Offering space/use to local community groups
- Engaging/working with young people in community
- Target marketing
- Flexible performance times
- Catering – social space that isn't a bar
- Networks – touring consortia
- Welcoming – making people feel comfortable
- Equality of opportunity for everyone to enter
- Ambience
- Elitist language – possibly dropping the title 'theatre'
- Staff representation – FOH, box office; providing dual language speakers
- Community ownership of the theatre through education, interaction and access.

**IF YOU DO WHAT YOU ALWAYS DID
YOU ARE GOING TO GET WHAT YOU ALWAYS GOT!**

The following are extracts from the CRE's website: www.cre.gov.uk

Positive Action

Opportunities for employees to develop their potential through encouragement, training and careful assessments are also part of good employment practice. Many employees from the racial minorities have potential which, perhaps because of previous discrimination and other causes of disadvantage, they have not been able to realise, and which is not reflected in their qualifications and experience. Where members of particular racial groups have been underrepresented over the previous twelve months in particular work, employers and specific training bodies are allowed under the Act to encourage them to take advantage of opportunities for doing that work and to provide training to enable them to attain the skills needed for it. In the case of employers, such training can be provided for persons currently in their employment (as defined by the Act) and in certain circumstances for others too, for example if they have been designated as training bodies. This code encourages employers to make use of these provisions.

Note: Section 7(3) of the Employment Act 1989 has amended section 37 of the Race Relations Act with effect from 16/01/90. Section 7(3) now allows any person including employers (not just training bodies) to provide positive action training without the need for any designation as long as the criteria on underrepresentation are met.

Positive Action

Although they are not legally required, positive measures are allowed by the law to encourage employees and potential employees and provide training for employees who are members of particular racial groups which have been underrepresented in particular work. Discrimination at the point of selection for work, however, is not permissible in these circumstances.

Note: A racial group is underrepresented if, at any time during the previous 12 months, either there was no-one of that group doing the work in question, or there were disproportionately few in comparison with the group's proportion in the workforce at that establishment, or in the population from which the employer normally recruits for work at that establishment.

Such measures are important of the development of equal opportunity. It is therefore recommended that, where there is underrepresentation of particular work, the following measures should be taken wherever appropriate and reasonably practicable:

- * Job advertisements designed to reach members of these groups and to encourage their applications: for example, through the use of the ethnic minority press, as well as other newspapers
- * Use of the employment agencies and careers offices in areas where these groups are concentrated

- * Recruitment and training schemes for school leavers designed to reach members of these groups
- * Encouragement to employees from these groups to apply for promotion or transfer opportunities
- * Training for promotion or skill training for employees of these groups who lack particular expertise but show potential: supervisory training may include language training

Appendix 6

Further discussion points

- Theatres should have a far broader remit than simply one of serving, and being representative of, their local communities?
- How can change be policed and supported? Who are theatres ultimately accountable to? Independent body or funders?
- Sanctions or financial penalties for theatres not embracing change or reaching specified targets?
- Praise and recognition should be given to theatres initiating and maintaining good practice; or name and shame those not reaching targets?
- Funders responsibility for board training?
- Funders acting as brokers between touring companies and theatres?
- Research needed into the use of non-negotiable targets?
- Bench mark / quality assessment of product?
- Cultural Diversity Loss Adjustment Programme?
- How to support a more comprehensive manager's training programme?
- Fund companies for partnerships and collaborations and not the theatres?
- Black artists acting as artistic advisors to senior managers and artistic directors; or African Caribbean or Asian individuals incorporated in the artistic team.
- Audience feedback and show reports should be circulated throughout the sector
- Regional Theatre Artistic Directors' meeting + invited/experienced African Caribbean and Asian directors to discuss the problems of integrated casting, non-negotiable targets, cultural values/ knowledge base, the canon/repertoire that they have/are programming on their main stages? To include comparative marketing, casting data?

Appendix 7

Morning session, Wednesday 13 June

Chair: Venu Dhupa

Speakers: Kim Evans, Sergeant Robyn Williams, Tyrone Huggins

Venu Dhupa – Executive Director of Nottingham Playhouse

On behalf of the Arts Council, the TMA, East Midlands Arts and the Playhouse can I thank you for giving up your time today to attend Eclipse, the working seminar to develop strategies to combat racism in the arts.

I just want to set the context. I'm sure everyone here remembers the tragic murder of Stephen Lawrence by racist thugs and due to the persistence and bravery of his family, but most notably his mother Doreen Lawrence, there was a police inquiry resulting in the McPherson Report. This is a landmark Report because it acknowledged publicly that not only do we live in a racist society, but there exists an insidious form of racism that is institutional racism. This is defined as the collective failure by the organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen and detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage African Caribbean and Asian people. The Report was a challenge for all of us to look at the industries in which we work and identify ways we can make a difference.

Because the performing arts and the funders which invest in us are traditionally at the more liberal end of the spectrum, I think that some times we kid ourselves that we are doing better than other sectors or that we are really nice people and don't mean to be racist. We all know that there are pockets of good practice and I think many of the people here will have been involved in pioneering projects but the fact is that our industry and the funding system that supports it are fundamentally racist. Most key decision makers within the industry, knowingly or unknowingly perpetuate the status quo. We need to imagine this as though we were taking a complete overview. As if we were seeing the industry for the first time, so no one needs to be apprehensive or defensive and no blame is being apportioned. What we're doing is taking an overview.

So this topic is now being discussed and penetrating all levels of our society. I was surprised to read in Barbara Ellen in *The Observer* and she writes, 'I had a letter from a Black woman thanking me for a column I wrote about race but expressing surprise that I had referred to Britain as a tolerant society. As a Black woman I don't want to be tolerated. I consider Britain one of the more tolerable societies one can choose to live in.' The difference is not subtle I'm sure you all agree. She then went on to add 'racism is a social asbestos we're all sucking it in but some of us are breathing easily, some are choking and others are actively suffocating'. Eclipse sits in this context and it's very clear about the premise which is to tackle the issue. The good thing is tackling the issue at both an artistic and organisational level is now a government priority, an Arts Council priority and a priority at regional level and this is filtering through the National Policy for Theatre and the Next Stage Review.

When Nottingham Playhouse approached the Arts Council with the idea for this conference we were very clear that it should be for the decision makers and that it should be focused. We're all aware of how pressurised time is for senior managers so we didn't want to dilute this strategic purpose, and we wanted to provide two days in which senior managers could take the option. We also recognise that there is work to do in specific areas such as the marketing field or development and so forth but we wanted to keep this discussion strategic. While wanting to confront the issue, I think all the partners agree that we need to progress sensitively on the journey. We need to emphasise that although we start from this premise we really are here to share good practice, to share ideas and to work through some of the areas of difficulty that prevent progress.

We're all aware that Britain is a multicultural society. We all know that we need a better understanding of the issues; that there is a need for fundamental change in theatre; that equal opportunities for all should be woven into the very fabric of our operations rather than just as an add-on and that racism, including institutional racism, isn't acceptable but that there are now enough of us that actually want to do something about it. The stance on this has not surprisingly been hard-line and I'm delighted that the Arts Council and others are committed to work to make these changes. I think that the ideas that come forward from these two days will be taken very seriously into new initiatives.

Our work today will be invaluable because never before have senior decision makers and board members been involved in this subject so directly and it's going to make a difference to this sector. We are the ones that can affect change and make a difference. My thanks go to all the staff at the Playhouse who have worked hard to make sure that today runs smoothly and to all the partners. I hope that you find today stimulating. This morning we're going to start with a few personal experiences. We're then going to break into groups with facilitators so that we can get into the nitty-gritty of the session. I hope that you find today productive and interesting.

Kim Evans, Executive Director of Arts, Arts Council of England

Thank you very much Venu and thank you to the Playhouse for hosting Eclipse and thank you to East Midlands arts and the TMA for collaborating with us the Arts Council on the conference. This is the first of a number that will be held across the country for theatre organisations over the next 18 months.

Today we're talking about issues which are fundamental not just to theatre and the arts generally but which go right to the core of our very society. Racism is an emotive word. It has an incendiary quality to it as we saw only too recently in Oldham. It's a word that puts us on the back foot, it threatens us and whatever our roots it makes us defensive. I think often at gatherings like this the people on the platforms are meant to be the ones with all the answers, I certainly don't have those today but one of the reasons why I'm really glad to be here representing the Arts Council is because I see this as a real opportunity to share concerns, to share ideas and to identify ways of going forward and really working together to make a difference.

I know that we are all here today because we want to be. We all believe in equality of opportunity and we all believe in encouraging talent, talent which draws on a wider range of forms and traditions; but does our theatre really reflect our belief? Can we really look at our organisations and say no change is required? Can we look clearly at theatre in England and say that it genuinely mirrors the make up of the nation at all levels: on stage, backstage, in the offices and in the audiences? No we can't. At a time when there are 300 languages spoken in our capital city and when in a number of our other cities ethnic minorities are soon to become ethnic majorities, are the theatres really lagging behind? The Boyden Report looking back at '98 and '99, showed that of the 2,000 people who are permanently employed in our building-based theatres only 83 are Black or Asian; and of 440 board members of those theatres only 16 are Black or Asian. I know there is recognition and concern that we have a poor track record of employment and programming and in attracting culturally diverse audiences. So what can we do about it? What practical steps can we take that will really make a difference? That's what we're going to be working on today.

I know there are a lot of you making a difference already. You're discovering writers old and new; I was really moved and struck by the Young Vic's rediscovery of Lorraine Hansberry in the production of *Raisin in the Sun*; new writers like Ayub Khan-Din and Felix Cross who are changing the texture of our theatre. There is too little work as yet on mid-scale and large stages but changes are happening there too; Indhu Rubasingham's *Ramayana* at Birmingham Rep and at the National Theatre have become symbolic of that change. You're training new directors and you are reaching new audiences with initiatives like the Derby Playhouse's Black and Asian Development Programme, but we could do more and, like many of you the Arts Council has been working to make a difference. Yesterday we announced the projects that we will be funding through our new Arts Capital Programme and £31 million of that £90 million programme will go to culturally diverse projects and that will make a difference for theatre. We are going to announce soon the real details of the year of diversity that we're planning with our director Sita Ramamurthy, and another way we really want to make a difference is through the *Theatre Review* which in 2003/04 will deliver an additional £25 million for theatre in this country.

We are passionately committed to promoting the talent in the theatre across all communities. We really put that commitment at the heart of our National Policy for Theatre. Work that speaks to diverse audiences is a priority for us and we want to see an increase in the theatre workforce from the non-white population. The £25 million worth of new money will help make that happen and so will new buildings, but most of all people make that happen. By our very positions in each of our organisations each one of us has a responsibility and that's to help create a theatre that will encourage, interest and engage new diverse audiences and young people. If we can open doors in the workforce, if we can engage with practitioners who will develop new ways of working then we can create a theatre that will truly embrace and celebrate our diverse communities.

Equality of opportunity is something we can all understand and work towards. It's not an add-on. It's something which has to be grasped and understood by every member of staff in every organisation. We really could create an environment in which diversity is at the heart of what we do and at the moment it just isn't. I wanted to end with a line from the Black writer who I most admire, Toni Morrison, who wrote in *The Bluest Eye*, 'there is really nothing more to say except why? And since why is difficult to handle one must

take refuge in how.’ That is what today is really about, it’s not about why we have to improve things, it’s how we can improve things. We’ve got to get practical about this. None of us would be here unless we were committed to doing that. But we’ve got to work together to make sure that we can take something away from today that really will begin to change the landscape and ensure that theatre of the 21st century truly reflects the country of which we are all a part. Thanks.

Sergeant Robyn Williams: Founder member and General Secretary/National Black Police Association 99–2000; Home Secretary Action Group overseeing the recommendations of the Lawrence Enquiry Report 99–2000; currently a member of the National Police Training Community and Race Relations Advisory Group.

Good morning. My talk to you is about some of the real issues relating to community and race relations also about the employment progression of Black staff. I will not be appealing to your humanity, as managers and employers you have obligations both professional and legal to comply with. This is not going to be a history lesson, nor is it going to be punctuated with numerous examples of things for people to say ‘Oh that’s terrible’. Conversely I think it’s really important that we don’t lose sight of the past because it is that history that has brought us to the position we are in today.

During the presentation I will be using the words Black and minority ethnic interchangeably but primarily the word Black and that’s to describe people who have a shared experience of racism in this country.

I’ve said that Black people in this country have a specific and differentiating experience of policing, in society in general and in particular today in theatre. There will be some statistics because they help to illustrate what I am talking about. One of the reasons why I was invited to speak, and you may think that policing has nothing to do with the theatre, is that they are both institutions that have hundreds of years of customs and traditions that are inherently and persistently exclusionary and problematic for the diverse communities in this country. They are both institutions that are dominated by white men and they are both institutions that have excluded women and Black people. I will be looking at why we need to address these issues proactively. At the top of the list should be that it is morally right and just, but as I said earlier, that notion has failed to secure change. Do not see racism and the issues as someone else’s problem, that it doesn’t affect me. We share more than the air we breathe, and need to live together appropriately. Inequality and the lack of access to opportunity, or its denial, is something that no communities will tolerate. Not only is it right but there is a catalogue of legislative provisions that have tended to support anti-discrimination.

Recently there has been the European Convention on Human Rights. In October last year this piece of legislation brought forward greater powers to the existing Act but also meant that public services, particularly the police, had to proactively promote race equality. It is no longer sitting back, ticking a box and thinking we’re doing alright here. You’ll have to provide evidence and illustrate how you’ve promoted race equality. In addition the Chief Constable is liable for acts by his or her employees (and in the police it is usually ‘he’).

Increasingly the UK is a diverse community, the census results indicate that the minority in the community is between 10 to 15% and growing. Another reason why we need to address the issues is that no debate would be complete without reference to the Stephen Lawrence Murder Inquiry Report. That Report, some 335 pages long made 70 recommendations. It established ministerial priorities to increase the trust and confidence of ethnic minority communities in policing while outlining the greater responsibility of society to act in a coordinated way to prevent the growth of racism. The Recruitment, Retention and Progression of Black staff was also an element of the Report's findings. In April '99, shortly after the Lawrence Inquiry was published the Home Secretary issued a number of targets for public services. For those of you who don't understand the difference between targets and quotas, targets are about focus, direction and aspiration; quotas are unlawful, unless you are in America. In setting those targets he looked at three particular areas: the recruitment of staff, the retention of staff and the progression of staff.

Recruitment: The issue is about access to opportunity, about how the old-boys network still prevails. Black staff who enter the service are unlikely to succeed in their applications in spite of being told that the police service is looking for more Black Officers. If they are allowed to participate then it is usually in the lower ranks and few actually progress all the way to the top. There are no Black Chief Constables. It is probably not dissimilar to that of Black theatre staff. Recruitment is about access and exclusion. In addition to bias it can be about selection processes or the lack of the same. Are the processes fair and justifiable? Who are the people who undertake the assessment/selection? Are they recruiting in their own image? Are the tests appropriate?

Retention: I've already mentioned about the representation of Black staff in the lower ranks; similarly there is a narrow field of specialist departments where they can be found. I would suggest that in theatre that Black staff representation is stifled by stereotyping, lack of choice. It is probably an economic necessity that you take on roles that you aren't particularly happy with, that are stereotypical, demeaning and dated. It needs a brave producer, who would cast someone outside of certain clichés and stereotypes. Interestingly enough I was here last night to watch *Ritual In Blood* and was pleasantly surprised that two of the cast were Black and Asian.

Progression: Throughout my 17 years of police experience I was never encouraged or supported to go for promotion. It was back in '91 that I did an African History course that I began to look at the world differently and decided that if I was to continue participating in policing then there were certain things I needed to do – they were to move on and move up. In terms of Theatre mirroring the Police Service there are very few Black people in high positions.

Now I want to talk about how we can address some of those issues. What the police have done and are continuing to do to tackle some of those issues. Post Lawrence there has been a fundamental review of how the police manage and investigate cases of murder, together with an examination of how racist incidents are handled (48,000 reported racist incidents 2000).

- **Policy review:** A review of other police policies, in particular, selection policies, is ongoing. Standards for assessors/ selectors together with new

policies on promotion and specialist department selection have been written and implemented. Bias is, as far as possible, negated or removed. Managers and others are held to account for their actions. ***Accountability can and does influence behaviour.***

- **Training** is not going to resolve all the issues and spending thousands of pounds on training is not going to solve the problem but it is a start. You need to be able to say I've trained my staff, I've supported them in these objectives. If people are failing to comply and act professionally then you can actually do something about it. Your values and beliefs must be outlined explicitly to all staff.
- **Support groups:** In the police service out of 43 police services we now have thirty-two Black associations across England and Wales. The issue of race is obviously critical and far-reaching across the service. Objectives of these support groups includes providing support staff and protecting their rights and interests. Building bridges between the service and minority ethnic communities is also a common objective. Because we have Black Police Associations, do not think that they are working to the detriment of the service. They are actually about working to support the service and meeting its objectives to serve all communities. They are policing the police on matters of community and race.
- **Leadership:** Many people think they are good managers, but actually they do what I call a partial job; because if you are not developing and supporting all your staff, if you don't have the breadth of knowledge and experience that diversity brings represented in your organisation, then you are not delivering the best service you can. Leadership is crucial, you need people to champion the issues, to lead by example and it should not, I repeat not, be left exclusively to black people. It is not a black issue it is an organisational issue.
- **Mentoring:** During my service, there were no mentors and no role models. In fact in 1992 when I was promoted, I went to a black female manager employed by the local council, Bandana Ahmed, to be my mentor. There were no Black women managers in the service. It was viewed as quite controversial. I felt the competence required to do the job was there; however the support, insight and unique perspective that I needed to manage my new role was not available internally. I needed to go out of the organisation to find them. Mentoring is very important.

The Home Secretary established a working party post Lawrence to ensure that the 70 recommendations are implemented. I don't believe that we need any more recommendations to add to the catalogue of provisions that exist regarding racism. What is needed is for all of us to achieve what has already been identified.

- **Consultation:** The police service is consulting widely. In the past the only people who have been invited to the table for consultation have been people in my opinion who have been quite passive, compliant with what the Chief Officer was saying. Now the dissenting voices, the critical voices are the ones also being listened to. It's also about securing the services of ***professional***

consultants to advise you. Do not assume that Black staff have a wealth of expertise and that being Black somehow empowers you to have the appropriate vocabulary, understanding and the strategic vision to take on this role. Listen to others, just because you have the power does not mean you have the monopoly on what is right.

Staff who are working in environments that need to change cannot sit back and think it will change on its own or rely on someone else to do it. You are going to have to identify your agenda and participate in it's progress.

- **Equal Opportunities policies:** Yesterday, many people talked about the Equal Opportunities policies in their work place. They are worthless and should be thrown away unless they are policed and resourced. You should know what the problems of equal opportunities in your area are. Why the candidates are unsuccessful? Why they do not apply? Instead of problematising those under-represented in your staff and saying, 'well we advertised the post/job but no one Black applied' It is about what you can do. *You need to apply the same rigor that you do to make sure that audiences come through the door to see a show.*
- **Action plan:** You need a strategy. You need to be able to visualise what you are trying to achieve. Securing the services of one Black writer is not addressing equal opportunities. There needs to be an action plan of specific things to do by a specific time. I've talked about leadership but you need commitment. You also need ownership, personal ownership. What can I do?

Hindsight is a wonderful thing but I'm hoping that after today you will have some foresight. There has been a backlash post Lawrence. Some Police officers said they had stopped searching Black people for fear of being labelled racist. The fact is that 'stop and search' figures did go down, but for searches on white men. There will be a backlash against what you are trying to do. Conversely people are not going to automatically let you off the hook because you throw in the odd initiative here and there. It's about being professionally correct rather than politically correct.

The vision for the future for me in terms of policing is an increase in participation by Black people in the criminal justice system. I'd like to be able to walk into a courtroom or down the street and not be the exception. I'd like to see that in all areas of employment people are retained, developed and supported and that people with the skills are promoted. In the police service 18% of Black officers have degrees next to 13% of their white counterparts. It was refreshing to hear the Chief Constable of Nottingham, Steve Green, admit that it wasn't a myth that Black staff had been held back or treated differently. Finally policing costs eight-and-a-half billion pounds a year. All communities expect a fair and appropriate service. You are delivering a service. Make sure it is similarly fair and appropriate. Thank you.

Tyrone Huggins – Artistic Director, Theatre of Darkness

The history/publicity: Briefly, I was born in St. Kitts, arriving in Birmingham at five-years old in 1961. I gained a degree in Metallurgy at Leeds University before co-

founding Impact Theatre Cooperative and discovering experimental visual theatre in '78. In the mid eighties I helped give life to Cleveland Independent Theatre Company. In 1981 I assisted the newly formed Phoenix Dance Company as a sound engineer. I am currently on the Board of Phoenix, Birmingham Rep and the Editorial Board of *Performance Research Journal*. I have sat on various panels including Arts Council and London Arts Board. I have generally run two strands of activity, first Performer/Technician/Set builder, later Actor/Writer, recently as Performer/Producer-Director. I operate between Birmingham, London and Leeds. The last three years I have been getting to the heart of the funding system; now I want to get out and get on with some work. Currently I am devising with The People Show a performance for the LIFT club next week. Following which I will be directing for West Sussex County Youth Theatre. I am producing ...*In Session* for a Theatre of Darkness tour in spring 2002. That's the publicist in me satisfied.

The meat and bones: My memory is that in or around 1987 a terrible thing happened, driven by political will and the ignorant presumption of the arts funding system that it knew what it was doing. That disaster was termed *The Glory of the Garden*. The idea was that by creating 'centres of excellence', the meagre resources allocated to subsidised theatre, could be made cost-effective. Crap!

I'll define some terms. I speak of a 'funding system' to mean the totality of finance, organisations, job descriptions and ultimately individuals whose role is to administer and direct the 'public subsidy' set aside for the arts. In particular the 'system' is the administrative machinery, organisations and processes by which public subsidy is turned into theatre product. Actors are artists whose skill is based around their ability to interpret text and realise character, within the construction of a script. Performers are artists who require no more than the instruction to perform. I define the British – or more particularly the English – theatre tradition very much along the lines that Sir Richard Eyre did in *Changing Stages* as beginning with Shakespeare, and essentially text-based. I end where he ended pointing the future towards a more performance-influenced form.

I began '87 touring a solo show (on my own), *Darkness Into Light*, which I wrote, produced, directed myself via video recordings, performed, built the set for, as well as operating the sound and light on stage, in performance. I envy Robert LePage. I was searching for a type of work I could find nowhere I looked. *Darkness Into Light* was the first Theatre of Darkness production. In a theatre of darkness, a world with no light, issues of skin-colour politics disappear. Naïve, but true.

The Glory of the Garden had an almost immediate effect; the world of small-scale touring that I knew collapsed quickly. I moved auditioned for, and was cast in, my first Repertory Theatre productions, five of them for Tony Clarke at Contact Theatre. I acquired an agent and was invited to join the board of Phoenix who were by then from Leeds accepting that bohemia was over. I Arts Council-funded. I also performed as an extra in the Glyndebourne production of *Porgy and Bess*. But I won't go into the tensions that arose when a plan to do *Showboat* – uncut, with the offending word 'nigger' – was mooted. It was a whirlwind year. There was just one downside. Suddenly there was no outlet for the full breadth of my creative energy. So I began to write plays.

Another discovery of joining the mainstream was that for the first time in any significant way, my skin colour became an issue. Contact Theatre had to call meetings with local critics to argue for Tony's policy of integrated casting. The Arts Council funding of Phoenix unexpressed its desire for Black representation at management level. Unexpressed, but implicit – as it often is. The arrival of this political baggage signalled the departure of some of its founding members.

I was now in bandit country. Linguistically I was already aware that we had moved from 'coloured' to 'Black', from 'West Indian', to 'Caribbean', from 'Black' to 'Black and Asian,' from 'Caribbean' to 'Afro-Caribbean', the terminology is a minefield, and has not yet settled. I hope this conference is peopled by those fearless about their use of terminology. We all know what we are talking about. I just wish to point out that by joining the 'mainstream,' the officially sanctioned institutions, I entered Black theatre and 'Black arts.' I also discovered the distinction between performance theatre and the mainstream at about the same time.

Around that time four things happened that alerted me to the fact that the problem was deeper than I was aware of, and in many ways more specific than is often realised. I had auditioned for a director, whose technique was devising, for a production at the old Leeds Playhouse. I knew him through University. Good chance, I thought. He put me in the frame or is it out of the picture immediately. The play would be set in a rough area of Leeds. He confided in me that he really wanted someone with the authentic 'street' feel, and compelled me to admit that I was just too middle-class. Later when I saw the production I realised that the middle-class white actors were being allowed to act 'street'. Hmm, I thought? Next I had an audition for *Biko*, a film about the South African activist Steve Biko. In a meeting with the director, he appreciated my reading, but was uncertain as he '...really thought it should be a South African actor...or a Southern African actor...or any African actor...you see the problem with West Indian actors is...' We're not real Africans... I picked up his benevolent drift. Hmm? Hard upon those experiences was *The Crying Game*, in which American actor Forrest Whitaker was called upon to play a British squaddie caught up in a Northern Ireland situation. There was outrage among the Black actors in my posse. Not at Whitaker, or the reality of film casting, but at a society that could not appreciate the insult of such choices upon 'we people', as members of that society. My brother was serving in the army in Northern Ireland at the time. Finally, I was in a production of *Fences* by August Wilson. The full story of which is too dangerous to tell. But on one occasion the lead actor, an American, turned to me in rehearsals and said – 'Tyrone...what do you do when you go home...do you sit around and talk with your white intellectual friends...do you? Yeah well forget it. You a nigger...just like me...'. I thought he had a point.

I also thought how strange it was to have played so many Americans, so many Africans, so many Caribbean characters – set in the Caribbean. Why had I never played a British Caribbean character in a Britain I recognise? To date my parts in David Hare's *Murmuring Judges* and *The Absence of War* remain the only times that I have done so on the British establishment stage. I determined that that would be the gap in the market that I would fill with my writing. Who told me to do that?

Discrete and unconnected as such things are, over time they accumulate meaning. I observed such accretion of insult and injury, which led to the formation of The Posse

– there is no justice, just us! Like many Black people, I look for Black faces on TV, clock them and appreciate their presence. Here were actors with stage track-records, who had achieved some featured part on TV and were now ready for that lead role that would make them box-office commodities for theatre – it's a bio-feedback mechanism, we all know it. But they were up against the glass ceiling. There was no-one who would big-up these guys but themselves.

Like many, particularly Philip Hedley at Theatre Royal Stratford East, I supported them for their enterprise and talent. But it was clear that they were in an inimical position. When we are forced to do it for ourselves we suddenly realise that we have no resources on which to draw. No capital, no natural home. It is a hard slog inventing a whole theatrical enterprise. The Posse [Eddie Nestor; Brian Bovell; Victor Romero-Evans; Gary Macdonald; Michael Bufong; Roger Griffiths; Robbie Gee and later David Harewood] were joined by the Bibi Crew [Judith Jacobs; Josette Llewellyn; Suzanne Packer; Beverly Michaels; Joanne Campbell; Josephine Melville; Janet Kaye] and together they carried the mantle of Black British theatre. They burned bright, but briefly. Now we are onto the next wave who are creating the PUSH. I hope they are not under-resourced, chewed up and spat out in the same cursory manner.

This was the early '90s and I had had that rare occurrence in modern British theatre, a play that went from commission to production in barely ten months. Thanks to Andy Hay at Bolton Octagon *Choo Choo Ch' Boogie* was my first play commissioned and produced within the system. Of course it had American subject matter – but hey, it was my play. Every commission since then has taken a minimum of two years, though mostly has not been produced at all. The good thing is...the plays belongs to me. I have learned to be patient. Or rather I have developed a strategy designed to avoid frustration.

Frustration, like arrogance, is a word that is perceptually linked with Black people. As an observer of words I have found this. So in order to avoid associating myself with frustration, I simply move between my disciplines. As frustration with writing occurs I turn to acting, as acting leads to frustration, I become a technician, I move onto producing, performing, I change the focus of frustration. I do not want to become part of the frightening statistic of psychologically disturbed Black people in this nation.

Whether my patience is a personal attribute or a survival technique, I am not sure. It does allow me to take a long view, for that I am thankful. The four incidents referred to earlier – let's call them narrative events – combined with a rather nasty experience at the hands of the RSC (not I stress of any particular racial content, but for which I still possess a letter of apology), combined with a dawning realisation that I was making the unfortunate presumption that I could model my developing career upon those of my white contemporaries. It dawned upon me that – yes – there was no career model for a black artist/actor in Britain in the 20th century. Norman Beaton, yes (but always only one). This realisation has provided me with the greatest security I have had in the last ten years.

I made a decision somewhere around 1991 that since I could not rely upon the traditional staging posts of an actor's career, roughly speaking; *Romeo*; *Midsummer Nights Dream*; Prince Hal; a bit of Ibsen, *Richard III*; a bit of Shaw; Iago – not Othello; bit of Checkov; a few modern classics; *Hamlet*; a few new plays; *Macbeth*;

Willie Loman; *The Tempest* – Prospero; getting weightier and more dignified till you are ready to give your Lear – no not an unpleasant grimace, the part, the man, the pinnacle of an actor's evidence of his durability and achievement – the series of works endlessly repeated in order that an actor, a director, a theatre company, a critic can all come to the same conclusion. Their lives have been well-spent within British theatre.

I had noticed something which I still believe to be true. I would never be in any position to hit those markers of a career, because they are based upon the classical cannon. Anyway, I wouldn't want to! If the classical cannon is not available to lend status to me, then I am not available to lend status to the classical cannon. In 1991 I withdrew my labour from the classics; since then I have only performed in plays of the 20th century, predominantly the last 50 years and predominantly new. I encounter fewer problems about my skin colour as an actor these days.

What is often missed in any attempt to draw Black people into the fabric of the system is that the system and its institutions – its classic works and markers of its worth – by their very nature exclude. The works do the job regardless of the very best intent. The mechanics of a system, its informal networks, role models, provides the mechanism of exclusion. An institution need only use certain systems of operation to embed a racial tendency within its fabric. This is my perception, my definition of institutional racism. It occurs before any people become involved.

This is not an arbitrary observation. The most lucrative areas of work I have done over recent years, has been in Equality training with a management training company currently rolling out its programme for the DfEE. A consistent issue arising throughout the years I have been involved is the informal network of the pub after work. The consistent example that arises is that; if one's religion prohibits alcohol, then the network of information-exchange built around the pub tends to exclude one from that information. Theatre may be full of boozers, so that may not often apply, but for pub read 'classical cannon' in my world.

A few weeks ago I attended an inaugural lecture by an old friend, Nod Miller, Professor of Innovation Studies and Assistant Vice-Chancellor, Lifelong Learning at University of East London, entitled 'Autobiographical narratives of innovation, lifelong learning, invisible colleges and the media.' It was the concept of 'invisible colleges' which really caught my ear. The informal networks in your discussion papers are defined as invisible colleges within her brand of sociology, which attempts to interpret the 'us in here', rather than the 'them out there'.

In early 1997 I took over the Chair of Phoenix from Graham Devlin, re-joined the board after an 18 month break, following seven-years membership. I was honoured and pleased to be considered such a natural successor for such an eminent role in such a prestigious company. But I am not a fool. Also departing was the Artistic Director and soon to follow the General Manager. I ask you to imagine what might happen next? In the space of six months, Phoenix lost all of its experience at senior level, including the invisible colleges associated with those individuals, gaining instead two Black people with very different invisible colleges.

My thought as I considered the situation before me was, '...a black Chair and a Black Artistic Director...Hmm, this is where it all falls apart'. My efforts throughout were to

avoid that at all costs. I quickly called a Round Table Funders Meeting, Arts Council Touring, Yorkshire Arts, West Yorkshire Grants and Leeds City Council, to express my concern at our ability to manage. The sensation of being patted on the head as I was told to keep up the good work lives with me now.

Other issues than the smooth running of a dance company were at play within our invisible college. On one hand sat the support of the dancers, pleased at my advancement and secure with my leadership. On the other hand were issues of authority unseen by white eyes. There is a phenomenon in which one Black person finds it difficult to accept the authority of another unused to the experience. This played itself out within Phoenix at all levels. I hunted around for practical support and received warm words and platitudes.

In order to have a yard stick on my Chairmanship I accepted an invitation to join the board of Birmingham Rep in 1998, with the additional advantage of proximity to the mechanism of Stabilisation, a process I was convinced was perfect for Phoenix's situation.

In 1999 I informed my board and Yorkshire Arts that I was not certain I could manage Phoenix, as the situation was becoming critical and my personal resources were in excess of meagre. I was exhausted having just produced and directed a subterranean tour of my music theatre piece *Sounds...In Session*. I was encouraged to persist with Phoenix and supported through a process which I actively characterised as 'stabilisation without the funding', even moving my operational base to Leeds for five months to baby-sit the company through it.

To cut a long story short, in March I relinquished the Chair, and on 23 May 2001 Phoenix Dance Company ceased operation, maintaining a small education element only while the company is restructured, re-emerging with new Chair and Artistic Director in 2002. Where issues of simple failure of the management system I led begin and insufficient nurturing and support of a role model end I dare not presume to determine. But what is clear is that this process, driven by the funding system for its own inarticulate reasons, has led to 17 or so poorly paid and predominantly Black artists and practitioners being made redundant, while five or six highly paid and exclusively white consultants pore over the entrails of the dead bird, whose complexity of practical operation will never be summed up in all the reports prepared for all the processes of arts administration that the system can devise.

In short, a practical tool of dance creation and Black practitioner development has been dismembered in an act of audacious offensiveness. I have personally been shamed to the extent that those who have lost their jobs cannot comprehend how I, the first Black Chair of Phoenix Dance, could have failed to protect an organisation set up specifically to provide a home for Black dancers. Others look at me sympathetically and say '...you never did believe these people were ever going to let us have anything, for we self, did you....'

My disappointment is that even though I saw this coming from so far off, there were factors at play that outsmarted me, leaving me to register that I can see no way to go further within the machinery of this system without becoming morally corrupted by its manipulations. I have seen too much, up close and personal. It may be best for me

if I don't see any more. On the other hand, within or without the system, I will never surrender my enterprise.

To conclude on my specialist subject, theatre; I would like to talk about the National Theatre and the Arts Councils planned restructuring of the RAB's, but enough already. It may be that I have achieved my most significant contribution to British drama with the writing of my quartet. I laughed and wept with relief last year when I completed a first draft of the fourth play of the *Inheritance Quartet*. I believe that in 20 years time, when my nieces and nephews have grown and go in search of a theatre that tells them something about themselves, they will not look to the best of American playwriting, or African playwriting, or Caribbean playwriting. They will hunt to find black British work. And when 20 years later than that, other generations further detached from our ancestral homelands look for characters that describe their forebears, I hope they *will* look and I hope they *will* find my work and similar work. At least it's written down now. If it does not come of age in my lifetime, I hope to the Gods it will in theirs.

Excessive patience? Lack of expectation? I don't know and I honestly don't care. I'm playing a very, very long game. Things will change. They have to.

Vayu Naidu: Storyteller and AHRB Post Doctoral Fellow, Creative and Performing Arts, University of Kent at Canterbury

IN A STATE OF PLAY

Namaste, Asalaam val e kum and good morning to you all. A sincere thanks to our hosts Nottingham Playhouse for organising this conference Eclipse from concept, and to the funders – principally Arts Council of England, the Theatrical Management Association and East Midlands Arts – for making this a reality. This is a reality that has created an open forum where decision makers and creators of theatre engage in a dialogue, a passionate and rational one, about overcoming the barriers of race. The outcome will be visible in the change within the operational infrastructure of theatres in England as part of the next stage of redevelopment.

The title of my shared thoughts with you is IN A STATE OF PLAY. In the past few conferences, the imminent concerns have been about a lack of funding and opportunities for greater development and visibility of Black and Asian artists, companies, managers and administrators in building-based theatres. With the best of intentions initiatives were drawn up, funding raised and practice propelled into action. Some of the artist-led initiatives were excellent practice, and quite a few of the administrative ones ended in uncompromising bitterness that fuelled the 'ism' that can be a consequence in the interaction between race in professions.

Here, today we are sitting with an awareness of that history of 'sting'. So one can actually press the PLAY button with a view to move forward, and with positive outcomes. That is the state of play in a current time frame.

II

A STATE OF PLAY is more significantly about mindsets, and therefore the potential for mind shifts. For us to face the beast before combating it let's name it: it is the 'ism' of race. Race in itself is a generic word, not neutral; it is about difference. In what state we in theatre – particularly senior management – wish to place this 'difference' is what is at stake. The existing control buttons on the race switchboard seem to be: 'marginal' or 'equal' or 'enriching'. Most of us have come here to address the 'marginality' factor with the hope of leaving it behind and suddenly incorporate 'equal' or 'enriching' in our action plans for business. I am suggesting let us, in our state of thinking, include this pain-of conscience- shackle of a word 'marginal' about race as well as equal and enriching in our vocabulary. Then a whole new chemistry of action takes place – like electricity.

What we have to do is include RACE as part of our mythology just as monarchy, the reformation, democracy, youth culture and sexuality. I am not talking of mythology as dead; it is a living seed that determines our present for the future. The past must have its say for the future to make sense. The acceptance of race as our living legend is a fact – 6% of Britain's population is from the ethnic minorities and this is likely to grow to 9% and stabilise at that in about 20 years time. The increase is likely to be greater amongst Bangla Deshis and Pakistanis than in other communities, because their younger generation is much larger. About half the ethnic minorities currently living in Britain were born here. 90–95% of ethnic minorities in 25–30 years' time would have been born here. Afro-Caribbeans number about half a million; Indian about 900,000; Pakistanis just under half a million; Bangla Deshis 165,000; Chinese – 162,000. In terms of Education and furthering economic prospects (or going onto managerial positions) these figures from the 1991 census indicated:

Race	A Levels					
	Women	Men	Managers			
Afro-Caribbean	35%	18%	22 %			
Bangla-Deshi	27%	23%	14%			
Chinese	85 %	82 %	23%			
Indian	57%	51%	30%			
Pakistani	31%	29%	23%			
White	34 %	27%	33%			

III

The figures aren't meant to batter us but to open the gates of our ivory tower in theatre and accept this reality of race and its consequences in determining opportunities and achievements. This also effects audiences. It is true the figures I have quoted state that 90 to 95 % of the ethnic population in 25 to 30 years will be born here. In light of that,

would this discussion on integration and the ‘acceptance of difference’ matter? My guess is that it would. Because race brings with it a discussion of history, and with it diverse cultural expressions combed through different political and historical and artistic processes.

Culture is an evolutionary state; people carry imprints of different metaphoric geographies – alternative ways of doing and planning things manifest in the diverse organisations that produce and promote work, even without public arts funding. While I am referring to ethnicity here, the context extends to youth, artistic disciplines, and professional cultural organisations. In looking at their examples of practice, the interesting way forward is that we don’t have to learn a new language. We only have to learn to be supple in our inclusion of ways of thinking. The best example of thinking supple is Jazz, how it includes and continuously weaves Blues, Gospel, Spiritual. As Winton Marsallis points out, the singer of Blues is not sad. She is happy. She is remembering a moment of encounter with a deeper part of oneself; singing the Blues is keeping in touch with a part of that self. We need that shift in our own understanding of race like the true meaning of the Blues; it’s about a moment of self-discovery and revival, not dereliction and loss.

So much for theorising. Some examples of good practice where theatres have taken on board the needs of Asian audiences is:

- The opening of theatre spaces based on interviews with Asian attendance groups
- Consider the duration of plays and their scheduled timings.

Although this still seems to be audience-related, and could be read as exploitative of Black and Asian audiences at a time when figures of a white middle-class theatre audience is consistently falling, it is a start in one direction. In the case of Leicester Haymarket Theatre, the chemistry of representing audience needs that were fed back to the building from the streets as it were, then filtered ‘down’ and across to departments was successful due to the visionary openness of people like Kathleen Hamilton, Executive Director (1998–2000), and Paul Kerryson Artistic Director. The chemistry for change is about which power sources those directives come from and how open those power sources are to information that is communicated to them.

If we are really to make things work, then it is about creating mind shifts in the existing staff of our theatres – front of House, Box Office, ushers, Production team, workshop Stage door, House keeping, the Bar, so everyone is integrated in the process of this shift. Without participation in the process of change, directives can have an alarming effect and causes alienation among existing staff.

Education and Marketing Departments are responsible for this dissemination in an inclusive way throughout the building and across the city and region.

My final word of caution is that let it be ‘integration’, and not assimilation. Woodrow Wilson’s policy in World War I of dehyphenisation for national security assimilated all cultures to one homogenous whole. But its consequences for future generations became like the Ant in the story of the Elephant’s headache. The Elephant thought the Ant was too insignificant to be considered an animal of its kingdom. While all the other animals thought of ways of deflating the elephant’s ego, they continued to be

powerless and obsequious in his presence. One day at a conference of the animals, the Ant said he would do something about the Elephant's ego. Of course everyone laughed. That moonless night, while Elephant was sleeping, the Ant crawled into through his trunk and wandered through the spaces of his large head. The ant was thrilled at these vast halls of space, so he began to sing and dance. The effect on the Elephant was sheer hell. He couldn't think of anything else but a scurrying pain inside that immobilised him. Worse still, he couldn't understand what caused it. Old Bull was passing by and gently advised the Elephant to plead with the Ant to relieve him and praise his size and courage were of tremendous significance.

If race and culture are considered disposable commodities as it is not 'tangible' in the Elephant's way of thinking (and the infrastructures of theatre), then the Ant of race and culture can move in imperceptible ways through the trunk of the Elephant into its head and cause such a havoc presence. Let's take this revolution in a different direction of moving ahead, integrating. English is a language that relishes new concepts, and weaves in new words that can kill and celebrate with accuracy. Let our theatres learn to embrace and manifest that magnitude of expression; that vibrant state of play with action.

Afternoon panel session, Tuesday 12 June

Chair: Giles Croft

Panellists: Steven Luckie, Femi Elufowoju Jnr, David Tse

Femi Elufowoju Jnr. – Artistic Director, Tiata Fahodzi

My name is Femi Elufowoju Jnr. Artistic Director of Tiata Fahodzi a National Touring Theatre Company based in London. I really do not know how helpful my intended contribution would now be this afternoon, as it seems everything that has gone before it, as in everything that could be said, has been said by this morning's keynote speakers and in the resourceful workshops which followed. I actually now fear my 'little moan' may just pale into insignificance, but here goes anyway.

When I was initially invited to attend and speak at this conference, the verbal guidelines which I was given by the organisers were for me to recount my experience leading a culturally diverse touring ensemble through the length and breadth of this country; highlighting obstacles encountered where prejudice or racism may have been the catalyst. Like a four-year old in a candy store I relished the prospect!

Over the past four years Tiata Fahodzi has made fantastic inroads touring and building wonderful and exciting relationships with communities all over the British Isles. It always seemed unfortunate however, when these positive developments were often deflated, undermined and tempered by the odd idiosyncratic employment practice carried out by the host venue. Some of these vignettes would definitely relegate most Equal Opportunity undertaking to Room 101.

As this conference does not seek to 'hammer anyone over the head or cover old ground', I make no apology for being the first to respond to the contrary, as I firmly believe that my only small way of contributing to this serious debate would be by sharing specific and arguably prehistoric attitudes companies such as Tiata Fahodzi have had to put up with as a Black arts organisation operating in 21st-century Britain.

My personal experience of racism in the 12 years I have had so far working within the British theatre community is pretty amusing I think. I use the term *racism* in absence of a more appropriate description, although my father who lived in this country for over 24 years, would vehemently disagree with me, as he did recently when he said: 'dear boy, do not call it "racism" but blatant ignorance'.

... And this was after he turned up in his traditional robes at the Royal National Theatre to purchase day seats for *My Fair Lady*, and he was told by a front-of-house person that the cleaner's vacancy had just been filled two hours earlier. I'm sure some of the non-white delegates at this conference could possibly relate to what I'm talking about when I say that it is not unaccustomed these days to turn up at the theatre, where maybe say a Brechtian or Alan Ayckbourn play is being performed, and what you get at the box office is a gob-smacked or better still incredulous gaze from the often non-Black or Asian box-office attendant, as if you've turned up at the wrong theatre. Unfortunately this example arguably sums up the general myopic consensus, which probably affects every single strata within the theatre infrastructure. You almost feel that there is no end to the crucial task ahead. My question is, how do we

start to redress this imbalance in cultural awareness? I think the answer is very obvious.

Programming

Enough cannot be said about the struggles endured by Black arts organisations in getting their work seen and programmed nationally. Initially getting our work programmed was a nightmare and we were under no false sense of illusion that it was going to be easy. Besides we were aware that venues had their pockets to watch we were of course a new company with a bizarre name, under a young angry Black director with no track record or qualitative value attached. No one was going to touch Tiata Fahodzi with a barge pole, and we did understand that anyone who'd take us on at that stage would be taking a great risk.

I'd love to think that the reasons were drawn from all of the above from purely pragmatic logic... but sincerely in my opinion, it just didn't add up, the product we were touting, had nurtured a successful tenure in London— attracted rave reviews in the National press, was critic's choice for two weeks running in *Time Out*, had toured extensively in Sweden, again to maximum houses, and most wholesome of all, had the backing of one of the country's most enterprising and illustrious theatres, Stratford East's Theatre Royal. Response from 99.9% of the regional venues that we approached at the time was disheartening and I quote:

'Not for us, we've had our Black show for the season, Not for us, Can't do, Not for us, Sounds interesting, but thanks, Not for us....'

One of the comments which Tiata Fahodzi hear as a universal chorus wherever black work had previously toured, and where for one reason or another the project achieved the least success, is:

'We can't have it, it didn't work last year'

As if all Black work, by all Black companies were componently similar, belonged to the same ilk, art form conceived. Question, do we now nurture our art form in a world where there is no scope to fail, without recrimination for the company or the entire Black race?

Eventually we got our feet through the door and then the stark reality and the fear from some of these venues stared us smack in the face. Touring three years to date Tiata Fahodzi has visited over 15 cities nationally, including small and mid-scale theatres, and although most of these art centres ask us back, the nature of our work still frightens the living daylight out of press and marketing managers, who incidentally are all white. Is this one of the problems? I am yet to come across a marketing official working within the repertory circuit.

By the same token, we have actually had the good fortune of engaging with some venues who have almost without effort, embraced the spirit of the product/show at the mere mention of its potential.

I'd love to think it's not the product that's in question here, but arguably passion, commitment, belief and understanding of the theatre community within which the

officer in question is based. But then again maybe this could also be addressed through consistent, regular programming throughout the season as opposed to the odd invitation to fill two nights in a split week in a year's programming. We all know that in most theatres where this is practised, the ultimate gain is to fulfil specific criteria encouraged, and quite rightly so, by the funding bodies.

Senior Management

It is an indictment on the profession that there isn't one Black or Asian artistic director of a repertory theatre or producing house in the entire country? To have one or two chief executives from the ethnic persuasion in question is not good enough as we know it takes more to redress the imbalance in staffing and in the programming of Black and Asian work.

On the issue of proportional representation within buildings, I tell you it makes a big difference as guests or service provider when you walk into a national or regional arts venue and the make up reflects the demography of the community within which it is based.

People blame the dearth of competent Black or Asian technicians, stage managers, actors, directors, for the lack of proportional representation within their buildings. I say be pro-active and seek them out because they are out and if you are in doubt I'm here for two days, stop me and I'll give you a comprehensive list for each of these disciplines.

Combating racism

Well... how Black people are generally stereotyped and perceived with our society at large no doubt has its repercussions within the profession too.

I'll end by citing a recent incident pretty fresh in my memory, the whole details which I shall in the name of goodwill spare the conference, as the chief executive of the organisation at the time has since written an unreserved apology to the company. It involved the bizarre coincidence of Tiata Fahodzi performing a matinee; and the theft of video equipment within the same building. Naturally we all felt the situation unfortunate, but what we were not prepared for was the audacious and insensitive ring-fence, which sprung up exclusively around the non-white members of the company during the get out that same evening. As artistic director I felt vicariously liable for the indignities suffered by the actors. The body checks and near strip search, endured by the artist in the lobby, in front of departing members of the audience and patrons of the theatre, led to a ferocious attack from my part on the establishment.

The general manager sole's defence and justification for her staff's action at the time was, and I quote:

'Your letter has upset many members of my staff. Our actions cannot be construed to be that of a racist nature as our exemplary record programming ethnic/diverse companies and individuals proves to the contrary.'

That statement summed up for me how deeply entrenched within our theatres institutionalised racism is today. I wrote back stating,

‘Sheer mention of this fact reminds one of the “some of my friends are Black” cliché, which in itself is a covert exclusionary statement. I would love to think that it is not the number of non-white people you work with or employ that makes the difference here. What should serve the record is how the same are treated within the whole... working closely with Black and Asian companies does not alleviate the fact that perspectives of institutionalised racism are prevalent within the building’

I am sure you will agree with me that institutionalised racism even in the theatre, is either a collective or unilateral trait which both Equal Opportunities statements or corporate policy have no jurisdiction over.

David K.S. Tse – Artistic Director, Yellow Earth Theatre

There is a current mobile phone campaign which claims we are all the sum of our ‘one to ones’, our relationships, our experiences. So in order for this ‘one to one’ today to make any sense, I want to just outline briefly my history, so that what I go on to say may be taken in context.

I was born in Hong Kong and settled in England in 1970. My parents were part of a wave of Hong Kong migrants coming over to meet the demand for Chinese food in the ‘60s and early ‘70s. Like the British economic migrants who had travelled to work in Hong Kong during colonial rule, my parents were entrepreneurs wanting to improve their lives.

Within the family, the subconscious need to have a positive affirmation of their cultural roots was so strong that we used to drive 50 miles to Birmingham each week to watch the late-night Hong Kong movie at the cinema. With the introduction of video, our family entertainment became regular two-hour slots of the latest Hong Kong soaps and today my elder brother and sisters have Chinese cable TV, so when it comes to *their* cultural needs, they are still paying in more, through their taxes and license fees, than they are getting out of the public arts funding system.

Meanwhile, my nephews and nieces have each briefly experienced the dislike of being Chinese, because they see so few positive images of themselves in popular British culture and of course, by implication, you can extend this example out from my family experience across the whole of the UK, where the Chinese and East Asian communities make up a third largest minority group. Just consider for a moment all those young people growing up with a negative self-image – what a waste of talent and potential! Especially when you compare this with the vibrancy of youth arts in Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo, for example. It's no wonder that many young, enterprising East Asians leave the UK to work in perceived ‘motherlands’, where they feel there is more of a level playing field, or migrate to ‘younger’ countries such as Australia, Canada or America with a more cosmopolitan outlook.

I read Law at university and then spent three years at Rose Bruford College learning about the history of European and American theatre, naturalism, British accents and comedia del'arte. While I was at drama school, I started offering my services to the Chinese community in Soho to encourage other young Chinese to express themselves through drama. Being the only East Asian in college, I started wondering what other

theatrical texts or skills I might have encountered in the East had my parents not decided to emigrate, so I applied for a local scholarship for Beijing Opera training in Hong Kong. It was during that period in 1988 that my love for East Asian physical theatre began. Back in England, I continued this training and wherever possible took part in other East Asian physical theatre masterclasses.

So, what's been my experience working in the sector? As an actor, I've played every East Asian character under the sun, from Cambodian to Japanese. The good side is that I've worked in all mediums. The down side is that most of the time, the parts offered are small supporting roles, quite often racial stereotypes that require foreign accents or speaking in a foreign language altogether, as if East Asians don't really belong in this country.

More often than not, one is there to give a white-led project an international feel. Consider plays such as *Privates on Parade* or *The Letter* and in the film world, *James Bond*, *Tomb Raider*, *Spygame*. One director at the BBC asked me to play a character in a 'typically oriental way, you know, inscrutable'! I turned down the job on that occasion, but there have been many, many times when I've had to swallow my pride and I'm sure I'm speaking for all my colleagues who work in this profession.

My fellow panellists may feel differently, but I think the provision for Black and Asian actors in this country has improved considerably. Look at Adrian Nester playing 'Hamlet' with Peter Brook or Meera Syal's multifaceted career. In *The Archers* there is a regular Asian lawyer and they recently introduced a Black South African character. *Eastenders* has regularly featured Black and Asian characters but nowhere in British cultural life today, not in theatre or television, not in radio or film, is there a regular East Asian actor.

So I fell into directing by chance, after the outrage of Tiananmen Square and the ongoing situation in Tibet. I wanted to contribute in some way towards these struggles in the East.... Rehearsed readings were organised with the voluntary support of many East Asian actors. After several of these events, the need for a permanent British-East Asian company to give voice to our communities' experiences was paramount. The idea for Yellow Earth Theatre was born.

The company received a kick-start with the support of Polka Theatre, which under Vicky Ireland's leadership, commissioned me to write *The Magic Paintbrush* for the main house. The brief was to produce a piece of theatre which drew on the best physical traditions of Beijing Opera. Through workshops, the actors Kwong Loke, Kumiko Mendl, Veronica Needa, Tom Wu and myself were cast. The show was a great success both with the public and the critics. It played to full houses in '94, toured to Singapore and Finland in '95, and toured the UK in '97 when it was nominated for a TMA Barclays Theatre Award. The time was right to establish Yellow Earth Theatre as a viable company with a positive contribution to make to the cultural life of this country.

So, moving on to the type of work Yellow Earth is trying to produce. We create text-based physical theatre which draws inspiration from East Asian experience and theatrical styles. This can range from the physicality of Beijing Opera and martial arts all the way through to the use of contemporary British Trance music and cutting-edge

new technology, eg, computer animation projected onto stage. The dialogue between the traditional and the contemporary is at the heart of Yellow Earth's work, both aesthetically and morally. So far, most of our productions have focused on East Asian stories. There is often a preoccupation with the roots of violence, the abuse of power, and the search for enlightenment. These, I hope, are universal themes.

The members of Yellow Earth originate from Hong Kong, Japan and Malaysia, and we've also worked with Vietnamese and Filipino actors. Our definition of East Asia is the area east of Pakistan and west of the Americas, all those people who fall into the generic term 'yellow', in the same way that Black encompasses Afro-Caribbean, African and British. As the company has developed, we've increasingly been able to cast multiculturally, whether it be a white actress skilled in Beijing Opera, or Black and Asian actors willing to learn martial arts. It has to be said though, that the level of physical training in this country is very poor. We auditioned more than 50 Black, White and Asian actors for *Play to Win* and only a handful came up to the standard required for the rigorous training necessary to do the show.

A couple of years ago, in a conscious effort to break out of the East Asian ghetto and affirm the British side of our experiences, we engaged David Glass to work with us on *Blue Remembered Hills* by Dennis Potter. Out of a cast of seven, four were East Asians (two from Yellow Earth) there was one Black actress, one White Jewish, and one mixed-race actor. A quintessentially English writer was reappropriated to reflect Britain's cultural diversity today.

Stylistically, the piece incorporated European new mime with naturalism, and other than the casting, use of songs and music, the ethnicity of the actors was not an issue. The production honoured the text and this motley bunch spoke West Country accents to varying degrees. It is interesting to note that reviewers who liked the show still thought that the play was a surprising choice for Yellow Earth. I pose the question: Why?

This autumn we're touring a new version of *Rashomon* for Japan 2001 and in the spring 2002 Veronica Needa will tour a highly personal solo piece called *Face* examining her Eurasian history. The challenge for the company is to keep developing its theatrical style without ever becoming exotic.

Next season, we're developing partnerships with venues through a series of rehearsed readings to raise the profile of established, quality East Asian writers, with a view to organising a national playwriting competition for aspiring British-East Asian writers. With Arts Council funding confirmed till 2005, we hope to develop eventually on to the middle scale, balancing innovation with accessibility and always emphasising the universal side of our work.

Moving on to specific problems encountered: at the start, lack of funding was obviously a key issue. As a matter of policy, we decided never to do profit-share so our earliest efforts were limited to rehearsed readings. Considerable frustration was generated because the Regional Arts Funding Officers kept changing the goal posts for what might attract funding. Despite cultural diversity being a priority, none of Yellow Earth's bids were successful between '93 to '95.

It was only in Polka Theatre's production of *The Magic Paintbrush* that Yellow Earth finally had the opportunity to show the artistic potential of the group. This opened a few doors, allowing us to start the slow climb up the funding ladder. As with most groups, artistic ambitions far outstripped administrative resources and Yellow Earth only survived through the voluntary hard work of its members.

We're very happy to announce that we now have our first full-time general manager, Diana Pao. In the forthcoming months, Diana and I look forward to developing many fruitful relationships with venues interested in physical, text-based theatre, particularly with those which have large East Asian communities in their catchment areas. Our current level of funding is still not enough to ensure adequate marketing support for our productions, but with an increase in revenue funding expected over the next few years, we hope that this problem will soon be resolved.

One of the biggest problems facing us is that although many venue managers have heard of us, they have yet to see our work. So one is often talking in the dark to someone who may be willing to try something new, but ultimately cannot commit for fear of the unknown. Indirect discrimination is very common in British theatre. Some venue manager will say that they would like to book us, but they cannot get the audiences in to see our kind of work because they are in a predominantly white area (frankly, I find this a lame excuse in a time of globalisation).

I do appreciate the difficulty that some venue managers have, but surely they shouldn't be allowed to receive full public subsidy and contravene the Race Relations Act. Our core funding only allows for one tour a year, so it's very easy to make a brief splash and then be forgotten until the following year. While we've managed to get additional funding to tour a second show this year, this increases the workload of limited admin staff and we actually want to enjoy working for the company, rather than it feeling like torture!

I want to share a little anecdote about how subtle and entrenched racism is in Britain. I was recently employed to direct on a freelance basis for a venue. The commissioning artistic director, who I know to be a progressive, liberally minded person, was initially insistent that I cast the British family in the play with all-white actors. It was only after I put up a stand, saying that my vision of Britain today was either a non-white family or one that used an integrated cast, that this AD came round to my way of thinking.

If I hadn't been in that position, if some other director had been in that job, they could have very easily gone along with what the commissioning AD wanted and we would have ended up with the same blanket group of white faces on stage. I discussed this with my culturally diverse focus group earlier and concluded that because we've all suffered discrimination, we are therefore much more conscious of not perpetuating all-white casts. I think if you've never experienced racism yourself, it's very hard to change, to have that mindset change, but I hope that today's conference will encourage people to do so.

Moving on, there are signs that things are slowly changing. The Arts Council's BRIT Initiative and the Royal National Theatre's Transformations programme are all a step in the right direction, making British theatre more inclusive. I hope that this

conference can help further the debate and create real opportunities for all culturally diverse practitioners.

I've just got a few suggestions to make:

- set up an incentive fund, to encourage more dialogue between venues and culturally diverse companies or artists to create co-productions, partnerships and workshop residences
- introduce more go-and-see funds to enable venue managers to go and see work that they are unaware of, or perhaps introducing more of a brokering system between Regional Arts Officers and venue managers
- change the pedagogy in schools and drama schools to take more of an interest in world drama. A good example is Central School of Speech and Drama (Postgraduate course) where they've asked companies like Yellow Earth and other culturally diverse groups to come and teach
- drama schools could organise some kind of marketing campaign to target more culturally diverse students and perhaps a scholarship fund could be set up to increase numbers (when I was trying to cast the freelance show mentioned earlier, I wanted a Black or Asian actor to play the lead and I had real difficulties casting it due to lack of numbers. The ones who are well-trained are thin on the ground and work regularly. There aren't enough culturally diverse actors graduating from British drama schools.)

Finally, from the focus workshop group this morning, there was a feeling that this conference should come up with some kind of motion which either could be legally enforceable, perhaps through the Race Relations Act, or certainly would allow the funding bodies to have teeth. So perhaps the re-introduction of quotas? The quota system may have failed in the '70s, but maybe the time is right to look at that option again, since the percentage of culturally diverse communities is considerably larger now in Britain 2001.

Thank you for listening to this 'one to one' and I hope that it may have affected your future programming policy towards culturally diverse work.

Afternoon panel session, Wednesday 13 June

Chair: Mukesh Barot

**Panellists: Anthony Corriette, Rukhsana Ahmad, Sudha Buchar,
Hermin McIntosh**

Anthony Corriette – Development Director, Theatre Royal Stratford East

Good afternoon. I've come to this conference with a positive attitude in the hope that by the end we will have identified a strategy for tackling racism.

For those of you who attended the Theatre 2001 conference remember that I was the one who *metaphorically*, pushed my way onto the Social Inclusion Panel at the eleventh hour. It was made up of five white speakers. Apparently it had been designed intentionally to leave out race because the other speakers from such companies as Cardboard Citizens and Clean Break deal with Black and Asian artists all the time. Yet the speakers had not been briefed to deal with race as an issue.

I've attended a number of different conferences attempting to deal with the issues that we're facing here today and I must say I've found past conferences frustrating. Frustrating because often, after all is said and done, much more got said than done. The conferences became little more than talking-shops.

I don't claim to have the answers. I do, however, have some of the questions:

Isn't it patronising that so few Black and Asian theatre workers end up as senior managers making real decisions?

Isn't it insulting that so few companies have sent representatives to this conference overall?

Are we expecting to achieve strategies against racism in isolation?

Until we win the hearts and minds of *all* decision makers in theatres at senior management and board level and within the funding system, little achievement will be made. Until the industry engages with African Caribbean and Asian people few positive steps will be achieved. All too often it's white men and some women, but white men primarily, who get wheeled out to speak at conferences, invited to meetings at DCMS and the Arts Council or asked to write papers on issues of cultural diversity. Nevertheless they may appreciate a lot of the struggle – and it really has been a struggle primarily for Black and Asian artists – their experiences are at most secondhand. But I suppose for a white person uncomfortable with issues of racism, seeing a white face talking about the subject takes away the emotion and the passion that Black and Asian people bring to the table when discussing this subject. Maybe that makes it more palatable or maybe it just waters down the issues. Black or Asian workers in the theatre have frequently been consulted in the past 20 or so years and this is evident from approximately 50 cultural diversity reports that grace the dusty shelves in the Arts Council's archives. Sadly few of them have seen the light of day, yet all of them have been part of the systematic lip service played out in the industry.

So how do we move this forward? Firstly we must agree three principles:

- Firstly there are woefully few Black and Asian managers or practitioners making real decisions in theatre in this multicultural, 21st-century Britain
- Secondly, it's better and preferable to engage with Black and Asian people first hand to learn about real problems and how they might be tackled
- Thirdly, please, if you write another paper on this subject please make sure that they have recommendations in them that are clear and are achievable and that the recommendations are acted upon

If we agree with these principles – and clearly that's where the position statement of the conference places us – then we can move this forward.

If you really want to tackle racism then engage with those who face it day in day out, African Caribbean and Asian people. They may not know the intricacies of running a building but then you may not know the intricacies of how racism pervades your organisation today through flippant comments, jokes and the ever-present glass ceiling. Partnerships are the key if we are to breakdown the barriers of racism in theatre and in our buildings.

The Macpherson Report said:

'...It is incumbent upon every institution to examine their policies and the outcome of their policies and practices, to guard against disadvantaging any section of our communities.'

Now everyone knows of the Macpherson Report, yet how many of our organisations have taken this first recommended step? It's more than just having an Equal Opportunities statement. It's about creating an organisational strategy for tackling racism and celebrating diversity. In order to keep the strategy alive it must be attached to timescales and achievable, realistic targets that require it to be constantly reviewed.

The outcome of your organisational diversity strategy should then be written into your organisation's business plan. The business plan – and the business – can then be monitored holistically.

One cautionary note though with regards to the improved levels of African Caribbean and Asian staff: In order to feel as though you are making a difference, the posts need to be for frontline, middle management or senior management staff.

Whether your organisation wants to raise African Caribbean and Asian staff levels, audience levels or produce or present African Caribbean and Asian work on your stage, it can only be done by tackling several areas at the same time in a kind of pincer movement.

Again, I don't have the answers, however here are some of the things that Stratford East does:

- We run a Black and Asian director's course to redress the balance of the low number of directors from those communities
- We have a commitment to the formal monitoring and mentoring of promising practitioners
- We have a community liaison officer who goes round and meets community groups and she gets them into our theatre
- We have a racially diverse board membership
- We make positive efforts to recruit people from culturally diverse backgrounds in an attempt to reflect the racial mix of Newham, an area of London where Anglo-Saxons make up the largest minority
- We are shortly to embark on some specific Equal Opportunities training as part of wider training for all staff and board members

Please don't get me wrong; I'm not hailing Stratford East as the perfect model, *far, far from it*. However, as an organisation Stratford East makes a bloody good start.

Rukhsana Ahmad – Artistic Director, Kali Theatre

Thank you very much. There are leaflets outside from our theatre company. I want to say that today has been really useful and instructive day for me. I've been here all morning and I feel I have learnt a lot. I hope this won't just be a case of *deja vu*. I feel there is a real energy and a real commitment to change. These are just a few random thoughts because this item is ripe for discussion. They are intended really to provoke comment and debate.

The problem with labels

I'm afraid I'm going to depart from all these speakers in the sense that I will actually protest against the label before I do anything else. For me, as for all practitioners, the problem with all good intentions to combat racism in the theatre is that they focus on the very aspect of the work that problematises it for theatre institutions, producers, managers and punters alike. They underline and insist on the anthropological rather than intrinsic value of the work. Practitioners are forced to wear labels and, of course, labels and categorisations based on race are reductive; and, when it comes to judgements about the work; they are misleading and often irrelevant. Equally and importantly, they create a fraught relationship with the artist's community.

So why do we collude in labelling ourselves?

The Arts Council and Regional Arts Boards have a moral obligation to distribute resources equitably – and *The Next Stage* ensures that in the future this responsibility will be taken more seriously by them. There is a burgeoning and lively theatre scene encompassing a rich diversity of companies – and that is how it should be. But, if by participating in these strategies we create a trap for ourselves, why do we, as practitioners, collude?

When I began writing I was unwilling to package and market my work on an aspect of my person of which I had not even been aware until I came to live in this country. Somebody had to explain to me that I was an Asian. Eventually, I was persuaded by rich incentives to give up my naïve resistance and like most level-headed Black and Asian theatre practitioners yielded to the inevitable and climbed into a race box.

Britain was in the throes of a multicultural experiment and this ethnicity trap became a rich source of work for me as a writer.

In that approach to inclusion there was a tendency to ethnicise the work – we felt compelled to speak about experiences connected with our racial identity at the cost of the wholeness of our experiences as individuals. It imposed a corresponding silence – as if our view of the world was irrelevant, as if we had no opinions about global issues. To break that silence seemed impossible.

This was and is the harsh reality of the theatre world – a scenario dictated mainly by producers and programmers. Perhaps the constraints on producers are real. It may be that theatre audiences have been slower than novel readers to warm to characters from another world. But, to state the obvious, the decisions about how plays and playwrights are bought, packaged and marketed are essentially commercial or strategic ones. Writers themselves seldom have any *real* choices or *real* power to influence them. By becoming a producer I realised I could at least begin to impact on some of those decisions.

The dilemma for someone like me was a difficult one: must we draw attention to the racial difference of the originators of the work to highlight our disadvantage? For reasons of funding we had to. Given a mainstream that is not interested in 'our stories', which arise from very different histories, we needed the support of funding. Given a constituency that is severely disadvantaged, among the poorest in this country, who are often oppressed and largely unheard, we needed better resources. To earn them we had to collude in the label. The work, mostly produced under very difficult material circumstances, needs careful and sensitive development support. New writing must not be ghettoised. New writing companies ought to see the work not as private capital but as a resource for the theatre community as a whole. We must share information about new writers, project them and genuinely help their development. We have in the past invited venues, funders and producers to rehearsed readings of new work. For this to enrich the mainstream we need structures – formal links with production houses – venues and producers who are brave. Who are willing to risk new writing instead of relying entirely on pantomimes and re-runs of old movies.

Theatre itself has a problem at the moment – it is suffering from lack of attendance. This is not entirely to do with race, but also with class and gender issues. I think class and gender issues are hugely important in the context of the discussion today. We are having this conference against the backdrop of race riots in certain areas – parts of the country that are not far from here. We need people to be risking new writing that connects with the lives of real people. Let's not choose safe options – let's go for ideas that are new, that are relevant to our times, that take up contemporary debates. Let's seek out work that goes beyond the search for what it feels like to be an Asian in Britain today to comment on life in general. Work that projects a different world view. That became our objective as a theatre company – to put on plays that project an Asian woman's particular perspective. The work itself is not ethnic – its creators happen to have that skin colour.

I am not entirely despondent. Collectively, our gains as Black and Asian practitioners have been very real. They are quantifiable not only in crude measures such as the actual numbers of plays produced each year and theatre companies, who are now

producing work in public view, the work itself is more confident, more visible and more successful in commercial terms. We are living in better times. Asians, at least a handful, are looking streetwise and cool. We can boast of hits galore – on the music scene! More recently there have been sell-outs in the theatre and, of course, there is the ubiquitous *Goodness Gracious Me*. The list of successes is impressive, and long may it grow.

The time has now come for us to create some room more for breathing within this valued space. We need to project the essential similarities at the heart of 'our' work with that produced in the mainstream: the underlying humanity and concerns that inform its creative drive.

We need to recognise that each artistic voice among us is unique as is each expression that emanates from it. There is no such thing as a generic Black or South Asian identity – so with reference to the work itself the terms 'Black and Asian' are as meaningless as the generic Indian accent hall-marked by Peter Sellers in his portrayals of 'Indians'. We come from diverse communities and cultures often at variance with each other. Over here we have created bonds across that difference and forged fragile harmonies held together only by constant negotiation and juggling – largely as a survival strategy. We chose a label to help us fight the rubric of injustice that hampered us in the past. Now we want to let go of that label which, though consensual, makes bland our real diversity and richness so that we can replace it with a more real individual identity.

Our work addresses all of you – a general, mixed audience. There will be some people who hate it and there will be some who love it – hopefully without reference to either their own race or that of the originator. Even those amongst us who work within minority languages are often addressing the mainstream. I am arguing here for the right to a fair hearing – a reading that meets the work half way – not for our sakes but for your own. Our work may derive partly from our histories, but the living vibrant heart of it is here. It is deeply relevant to this society.

To categorise it as different in its essence and to leave it on the margins – is to short-change us. Western notions of cultural diversity imply Eurocentric 'universal norms'. To keep these norms ethnocentric may insidiously serve certain interest groups but, without a doubt, it distorts reality by projecting a world bleached of all colours except white: a world the greater majority of its peoples cannot recognise or validate. If you can cross those barriers and meet us half way our work will yield much more to you, as audiences, as readers, and enrich our society as a whole.

For those of us who have fought for resources, for fairer representation, for recognition, and for imaginative truth, our new identity throws endless challenges – of race, class and gender. Our creativity is born and rides on their cusp. We need you to leap up and discover it – unless the work is properly understood and discovered it cannot be evaluated or challenged. If we are to continue to grow, develop and progress we all do need those challenges.

The last thing we need as an artistic community is an apartheid which confines us to a playpen where we play our own games of pretend art that no one can assess because they have only perceived it as the 'other' and not fully explored its all premises or any

of its nuances. We need critics and we need standards. However, we must define those standards for ourselves, instead of waiting for the establishment to define them for us; and we need to welcome and enable critics, regardless of their race, who choose to make that journey of discovery and befriend the work.

We are now a sizeable market that can pay for itself – predictably – glittering prizes have come from the world of entertainment and leisure. Sadly, however, what has been celebrated the most in recent years is merely a diet of comedy and satire. For the older generation this portrayal is often troubling. Many questions arise – have we sold out? Are we really only acceptable when we make ourselves the target of satire? Must we laugh at our most sacred myths, our most cherished beliefs to make them acceptable? Why is it that the work which belittles and ridicules us earns more laurels? Is there a reluctance to admit those writers to the canon who comment and reflect, debate and provoke, who choose to challenge rather than confirm the worst prejudices of the mainstream?

There is a tendency to programme work that is comedic, light in texture and 'safe'. Work which is popular and draws audiences is preferred over and above serious productions that might be controversial, which provoke thought and debate. The time has come for artistic directors and programmers to meet the practitioners half way in terms of understanding the work *per se*. They need to encourage and support a range of culturally diverse productions and to programme with sensitivity not only to their audiences' tastes but also their *needs*, without patronising them. In order to do so they need to step out of their Eurocentric cocoons and begin to apprehend and appreciate Britain's diverse cultures and communities.

We, the practitioners, need to insist on more participation in decision making and consistent monitoring of what is being funded for productions and delivered to us as audiences. Unless, we, as practitioners, our work, and our communities are treated with justice and accorded an equal and fair status, we cannot hope to combat racism in the theatre.

Appendix 8

Eclipse conference into racism in theatre Nottingham Playhouse 12 and 13 June Report by Tony Graves

The Eclipse conference was an opportunity to analyse the industry, put it under the microscope with those people such as chief executives, artistic directors and funding officers acting as seemingly willing participants in the process. My role as facilitator was as I perceived it to ease the process, allow people to express themselves, coax their opinions, point out if necessary the relevant issues, challenges or inconsistencies, but not to cajole, browbeat or accuse.

I write my Report as a personal narrative as I feel that to engage in a purely clinical dissection of the event would create a feeling of self-censorship and therefore undermine the underlying passion which I am sure myself and the majority of Black delegates feel regarding the subject. The mainly subtle racism that operates within the industry often enables the perpetrators to avoid direct accusations and therefore continue with their habitual practices.

This is a crucial point. Racism in Theatre is like a cancer. You know it's there but often you can't see it. My African arts producer experience as well as subsequent arts management work have underlined the sense of an hierarchical system that divides those of us working from an African-Caribbean perspective from those who aren't.

As a consequence of this system choices in terms of resources, access, facilities, critical acknowledgement and perhaps most importantly the right to experiment and fail are denied to many of us. However the selection process within the sector is often based on subjective, aesthetic judgements that very often don't have to be justified since those making the judgements are coming from the same white majority perspective.

Applying this analysis of the industry to the conference principally I found that the delegates fell into two broad camps. The first was those that could accept the definition of racism as defined by the Macpherson Report but couldn't recognise it within the theatre and the second was those that wholeheartedly embraced the definition and its application to the industry. In other words, in the first instance, there was a sense that the sector is liberal by definition and therefore couldn't possibly be guilty of institutionalised racism. The lack of Black product, artistic directors and chief executives is due to some other factors that lay outside of their control as decision makers. These were often quoted as being disinterest in the arts by the African, Caribbean and Asian community, citing the old chestnut of advertising but not getting any response from Black candidates. A road to Damascus conversion within the confines of the conference was clearly out of the question. However in certain instances it was possible to a certain degree to get to the root of the resistance. Confusion over the term positive action seemed to exist as an explanation for the apparent impotence and reluctance to embrace strategies to address under representation of Black people in the industry. There was a fear that these strategies inevitably meant engaging in positive discrimination. Since all agreed that positive

discrimination was not what anyone wanted and led to tokenism, declining standards, (all interestingly associated with the employment of Black artists, staff, directors) then the situation was out of their control and therefore all they could do is merely reflected the status quo. Clearly the need for positive action and the need to distinguish between this and positive discrimination was an important point to clarify for many of the delegates.

The second camp for me constituted the more worrying and dangerous obstacle. There was no debate to be had as there was complete agreement with the need to change (based on an understanding completely of the issues and even their own complicity), only the methods were under dispute. However despite this they also had a conviction that change was being implemented by them. But this disturbed me, as there was an echo of my own experiences as a producer in a mainstream organisation. The need in sociological terms for change was not in dispute. However the acceptance that this would require a shift in terms of aesthetic reference points remained for the most part unacknowledged and the implications of this change were seemingly subject to a peculiar sort of denial. For example, one delegate had hardly participated in the workshop. When I had the chance to ask him in a break if he had a problem with the workshops he said that they didn't really apply to him and his organisation as they worked in a culturally diverse area of London and their outreach programme was thriving. So the limit to which he saw the role of Black arts and artists was in audience development and outreach work. In another instance a funder present talked about the need for new spaces to celebrate non Eurocentric ways of working but again was talking about committing small sums of money from the drama budget to aid this development, unable to envisage the need to make different choices regarding the size of the slices of the funding cake being allocated to the mainstream organisations.

One fundamental, critical factor to emerge during the conference was the question of the artistic director and the notion that their territory is sacrosanct. This was a new and welcome departure for me as in previous symposia conversation has rarely turned to their particular role. However now that the climate in which theatres operate has supposedly changed and the issues of inclusion are much more on the agenda then every aspect of a theatre's operations has to be appraised in this light. The artistic director should no longer be able to inhabit a purely ethereal plain with no concern for the social impact of the space and medium in which they work. Certain artistic directors at the conference were refreshingly candid in acknowledging that the artists they work with and the creative teams they employ were likely to come out of their address book and that, being white, male and middle class, the work they created, and the people they created it with, were going to reflect their particular reference points.

This to me has led to a major impasse and highlights the need for radical solutions. One suggestion I would make is that boards seeking to appoint an artistic director should ensure that the person specification for the job should include a candidate's interest in, knowledge of and commitment to African, Caribbean and Asian artists and arts. This must be a prerequisite. Without this then knowledge of Black actors, directors and product will inevitably be limited, leading to a lack of work from this perspective. But this is not to then enable the artistic director to become an 'expert' and indulge in cultural colonialism. (Until the lion has its own stories tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter.)

Another solution is already being implemented at The Haymarket Theatre. The centre of artistic control can be an equal partnership between two artistic directors who bring with them a range of cultural sensibilities, able to build on each other's strengths in order to deliver an inclusive programme. I would also like to see the idea of guest programmers being used to open up spaces to new ideas and overcome the inertia caused by a lack of knowledge concerning Black product and contacts. (It's also critical that ACE moves forward with plans to create a comprehensive database of Black artists as a national resource.) The ultimate solution of course is the appointment of Black artistic directors.

But just as very often people go to theatre to see reflections of themselves so the senior management team of a theatre is a reflection of the people that employ them, namely the board. This is another critical factor. The appointment of one or two Black faces to the board is not the answer. It needs a complete acceptance and acknowledgement by the board members to take steps to include cultural diversity in the job descriptions/person specifications of senior management and throughout the whole organisation.

In addition formal training of the boards, artistic directors and chief executives should be undertaken as opposed to the normal assumption that the need for training always resides with black artists, artistic directors and administrators. This 'capacity building' of organisations in terms of cultural diversity is paramount and, as was suggested, could where appropriate include a professional presence at board meetings to facilitate the process.

In both days of the conference what struck me was the fact that I was faced by intelligent, competent, resourceful arts managers and practitioners. Yet there seemed to be a collective failure of ability when it came to the implementation of strategies to address the situation. The point was well made by Hermin McIntosh in her presentation. Often the plea in my workshops was 'tell me what I should do'.

The simple introduction of benchmarks which would be employed presumably for say an audience development scheme somehow did not seem to be applied to the issue of cultural diversity, as if it's enough for this to happen by osmosis. The practise of choosing indicators to measure what progress is being made that goes beyond purely audience profile, either by artistic programme, marketing practices, networks with leading community figures, response to culturally diverse influences in the environment, the ability for the theatre to be a meeting place for culturally diverse groups similarly hardly seemed to be adopted. Here I would suggest there needs to be more pro-activity by the RABs and ACE in requiring this approach. And of course this process should be relevant both to theatres which are situated in culturally diverse areas or where geographically there are few people of culturally diverse backgrounds. In the latter case the point needed to be made that mission statements and policies of theatres are about education as well as purely entertainment or playing safe.

Overall I felt a different chemistry to the event. Its format achieved a less 'ghettoised' approach than I have experienced in past conferences dealing with these issues and credit must go to the vision of the organisers for the way in which it was conceived and delivered.

As much as praise is due I would like to see other approaches such as the emergence of a Black pressure group formed by attenders at the conference which is able to lobby the funders and the arts organisations themselves in order to keep the focus on the debate. I would also make a plea on behalf of the facilitators involved that we are able to stay with the process as it makes its way to the next stage of regional consultations.

On a positive note the middle-scale touring consortium proposal for Black work was seen as an excellent way of increasing Black product with many delegates keen to buy in to the idea. Here I would suggest that the coordinator's role should not be confined to purely an administrative capacity but ensure that creative ideas can be brought to the table.

Alongside this development the endless cycle of training and bursaries directed at Black administrators and directors needs to be broken. Instead the step to making appointments of Black executives in mainstream buildings needs to be made. I look forward to buildings such as Tricycle, Oval House, Theatre Royal Stratford, Bristol Old Vic and others grooming potential artistic directors from within to take over at the appropriate time rather than participating in schemes that in themselves provide a taster but not a main course. Otherwise, as guest speaker Sgt Robyn Williams pointed out, it's only a matter of time before someone brings a case of racial discrimination to court.

Ultimately we should be seeking to arrive at a point where the connotations behind the conference's title 'Eclipse' are redundant and that theatre becomes a place which reflects all cultural expression and artists have equal opportunity to represent themselves and their work on stage. That's the theatre that I would love to see.

Appendix 9

List of attenders (delegates and guests)

Mark Pritchard
Theatre Royal/Stratford East
Board Member

Angela Galvin
Sheffield Theatres
Marketing and Development Director

David Edwards
Derby Playhouse
Executive Director

Susan Haskew
Derby Playhouse
Chair of Board

Stephen Phillips
Chichester Festival Theatre
Board Member

Sarah Smith
Bristol Old Vic
Executive Director

John Botteley
Bradford Theatres
General Manager

Peter Rowe
New Wolsey Theatre
Artistic Director

Ben Bousquet
New Wolsey Theatre
Board Member

Symon Easton
Northampton Theatres
Chief Executive

Rose Cuthbertson
Lawrence Batley Theatre
Artistic Director
Jenny Stephens
Worcester Swan

Artistic Director

Deborah Rees
Worcester Swan
Admin Director

John Blackmore
Bolton Octagon
Executive Director

Rebecca Morland
Salisbury Playhouse
Executive Director

Jack Wills
Salisbury Playhouse
Board Member

Suzanne Elliott
Darlington Civic Theatre
Administration Manager

Pat Weller
Royal Exchange
Executive Director

Pauline Catlin-Reid
Eastern Touring Agency
Manager

Venu Dhupa
Nottingham Playhouse
Executive Director

Tom Huggon
Nottingham Playhouse
Chair of Board

Giles Croft
Nottingham Playhouse
Artistic Director

Jim Robertson
Nottingham Playhouse
Administrative Director

Andrew Breakwell
Nottingham Playhouse
Roundabout/Artistic Director

Jonathan Church
Birmingham Rep
Artistic Director

Trina Jones
Marketing Director
Birmingham Rep

Grahame Morris
Sheffield Theatres
Chief Executive

.
Katherine Anderson
Theatre by the Lake
Administrator

Maggie Saxon
West Yorkshire Playhouse
Managing Director

Paul Crewes
West Yorkshire Playhouse
Producer

John McGrath
Contact Theatre
Artistic Director

Mark Courtice
Theatre Royal Brighton
Chief Executive

Tim Brinkman
Hall for Cornwall
Director

Amanda Belcham
The Dukes
Chief Executive

Philip Bray
Mercury Colchester
Marketing Director

Rod Green
Mercury Colchester
Board Member.

Gwenda Hughes
New Vic Theatre
Artistic Director

Howard Wraight
New Vic Theatre
Vice Chair/Board

David Prescott
Theatre Royal/Plymouth
Artistic Associate

Mandy Stewart
Leicester Haymarket
Chief Executive

Jasmine Hendry
Chester Gateway
Chief Executive

Beverly Briggs
Northern Stage
Head of Marketing

Kenneth Alan Taylor
Oldham Coliseum
Artistic Director

Philip Headley
Theatre Royal/Stratford East
Artistic Director

Sian Alexander
LAB
Head of Theatre

Jo Hemmant
LAB
Theatre Officer

Judith Hibberd
SEAB
Senior Drama Officer

Ros Robins
WMAB
Director of Management Services

Alison Gagen
WMAB
Performing Arts Officer/Drama

Mark Mulqueen
NAB
Performing Arts Officer

Shea Connelly
EMAB
Drama Officer

Alan Orme
EEAB
Arts Development Officer/Theatre

Helen Flach
EMAB
Senior Arts Officer

David Bown
YAB
Drama Officer

Keith Halsall
NWAB
Director/Performing Arts

Isobel Hawson
ACE
Senior Drama Officer

Kim Evans
ACE
Executive Director of Arts

Vicky Spooner
ACE
Asst. Dance Officer

Natasha Bucknor
ACE
Asst. Drama Officer

Felicity Hall
ACE

Touring Officer

Denise Jones
ACE
Asst. Drama Officer

Angela Latty
ACE
Asst. Policy Officer

Willy Donaghy
Bectu
Supervisory Official

Amanda Paige
Bectu
Shop Steward

Charlotte Jones
ITC
Director

Anjan Saha
ITC
Training Coordinator

David Emerson
TMA
Senior Executive Officer

DCMS

Chandran Owen
Nottingham City Council

Topher Campbell
Freelance Director

Tyrone Huggins
Theatre of Darkness
Artistic Director
Speaker

Anthony Corriette
Theatre Royal/Stratford East
Development Director
Speaker

Rukhsana Ahmad
Kali Theatre
Artistic Director
Panellist

Sudha Buchar
Tamasha Theatre Company
Co-Artistic Director
Panellist

Hermin McIntosh
Independent Arts Consultant
Panellist

Shabnam Shabazi
Derby Playhouse
Creative Producer

Kully Thiarai
Leicester Haymarket
Associate Director

Suzannah Bedford
Talawa Theatre Company
Administrator

Judi McCartney
Independence

Delia Barker
Independence

Maya Biswas
Leicester Haymarket

Mukesh Barot
EMAB
Workshop Facilitator/Panel Chair

Sue Moffat
New Vic Theatre
Borderlines Director

David Tse
Yellow Earth Theatre Company
Artistic Director
Panellist

Diana Pao

Yellow Earth Theatre Company
General Manager

Shabnam Shabazi
Derby Playhouse
Creative Producer

Cheryl Roberts
Lawrence Batley Theatre
Development Officer

Karena Johnson
Kushite Theatre/Oval House
Artistic Director/Programmer

Femi Elufowoju Jnr
Tiata Fahodzi
Artistic Director
Panellist

Steven Luckie
Freelance Writer/Director
Panellist

Sgt Robyn Williams
Speaker

Dr Vayu Naidu
Speaker

Tracey Anderson
Workshop Facilitator

Jacqueline Contre
SAMPAD General Manager
Workshop Facilitator

Tony Graves
Workshop Facilitator

Paul Moore
Nottingham Playhouse
African/Caribbean Arts Producer

Stuart Brown
Nottingham Playhouse
African/Caribbean Arts Producer

Christine Hayward
Nottingham Playhouse

Note Taker

Rebecca Davies Nash
Nottingham Playhouse
Note Taker

Kimi Gill
Note Taker

Ord Brown
Note Taker