WHAT SHADOWS

Resource pack written by Birmingham Repertory Theatre
Adapted by Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh

By Chris Hannan

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CREATIVES

DIRECTOR: ROXANA SILBERT
DESIGNER: TI GREEN
LIGHTING DESIGNER: CHAHINE YAVROYAN
SOUND DESIGNER: GILES THOMAS
VOICE COACH: STEPHEN KEMBLE
VIDEO DESIGNER: LOUIS PRICE

CAST

Saeed: WALEED AKHTAR
Sofia/Pamela: BRID BRENNAN
Clem Jones: GEORGE COSTIGAN
Enoch Powell: IAN MCDIARMID
Rose: REBECCA SCROGGS
Sultan: PHALDUT SHARMA
Grace/Marjorie: PAULA WILCOX
Teacher Resource

This resource has been created by Birmingham Repertory Theatre. It has been written and adapted to suit the needs of the Curriculum for Excellence with particular focus on Higher and Advanced Higher Drama, English and Modern Studies pupils. The resource aims to enhance students’ understanding of WHAT SHADOWS, the rehearsal process and spark interesting conversations about the production.

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Principal Characters
(in order of appearance)


Sofia Nicol -48 years old- white- a former Oxford lecturer. Of Greek, Cypriot descent. Is accused by Rose of having racist sympathies.

Clem Jones -52 years old, editor of the Wolverhampton Express and Star, a newspaper with a larger circulation than ‘The Guardian.’ Old friend and press advisor to Enoch Powell. Although does not agree with his political standing.


Pamela Powell- Enoch’s wife. 42 years old. Good friends with Marjorie Jones.

Marjorie Jones -52 years old. Wife to Clem Jones. Good friends to the Powells but in strong opposition to their political beliefs.

Grace Hughes- white, a B&B owner in Wolverhampton and a resident who has been deeply affected by the impact of immigration on her local area.

Sultan Mahmood – 40 odd. An educated, irrigation work from Pakistan. Ends up marrying Grace

Saeed Mahmood- younger relative of Sultan. Less articulate and educated.
Synopsis

‘The greatest of human realities, the greatest of political realities is the question of identity – who do we think we are? - Who am I? – and immigrants present that question in its most dramatic and rawest form.’

Act I Scene One
The play consistently flits between 1992 and 1967/68.

1992- Rose Cruickshank, daughter of a Caribbean Immigrant, an Oxford graduate, an academic and an author, has come to Kintryre to confront her former university lecturer, Sofia, whom she had dismissed from Oxford on accusations that she held racist sympathies and was a particular supporter of Enoch Powell. Rose is writing a new book, and in an effort to come to peace with past and the repercussions of Enoch Powell’s divisive speech, she has asked for Sofia’s help.

Act 1 Scene Two
1967 – In this scene we are introduced to Enoch Powell and his press advisor Clem Jones and both their wives Pamela Powell and Marjorie Jones at a picnic. Enoch Powell discusses how he is not happy with how he is perceived in the press and starts to seek Clem’s advice on how we can improve. Clem mentions that his speech style is dull and doesn’t appeal to the masses.

Act 1 Scene Three
1992- We meet Rose and Sofia again, but this time Rose is in hospital after an attempted suicide from drinking car fluid. Rose phoned Sofia in a desperate state and in need of her help. Rose tells Sofia she has arranged an interview with Enoch Powell next Monday. Sofia then agrees to take Rose to Wolverhampton, where she grew up, in order to start her quest for answers and her identity

Act 1 Scene Four
1967 – We are at a party held by Joyce Cruickshank (Rose’s Mum) and we see a young Rose Cruickshank pushing a hostess trolley round and serving Prawn Cocktail. Guests at the party are Sultan Mahmood, Saeed Mahmood and Grace Hughes all locals to the area. With the mix of cultures in the room, tensions very quickly escalate. Grace talks about being ‘the only white for three streets’ and how she struggles to rent out the extra rooms in her B&B she bought and ran with her husband who died in the war. They all tell stories of their history and their culture. Sultan talks about how he was a respected worker in the Irrigation Department whilst Saeed was just a ‘Junglee’ slaughtering animals. The atmosphere downturns when Joyce is greatly offended by the fact that she is described a ‘black.’ She quickly turns on Rose, whom she believed, because of the darker complexion of her skin, is less worthy. We see very quickly the idea of ‘identity’ is more complex than just ‘black and white.’
Act 1 Scene Five
1967 – The Powell’s arrive at Clem Jone’s house, whom is bee-keeping. We see for the first time that Clem is not a supporter of Enoch’s views, due to his reluctance to speak with them. Tensions are high after Clem reported on Enoch’s recent Walsall speech unfavourably. Clem believes Enoch’s points are too strong and on occasion, unfounded. However, as a friend, Clem gives Enoch some critical advice on how to attract more attention with his speeches by timing them so they reach the headline news, however the subtext is clear that Clem is not at ease doing this.

Act 1 Scene Six
1967- The scene starts with a violent knock at Grace Hughes’ door. It is Sultan who forces his way into her house. After a confrontation where Sultan says he has come to save Grace from this ‘half life’ Grace is living, Grace has an hallucination that disturbs her and afterwards the situation calms. Grace and Sultan then find common ground talking about her husbands time in the military and Sultan’s. Grace admits that her husband stopped writing to her after a while. Sultan comforts Grace by telling her that war can make men lose their minds and that it probably wasn’t personal. By the end of the scene we see that a romantic relationships has started to flourish between the two.

Act 1 Scene Seven
1968- Sultan and Saeed are in Straford-upon-Avon dressed for the theatre. Sultan has planned for them to bump into Enoch Powell outside the theatre. As Enoch and Pamela come out of the theatre Sultan addresses them. Sultan and Enoch talk about their time in the military with fondness. However Enoch talks about his sadness at the collapse of the British Empire and India’s independence as he fell greatly in love with the country when he served in the army there. It is clear that this has deeply moved Enoch.

Act 1 Scene Eight
1992- Rosa has bought Sofia to the street and the house she grew up in. Rose talks about the prejudices her mother held against her for being ‘too black’ and how she would ignore her at parents evenign like she didn’t exist. Rose describes her mother as being ‘in denial.’ Sofia then admits that she is a Greek Cypriot immigrant because the Turks burned down their home and warehouse in a riot. She admits to carrying the racism that her parents had through in her own life. They agree to visit Rose’s Mum in hospital.

Act 1 Scene Nine
1968- Clem and Enoch have been walking and the conversation turns very quicky to when Enoch will deliver his speech on immigration. Enoch talks about his concern that there will be bloodshed in the country unless something is done. Clem clearly has a different opinion. Clem talks about the economic benefits of immigrants . Clem believes that Enoch is only inflaming tensions. Clem agrees to babysit Enoch’s children whilst he makes the speech on Saturday.

Act 1 Scene Ten
1968-Enoch delivers his famous river of blood speech. The transcript of the speech is delivered word-for-word by the actor playing Enoch Powell.

Act 1 Scene Eleven
1968-Marjorie is appalled that Clem has helped Enoch get coverage for the speech. Marjorie admits that she no longer loves Clem. Pamela and Enoch arrive back at the house to pick up
their children after the speech. Marjorie is hurt and seething with anger at the speech Enoch has given and details her contempt at the wording he has used. The Powells leave. Marjorie states that their marriage is over.

**Act 2 Scene One**
1992- We see Enoch Powell as an 80 year old man at his doctors. He is frail and we find out he has Parkinson’s disease. A progressive illness. We see Enoch’s frustration at his illness and the sense of powerlessness it is giving him. We get the impression that the fact he is being looked after and assessed by a doctor of ethnicity is troubling him. He repeats several times ‘this is not who I am.’ Enoch tells the doctor he is meeting an old friend at a church in Gloucester. We assume it must be Clem.

**Act 2 Scene Two**
1992- We see an old lady on a rooftop whom we recognise to be Grace Hughes (now Grace Mahmood as she has married Sultan Mahmood.) Sultan, Rose and Sofia all enter the scene. We instantly realise that Grace is not of sound mind. Maybe she has dementia or something affects her memory as she is unable to recognise her husband. Sultan is getting increasingly frustrated at the fact she does not know him. Grace say she recognises Rose because she has a memory of Rose spitting on her in the street many years ago. A police officer comes in to diffuse the situation. Grace talks more about Rose and how a group of them attacked her because she was white. Rose has no recollection of this. Grace is taken away by the police officer. Sultan and Rose both have lost their identities. Rose because she has been accused of a racist attack, something she has fought against her whole life, and Sultan because he wife is treating him like a ‘paki’ again. Rose wants to clear up exactly what happened the day that Grace is talking of.

**Act 2 Scene Three**
1992- Enoch and Clem meet at a church in Gloucester. Marjorie has died without ever forgiving Enoch for his speech. Clem admits the aftermath of the speech was difficult as ‘prominent nigger-lovers like me, bricks through our windows, that sort of thing.’ They are reminscent of the aftermath of the speech, and they still hold such opposing views.

**Act 2 Scene Four**
1992- Rose and Sofia visit Saeed who confirms Grace’s story that she was involved in a racist attack. Rose is shaken and devastated by the news. She has become something that she has been fighting her whole life. This has put her whole identity and purpose into question.

**Act 2 Scene Five**
1992- We are at Enoch’s house before the interview he is going to have with Rose. Pamela is worried that Rose will outsmart him but Enoch is unphased as he is still sure that he ‘held a mirror up to England.’

**Act 2 Scene Six**
Sofia and Rose arrive at the cemetery where she will interview Enoch Powell. The tension is palpable. Nearly 30 years of Rose’s anger, frustration, bewilderment is let out in an attempt to get some sort of explanation and acknowledgement of the damage his speech and cause had on people like Rose. However Enoch still believes that a storm is coming. He finishes on the point ‘There will be more hurricanes to come and they will be given different names, but I warn you; when they occur noone will hear a word that’s spoken.’
John Enoch Powell (16 June 1912 – 8 February 1998) was a politician, poet, academic and linguist.

John Enoch Powell was born in Stechford, Birmingham, on 16 June 1912. He lived there for the first six years of his life before his parents moved to Kings Norton in 1918, where he lived until 1930. He was the only child of Albert Enoch Powell a primary school headmaster, and his wife, Ellen Mary.

Before entering politics, Powell was a classical scholar, becoming a full professor of ancient Greek at the age of 25. During the Second World War, he served in both staff and intelligence positions, reaching the rank of brigadier in his early thirties. He had a long and varied military career and was a keen advocate for retaining the British Empire. He was particularly upset when India declared it’s independence, as he had spent many years serving there. He also wrote poetry, his first works being published in 1937, as well as many books on classical and political subjects.

Powell was a pupil at King's Norton Grammar School for Boys before moving to King Edward's School, Birmingham, where he studied classics (which would later influence his 'Rivers of Blood' speech), and was one of the few pupils in the school's history to attain 100% in an end-of-year English examination. He studied at Cambridge University from 1930 to 1933. He took no part in politics at university.

Powell was renowned for his public speaking skills and his masculine nature. Despite initially welcoming Commonwealth immigrants, on 20 April 1968, he made a controversial speech in Birmingham in which he warned his audience of what he believed would be the consequences of continued mass immigration from the Commonwealth to Britain. The speech was nicknamed ‘Rivers of Blood’ and causes controversy and divisiveness to this day.
'As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see 'the River Tiber foaming with much blood'. That tragic and intractable phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic but which there is interwoven with the history and existence of the States itself, is coming upon us here by our own volition and our own neglect. Indeed, it has all but come. In numerical terms, it will be of American proportions long before the end of the 20th century. Only resolute and urgent action will avert it even now.'

The Times declared it "an evil speech", stating, "This is the first time that a serious British politician has appealed to racial hatred in this direct way in our postwar history."

The aftermath of the speech shot Powell to fame and split the opinion of much of the British public. A poll suggested that 74% of the British public agreed with his speech on mass immigration. However his opponents labelled him a racist, fascist and a far right leader.

The concerns raised in the ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech still echo in our society today and Enoch Powell’s legacy is one of controversy and division.

Powell had a long career serving in politics - mainly with the Conservative Party where he fought passionately for his views and causes. In the 1990’s he endorsed the UKIP leader candidates but refused to ever run for leader himself.

In 1992, at the age of 80, he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, a degenerative illness. He passed away on February 8 1998.
An Interview with Milli Bhatia- Assistant Director

What Shadows is about events that happened nearly 50 years ago- why is it important now?

When I first read ‘What Shadows’ it resonated with me because we were in the immediate aftermath of Brexit. I had been reading a lot that week about the rising figures of hate crime and racially motivated attacks in the country. This was also the case post the ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech that Enoch Powell delivered. And I believe that the voice of ‘the other’ is more important now than ever before. Our protagonist in ‘What Shadows’ is a black woman, and she, as in the play, is one of the ‘wide grinning picanines’ and I think the irony of that is incredibly powerful. Now more than ever it is imperative that we are illuminating this voice and providing a platform for this voice. It is also nearly 50 years since the speech took place and it happened just half a mile away from The REP so it should be here and it should be now.

Was Enoch Powell evil?

I have to answer this as an ethnic minority whose grandparents were first generation immigrants in the Midlands during the time of the speech who encountered first hand the racially motivated prejudice. I have to say that in relation to the play, Chris Hannan is genius, because what is fascinating watching the play and, for me, working on it, is that he humanises Enoch Powell so that when you hear the speech and the content of it hits you, you struggle watching it because up to that point he is so human in terms of his relationships and what leads him to his prejudices and I think that’s what makes this play so brilliant.

How are rehearsals going?

We are coming to the end of week 3 of rehearsals and it’s in a really great place at the moment. The company are fantastic. We’ve had the writer in the room for the majority of the rehearsal period which has been great because we have been able to unpick things and ask questions. I think it’s in a really good place and can’t wait for an audience to experience it.

What do you like about the play?

As I’ve said before it gives a platform to a voice we don’t hear a lot of and I also think it is incredibly timely to here and now. I think the play really cleverly unpicks what our inherit
prejudices are, on both sides and questions how we speak across a divide that is more clear and prominent now than it has ever been post Brexit and in these political times.

Do you have any advice for young people wanting to carve out a career in theatre or as a Director?

I’m very early on in my career but my advice be to see as much theatre as you can and to develop ideas and thoughts about what you like and why and what makes you feel passionate and what stories you want to tell. As a director, assisting is really important. I’ve been fortunate to assist Roxana twice on two very different plays and I’ve learnt an enormous amount. I think it’s also really important to talk about and see other director’s work thinking about what you like or don’t like about it so you can get a sense of the kind of work you want to make.
Themes and Talking Points

Identity

The idea of identity in the play is incredibly strong. What makes you, you? Is this solely based on your cultural/geographical background or is it deeper than that? Are we inherently protective of our identity and others who we believe are here to dilute it? Enoch Powell and Rose Cruickshank, although have embedded differences of opinion, are both seeking answers to the same question – how do I retain my identity? Rose battles the idea of her identity throughout the play. She was bullied by her mother for being ‘too black,’ she was present in the aftermath of the Enoch Powell speech and the racially motivated prejudices that were aimed at her and other ethnic minorities in Britain. She had fought and campaigned against racism her whole life and is then faced with the fact that she had committed a racially motivated assault on a local white woman. This throws into question her whole existence, purpose and being and whether we are all subconsciously scared of ‘the other.’

Discussion- In groups get pupils to talk about their identity, where they come from, where their family come from. Encourage conversations and sharings of identity- what traditional food people eat, celebrations, family etc.

Division

The theme of division runs through the play continuously. The idea of this great divide between people that we can’t communicate through. In Enoch Powell’s speech he draws on the division between white and black where states ‘in 15 or 20 years time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man.’ This incredibly divisive statement instantly draws upon what separates us and puts different ethnic backgrounds in competition, rivalry with one another. The divide in cultures is reflected in a more colloquial manner with Grace Hughes, who talks in contempt about the fact she cannot rent her rooms out in her B&B as she is now the only white woman on the street. It talks about division on a domestic and a national scale, leaving the audience to draw their conclusions on whether that gap can be bridged.

Friendship and community

This play pulls on the human elements of the characters- not just the political ones. It is easy to label Enoch Powell as a racist, a facist, a xenophobe etc but when there is a magnifying glass on his relationships, his friendships, his ideals, his generous nature, his community spirit, it is not so easy t whitewash his character completely. We see in details how friendships are torn apart by different views and political beliefs. Marjorie Jones marriage is torn apart as well as her friendship with Enoch over it. Rose’s relationship with her mother is strained from it. Grace’s relationship with her community and her husband is tested.

Discussion- discuss in pairs or as a class- have your ideas or beliefs ever been opposed and how did it affect friendships. Have you noticed any differences in relationships over recent political events.
Set Model Box Images
Race Relations in the UK

There have been some key milestones and setbacks since the Second World War in relation to Britain’s integration and race relations. Here are some examples of key events that shaped Britain’s cultural landscape.

1. The arrival of the cruise ship Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks on the morning of 22 June, 1948, marked the start of modern day mass immigration to Britain. On board were 492 Jamaicans, mostly young, single men, who had made the voyage across the Atlantic in search of work.

2. In the 1960s, an MP told the House of Commons that the only sensible political debate in this country was taking place on ‘Till Death Us Do Part.’ First screened in 1965. It was pulling in almost 20 million viewers. Its star character was Alf Garnett, abrash, working class white male, described by one TV critic as "everything most hateful about our national character - xenophobic, illiberal, racist, anti-Semitic, toadying, authoritarian". Writer Johnny Speight had meant it as a satire, but millions failed to spot the irony, preferring instead to see Garnett as a champion of the downtrodden, white, working man. Both sides saw the clear message that Britain was struggling to come to terms with immigration.

3. The Race Relations Act 1976 enshrined many of the laws on discrimination that are taken for granted today. The act, which applies to Great Britain but not Northern Ireland, makes racial discrimination unlawful in employment, training, housing, education and the provision of goods, facilities and services. The Act was amended to impose duties on many public authorities to promote racial equality.

4. The murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence, in 1993, and the subsequent investigation, or lack of one, again blew open the schism between non-whites and the police. Lawrence's parents gained influential support from the media as they persisted in hounding the police for answers. Eventually a public inquiry was ordered. The report blamed police racism and incompetence for scuppering any chance of justice. Crucially, it also identified the police as "institutionally racist.”

5. It hasn’t happened yet, but according to population forecasts last year, Leicester is set to be Britain's first non-white city. The prediction was made after claims that Leicester is a role model for good race relations. Already "ethnic minorities" account for about half the city's schoolchildren. Ross Willmott, leader of the city council, said Asian and other communities "play a major role in Leicester's life and in the leadership of the city, giving it a unique character". It wasn't always this way. In the early 1970s, as thousands of Asians prepared to flee tyranny in Uganda, Leicester council warned them to stay away from the city.
Activities and Exercises

These exercises are mainly focussed on Drama and are designed to get the students actively involved with the themes, relationships and context of the play.

The Communication Game

**Objective** - can we communicate with each other without using words? Communication, or the lack of, is a key theme in ‘What Shadows.’ The students should be able to communicate a tell a story using a different methods of communicating. This is a primarily non-verbal way of communicating. What do the students learn from this?

Put the class into pairs (or larger groups if you’d rather)

Give each pair/group a scenario- i.e. at a doctors surgery, at a school, in the playground, on a spaceship etc.

The group may only use the words ‘fe’ ‘fi’ ‘fo’ to communicate a scene or a story within their given environment. Give the group around 5/10 minutes to come up with something.

The group will then present/share their scenes with the rest of the group- can the rest of the group understand the story or scene even though it wasn’t communicated in the English language?

The Magnet Game

There is a lot of subtext in this production- things that aren’t being said.

Put the class into pairs and give them this extract of the script between Grace and Sultan. Get the pair to stand a metre or so apart from each other. Get them to speak the scene. When they say each line get the pair to either take a step forward if they believe it is a positive interaction, and a step back if they believe it to be a negative interaction. Get each person to make step on every line. They may find that some lines have a hidden meaning...

*SULTAN MAHMOOD. you make me bloody angry banging the door for bloody hour*

*GRACE HUGHES. not very gentlemanly banging me door for a twothree hour*

*SULTAN MAHMOOD. you making me impossible to be civilized!*

*GRACE HUGHES. my husband would turn in his grave he saw you here*

*SULTAN MAHMOOD. you should invite me in*

*GRACE HUGHES. I should phone the police*
Improvisation

In this exercise the group will create their own scenes, developing their creative ability and instilling empathy with their characters. This exercise gives the students as much freedom as possible to explore the idea of isolation and exclusion.

Split the class into groups of 4.

Each group will improvise their own scene. Creatively it is up to them how this unfolds- the story, characters etc.

However, one of the characters in the scene has to be ‘excluded’ or ‘isolated’ in some way by the other 3 characters. The scenario or setting for this is completely up to them.

Some possible ideas- playground/school, workplace, family, rich/poor etc.

Get them all to present their scenes, then as a group discuss with everyone else how it felt being the excluded one. What can we learn from this?