CUTTER
RESOURCE PACK
&
GCSE Teachers
EDExcel pullout

by sean burn
directed by vishni velada billson
music by paul emile and jim mortimore
designed by leslie travers
pack written by julia samuels
pack compiled & designed by imogen kinchin

cutter played by maria thomas
granda played by richie campbell

For 13+ audiences
CONTENTS

1. cutter - The Play
   Language
   Story
   Character
   History
   Style and Conventions

2. cutter - Themes and Issues
   Self-harm
   Bereavement
   Parenting
   Boxing

3. cutter - The Production
   Rehearsal photos
   Thoughts from the Creative Team:
   Interviews
   Writer: sean burn
   Director: Vishni Velada Billson
   Designer: Leslie Travers
   Music composers: Paul Emile & Jim Mortimore
   Cutter: Maria Thomas
   Granda: Richie Campbell

4. Resources & Further Research
   Sources of information and support.
   Other resources, references and further research for students.

5. Half Moon Young People’s Theatre

GUIDE TO SYMBOLS

DISCUSSION POINT
EXTENSION ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY
INFORMATION

OTHER RESOURCES
SCRIPT EXTRACT
1. CUTTER - THE PLAY

LANGUAGE

choose t fight or yu can choose flight
or bury yr head cos lifes too great a fright
but we all gotta choice in th rules we live by
we all got choice in th rules we live by.

\textit{Cutter} boxin & losin scene, p.16

As you will see from reading \textit{cutter}, sean burn writes English in a non-standard way. This choice reflects his committed philosophical and political standpoint.

\textbf{sean burn says...}

language can be liberating or controlling.
we are surrounded, often defined by it, yet we use it to free ourselves.
language is alive, constantly changing, far as i’m concerned thats a good thing.
powers that be cant pin it down - language lives. i write an ‘urban north’ - spent most ov my time there, moving around, no specific accent but a non-standard english;
instead real, lived. create yr own language.

Divide the group into pairs.

Give each pair a copy of the first scene of \textit{cutter} (swansea bay: opening) p. 1

Ask them to try it out: Reading it together and then rehearsing it.

See two or three versions of the scene.

Discuss what effect the written language style has on you, as an actor.
granda  swansea bay, ma wee bright star, swansea bay. wat do we see ma angel?

Cutter  cartwheels on. ribbons in hair. a child. a butterfly dancin on autumn sand

Granda  2 halves a cockleshell kissin

Cutter  ...look a cowrie. a cowrie granda, a cowrie

Granda  in th caribbean wen aa wz lad - cowries th size ov yr hand. here, coldwaters make em small so small ma wee star

Cutter  & another cowrie, granda. & another & another!

Granda  wee miracles like yu ... wat else?

Cutter  th feel ov sand between ma toes its like ... a song!

Granda  smell th sea! taste its beauty, little 'un.

Cutter  th song ov stars & shingle & surf & gulls.

Granda  music ov this, our kingdom ov th invisible. look: a watch wi no batteries. th tickin ov waves. soon we'll need t find out th time

Cutter  & coal granda. coal. see? wat yu dug 4

Granda  wat we dug 4 aye ... til th wheels stopped. mountains black wi th seam. & men: their faces black as yu as me

Cutter  grit & grime / 

Granda  / remember this: they say coal is dirty, but it burns. burns bright, burns wi a fierce fierce flame. crushed 4 millions ov years but still it remembers. see here...

Cutter  leaves! trunk! roots!

Granda  dreamin from where it came. remember that child - no matter wat others say, no matter wat they call yu - coal is beautiful, precious, black. contains th memory ov its beginnins. & crushed, it contains power unimagined...

Cutter  ... diamonds

Granda  aye ma bright star. diamonds. a perfect splittin ov light; its brilliant blade has a cuttin power beyond imaginin. never forget child. never forget

Cutter  never granda. aa wont EVER forget
Tom Leonard is a Glaswegian poet. He has a similar philosophy of language:

*The 6 o'clock news* by Tom Leonard
(From a series called *Unrelated Incidents* - from *Intimate Voices: 1984 (3)*

There is an audio recording of Tom Leonard reading this poem at [www.tomleonard.co.uk](http://www.tomleonard.co.uk).

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STORY: Scene synopses by sean burn

1 swansea bay:
brief opening which establishes location, warm relationship between cutter/granda, and also a place of ‘safety’ for characters and audience. It also sets up grandas background/her heritage, and the central theme of coal (as actual substance and as metaphor).

2 school scene:
flashback to scenes at school - both negative (bullying, racist teacher) and positive (caring teacher). Discussion of morals. Grande worries that cutter’s growing up too fast and he can’t keep up.

3 carnival scene:
celebration of heritage summoned by granda where he places maas necklace round cutter’s neck. teenage cutter is embarrassed by grandas dancing/flirting. This scene is where truths are revealed. Her discovering granda is dying as he collapses. He tells her of the doctors examining him, finding shadows on lungs. He tries to reassure her he’s got years left, but her mother died young, from cancer and she fears he will be soon gone like ma. Grande finds out about cutters self-harm, which is primarily a mechanism for coping with the loss of her mother. There is confrontation, but ritualised into boxing sparring - though this goes over the top when cutter knocks granda down. Cutter complains that granda still treats her too tomboyish.

4 boxing/losin scene:
scene focuses on boxing in reality and as metaphor. The importance of discipline in boxing, of channelling fears and aggressions. Grande trains her, cutter raps to big herself up, then enters ring where granda provides commentary. She loses the bout.

5 serial killers scene:
short reminiscence from granda about being in hospital & everyone sitting watching late night TV (programme on serial killers), him deciding he’d rather die at home: gallows humour. Cutter brings him home to die.

6 samaritans scene:
cutter, post-grandas death, facing up to her aloneness, to her grief and her depression. Realising she needs help, she calls samaritans as her route out. They promise to help find a safe place for her in the short-term. She is admitted voluntarily and temporarily to a psychiatric hospital - to help deal with self-harm, depression, grief.

7 beginnin the fightback scene:
now hospitalised but angry over her treatment there. She breaks a bone in her hand in frustration, punching a wall, trying to deal with a racist situation. But then she finds the other side of nursing - the caring, nurturing, supporting side and cutter is encouraged to challenge her views, her fears, her self-harm - to find another way of looking at her problems. She takes her views apart - fights against the self-harm, wins thru. Cutters real name is spoken out loud for 1st time in play. It’s louise. She is supported into her new post-cutting life, and encouraged to go back to the boxing ring, with her real name.
8 keep yr neck in lass - boxing scene 2: free of cutting. free of hospital. she is encouraged to return to the ring and fight for what she believes. fighting in grandas memory, maas memory and in her own name. this time louise (cutter) is more focused, determined to win thru. taking on, battling the demons, she wins the fight - metaphorically, and the bout - literally.

9 swansea bay - reprised: we revisit wishes made and achieved

Divide the class into 9 groups:

Using these scene summaries, each group takes one scene from the play.

Each group presents its action and themes by creating three still images.

Play these scenes in order. The group should then discuss each group’s work at a time and give each presented still image a title.

Extend this by adding: Narration Thought tracking Soundscapes

Discuss what themes, issues and questions are arising.
CHARACTER: Hot seating: What do they want?

Give each group a scene to look at and analyse.
Hot seat both cutter and granda.
Choose a series of characters from the play that you would like to hot seat.

Discuss as a group: What do cutter and her granda each really want?

Music:

The CD of music from the show includes representations of key moments such as a sound for cutting as well as a time for healing and mother’s memory.

Following hot seating the characters, allocate groups of four or five.

Make a list of what might have been happy moments in cutter’s life. Some of these moments might be from the play itself, some might be made up. E.g. Cartwheeling; her mum making her a birthday cake; granda giving her her mother’s necklace; reading a book. This should include memories and activities that she likes doing.

Using mother’s memory from the CD, create a scene without words that shows cutter happy.

Repeat the exercise for healing. Refer to the timeline in the History section.

Develop the scenes from the previous exercise.
‘Mark a moment’ for each character, and/ or add words, and/ or add something to the scene that disrupts their happiness.

Key moments:

This exercise was used as part of the process of developing the script of cutter.
In pairs create two still images:
A pivotal moment of choice
A key moment for cutter in the play.
A key moment for granda in the play.

Add a line of text from the play for each character.

Discuss as a class what has been learnt.
CHARACTER: Using and applying voice and movement

cutter is written for two actors. At various points in the script, cutter and granda ‘play’ other characters.

Working alone, choose to play cutter or granda.

Students choosing cutter should look at the school scene. Pg. 5.
Students choosing granda should look at the Serial Killers scene on Pg. 19 - 20

Rehearse the section. Make sure to differentiate the different characters using voice and movement.

Show some of these to the class.

Look at this again. Get into pairs and try the same scenes with two actors. The second actor takes on the parts that aren’t actually Granda (i.e. TV voice and nurse) or cutter (i.e. playground chant and teacher).

Discuss: What difference does it make when the scenes are played by only one actor.
SCRIPT EXTRACTS: Cutter & Granda
school scene pg.5 and serial killers pg.19-20

**Cutter**  
/as playground chant/ cu-tter. cu-tter. cut cut cut.  
cu-tter. cu-tter. cut cut cut.

**As herself**  
theres worse names t be called than that.

**In their faces, makin a fist**  
want some blood. nuuh?  
well back off. back. off

**As teacher**  
must be hard growin up without yr maa. yr havin a tough time?

**As herself**  
me grandas fine  
... but ...

**As teacher**  
but wat? ... but nothin. right?

**As herself**  
wat about those things only mothers can do? he's a good man but maybe?

**As teacher**  
... look if theres anythin yu wanna talk about now... later: aam here 4 yu ...

**As herself**  
but aa cdnt name all those things between a mother & her daughter, jes cdnt.  
sometimes aa dont wanna box, dont wanna fight, wanna get ma hair braided up
fine & ... tho that teacher encouraged us t fight too ... wen th time wz right.

**Granda**  
lung cancer from breathin in all that crap down th mines.  
they took me into hospital t die.  
said it wz 4 th best.  
hospital stank ov biscuits & tea & piss: enuf t kill anybody

got out ma bed walked thru t where they wz  
mimics fellow patients glazed-eye look

lyin there stoned on out-ov-date loraz, lorazepam watchin

**TV voice**  
serial killers on ITV

**Own voice**  
MAAAN! turned back t ma bed. lay down. laffed.

gallows humor. aa guess.

that TV! on all hours. too loud. fixed t top gear, mass murder or casualty.

drillin dross into ma head til aa wanna scream. aam dyin & theres no
peace, none @ all.

**Singin loudly**  
bits from TV anthems hes been forced t endure, (add/improvise yr own from 1997)

match ov th day / news @ 1 / neighbours / east enders / news @ 6 /

brookside / coronation street / blue peter / news @ 10

packed ma stuff into those green hospital carrierbags.

signed maself out genst their advice.

they tried keepin me in t die.

**Nurses voice**  
4 th best.

**Own voice**  
went out front waitin on ma granddaughter, on her takin me home

**Cutter enters, silently takes his bag, carries it 4 him**

she came & took me home ...

a good lass. really she is. th best

home t die ... & in this - no more fear, even. no time t fear.
on ma way out, can feel it within.

years ov regrets, those bloody mines
- those great clouds ov dust, a dark army invadin ma body.

**Weepin**  
but th time 4 me t fear is past.
th only question left is wat will become ov ma gran-daughter?
wat will become ov her?
HISTORY: cutter Time Line - by sean burn

1928: granda born. brought up by familyless uncle in rural trinidad.

1941: uncle dies. granda leaves for port of spain, age 13 / 14. learns to box. fight. win

1945: 2nd jan, granda enlists, underage. 17 but says he’s 18. fights out last months WWII - navy. (very little action. mostly training. final naval patrols)

1946: ship returns to england. granda finds work in south wales mines. aged 18

1953: meets siobhan, aged 15, he is 25. ‘courting on-off-on’.

1956: jo-ann, cutters mother born. (conceived 1955 - siobhan, 17. this is 1st time he sleeps with her, tho the families accuse him of sex earlier)

1958: race riots, nottinghill

1960: siobhan meets frank at weekend in rhyl. forgets her early life. abandons her ‘young’ family.

1968: enoch powells infamous racist speech ‘rivers of blood’ is made.

1979: cutter (real name louise) born: one of the first thatchers children. (born in the early morning of th general election ‘victory’)

1983-4: miners strike.


1990: jo-ann - cutters mother dies, aged 34. (cutter aged 11)

1992: visiting notting hill carnival. shadows on grandas lungs. 5 years of decline / illness follow. cutter becomes ‘head’ of the family. age 13. shopping etc.


1997: cutter 18+ (not yet 19), adult, and alone granda dies, age 69 new labour elected. (cutters life spans the tory years - this is significant: the coal story underpinning it all)
HISTORY:

Split the class into groups of four or five.
Using the timeline given on the opposite page as a guideline to creating your own timeline using different materials and techniques.
Think about what each date represents through colours, pictures or stories.

Each group chooses a moment from the timeline that captures their imagination and curiosity. This should be a moment that isn’t in the play.

Create and share the improvisations.

Discuss how this work has deepened the understanding of the characters, story, issues in the play.

Margaret Thatcher:

cutter was born in the early morning of 4th May 1979, the day that the Conservatives, led by Margaret Thatcher, won the general election. She was one of the first “Thatcher’s children”.

Examine how other playwrights have explored the Thatcher government and its legacy in the following plays:

_Thatcher’s Children_ by Trevor Griffiths (Faber, London, 1994)
_Top Girls_ by Caryl Churchill (Methuen, London, 1992)

These two plays both examine life during Thatcher’s time in power. Examining people and their existence.

What is also so poignant is the aftermath and the picking up of the pieces left by numerous policies, cuts and setbacks.

Both plays are a good resource to compare and contrast with the world in which cutter and her granda exist.

Trinidad:

Remember that child - no matter what others say, no matter what they call you - coal is beautiful, precious, black. Contains th memory of its beginnings. & crushed, it contains power unimaginined.

cutter, scene 1, p. 2

The first Caribbean carnival was held in Trinidad in the 1820s or 1830s. It gained momentum following the Abolition of Slavery Act, and spread throughout the Caribbean.

European Carnival had been actually introduced to Trinidad around 1785, as the French settlers began to arrive. The tradition caught on quickly, and the wealthy planters held masked balls. Obviously banned from the masked balls of the French, the slaves would hold their own little carnivals in their backyards - using their own rituals and folklore, but also imitating their masters’ behaviour at the masked balls.

For African people, carnival became a way to express their power as individuals, as well as their rich cultural traditions. After the abolition of slavery, the freed Africans’ carnival celebrations spread to the streets and grew more and more
elaborate, soon becoming more popular than the balls.

Today, carnival in Trinidad is like a mirror that reflects the faces the many immigrants who have come to this island nation from Europe, Africa, India, and China. African, Asian, and American Indian influences have been particularly strong.

Carnival is such an important aspect of life in Trinidad that many schools believe that sponsoring a carnival band is a way to teach young people about their roots and culture. In Trinidad’s Kiddies Carnival, hundreds of schools and community organisations participate! In this way, communities work together to develop stronger friendships and greater respect for the many cultures that make up Trinidad.


Discuss as a group how granda feels about his Trinidadian roots - and how he passes this onto cutter.

Is our cultural identity and past important to us in the present day?

Identify moments in the script that demonstrate granda’s feelings about his Trinidadian roots.

HISTORY: Trinidad continued:
The miners’ strike lasted a year and was one of the longest and possibly most damaging industrial disputes ever seen in Britain.

In 1984, the National Coal Board announced they intended to close 20 pits. 20,000 jobs would be lost, and many communities in the North of England and Wales would lose their primary source of employment. Depending upon the impact of the proposed closures in their own areas, miners in various coal fields began strike action.

The strike gained momentum and so Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) then declared unballoted strikes in the various coal fields to be a national strike - he called for strike action from NUM members in all coal fields.

After nearly a year of hardship and violence, the strike ended on March 3, 1985, when the NUM conceded defeat, faced as it was with an impoverished membership and hostile government.

Arthur Scargill finally retired as NUM president in 2002. Figures for 2002 show there were just 13 deep coal mines in the country where once there were 170 and the once mighty NUM now has a membership of 5,000 when once most of the country’s then 187,000 miners were members.
HISTORY: Miner’s Strike: continued

Newspaper article: A true-life story:

Stuart Taylorson was the nine-year-old son of one of these miners and can clearly remember the hardship of the strike year.

There were about 3,500 people in our village who worked down the pit. Easington wasn’t one of the pits that was going to be hit, and as a kid I didn’t really understand why my dad was going on strike. Financially it was horrendous. We didn’t know where the next loaf of bread or pint of milk was coming from, nor did we know when we’d have hot water. Me and my little brother used to go down to the beach and scoop up the sea coal because the coal supply in the house was going down slowly and we had to keep topping it up.

My dad never thought about going back to work because he believed in his job so much. My parents had a really rocky time as well with financial stress and trying to find food to feed us. We lived on potatoes mainly, and potatoes as a staple diet isn’t really good. My dad had an allotment so we could grow some of our own produce. But it was all vegetables - we were unable to afford meat and bread.

Christmas was an immense strain. Because we were below the bread-line my mum and dad couldn’t afford to go out and buy presents as we would now. I think it was a charity in Sweden or Norway that organised presents to be sent over and they were distributed to the miners’ kids. I received a pair of shoes, a couple of games, a bar of chocolate and a jumper. I remember seeing this little brown box with, “Have a good Christmas through the miners’ strike” written on it. It was quite amazing. I remember thinking, “We haven’t got any money - how have my parents got these?”

There was a big social club for miners’ in Easington Colliery at the time. They started producing meals for the miners and we could go along as long as we had our dad’s tally number. All the children and some adults would go along. There was the play scheme as well, which was absolutely fantastic. There was a massive field by the colliery club where games were held which kept us busy through the summer holidays. My dad had friends who ran it and all the miners’ kids were invited. Before the strike we used to go down to Torquay for a holiday every year and the play scheme took us out of the despair of not being able to see grandparents that year.

When my dad went back to work it started to get easier but it wasn’t the area we knew anymore - people had moved on and the community spirit started to fall. The community had been shattered. You didn’t have the feeling you had before the strike. There was a lot of support. Everybody knew everyone’s business which was good in some ways and bad in others - but after the strike nobody cared any more.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisdday/hi/witness/march/12/newsid_3498000/3498166.stm

FILMS

**Brassed Off** (dir. Mark Herman 1996)
This is a very accessible film about the miner’s strike.

**Billy Elliot** (dir. Stephen Daldry, 2000)
The strike provides the backdrop for this film. It effectively demonstrates the impact of the strike on a community.

There are several interesting 20th Anniversary articles about the strike at [www.newsbbc.co.uk/indepth](http://www.newsbbc.co.uk/indepth)
**STYLE AND CONVENTIONS**

*cutter* is not a naturalistic play. sean burn uses a variety of conventions to tell the story.

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Each of these conventions is used in the play. What effect do they have?

- cutter and granda playing extra characters: school scene / serial killers scene. Pg.5/ Pg.19-20
- Rap: hey mr nazi. Pg.30
- Characters talking offstage: Pg.23
- Dead characters on-stage: Pg.2-8
- granda commentating on the boxing matches: Pg.17

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Discuss in groups what other theatrical conventions occur in the play?

What effect do these conventions have on the action?

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In pairs, try out the examples above to see how this non-naturalistic writing could be performed.

In pairs pick one of the scenes from the play and try it out.

Decide what the objectives are of the characters in the scene you have chosen.

Using these objectives, try to tell the same part of the story through a naturalistic improvisation.

Change the objectives of each characters and repeat this process.

Share each improvisation followed by the initial scene.

Discuss these differences.
2. CUTTER - THEMES AND ISSUES

SELF-HARM

Self harm is causing deliberate hurt to your own body, most commonly by cutting, but also by burning, abusing drugs, alcohol or other substances. This occurs at times of extreme anger, distress and low self-esteem, in order to either create a physical manifestation of the negative feelings which can then be dealt with, or alternatively to punish yourself. Sometimes linked with hearing voices - particularly as a way of stopping the voices.

From Self-harm – a Fact sheet from the Mental Health Foundation

Self-mutilation is a very different issue to suicide. It is a controlled pain personal to you, allowing you to live/exist to some degree.

Richey James Edwards

Richey James Edwards of the Welsh band Manic Street Preachers had a history of self-harm, anorexia and alcoholism.

In 1991, during an interview with Steve Lamacq of New Musical Express (NME), James took a razor blade from his shirtsleeve and carved the words “4REAL” into his arm. Lamacq had insinuated that the band’s revolutionary lyrics might be bluff. “Richey was so calm, so absolutely calm. He didn’t look in any pain, whatever. He could almost have been writing on his arm in ballpoint pen,” Lamacq said.

The incident received much publicity, as did James’ disappearance in 1995. He checked out of a hotel room, leaving his belongings and is missing, presumed dead. His car was found close to the Severn Bridge (a notorious suicide point). However, friends, family and fans believe he is still alive and there have been alleged sightings of him from Goa to the Canary Islands.

In April 2004, the Mental Health Foundation and the Camelot Foundation launched a 2-year study into self-harm amongst British teenagers. For further details, please visit [www.selfharmuk.org](http://www.selfharmuk.org)
SELF-HARM - GIRLS WHO CUT

Self-harm is increasing among children as young as six. Hilary Freeman reports on why so many are turning to the razor, and one teenager tells her story

Tuesday September 2, 2003
The Guardian

Paula is 12. She doesn’t get on with her parents because they dislike her friends and complain that she stays out too late. Lately, they have been having huge, ugly rows which leave Paula feeling angry and upset. She will go to her room and take the razor she uses to shave her legs out of the drawer. Then she will drag it along her wrists or upper arms, cutting deep into the flesh until her blood pours. It makes her feel better, less angry and raw.

Her friends know she does it and understand why. Several of them cut themselves too.

What is most shocking about Paula’s story is not that she regularly mutilates her body but that in doing so she is not unusual. For girls like her - and less commonly, boys - self-harm is a normal, almost banal response to emotional pain. Last week, the BBC Six O’Clock News released the results of a survey of 50 accident and emergency departments, which found that 66% of staff believed cases of child and adolescent self-harm were increasing.

They reported seeing an average of 13 cases per month, with one department reporting three a day. More worryingly, most thought the age of self-harmers was falling. The average age of those treated was just 11, but children as young as six were admitted with self-inflicted injuries.

Since hospitals only see cases which require medical attention, the true number of child self-harmers must be countless times higher. Earlier this year, the Samaritans commissioned a study of teenage self-harm, conducted by the Centre for Suicide Research at Oxford University. After quizzing 6,000 teenagers it concluded that more than one in 10 adolescents has deliberately cut themselves at some time. Girls were almost four times as likely as boys to do so. Only 13% of self-harm incidents had led to a hospital visit ......

According to Dr Michaela Swales, a lecturer practitioner in clinical psychology at the University of Wales, the answer is that self-harming is not as far from normal behaviour as we might believe. “Cutting oneself is simply an unhealthy habit, not that different from drowning one’s sorrows in a few drinks, drug taking or smoking cigarettes to relieve stress,” she says. “Rationally, we know that smoking is bad for our health and will harm us in the long-term. But in the short-term it makes us feel better, so we do it. It’s the same for those who cut themselves.”

Swales says children and teenagers who cut themselves do not necessarily have mental health problems: “There are many and varied reasons why people self-harm, but broadly there are three explanations. The first category describes young people who use cutting as a way of coping with a situation, as a way of releasing tension or changing an unpleasant emotional state. For some, physical pain is more bearable than emotional pain.

“Second, some young people use self-harm to give them a sense of control over a situation which they can’t control, such as bullying for example.

“Finally, self-harm is used by some young people as a way of validating their suffering. A child who has been abused may feel that nobody believes them because they don’t show any visible marks. By harming themselves they create a physical manifestation of their inner pain.” ...

The full article is at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/health/story/0,3605,1033775,00.html

For further articles on this subject please see resource section at the end of the pack.
SELF-HARM

You say those things to me...
A poem written by angelofdarkness aged 14.

This poem was posted on the Creativity Message Board at the National Self-Harm Network website: www.nshn.co.uk

you say those things to me
but you do not know how much hurt they cause,
the pain inside is so much,
because i keep it all inside,
but you do not see this,
in your little world
i am selfish,
i am heartless,
i am feelingless,
between the real world, or just my world,
i do feel things,
between my sadness, my pain,
and you still think that i am fine,
you still think that nothing’s wrong,
but that is not true,
for every time you turn away, showing your pain,
i hide in a room, to let out my pain,

though we have different methods,
my method is more physical, more secret,
i reach for that blade, shiny as it is,
trying to stop......i can’t,
and again, i feel that sting and see what i’ve done,
the redness that starts to leak,
oh no, what have i done?
why can’t this stop?
i put down the blade, the feel of release,
the red stains my clothes, i wash it away
for fear of you finding out,
my secret.
i hear you nearby,
and i have to face you again,
and to do so, i put on a mask,
so you cannot see,
from your world, into mine

Why does cutter self-harm? Draw on the resources above in your discussion. Highlight examples in the play text and compare and contrast them to lines in the poem.

Choose one line from one of the range of resources:
The poem: You say those things to me
The newspaper article: Girls Who Cut
The information and picture of Richey Edwards
The excerpt from the leaflet.
Use this as a starting point to create a scene about self-harm.

FORUM THEATRE

2 volunteers from the group should enact the end of the carnival scene.

Replay the scene, where anyone watching can stop the action, and come up and replace whoever is playing cutter. They then come up and improvise with granda, to see if they can help cutter get to a better place: could cutter say anything else/anything more to granda?

Extend the forum, creating improvisations with more volunteers as cutter: Who else could cutter tell about the self-harm? What might happen? Try out some of the scenes and see if they can help cutter change her story.

Within this, find moments to hot seat cutter and granda to find out how they are feeling.
cutter re-enters. sinks t knees looks 4 somethin t cut wi. pulls up sleeves exposin bandage/plaster coverin cuts/scars. 1st view shd shock.
granda enters, looks, wat in th name ov hell IS THIS? he grabs her arms. scene is frozen - perhaps 10 seconds in utter disbelief before she pulls away
cutter leave me be, leave me be
granda yr ma flesh, ma blood
cutter this is mine. flesh. mine - blood. but yu dont buy th tampax so waddyu / know?
granda wat th hell is goin on? someone done this t yu? / gimme their names
cutter / no
granda wat do yu mean no. yu didnt ... yu cdnt ... do this yrself?
cutter sometimes aa get so low
granda yr gonna STOP / this now
cutter collapsin into his arms / aa miss maa
granda ssh-shshin, strokin her hair ma daughter, yr maa, aa miss her too but. aam no leav in yer ... jes gotta take it easy, yu too.
cutter take it easy: thats th best doctors can give yu?
granda this has t stop. aa cant believe no flesh & blood ov mine ... long pause then touchin bandages since wen?
cutter (beat) aa love yu.
granda aa know yu do girl, aa know yu do he lifts then kisses th necklace gently. cutter kisses it as before. granda puts it back yr maas. ma daughters. ma daughter. & now its yrs, ma treasure, now its yrs. liftin cutters arms. but why?
cutter cos maas gone
granda aa miss her too yu know. thumps chest miss her here like hell
cutter aam lonely, & no-1 t hold me, hold me tight, t talk bout all those things & ... & all th names & th pressures &
granda shoosh girl
cutter yu think its gonna get easier now yr dyin & soon aall have no-1
granda love yu, aa do... so much it hurts but ...he dances her gently around & off
**BEREAVEMENT**

**cutter:** that's what they said over maa. *hit.* what they said & then... *hit* more shadows on her breasts. *hit* & taken back to the hospital *hit* only there was nothing left to cut, t cut out. *hit* CANCERS ALL OVER, it's all over &...

**cutter,** carnival scene, pg. 10

**cutter:** th suck ov air, th rasp ov his breath, & then...
no breathin, no breath. aa turn, turn t him paper crumpled t ball in silence granda leaves but he wz gone. ... soaked his wool cardie thru as aa sobbed & rocked & not wantin t let go cryin cryin, fire dyin, but he wz gone ... only then did aa make th call **cutter,** samaritans scene, pg. 22

**cutter:** granda: why did yu go leave me?
maa. why did yu die so long ago?? leavin me; ... leavin me...

**cutter,** beginnin th fightback scene, pg. 27

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**FILMS**

**Stand by Me** (dir. Rob Reiner 1986)
After the death of his brother Gordy goes on a journey with three friends to search for a dead body. It is a coming of age film and one that looks at death, loss and the memories of childhood. A useful resource as a stimulus for dealing with bereavement and growing up.

**In America** (dir. Jim Sheridan 2002)
An Irish family relocate to America after the death of their son/brother and struggle to come to terms with a new country, a new culture and a new way of life. A good resource for dealing with parental bereavement and the loss of a sibling.
taught yu best aa cd girl but that werent enuf
cutter, pg.17

Children: An extract from The Prophet
And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said,
“Speak to us of Children.”
And he said:
Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit,
not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you
with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer’s hand be for gladness;
For even as he loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that
is stable.


Make a list of everything you think a parent should provide for a child.
How many of these does granda provide for cutter?
Does he provide anything additional to your original list, compare this with the
poem?
What else does cutter need that granda can’t provide?
Is there anyone else could she get this from?

In groups create a series of still images showing what granda gives cutter as a
parent. Create soundscapes to accompany the series or use music from the play.

Divide the group in half.
One half of the group in pairs should create a series of still images showing what
else cutter needs.
The other half of the group should use the poem above as a stimulus. Enhance
these images using soundscapes.

PLAYS (for further details about these resources see Resource section).
The Caucasian Chalk Circle by Bertolt Brecht
East is East by Ayub Khan-Din (1997 Nick Hern Books, London)
FILM
East is East (dir. Damien O’Donnell 1999)
Boyz’n’the Hood (dir. John Singleton 1991)
Boxing is a controversial sport. Discuss the group’s opinions about the sport, drawing out this controversy.

What do the group think is the relationship between boxing and self-harm?

How does Sean Burn use boxing as an issue, and as a metaphor in the play?

In pairs, give the group pgs. 15-17 to read

In pairs try out this scene from cutter.
Pay particular attention to the rhythm/pace, contrasts (sounds and silence) and the anti-climax.

What effect does Granda’s boxing commentary have on the scene in performance?

Mohammed and Laila Ali

The man who views the world at 50 the same way he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life.
The man who has no imagination has no wings

Mohammed Ali

Mohammed Ali was possibly the most famous boxer of all time. His daughter, Laila is now also a professional boxer.

Recently some young Muslim women in India have been taking up boxing. Most of them come from desperately poor areas of Calcutta. There is much resistance to them boxing from their community. Many of these young women are inspired by Laila Ali, who is also a Muslim.

Websites
Read more at:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3396613.stm
http://www.boloji.com/wfs/wfs186.htm
boxin and losin scene pg.15 -17

cutter  miss jones.  granda.  ringside.  her not lookin.  his grin.  me butterflyin.  them both shoutin

granda/cutter  shoutin  get in there.  & win!
cutter enters ring
granda  laydeez, gennelmen  in th black corner: lemme hear a big hand playin th audience  aa said lemme hear yu ...
cutter punchin air
granda  thas better ...  th rebel star, swansea snarler, queen ov th M4, avenger ov th valleys, CUTTER: wat yu gotta say before th fight girl?
cutter continues punchin air etc
granda  we know yu got th poetry within - we seen yr footwork! wats th rap on yu, girl? wats th rap on yu?
cutter  hesitantly @ 1st  gettin more confident choose t fight or yu can choose flight or bury yr head cos lifes too great a fright but we all gotta choice in th rules we live by we all got choice in th rules we live by louder  they call me cutter  & aav just turned 18 but wz taught by greatest fighter aav ever seen he taught me t fight hard but fair  take on yr rules cos we all got some choice in how we get by
granda  big round 4 cu-tter cu-tter cu-tter
cutter  LOUD  aam gonna throw some punches before aa lie down aam gonna throw some punches before aa die down

bell rings  she starts t box  grandas commentary fast & furious
granda  round 3 & level on points, each lookin 4 th knockout & now ... circlin, circlin. cutter may not have th reach & weights a little down but she’s sure got speed & silence oh. no. cutter stumbles recovers & ...  theyr back up lookin 4 an openin lookin t open up feint drive drive in reach skin, open up & YES did yu see that oh killer maan killer. YES. now weavin defensive neat steps. doin th dance th dance its in th stance get yr body behind get in good & fast & out again aa taught her that CU-TTER  CU-TTER & silence ooooh thats gotta sting. keep yr neck in girl, yr neck in. theyr really squarin off t it now, vi cious wat a cut. ooooh ... cutters not taken it good, th glints gone from her eyes. a cut above her eye, streamin blood its is it its aa think yes refs callin a halt theyr countin cutter out countin her down aaaaah she cdov cdov been
cutter - shrunken - turns t audience moppin sweat / blood from eye-cut
**BOXING:**

*Glow* by Manjinder Virk is another play about a young female boxer. Many of the questions/issues/images are similar to those in *cutter*, although the play is very different in style.

Kul is the heroine in *Glow* and, like cutter, her mother is dead. She also struggles with growing up as a woman without a mother-figure. Her father doesn’t approve of her boxing, and she spends much of the play speaking to Mohammed-Ali-within-her-head for support with boxing and with life.

In the scene below, Kul speaks to her father Raj.

**Extract from Scene 13**

RAJ It has been a long time since we both sat together  
(Beat) 
KUL Dad, did you go to school with Mum? 
RAJ What 
KUL Were you at the same school as Mum? 
RAJ Hers was in the next village. 
KUL Do you remember when you first talked to her? How old were you both? 
RAJ It was a long time ago. (Beat) 
KUL I’m fighting in the semi’s tomorrow. 
RAJ You are still fighting then. 
KUL I got you a ticket. It’s a good seat. Coach said you’ll be allowed to come to the dressing room after. If you want to. 
RAJ I do not want to watch my daughter being hit. 
KUL I don’t get hit. 
RAJ It is not right. 
KUL But Dad you got me into it. 
RAJ For self-defence. 
KUL Yeah and I use it for that as well. 
RAJ I want you to be safe. 
KUL I am safe. (Beat) 
KUL Mum watched every game you played at college, didn’t she? (Raj nods) I can’t believe Mum did that. I thought she hated sports. 
RAJ I don’t know. (Beat) 
KUL What did she like doing? 
RAJ I can’t remember. 
KUL She used to sing when she was cooking. 
RAJ Are you trying to upset me? 
KUL No… 
RAJ You have to torture me in this way just because I ask you not to box? You think I need reminding of my pain? 
KUL Sorry… 
RAJ I have enough to deal with. People sucking blood from me in every direction. Do you know how much money I am owing? 
KUL No. 
RAJ No you don’t! How can you understand? Raj exits. Pause. 
KUL I need some money, Dad.

*Kul sits for a moment and then goes to the jar. She needs the money for [sanitary] pads - she takes out two pounds.*
BOXING:

In pairs ask the group to prepare this scene from *Glow*

Show two or three of these and discuss these as a group.

Discuss how the themes, questions and images are similar to those in *cutter*.

Discuss how the styles of the plays differ.

Ask the group to work on further scenes from *Glow*.

Compare and contrast these with *cutter*.

Before female boxing matches, the women have to take a pregnancy test. The commentators announce that the women are not pregnant. If they were found to be pregnant, the women would not be allowed to enter the ring.

Read the group the information above about pregnancy testing for women boxers.

Ask the group what they think about this information - how does it make them feel?

In small groups ask the group to make a still-image that explores issues around women boxing.

Enhance these still-images with thought-tracking, narration or other techniques.

Create short scenes about women in the world of boxing.

WEBSITE:

Please see the following article for further information about female boxers

http://www.celebagents.co.uk/html/cathybrown.html

FILM

*Girlfight* (cert 15) dir. Karyn Kusama

PLAYS

*Glow* by Manjinder Virk

Theatre Centre: Plays for Young People Vol.1 (Aurora Metro, 2003)

See the Resources Section for details of how to buy this play.
3. CUTTER - THE PRODUCTION

Have a look at the rehearsal photos throughout this pack.

What do they tell you about the rehearsal process?

INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE cutter CREATIVE TEAM

sean burn - writer

How did you start to write this play?

1st i want to say its an honour to see my work put in the context ov tom leonard. he was the writer that 1st got me published back in the 80's in the west coast magazine. he's such an honest, naked, unadorned, political writer - & has had a huge influence on a whole generation ov writers.

as far as this play goes - there were 2 elements to the process. the 1st, more generic point was that i was invited onto a seed writers scheme with half moon to develop some new ideas for work. writing often comes from these more practical developments / awards / commissions etc - although this doesnt dictate the contents. its a generous way ov working with the writer building a slow relationship with the theatre & each able to support the other, as well as check each other out. the theatre wanted some writing - no set topic, age group, or particular end point - just a development process which allowed us all to connect & see if something longer-term might develop.

so i was in this situation ov being able to do some writing & looking for what it might be. now my own philosophy ov writing is that it changes lives; or at least has this potential. the best writing can open something up, explain something, make us laugh, believe, feel, can offer relief, hope, can explore pain etc - & theatre is perhaps the most direct ov these methods. i didnt enjoy school, didnt enjoy growing up, it was mostly a very unhappy time - but i loved writing. we had a local writer - no-one famous - who came into the school a few times & he encouraged us to tell our own stories, & that encouragement has lived with me, & kept me going.

1 ov the things i most remember about growing up was the issue ov thatcher - the estates where i was living were destroyed by her governments policies, including the miners strike. the miners strike gutted communities, ripped the hearts out ov them. in the wake ov that hopelessness thats when the drugs came in. i kept writing, & it was what kept me afloat. i watched so many other people destroyed, written off. milan kundera once wrote - 'the triumph of people over power is the triumph of memory over forgetting'. writing is this triumph ov remembering over forgetting; i wanted to write something ov that. talking to young people about thatcher/the miners strike - i realised they didnt know what i was talking about, thats when i latched onto writing a play about a mining or ex-mining community. that was the 1st point.

i'd never previously really written sympathetic male characters in my plays or prose - usually the men are flawed, weak, useless, violent, abusers, or passive, accepting ov fate & its the women who are intelligent, questioning, fighting, struggling through. i've found it so hard to write a sympathetic male character but with granda i started to explore this sympathetic side. at the
INTERVIEWS: sean burn cont’d

time i was having serious health problems - including 6 months in a psychiatric hospital - & i came into contact with a fantastic nurse - raymond khadoo from trinidad - who helped keep me going; it was some aspects ov his personality - his positiveness, his forcefulness, his way ov fighting thru - that i used as a starting point for granda. one day ray took me outside and said - i want to take yu all and lift yu up to the sun.

as for louise (cutter) - although loved, she’s had it tough growing up; i could identify with that. i specifically wanted to write about self-harm as well - not from some academic standpoint - but because its some ov what i’ve been thru & i really wanted it named, explored, in public - put in a place where the issue is talked about, thought about, not stigmatised. i hope it doesnt swamp her life, she does literally fight thru - but its a hell ov a battle, & i wanted to honour & respect that, & do so from a position ov knowledge. i wanted to offer some hope, but recognise the realities ov the battle we all have to go thru, we all face.

How did it change through the development process?

as mentioned before, half moon had this generous development model where we spent a year & a half talking, writing etc, really structuring, shaping, questioning, challenging every aspect ov the characters & script before it as commissioned so the characters were complex, developed, & literally standing on their own 2 feet when it came to the commissioning ov the script.

we then went through 4 drafts - each 1 seen by Vishni & Chris (Elwell, Director ov Half Moon,) plus 1 draft was worked on by school kids & another by professional actors - over the course ov a year; this was a pretty fundamental examination ov all aspects ov the play - hard work, hard going, i learnt a lot, we all did - but also 1 necessary to the communal or collaborative nature ov theatre. i’ve previously worked with actors/directors where we’ve argued over the script. in theatre i feel that there are fundamental philosophies that i have to stick by as a writer, whilst the actual style, the way they speak or behave or act, their actual lines - can be compromised over. fortunately, half moon have proven to be a really great team, & i’ve had a wonderful if tough time working with them on the script, going thru this development process to make it really stand up, to make it as true as possible, to really bring it all to life; so quite an organic process ov change & 1 necessary to bring a script to life.
Vishni Velada-Billson - Director

What excited you most about working on Cutter?

I first got excited about Cutter when I began working on an extract from it with a group of 14-17 year olds. Their reaction to the content, language and story confirmed my ideas that Cutter could really work as piece for the 13+ age range. I really liked the fact that Cutter is written in quite an abstract style with very few stage directions, enabling me to think really imaginatively about staging, movement and how to engage the audience. As the script developed, with each new draft I became more excited.

I am really enjoying working with the composers and the set designer who have both embraced my ideas whilst bring their own expertise and imaginative responses to the play. Working with all three of these people has brought a whole new energy to the piece in the early stages of its development. At the time of writing this I am about to cast the show and we are holding auditions next week, I am excited about choosing the actors who I think will best be able to tell the story of Cutter.

As a director, what do you particularly need to think about when you are working on a new play?

My role as the director is to bring the play from the page to a live theatre performance. I focus upon the themes raised in the play and think about the main focus of each scene whilst trying to keep an overall picture of the whole play firmly in mind. I think about each characters individual journey and story within the play and the most significant moments of interaction between them. I keep in mind how the design, music and lighting will effect and support the piece.

I will need to make sure the actors I am working with understand my vision for the play and that myself and the creative team are working together to clearly communicate to our audience. During rehearsal we will need to think as a creative team about the rhythm of the play and ensure the scenes vary in pace and keep the audience engaged at all times.

What rehearsal techniques are you planning?

I am planning to explore the play from a very physical perspective. The piece lends itself to movement and physicalisation. I hope to enable the actors to have an intimate understanding and empathy with the themes and issues raised in the play and that we as a company can effectively communicate these through physical and vocal techniques. I will be exploring how we can communicate through our bodies with little or no speech. I will focus upon how we can show ‘loss’ within the play and how to bring some lightness to the story. There are very few times when the characters actually interact directly with one another I hope to uses some exercises to explore this further and experiment with different ways of the characters interacting.

I want to think about how we show the cutting on stage. We will explore self-harm through abstract and naturalistic movement and see which fits best. We will also examine how the two actors become other characters within the story; for this we will use a range of exercises that incorporate voice and movement, stillness and levels.
Throughout the rehearsals we will be experimenting with the music and set and reacting to how this can impact upon specific aspects of the play. It is our aim to have the soundtrack and set ready for the first day of rehearsals.

Finally it is my aim to create a positive and supportive environment where the actors feel free to explore new ideas and offer their interpretations of the piece. It will be my role as the director to respond to ideas arising throughout the rehearsal period and offer exercises and techniques to help shape these ideas and place the ones that work into the finished production of cutter.
INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE cutter CREATIVE TEAM

Leslie Travers - Designer

What were your first design ideas when you read the script?

My first idea was to create a world where the story could unfold in a fluid and dynamic way. I did not want to create a set that was decorative that the actors would perform in front of and not touch or stand on. Rather, the set should be adaptable and provide many different spaces and levels that the actors can explore, literally by climbing on it and moving it around.

How are you going to approach creating the different locations in the play?

The set looks as if it is abstract. I researched many of the locations in the play and the design I came up with is a combination of all of many of them - a coalmine, boxing ring, school etc. With the way the actors use the set it will suggest the different locations. The design should not only suggest locations but it also has the ability to provide a barrier between the two characters, sometimes enclosing and trapping them inside its structure, this has more to do with the emotions and feelings of the characters.

As in a painting or a piece of sculpture, it shows visually how the character is feeling on the inside. During the rehearsal period we will find out how to create even more possible uses for the set.
INTERVIEWS:

INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE cutter CREATIVE TEAM

Paul Emile & Jim Mortimore - Composers

What were your first composition ideas when you read the script?

Our first composition ideas when we read the script, I think, were based around identifying musical styles that would represent the two main characters. And how to visualise the mood and texture of the piece.

What different ways do you think you’ll use music in the play?

We think we will use music in the play to infuse the cultural diversity, pain, reflection, happiness and sorrow, hopefully adding to the pace of the stage production to keep the audiences’ attention.

CD soundtrack
(if this CD is missing please call Half Moon)
INTERVIEWS:

INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE cutter CREATIVE TEAM

Maria Thomas - cutter/ louise

How did you prepare for the part of cutter? What has been the most different or interesting part of the process so far (after week 1 of rehearsals)?

To prepare for cutter I read the script and looked at the issues discussed like self harm and boxing. I went to the library and got the only book out on self harm called *Crying with Pain* which looks at depression and looks at the levels of self harm and its connections with suicide and schizophrenia. The second book is about a female boxer called Kate Seckules and she talks about how she got into boxing; her hopes and fears. I then looked up the coal miners strike on the internet to get an idea of where it all started and what communities were affected. I also got hold of a copy of the *Morning Star* newspaper that is mentioned in the script and its context. I’ve also spoken to my niece and her experiences at school in terms of friends and how she feels about her school environment.

I have taken a few boxing classes at my gym to gain an idea of the moves and spoke to my teacher who used to box, this was very useful for technique and to build stamina. I have looked closely at the text and analysed what is being said.

After week one of rehearsals I am in pain! I have never worked on a production that’s been so physical, looking at the text and then immediately putting it on its feet has been great. It allows you to explore the text without becoming too analytical about it. It’s been an effective way of working.

How has this rehearsal process differed from your previous experience? Please give examples.

The rehearsal process is very different as usually we look at the text first and then discuss the issues which can take up to two or three days. Whereas with cutter we have put some scenes into action and discussed meaning rather than issues first. The physical element has been new and exciting. We spent a whole day looking at lifts and working with the set, not being afraid of it and using each other for support.

We have also worked physically together with trust exercises which I find can be quite difficult because there can be lots of barriers. However, because the company is small I have found it easier to let go with [my fellow actor] Richie.

We’ve worked quickly on text and scenes that I have found useful in remembering and keeping ideas fresh. Overall the first week has been exciting and informative.
INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF THE cutter CREATIVE TEAM

Richie Campbell - granda

How did you prepare for the part of granda? What has been the most different or interesting part of the process so far (after week 1 of rehearsals)?

Because granda is an older character I looked at possible gestures and mannerisms of people in that age bracket. I also focussed on his background as a character because that is fundamentally what he is trying to teach and give cutter - her heritage.

The most interesting part of rehearsal so far is the time dedicated to the physical work. Although the story and relationship between the two characters is important, the physical work is extremely important because it allows relationships to be explored and understood without the use of words.

How has this rehearsal process differed from your previous experience? Please give examples.

The rehearsal process so far has differed because it has allowed more of ourselves as people to be included within the character, whereas from my own personal experience it has always been about thinking beyond yourself and making that character distant from what you would say or do.
4. RESOURCES & FURTHER RESEARCH

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

SELF-HARM/MENTAL DISTRESS
- Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90 (UK), 1850 60 90 90 (Republic of Ireland)
- ChildLine: 0800 1111
- Read the Signs (mental health awareness campaign for young people): www.readthesigns.org
  - National Self Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk
  - YoungMinds: www.youngminds.org.uk
  - Young People and Self-harm resource www.selfharm.org.uk
  - Self Harm Alliance: 01242 578820
  - www.mentalhealth.org.uk
  - www.selfharmuk.org

BEREAVEMENT
- Childline have published a report into bereavement: I can’t stop feeling sad - Calls to ChildLine about bereavement by Sheila Cross. Available to order from www.childline.org.uk/BereavementReport.asp
- The Child Bereavement Trust have a “for young people” area of their website: www.childbereavement.org.uk

OTHER RESOURCES, REFERENCES AND FURTHER RESEARCH

1. CUTTER - THE PLAY

LANGUAGE
The 6 o-clock news by Tom Leonard.
(From a series called Unrelated Incidents from Intimate Voices - 1984 (3)). You can hear Tom Leonard reading this poem, and read more of his work at www.tomleonard.co.uk

HISTORY
cutter Time Line
- The full version of Enoch Powell’s “Rivers of Blood” speech can be found at various places on the internet, including http://www.hippy.freeserve.co.uk/rofblood.htm.
- Notting Hill race riots - Britain’s first race riots occurred here in August 1958. However, the next year the Notting Hill Carnival began in St. Pancras Town Hall as an unofficial reply to the riots; by 1965 it took to the streets and has grown ever since.
  - www.nottinghillcarnival.org.uk

Thatcher
- Thatcher’s Children by Trevor Griffiths (Faber, London, 1994)
- Top Girls by Caryl Churchill (Methuen, London 1992)
These two plays both examine life during Thatcher’s time in power. Examining people and their existence.
What is also so poignant is the aftermath and the picking up of the pieces left by numerous policies, cuts and setbacks.
Both plays are a good resource to compare and contrast with the world in which cutter and her granda exist.
Trinidad

- Carnival history adapted from [http://www.caribbeanlime.com/carnival%20history.htm](http://www.caribbeanlime.com/carnival%20history.htm)

Miner’s strike

- The miner’s son’s story is from [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday). Go to the website and look at 12th March, then select 1984. There are several other interesting articles and witness accounts.
- There are also several very good 20th anniversary articles about the strike at [www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk) in the “In depth” section.
- Film: *Brassed Off* (dir. Mark Herman 1996)
  
  In the Yorkshire town of Grimley, there has always been a coal mine, just as for the last 111 years there has been a brass band. Tory economic policies, however, are closing coal mines around the country in favor of nuclear power, and Grimley appears to be next on the list. It becomes clear that music is an expression of the human spirit, a bit of beauty and sanity in a harsh world.  
  
  (Extract from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))

- Film: *Billy Elliot* (dir. Stephen Daldry, 2000)
  
  The setting is County Durham in 1984, and things “up north” are even grimmer than usual: the miners’ strike is in full rancorous swing, and 11-year-old Billy’s dad and older brother, miners both, are on the picket lines. Billy has discovered a genius for ballet dancing. Since admitting to such an activity is tantamount, in this fiercely macho culture, Billy keeps it quiet.
  
  The miners’ strike serves largely as background color, but the brief episode when visored and truncheon-wielding cops rampage through neat little terraced houses captures one of the most spiteful episodes in recent British history. (Extract from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))

2. CUTTER - THEMES AND ISSUES

Self-Harm

- *Girls Who Cut* The full article is at: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/health/story/0,3605,1033775,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/health/story/0,3605,1033775,00.html)
- angelofdarkness’ poem was posted on the Creativity Message Board at the National Self Harm Network website: [www.nhsn.co.uk](http://www.nhsn.co.uk)
  
  Other useful articles and websites
  
  [www.selfharmuk.org](http://www.selfharmuk.org)
  
  There are a number of useful and informative articles on the BBC website [http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/health](http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/health)

Bereavement

- [www.childbereavementorg.uk/home/for_young_people/](http://www.childbereavementorg.uk/home/for_young_people/)
- Film: *Stand by Me* (dir. Rob Reiner 1986)
  
  After the death of his brother Gordy goes on a journey with three friends to search for a dead body. It is a coming of age film and one that looks at death, loss and the memories of childhood. A useful resource as a stimulus for dealing with bereavement and growing up.
OTHER RESOURCES, REFERENCES AND FURTHER RESEARCH

- Film: *In America* (dir, Jim Sheridan 2002)
  An Irish family relocate to America after the death of their son/ brother and struggle to come to terms with a new country, a new culture and a new way of life. A good resource for dealing with parental bereavement and the loss of a sibling.

Parenting
- Play: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Bertolt Brecht
  Brecht projects an ancient Chinese story onto a realistic setting in Soviet Georgia. In a theme that echoes the Judgment of Solomon, two women argue over the possession of a child; natural justice is done and the peasant Grusha keeps the child she loves, even though she is not its mother. The Caucasian Chalk Circle is a politically-charged, much-revived and complex example of Brecht’s epic theatre.

  This is a warm, richly funny portrait of the cultural and emotional collisions of a multiracial family in 1971 Salford. Adapted by Ayub Khan-Din from his own stage play, the film centres on Pakistani immigrant George Khan still deeply attached to the moral and political mores of his homeland, but married to Englishwoman Ella. Despite her protestations, Khan is adamant their six sons and daughter, raised to respect traditional Muslim values, must enter into arranged marriages. Looking at the family’s everyday struggles, while bringing an unexpected emotional punch to the scenes of violent confrontation the film also maintains comic momentum and dramatic intensity throughout. (Extract from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))

- Film: *Boyz’n’the Hood* (dir. John Singleton 1991)
  The film focuses around three friends who live in South Central, Los Angeles; a place where drugs, guns, and violence appears to be around every corner. The three friends are Tre, Ricky, and Doughboy. Tre’s father has tried his best to raise Tre into becoming a real man; supplying him with knowledge and wisdom. Ricky has dreams of being a professional football player while his brother, Doughboy, is always getting into some kind of trouble, whether it be with the law or the neighborhood gang-bangers. In the end, the film is about choices and how every action can set off a chain of events. All in all a very real, gritty depiction of the challenges faced at every turn by African American men and women in modern America. (Extract from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))

Boxing
- More about young Indian female boxers at
  [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3396613.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3396613.stm)

- Film: *Girlfight* (cert 15) dir Karyn Kusama
  A simple but compelling story of a young woman in Brooklyn whose violent impulses in school, and her tendency to physicalize her anger, lead her to train as a boxer. Her trainer at first puts her off, but the combination of her desire and her physical prowess changes his mind. Diane is a scowling lightning rod for sudden violence who discovers that she can find a sense of personal grace in boxing—in the training and in the honing of skills—that seems to spill over into her daily life, despite the disapproval of an abusive father. (Extract from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))
OTHER RESOURCES, REFERENCES AND FURTHER RESEARCH

  Available to buy on the website [www.theatre-centre.co.uk](http://www.theatre-centre.co.uk)
  *Glow* by Manjinder Virk is another play about a young female boxer. Many of the questions and issues are similar to those in *cutter*, although the play is very different in style.
  Kul is the heroine in *Glow* and, like *cutter*, her mother is dead. She also struggles with growing up as a woman without a mother-figure. Her father doesn’t approve of her boxing, and she spends much of the play speaking to Mohammed-Ali-within-her-head for support with boxing and with life.

3. CUTTER - THE PRODUCTION

sean burn has got 2 books being published very shortly.
Wrecking Ball Press publishes his first full length poetry collection: 
*never sleep with anyone whose got more scars than yu* - spring 2005 [www.wreckingballpress.com](http://www.wreckingballpress.com)

Maria Thomas mentioned two books in her interview:
*Cry of Pain - Understanding Suicide and Self-Harm*. Mark Williams
(Penguin Group, Penguin Books Ltd)

*The Boxer’s Heart*, Kate Sekules (Aurum Press Ltd)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to...
angelofdarkness, Tom Leonard and Manjinder Virk for the use of their work.
Thanks also to Rory Simpson from Pimlico School, Kiri Tunks and Kathy Hudson from Oaklands School, Aurora Metro Publications and Michael Judge at Theatre Centre.
Half Moon Young People’s Theatre is London’s leading small-scale theatre company working exclusively with young people from birth to aged 17 and their teachers, carers and leaders.

We offer two inter-locking strands of activity – producing and presenting professional original theatre at our base, in venues, and in youth and school settings, and an extensive participatory programme including youth theatres, school and community projects.

We serve principally London and place a particular emphasis upon engaging those often excluded in terms of culture (ethnicity) and ability (disability). Created in 1989, Half Moon’s home on the Stepney/Limehouse borders of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets is a perfect base to engage and explore London’s artistic and cultural diversity. This unique resource provided a place to watch and participate for over 32,000 individuals last year.

For further information on any aspect of the company’s work, please contact:
Chris Elwell (Director): 020 7265 8138  E-mail: chris@halfmoon.org.uk

For information about this pack please contact:
Imogen Kinchin (Projects): 020 7709 8908  E-mail: imogen@halfmoon.org.uk

Main office and information: 020 7265 8138  E-mail: admin@halfmoon.org.uk

Half Moon’s work is supported and funded by:
CUTTER
Tour dates 2004

29th Sept - 1st October: Half Moon Young People’s Theatre 020 7709 8908

5th - 9th October: New Wimbledon Studios 08700 606646

14th - 16th October: Croydon Clocktower 020 8253 1030

18th - 20th October: Lyric Hammersmith 08700 500511

21st October: Redbridge Drama Centre 020 8504 5451

8th November: Oval House for schools 020 7709 8908 (book at Half Moon)

9th November: North Westminster Studios 020 7641 8424

10th - 12th November: Harrow Arts Centre 020 8428 0124

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