THE END OF EDDY
TEACHER RESOURCE PACK
FOR TEACHERS WORKING WITH PUPILS IN YEARS 12 AND ABOVE
THE END OF EDDY

Based on the book En finir avec Eddy Belleguele by Édouard Louis
Adapted by Pamela Carter
Directed by Stewart Laing

FROM THURS 13 SEP – SAT 6 OCT 2018
FOR PUPILS IN YEARS 12 AND ABOVE

CAN WE CREATE OUR OWN FREEDOM?

My crime wasn’t doing something.
My crime was being something.
Being different in a way everyone else could see.

Born into poverty in an isolated village in rural France, a boy grows up amongst hard men and women living hard and violent lives. Bullied relentlessly for being gay, this is the story of Eddy’s struggle to understand who he is, who he might become, and of his fight to escape.

Written when he was just 21 and combining vivid storytelling with frank reflections on sexuality, class and power, this new stage adaptation of Édouard Louis’ internationally acclaimed autobiographical novel, is filled with hope, love, lust and anger.

Contains strong language and sexual references.
Duration: Approx 1 hr 30 mins

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Welcome to the teacher resources for *The End of Eddy*, a co-production between Untitled Projects and the Unicorn Theatre, written by Pamela Carter and directed by Untitled Project’s artistic director Stewart Laing.

*The End of Eddy* is a major new production which will see its world premiere at the Edinburgh International Festival, before returning to the Unicorn Theatre as part of its Autumn season. The play will then tour in rural Scotland and to the Dublin Theatre Festival.

This resource is designed to provide teachers with context for the play, insight into the theatre makers’ creative process and ideas for drama and discussion activities that can be done before or after your visit. Activities aim to open up the themes of the play for students, give them opportunities to expand the imaginative life of the play and create drama and theatre work of their own which draws on the form and content of the piece.

*The End of Eddy* is based on the book by Édouard Louis, written when he was just 21, and is his account of his life growing up in poverty in a rural, industrial village in northern France, and experiencing oppression, bullying and abuse for being different. As Eddy grows up he begins to learn that he has sexual feelings for men that he cannot deny.

The play stages the poverty of Eddy’s childhood, the extreme masculinity, violence, and homophobic bullying he experiences, as well as detailing his growing awareness of his sexuality. Strong language and descriptions of sexual activity are included when necessary to the authenticity of the piece, reflecting the environment Eddy grew up in. *The End of Eddy* is funny, moving and thought-provoking and explores themes of class, sex and sexuality and violence in an accessible and sensitive way.

The innovative staging will see four TV screens and two young male actors on stage, one white, one of colour. Both actors will play Eddy and all the other characters, live on stage and on the screens. The live actors at times interact with the characters they are playing on the TV’s, and at other times speak directly to the audience, entering into a dialogue about what is happening to Eddy and why it is happening.
CPD – THURSDAY 13 SEP, 4.30 TO 7PM

CPD is free for teachers and is a great opportunity to find out more about the production and to gain practical experience of the accompanying scheme of work before running it with students. Teachers may also book two free tickets per school to the press night on Tue 18 Sep at 7pm by emailing schools@unicorntheatre.com.

Untitled Projects is based in Scotland, and led by Stewart Laing. The company has a reputation for creating ambitious, adventurous and provocative theatre, and has presented original projects for 20 years. Co-productions include Edinburgh International Festival and National Theatre of Scotland, and international presentations at the Barbican in London, Dublin Theatre Festival and Ystad Festival in Sweden.

The Unicorn Theatre is the UK’s leading professional theatre for young audiences, dedicated to inspiring and invigorating young people of all ages, perspectives and abilities, and empowering them to explore the world – on their own terms – through theatre. Purpose-built for children and based in London, the Unicorn is one of the most prolific producing theatres in the UK, presenting up to 30 productions for children of all ages every year, and touring widely across the UK and beyond.
ABOUT THE PLAY

The play begins with two actors on stage, both young men, one white and one of colour. They introduce Eddy - born in a small, poor, rural, industrial village in France, Eddy is different to his family and to almost everyone in his small community.

It might be tempting to imagine a picture-book village of dainty cottages and blooming gardens and healthy country folk living gentle lives. But that’s not Hallencourt. This village is deprived and it’s post-industrial, if you can picture that. Someone’s described it on-line as ‘glum and untidy’.

The actors explain that this is a play, based on the book, written by a young man looking back on his childhood and teenage years.

Édouard Louis wrote it when he was only 21 years old. It became a bestseller in France and it’s now been translated into over 20 languages. And everywhere the book has been praised for its open and honest discussion of poverty and violence, and sex and homosexuality.

There are four TVs on stage: one of the actors appears on screen and for this scene will play Eddy, while the actors live on stage become two older boys at Eddy’s school. They begin to tell and enact the moment when Eddy was first bullied by two boys. He has just started at secondary school and spends break times wandering around trying to look as if he is busy, as if he is going somewhere and not just drifting aimlessly on his own. He knows that he is not the same as other boys. The actors take us back in time to describe Eddy’s early childhood and the place where he grows up. Both actors play Eddy, on screen and off, as well as multi-roling as all the other characters. From a young age his family made it clear to him that his behaviour was not what they expected from a boy.

Father: You’re scared of the dark. Like a little girl. Is he a boy, is he a fucking boy or what? Crying all the time, he’s scared of the dark, he’s not a real boy. Why is he like this? I didn’t bring him up a girl, I brought him up like the other boys. Why does he act like a girl? Why is he doing this?

Eddy: I had no idea. As soon as I’d learned to speak, my voice was higher pitched than other boys and took on these feminine inflections. When I walked I couldn’t help swinging my hips from side to side. When I spoke my hands flapped and beat the air. Whenever I was excited or scared or happy high-pitched squeaks literally escaped from my throat. My parents called these my ‘ways’. ‘Can’t you stop it with your ways Eddy. Can’t you stop it with your girly ways.’

It is a story of a desperately difficult, isolated childhood, told from the perspective of Édouard Louis, the adult the young Eddy Belleguele becomes. Édouard knows that his version of events is highly subjective, that he is an unreliable narrator whose perspective has been profoundly shaped by his experience.

I have no happy memories of my childhood.
Which is not to say that I never felt any happiness or any joy.
Only that suffering is totalitarian:
anything that doesn’t fit within its system, it makes disappear.

The family live in poverty, in a house without carpets and with few doors, with a television in every
room, all of which are constantly on. Eddy is encouraged to watch TV by his mother: ‘Watch the cartoons Eddy, it’ll do you good, it’s relaxing before you go to school…’

Édouard describes a world of pronounced masculinity and sporadic violence. ‘My father a hard man. A real man. Whose duty it was to pass on his own hardness and virility to his son’. But there are codes of behaviour within his family; his father will punch holes in the wall, but will never hit his wife or children, not like his father before him. His brother Vincent however is more of a threat, more volatile; he is prepared to hit both women and his younger siblings.

Some people in the village accept and like Eddy as a child (‘he’s really polite’) at the same time as feeling free to comment on what they see as his effeminacy (‘why does he act like a girl?’). But as he grows older the intolerance of who he is is made explicit and Eddy becomes much more vulnerable.

And then I turned 10. And it was time to go to the school in Abbeville.
And everything changed.
From the moment I started at the school in Abbeville I wandered about trying to make friends. But no one would speak to me.
No one wanted to be friends with a boy who looked gay.

Two boys begin to bully him incessantly. Eddy experiences their bullying with a sense of inevitability; he doesn’t try to avoid it but meets them each day in the same place, in the corridor outside the library.

The bullying escalates after a pivotal episode that takes place in a barn. Eddy, his cousin and two friends meet up, and one of the older boys has stolen a pornographic video from his father which they watch together. Eddy loudly voices his disgust, ‘I had to use the words like ‘faggot’ and ‘queer’ to put some kind of distance between my body and their bodies’ and he feels he has to broadcast his anti-gay sentiments: ‘Pretending to be gay was a way for them to show they weren’t gay’. Later, while playing in a barn one of them suggests that it would be fun if they could role play what they see on the film. Someone else suggests that two of them could wear rings to signify that they are playing the girls: ‘With rings we’d always know who was who’. Eddy can longer resist and what follows is a period of sexual exploration which demonstrates to Eddy what his true desires are. His body shows him what he wants and who he is, and he is no longer capable of refusing to join the game.

When what they have been doing is discovered, only Eddy is attacked: his heterosexual friends and cousin are left alone.

My crime wasn’t doing something. My crime was being something.

The violent response Eddy is met with shows him how dangerous it is to be gay in Hallencourt and leads him to try to contain who he is, control his behaviour and try to shape the person he will be in the future.

‘Today I’m going to be a man’ becomes his mantra. He tries to speak with a lower voice, he keeps his hands in his pockets so his ‘hands don’t flap around’ and he starts to date girls.
First Eddy goes out with a girl from school, but she finishes with him when people call him gay. Then his sister tries to match make, setting him up with a friend of hers, who is a lot older than Eddy. When his sister and Sabrina contrive an opportunity for them to sleep together he tries to find feelings of physical attraction for her, but his body asserts who he really is and he makes a quick escape, saying he has an asthma attack.

Finally, when he is pushed up against a man in a mosh pit at a gig, the reality of his sexuality is irrefutable and undeniable. He has to accept who he is, but he knows that in Hallencourt that person is not welcome.

Eddy finds out that he is good at drama and that can offer him a way out, and a way into an education. The play ends with Eddy moving to the nearest city to start college where he discovers that there are other ways to be a man, there are other ways to live. This discovery is the beginning of ‘the end of Eddy’ and his transformation into Édouard Louis.

The End of Eddy is moving, funny and challenging theatre. Using the motif of the TVs in the family’s home, the play incorporates four television screens on stage. The TVs sometimes display text, at other times film of the two actors performing Eddy, Mother, Father, Vincent and Sabrina. The actors on stage interact with these film portrayals, creating layers of perspective and distancing which serve to break up this personal and highly emotional story giving the audience space and critical distance from which to view what is happening.
Both actors play both Édouard and Eddy, embodying the internal conflict Eddy experiences and the ultimate creation of Édouard as he redefines his childhood self. The actors also step out of the narrative and comment on the action and reference the original autobiographical novel the play is adapted from. In these moments we are conscious of the actors as conveyors of the story, as well as the voices of Édouard Louis and the writer Pamela Carter.

(One actor speaks and we see the other actor on video.)

Here’s me as Eddy. Both of us are Eddy as well as all the other characters in his story. Sometimes on these screens, and often not. We’re both Eddy’s mother and father. His brothers and sisters. His girlfriends. The two boys who make his life at school a misery. But mostly, we’re Eddy. At the age of ten as he is here. Eddy at twelve and thirteen trying so desperately to be a man. And Eddy at fifteen, when he leaves Hallencourt, and that’s the end of his story.
INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR STEWART LAING

WHY DID YOU WANT TO ADAPT THE BOOK THE END OF EDDY FOR THE STAGE?

I read it about a year and a half ago when it was first published in English, and it really grabbed me, it reminded me of certain aspects of my own teenage years and the politics of it, and the sexual politics in particular.

I was a gay teenager growing up in Scotland in a situation where I found it very difficult to talk about it. I wasn’t coming into contact with other openly gay people and I spent several years of my life containing that and I think that is very much what the book is about; about knowing something about who you are but not being able to express it. The thing that surprised me about the book was that when I was growing up in the 1970s that was normal, but for that still to exist now in France just seemed a really shocking thing.

The book is also about otherness. The specific otherness for Eddy is that he realises that he is gay, but there are other othernesses; race for instance, and in terms of body shape, kids grow up and are picked on for being the wrong size or the wrong shape or the wrong colour. To be the odd one out. In Édouard’s situation, it’s the whole of his society who are giving him trouble for that, it’s not just the kids at school; it’s not an enlightened situation where he might go to a school teacher and discuss it, it’s pretty much everybody in that small community.

Another of the things that attracted me to it was that it was rural, it’s not an urban story, and those rural stories aren’t heard so much. I was born in a small town further north in Scotland and although I moved to a larger town nearer to Glasgow when I was very young I still know what that rural environment is.

COULD YOU TELL US WHY YOU SET YOUR COMPANY UNTITLED PROJECTS UP?

I trained as a designer, and spent the whole of my twenties designing plays all over the UK. Then in my 30s I started to direct, but I felt that most of the opportunities for me to direct were when a theatre commissioned me to direct a play that already existed and I had an idea that I wanted to do weirder stuff than that: I didn’t want to make stuff that fitted into the system of how theatre was made. So I set the company up and it brought different groups of people together each time and it allowed us to focus on each project and think about what would be the most interesting way to do the project.

Nearly all of our projects start off with a text and nearly always with a non-theatre text. The first thing I did was some sci-fi stories by JG Ballard, and then I did an adaptation of a French novel about blind teenagers (Blind Sight, 2004, based on the novel by Herve Guibert), so I can really see the connection between that and The End of Eddy.

Usually there’s a text or a book as a starting point and what we normally do is start by reading the
book out loud, which is what we did with Eddy in our first development week. We just read the book to each other over a week, and it’s really just about sitting around and talking about it. Often we bring actors in pretty late in the process, so it’s not necessarily sitting about with a group of actors talking, it’s often with different artists and producers who are working on the show. So it’s a talking shop, Untitled Projects is a talking shop.

THE WRITER, PAMELA CARTER, MENTIONED THAT AS HAVING TRAINED AS A DESIGNER YOU OFTEN START WITH A VISUAL IMAGE.

The first time I worked with Pamela I took an idea to her I had about a set; I’d read a biography of Rimbaud the French poet and I had an idea for a set and I took that idea to Pamela and said ‘Can you write a play for this set?’

The visual starting point for The End of Eddy wasn’t a design but two actors (on stage) with different racial backgrounds, wearing the same clothes. We also decided to use television sets very early on, the idea for doing it with two actors came very quickly and Pamela thought that TV sets might be useful for doing the scenes with more people in them, from a very basic (practical) point of view. And then I remembered that TV was such a big thing, this idea of there being four TVs on in their house all the time and that even though they were desperately poor they managed to have their four TVs playing in their house all the time.

So the idea of two men and four TV sets playing Eddy, that was the visual image for The End of Eddy.

THE PLAY SEEMS TO INCLUDE MANY DEVICES STUDENTS MIGHT IDENTIFY AS BRECHTIAN - TECHNIQUES WHICH BREAK THE ACTION AND DISTANCE THE AUDIENCE.

I think the way that Pamela has written the adaptation, it very much jumps in and out of the actors talking directly to the audience about what’s going on and then into the actors playing Eddy. We’re not pretending that this is happening; we’re constantly reminding the audience that what we are watching is a piece of theatre.

Also it has a political polemic; it is clearly saying that this is a political story about how the individual functions in his society. It’s not emotionally overdoing the misery, it’s trying to looking at it clearly.

We’re getting Édouard’s perspective on the story as the 21 year old who’s written the book and then you’re getting Eddy’s perspective as the child or teenager.

DO YOU HAVE A CLEAR SENSE AT THIS STAGE OF HOW THE PRODUCTION WILL WORK WITH THE LIVE ACTORS PERFORMING SCENES WITH THE (SAME) ACTORS ON THE SCREENS?

I think I have a pretty clear idea of what will happen. One of the things we’ll make use of is text on the screens. And we’ll use the screens with the actors playing his brother, mother, father and sister, and the actors will always be as themselves, they won’t put costumes or wigs on, it’s the same actors looking exactly the same as the other parts.

There are other times when the screens will be used in a more cinematic way – we now have a scene that is the car journey (when Eddy leaves home) which I can see working really nicely, with the
landscape passing outside in a decorative way rather than an integral part of what’s going on. The video designer we have, Finn Ross, is a really high profile video designer. He’s working in America on the musical of Frozen on Broadway so we’ve not had a lot of contact with him as yet, but I’m sure that Finn will bring something else to all that. We’ve used technology a lot in Untitled projects; video and different kinds of film. I’ve always thought if we use video in a show it has to be in an integral way, we would never use video just as background, as an effect. In this piece it is integral because it gives us the chance to have scenes with six people in it with only two actors.

YOU’VE NOT MADE WORK FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES BEFORE, WHY DID YOU PARTNER WITH THE UNICORN THEATRE TO MAKE THIS PIECE?

One of the things is a real admiration of the Unicorn Theatre and the way it pushes your expectation of what work for young people can be. I’ve always been excited by what the Unicorn programmes. And this book is about a teenager and Pamela and I thought it would be exciting to make this work about teenagers with a teenage audience in mind, and that’s not an easy decision to make. I think it is possibly a difficult thing to do for a younger audience, but I think for us that makes it more exciting and a bit of a challenge.

Édouard wrote the book when he was 21 years old, it’s not someone who’s got to the age of 32 and has written about their teenage years. It’s someone who is just coming out of their teenage years with a very fresh idea of what that life was and what the emotional impact of that was and I think that makes it exciting to take to a young audience as well.

ÉDOUARD LOUIS TALKS ABOUT THE ISSUE OF CLASS THAT HE RAISED IN THE BOOK AND THE RESPONSE FROM HIS FAMILY AND THE PEOPLE OF HALLENCOURT...

The interesting thing is that the book really flies the flag for education, because it is education that got him out of that situation. There’s one way of looking at it, that it was a geographical change because he moved out of his village and he moved to the nearest city to go to college. But it’s education, it was having an opportunity to study in a way that was not the obvious thing for someone with his background to do.

Books were scorned by his family, they were for “pussies”, there was an idea that they were proud of their poverty in a way and that books were for posh people: ‘we don’t like posh people so we don’t like books’.

I think it is an experience that we all go through. Édouard’s individual and personal journey is very specific to him, but I think that we all go through a period in our life where we reject the values of our parents. That is a really fundamental and common thing that humans do, they go through a period where the values of their parents are called into question and they rebel against them. So I don’t think that you necessarily have to be someone who grew up in poverty in a rural setting to appreciate it because I think we all have periods in our life where we reject the values of our parents; where we feel shame about our parents and our family.
WHAT DO YOU HOPE THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE WILL TAKE FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF WATCHING THE PLAY?

To think of the pain of the person who’s been bullied, because you see it from the point of view of the young person who’s been picked on, who’s been bullied, and it’s painful, it’s horrible.

And also that they take away the idea that you can question what you’ve been brought up in, you don’t need to take those values. You can question the values you’ve been brought up in and that’s a really admirable thing to do.

If you think that metaphorically we all grow up in a village – a small community we know – well, just to know that outside your village there’s a whole world out there.
MAKING THE PLAY
INTERVIEW WITH WRITER PAMELA CARTER

COULD YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR PREVIOUS WORK WITH UNTITLED PROJECTS?

I first met Stewart when I applied for a grant to go and watch him work directing an opera in 2004 in Sweden and it was quite clear we had a lot in common. The first project he invited me to work with him on was *Slope*, which started out with Stewart saying, “I have a design, I’ve got an idea about the c19th French poet Arthur Rimbaud and I’m interested in Pete Doherty (musician and bad boy) and I think I want to mix it up with some bits of text.” Stewart was obsessed with bathrooms and he had this idea he wanted to build a traditional bathroom from a c19th Glasgow tenement flat: 2 metres by 3 metres with a high ceiling. He wanted it to be fully plumbed and he had this idea to seat the audience around the top of it looking in. The bathroom had to be built into a 60 metre slope, so you walked up the slope and it would look like a table from a distance, but when you got there you realised you were looking down into a well that was a perfectly built bathroom, with a working bath, toilet and a sink.

When I saw that design I thought we didn’t want anything abstract, what we needed was a straightforward play because the design was literally embodying ‘fourth wall theatre’: you actually have four walls, the actors can’t see the audience watching. This is perfect naturalism and absolutely voyeuristic for an audience; they are watching something they ordinarily shouldn’t be watching. So I wrote my first ever full-length play for Stewart, and I don’t think either of us had started out thinking that’s what I was going to do. So a year later we had three characters (Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, his lover and poet, and Mathilde, Verlaine’s young wife) and the play is in three acts; the first in a bathroom in Paris, the second act in a bathroom in London and the third a bathroom in Brussels. And it worked.
The design was spectacular. Stewart trained as a designer first and his impetus is often a set of images or a space/design and then the story will evolve from there. How I work is also with a visual image and by imagining a particular relationship between an audience and the actual physical space, and the imaginary space or the conceptual space that we’re in. So not just that we’re in a bathroom in 1873 in Paris, but we’re in a theatre in Glasgow. So [Stewart and I] can both have a conversation about design, and about meaning as well and I think that’s where our relationship is based.

(This said, The End of Eddy has been very different. Stewart didn’t have a design in mind, and we’re working with Hyemi Shin as designer. A first for us.)

With Untitled there’s that sense that design isn’t an after-thought, it’s almost the impetus, the beginning. There are certain ways of researching work that can be visual, but can also be about talking to and interviewing people as well, that we both enjoy and just a larger group of collaborators. I think Stewart has always been careful that when he’s met somebody he thinks he can work with, he’s carried on working with them. So our technical director Nick Millar, who will work on the show, he’s really crucial in making things technically happen, but engaging in a meaningful way with the artistic development of a show.

One of the crucial things about Untitled for me is the larger group of collaborators and how we work together as friends, almost a family. It’s also about an ethos of working with people, about sharing an aesthetic and intellectual project and appreciating the different skills, histories and personalities that everyone in the company brings to the show whether it’s onstage or offstage.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO ADAPT THE END OF EDDY FOR THE STAGE?

You can identify certain themes in the book which recur in Untitled’s work: sex, sexuality, class, biography, and French culture.

I think both Stewart and I recognise things in Eddy’s story to greater and lesser extents. Personally I’m the first person in my family to go to university, and though I was encouraged to get there and my parents made huge sacrifices for me to do so, I can understand this feeling of being educated away from your background and family. There is a sadness there, there is a departure, a distance occurs that, in my case, only ever came from my parents wanting better for me.

I also recognise Eddy’s experience of growing up visibly different from the community he lived in as a child: I’m half-Chinese and was raised mainly by my white father in a white Lancashire seaside town in the 70s. Plus my Dad insisted I wore a uniform to school even though it was voluntary and no one else did. There was no way I was going to ‘blend in’.

Édouard Louis is also editor of a magazine about the work of French social-anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu, whose work I read in my 20s during my Master’s degree. He put forward a way of looking at how people use or consume culture: the politics of it. We get the phrase ‘cultural capital’ from Bourdieu. It really struck me as a different way of talking about taste. ‘Good taste’ is often seen as a gift or natural talent in recognising something cultural (art, food, architecture) as being of high value. But Bourdieu insists that it is learned and absolutely a product of social background, economics and education. Demonstrating ‘good taste’ is a way of demonstrating power – especially for the middle classes who don’t have real financial power (I don’t own a castle but I can buy really nice olive oil.) When I read The End of Eddy I realised Louis was familiar with Bourdieu and was applying the theories to his own background. He’s gaining this knowledge (through education) and trying to apply
it; he talks about how we understand where violence comes from. So rather than saying, ‘That person was violent to me and therefore that person is violent and bad’, he’s saying ‘That person was violent to me; and that violence is learned. How is this violence learned?’. Louis is looking at where violence comes from and seeing it as part of a socio-economic system which enacts violence on those at the bottom of the pile. The violence is taught and becomes naturalised and normal.


I think that scene, in which they discuss how ‘suffering is totalitarian’, is important, otherwise you just have this play and you say ‘oh all those people are being awful to Eddy, aren’t they terrible’. In the book he doesn’t make it incredibly explicit, he becomes more explicit about it in interviews afterwards, but I wanted to tease it out a little more. He is judgemental about his father and about the men in the village and the way the women behave, but he’s also trying to frame it in a way that says ‘Can I begin to understand where it comes from for them?’ It is such an emotionally abusive thing [that he experiences] that to not be hurt is impossible for him. I put that scene in there just to make it a little bit clearer that we shouldn’t be so unthinkingly harsh about his parents and about his background and that they suffer too and it isn’t just about Eddy’s suffering.
WHY HAVE YOU WRITTEN THE PLAY WITH TWO ACTORS, BOTH YOUNG MEN, ONE WHITE AND ONE OF COLOUR, PLAYING EDDY AND ALL THE OTHER CHARACTERS, AS WELL AS ÉDOUARD’S VOICE AS NARRATOR AND YOUR VOICE AS WRITER?

The decision to have two actors is a simple thing; the last show that we made was a one man show and Stewart didn’t want to make another one-man show, but it is a one boy/man book, so there’s a kind of perversity in that.

The book is about Eddy and a white working-class community, but I didn’t want to just see one white person on stage. The issues being raised about racism and homophobia and class I think are equally appropriate to all communities, so it’s about saying ‘it’s not just about this specific community in France, but it’s about all of us’, so it’s about representation and diversity.

And there is a case made for it in the book because there is an Édouard Louis and an Eddy Bellegueule and they are/were the same person so there’s a duality there already. In the book when he wants to quote his family you get these little vignettes or paragraphs in the French – it’s not really dialect but you can see there is a change in register between the more classic French of the narration and then the more casual dialect quoting from his family or the villagers. So there is a sense that there is one person that goes through a shift in how they speak and their vocabulary, and that there’s a process of education. But I think it’s not a particularly interesting thing to have the uneducated dialect versus the educated middle class voice, I think it’s much more complex than that. I think identity is fluid and changing depending on our context; and one person can move through different communities and contexts. I do it, I think we all do it, I think if you’ve had that life, with social mobility, where you move through one class to another, you don’t leave behind something. I think you’re always working in different modes.

I think it’s clear that this is Édouard Louis’ version, it’s not documentary, but it’s very tempting to think it might be documentary. This is about saying that whilst this is non-fiction, it doesn’t make everything factually true and that we are seeing the world and everyone in it through Eddy’s eyes. There is controversy with certain members of his family contesting his version of events; they are all Édouard Louis’ versions, so I thought that was a way of making that clear.

I’ve always been interested in this movement between the actor persona and the character persona, and the voice of the writer (also a persona). It’s about being able to operate between all of these voices, which is, I think, a real reflection of how we all operate in different modes in different contexts: how we are with our parents, to how we are with our colleagues, how we are when we’re walking down the street, to how we are if we meet someone from the police constabulary.

We have different modes and it’s not that one is more true than other, it’s just life is complex, personalities are complex, and how we understand each other and how we communicate with each other can shift. So I’ve had it with going ‘here’s a character,’ I want people on stage to go ‘I want to talk to you, the audience, and I’m here now, I’m not pretending that I’m elsewhere – in c19th France. It’s really here and now and we can imagine things together, and you can imagine me as a character in this moment, but you can also imagine me as the actor talking to you and this voice that comes in we can look at that and ask how are they speaking to you, to me.’ It’s about being much more fluid.

That can be quite challenging for many actors, as they want to know ‘who is speaking now?’. It’s the fluidity of personality, of character, of psychology and trying to be open to the here and now of meeting people in the theatrical event and the fact that we’re all complicit in imagining: How true
is this? How real is this? What is the authenticity? We're all pretending here, yet I’m still feeling an emotion which is real and true...

WHAT DOES THE FORM OF THE PIECE OFFER THE AUDIENCE?

When Stewart said he wanted to do this book I immediately said, ‘yes, but can we use video?’ There’s a technical challenge which I really enjoy – sitting down to write, I’m having to picture imaginary TV screens talking as well as actors. When you’re making theatre you’re always thinking in the hypothetical, because you don’t know what you’re going to get right up until you put it in front of an audience.

It also links back to this idea of authenticity and different modes of being. It’s very easy to slip into feeling that the two actors appearing in front of you are Édouard and/or Eddy, and that they are offering you the ‘bottom line’. The TV screens let us play with remembering and story-telling. And they give us a way of presenting the other characters on stage with only 2 actors.

But I also think having the screens makes our show look more like ‘real-life’. Everyone has a phone in their hand, or a screen when they’re looking at each other, or they’re filming themselves. Screen images are everywhere.

And whilst Eddy didn’t have a mobile phone or a smart phone, he had these TVs on constantly in the background, his life was a multi-media life as well.

WHY WAS MAKING THIS PRODUCTION ACCESSIBLE TO A YOUNGER AUDIENCE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT?

I think this is about Stewart growing up and about his connection to it. He said he wanted people of Eddy’s age to see this; that Édouard’s experiences should be accessible to the people they most apply to; I thought that was a really fair and good proposition. And it has been challenging.

It’s been an interesting negotiation with myself, and my responsibility to different groups of people: to Édouard Louis himself; people who haven’t read the book; to under 16s; to different identity groups whether they be defined by race or sexuality; to people who’ve read the book and might want to come and see it, who might well be adults; to teachers and schools regarding what they’re legally allowed to talk about, and what is desirable to talk about within an institution. What young people talk about on their own is a different thing, but it’s not something we can just say, “Well of course they’re talking about this, or doing this,” that’s not the point.

We’ve talked about gender and representation as well. In the book he talks about the women in the village and their experiences, but I’ve never been terribly convinced by his ability to deal with the female perspective. And it might be tempting to think that there isn’t much in the book for girls or women. But I’m realising I don’t need to be spoken to about my gender by someone who’s not very good at speaking about my gender. I felt actually the best way for me to go was to focus on what it is predominantly about, which is about a boy dealing with growing up ‘a man’ and a certain kind of ‘toxic masculinity.’ I’ve always known that as a girl and woman I could watch a show or film or read a book and not feel I had to identify with the female roles in them (if the female roles are boring,
or under-written, or sexist, or just non-existent). I wouldn’t be able to watch decades of films or read centuries of books otherwise.

There was also a discussion about race. I had to tone down some of the racism in the book and that felt quite a tricky one for me, leaving any racism on stage is really hard for me. Homophobia is addressed very clearly, the racism less so by Louis, but that’s perfectly explicable. He doesn’t directly experience racism or its effects at his point in his life. (He does address it directly in his second book *The History of Violence*). But I’m aware that once we’ve made the decision of having a person of colour on stage then I’ve got specific responsibilities to that person as well as to the audience. Sometimes if you say something on stage whilst implicitly it’s critiqued, actually you’re giving it a permission.

There’s an idea of ‘colour-blind’ casting, but I think we’re doing the opposite here. Every actor brings meaning to the stage, their bodies and histories bring meaning; and it’s about staging those meanings and being open to them in the conversation between a show and its audience. We’re not doing naturalism (Édouard Louis is white therefore any actor playing him must be white also). We’re making the case for the idea that character and identities are fluid.
ABOUT OUR WORK

Untitled Projects makes ambitious and adventurous theatre on a large scale. We embrace taking risks, and in doing so we surprise and challenge our audience. We continually re-imagine what theatre can be: blending landscape, biography, novel, video, lecture, documentary, installation, interview, fashion, music, science and playwriting. Rooted in Scotland, we pride ourselves in a far-reaching international outlook.

Our work has some common themes driving it. We are interested in contemplating the future, and how our current obsessions as a society might eventually play out. We also explore cultural history, completely reinventing our source material in the process, so it speaks loudly and clearly to our contemporaries. Our audience is always at the centre of what we do and is often to be seen as an involved presence in our projects.

Each of our projects is imagined individually, with a specific group of exceptional freelance artists and practitioners coming together to collaborate. We devise our work over a long period of time.

STEWART LAING (ARTISTIC DIRECTOR)

Stewart Laing is a Scottish theatre director. He is Associate Director with National Theatre of Scotland and is Artistic Director of his own company, Untitled Projects, which he formed in 1998.

Directing credits with Untitled Projects include J.G. Ballard Project, blind_sight, Slope, An Argument About Sex, The Salon Project, Paul Bright’s Confessions of a Justified Sinner and Slope Redux. Further directing credits include The Maids for Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, Ten Plagues for Traverse Theatre,

Stewart originally trained as a theatre designer at Central School of Art and Design in London and has worked extensively as a theatre designer throughout the UK and internationally. He has designed for the West End and Broadway, winning a Tony Award in 1997 for his work on the musical *Titanic*. Recent design credits include work for The Old Vic in London, The Park Avenue Armory in New York and The Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

### Pamela Carter

Pamela Carter is a playwright and dramaturg.

Her plays include: *Lines* (The Yard Theatre, London); *Fast Ganz Nah/Almost Near* (Theater Dresden, Germany); *Skåne* (Hamptead Theatre; winner of the New Writing Commission at the Berliner Festspiele Stückemarkt in 2012); *What We Know* (Traverse Theatre); *Wildlife* (Magnetic North Theatre Co); *The Last of Us* (Play, Pie & a Pint).

She has been collaborating with the theatre and opera director Stewart Laing since 2005. Her plays for his company include Slope (2006 and 2014); Paul Bright’s Confessions of a Justified Sinner, 2013; and *An Argument About Sex* (After Marivaux) in 2009.

As dramaturg and writer with Vanishing Point Theatre, she has made the award-winning *Interiors* (touring internationally since 2009), *Saturday Night*, and *Tomorrow*.

Pamela also works in opera, film, dance and visual arts. She has been writing for the internationally acclaimed artists Goldin+Senneby since 2010; to date this work has been staged in the UK, Romania, Lithuania, Netherlands, Sweden, USA, Denmark and Germany. She has recently adapted a short story
by Don Delillo as a libretto for the composer Liam Paterson; the opera will be produced by Scottish Opera in 2018.

She has also made work for the National Theatre of Scotland, Scottish Dance Theatre, Traverse Theatre, Tramway, LIFT, the Young Vic, Hampstead Theatre, and Malmö Opera House amongst others. She was an Artistic Associate at Suspect Culture from 1997 to 2002.

Since 2014, she has been a visiting lecturer on the Masters in Interior Design at Glasgow School of Art. Between 1998 and 2004 she lectured in Performance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Paul Bright’s Confessions of a Justified Sinner is published by Oberon Books, and Slope and What We Know are published by Nick Hern Books.
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

These drama activities have been designed to be useful to students at Year 12 and above. They could be used as a simple way into investigating some of the key themes before and after your visit to enrich the experience of seeing the play, or developed as a whole scheme of work exploring the play’s form and content.

Drama sessions will allow students to:

- **Respond to stimuli**, including text, when creating drama
- **Work with others** to share and use drama ideas
- **Develop knowledge and understanding of social and cultural influences** when creating drama
- **Explore drama form, structure, genre and style**
- **Gain knowledge and understanding of complex production skills**
- **Apply complex drama and production skills** when presenting
- **Apply evaluative skills** within the creative process

The three sessions build sequentially, developing understanding, skills and knowledge at the same time as facilitating students creative responses to the content and aesthetics of the piece. Sequence one and two are designed for use before your visit, sequence three for after watching the play.

‘The Wider Issues’ provides starting points for discussion and further research around toxic masculinity, homophobic bullying, legislation around LGBT+ rights, class, and the rise of populism in France and beyond. Links will be provided to articles which open out these discussions to useful statistics and other teacher resources that have been create by the organisation Stonewall.

Teachers may want to follow the sequences closely or to use selected activities as a starting point for developing their own scheme of work. Resources are designed to be flexible so that they can be adapted for use by Drama, English and PSHE teachers.

Each practical session is estimated to fit within a 1 to 1.5 hour lesson.
Sequence 1 - Outsiders

‘My crime wasn’t doing something.
My crime was being something.
Being different in a way everyone else could see.’

This sequence will develop ideas around difference and isolation. Using the quote from the play, but leaving the context open for students to interpret for themselves, this activity will allow students to build drama moments which draw on their experience and understanding of intolerance, bigotry and how people are able to respond in situations where what they are is considered unacceptable. Stewart Laing speaks of the way in which as a young man he ‘contained’ who he was.

Sequence 2 - Playing with form

Drama activities that allow students to explore the use of multi-roling, direct address and use of technology in the production. Using themes from the play, these activities will suggest ways for students to combine live performance with pre-recorded film and explore the way the writer and director have constructed the piece to be performed in a way that utilises the actor persona and the character persona and allows for roleplay as a range of characters from one perspective. As Pamela Carter describes, “This is Édouard’s version of events”. Students will be invited to reflect on perspective, the fluidity of the individual and to ask, ‘Where does the truth lie?’.

Sequence 3 - Perspectives

Post show

In the play writer Pamela Carter chooses one moment where she imagines a scene that could have taken place between Eddy and his father. Using the text from the play as a starting point, this sequence will give students the opportunity to create scenes they imagine might be true from different characters’ perspectives. What do students imagine might be the back story of his brother Vincent, and can they try to identify where his particularly violent reaction towards Eddy originates?

Drawing on their responses to the piece, this sequence will continue to explore the idea of perspective, looking at whose version of the story is being told, how it is being told and the extent to which emotional experiences and subjectivity impact the narratives we construct around ourselves.

The Wider Issues

This will provide discussion points, research and simple classroom based activities which can be incorporated into the drama sequences. Starting points for exploring themes within the play, in particular ideas around toxic masculinity, bullying against LGBT+ people and Édouard Louis’ depiction of class and the nature of violence in his book and the production. An extract from the play in which Eddy reflects on the intolerance which defined his childhood is included as a resource.
SEQUENCE ONE
OUTSIDERS

AIMS
To introduce students to key themes in the play, exploring the tension within groups of people, and the idea of the insider and the outsider.
To work physically to embody and explore these dynamics.
To devise a short movement piece based on students responses to these themes.
To identify and empathise with those who find themselves outside societal norms.

STRATEGIES
Bomb and shield, sculpting partners, ensemble movement, Laban Efforts, devised moments, still image, underscoring.

STAGE ONE: BOMB AND SHIELD

• Ask students to start walking around the room, feeling the space, moving in and out of each other and developing an awareness of others in the room.

• Now ask each student to identify one person in the room as their ‘bomb’, this person is a threat to them. As they continue to move around the space they should keep their ‘bomb’ in sight and as far away as possible.

• Now ask them to choose someone as their ‘shield’, they should attempt to keep this person between them and the bomb.

• Ask half of the group to watch the others and to reflect on what they see in the performance space. What do they notice about the dynamic between those doing the activity? Do they construct any narratives around what they see?

STAGE TWO: SCULPTING IN PAIRS

‘My crime wasn’t doing something, my crime was being something.’

• Introduce this line from the play and ask students to form an initial response to the quote. What does it make them think about? What might the ‘crime’ be?

• You could think about the quote in relation to the bomb and shield exercise: who or what might the ‘bomb’ represent? What threat might they have been trying to avoid? Who might the ‘shield’ be in the
activity? Or if the shield isn’t a person – what else could it be?

• Working in pairs, ask one person to sculpt their partner into an image which responds to the quote. The idea is for students to work with their initial responses, not to overthink or intellectualise, but to give form to their first intuitive responses.

• See some of these sculptures and ask students to respond to what they see – make sure the pairs listen to the responses of their audience, and not leap to explaining their intentions.

STAGE THREE: LABAN EFFORTS

• Introduce the concept of Laban Efforts. This movement practice was first developed as a notation system for dancers created by dancer and choreographer Rudolph Laban. It was adopted for use by actors and directors who saw its potential to extend actors’ movement vocabulary and develop the physicality of their characters.

• Laban categorized human movement into four component parts:

  - **Direction**: is either direct or indirect.
  - **Weight**: is either heavy or light.
  - **Speed**: is either quick or sustained.
  - **Flow**: is either bound or free.

• For example, if you’re exploring **flow** and the movement is **bound**, then the movement will be very tight and held in. A **free** movement in **flow** is the opposite of bound, it is open and fluid.

• Teach students the Laban Efforts. Ask them to move around the room embodying each of the Efforts as you call them out. You could combine Efforts, with some doing **flow bound** and others **flow free**, for example. Allow students to make their own interpretations of the movements, discovering what they mean to them.

• Split the group in two and ask the audience to ‘read’ what they are seeing. What do they observe about each of the Efforts? Who might the characters be? What is their relationship? You can also ask participants how it felt to embody each of the Efforts.

• We are using only the first stage of the Efforts, which identifies the four elements of movement. Laban goes on to identify eight Efforts: wring, press, flick, dab, glide, punch, slash and float. There are many online resources for those interested in exploring this in more detail.

STAGE FOUR: IMAGE WORK

• Now ask the class to continue moving around the space, working individually but aware of others in the space. Explain that you will call out titles and ask them to create images in response to those titles:

  - Individual
  - Belonging
  - Avoid
- Confront
- Insider
- Outsider

• Students can decide in the moment whether to create their image alone or interact with others in the space. Reflect on some of the images created and any thoughts the activity provoked in them.

**STAGE FIVE: DEVISING TASK**

• Ask the students to think of a time in their life when they have felt like an outsider – this should be an example that they feel happy to share. In groups of four or five, ask them to share these stories.

• Now ask each group to choose one of the stories to work on; this will be the story that the group feels has the most potential for them to perform, demonstrating the dynamic between the outsider and the group.

• The person whose story has been chosen will become the director of the piece, shaping how the story is staged. Ask the groups to create three still pictures which show the actions and reactions of the protagonist and the group.

• Once three key moments from the story have been established, ask the groups to find a way to transition between each image, bringing the images to life. As they do this, ask them to try and incorporate some of the Laban elements of movement into these transitions: how does the ‘outsider’ move physically, how do the ‘insiders’ move? The non-verbal piece will become stylised and heightened, but the director should be the removed eye, working for the emotional truth and authenticity of the piece.

• See each group’s work and discuss what it reveals about how the outsider and the group behave. Why was the person on the outside of the group? How did the group respond to the protagonist? To what extent was their outsider status subjective, a feeling by the individual that they didn’t fit in, and to what extent was their outsider status reinforced by the group?

• Remind students of this quote from the play:

  ‘My crime wasn’t doing something, my crime was being something.’

Explain that in the play, the main character Eddy, as a gay boy, constantly feels he is outside societal norms in the community he lives in, because who he is is not acceptable and is considered a crime. Eddy lives a life where he is under threat at all times because of who he is.

• Ask students to return to their pieces and develop their physical, non-verbal piece. Ask them to add a greater sense of threat and danger to the dynamic between the outsider and the group. They can change one of their three key images/moments if they want, but stipulate that while there may be a threat of violence this is not enacted.

• Finally ask the students to choose some music to underscore their piece. You could provide three or four contrasting options, or they could suggest their own.
STAGE SIX: PERFORM AND DISCUSS

• Ask students to reflect on each other’s scenes. Focus on the experience of the outsider and the responses and motivations of the group.

• Discuss what you think the options are for someone if they feel like an outsider. In the play, Eddy describes the range of strategies he uses to survive over the years: how he tries to hide who he is, changing his mannerisms and physicality; avoiding situations that expose who he is; even at times deflecting attention and hostility onto others, for example calling another gay boy a ‘fairy’ and a ‘faggot’. He returns repeatedly to be bullied, accepting and internalising the violence directed at him.
AIMS

To introduce students to the innovative form of the piece, with actors narrating and performing in character, multi-roling, and acting on and with screens.

To work with text in order to stage a short scene of the play.

To devise and perform their own short piece utilising the form and themes of the play.

STRATEGIES

Paired improvisation, direct address, acting onscreen, acting with characters onscreen, directing, working with technology, devising.

RESOURCES

Texts A, B and C from the play (resource one); ipads or smart phones to pre-record the onscreen acting and integrate into their scenes.

STAGE ONE: INTRODUCTION

- Briefly introduce the students to some of the formal elements they will encounter in The End of Eddy. Explain that they will be working with these elements practically and by the end of the session will understand more by doing so. They aren’t to worry if there are parts of the description that they don’t understand initially.

  - There are two actors who both play Eddy and all of the other characters in the play.

  - The actors at times narrate the story as themselves as actors and at others as Édouard Louis looking back on his childhood.

  - Both actors play all the other characters; Eddy’s mother, father, sister and brother, two bullies and a careers adviser.

  - At times these characters are represented live on stage, at other times they are performed on one of four television screens. Sometimes the live actors will act a scene with a character onscreen; the dialogue will pass between live actor and screen actor.

  - Text is also used on screen as a way of establishing setting or underlining a concept, for example using the heading ‘Violence’.

  - When the actors are performing other characters, there are no costumes or accents distinguish who they are, although there will be shifts in performance to embody these
characters in a “representative” style of acting.

STAGE TWO: ACTOR-NARRATOR EXCERCISE

• In pairs, ask students to pick a well-known story that they both know reasonably well (for example Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Red Riding Hood) and give them a couple of minutes to check they know the key points of the story. Now ask one to narrate the story using direct address, and the other to act out the action.

• Swap over so that both students have had a chance to try both roles. This is a playful activity so stress that it doesn’t matter if they have different versions of the story, or that details may be different. They can embellish or add details – this can be part of the fun.

• Now ask them to share both the narration and the acting out and to find points in the storytelling where they swap roles. They might choose to find a way to hand over the narration, or one could jump in and take over from their partner. Ask them to practice working together to make the storytelling smooth, and to find an energy and pace together that works for their story.

• Perform some of the stories for each other and ask students to comment on what is challenging and satisfying about this way of telling a story for an audience.

STAGE THREE: INTEGRATING LIVE ACTOR AND SCREEN ACTOR

This activity gives students the opportunity to play with the form of the play on a small scale, and use technology in a way they will see fully realised in the production. You will need to use a number of ipads or smartphones to film the onscreen text and action and then use in performance.

• Move students into groups. Give each group one of the three extracts of text (resource one) and ask them to find a way to perform the text using live actors and screen actors, along with text onscreen.

• They will need to pre-record the filmed sections and find a way to integrate this with the live narration and action. Ask them to mirror the production with the same actors who perform live also playing the other characters on screen.

• Other students will need to take on the technical role in the scenes, although when they find their staging solutions these roles may well need to perform in the piece as well.

• In the production there will be four television screens operated by the technician. In their pieces they will need to find a way to perform while holding the devices – this is very much a low-tech version of the production.

• It may be useful to have a director in each group, although this role could be shared by the technicians.

• Encourage the students to work for authenticity in their performances and find the best way to communicate the content of the text within the constraints of the form.

• When the groups have finished their pieces perform them for each other. Discuss what they observed
about the different elements of the staging they have worked with; each of the three scenes has a different combination of the range of elements they will encounter in the production.

- Finally discuss what they have understood the themes of the play to be, having worked with small sections of the text. Draw up a list of themes and questions that have been raised so far by the work.

**STAGE FOUR: DEVISING TASK**

- Using devices used in the last task, ask students to create their own short piece based on one of the themes or questions identified previously as a starting point; for example: prejudice, family, violence or identity.

- Ask the groups to identify a protagonist for their piece, the person whose story this is, and build their piece from that person's perspective. As in the play, they should include the protagonist later in life looking back on what happened. This could be just a year ago, or they might want to create a protagonist looking back from many years in the future.

- As a group, ask students to first write the story of what happened to the protagonist. When they have done that they can break it down for performance including some of the elements and devices they used in their scenes in stage three:

  - Direct address (actors narrating to audience)
  - Characters in scenes performed live onstage
  - Characters performed onscreen
  - Text to set a scene or highlight a theme.
SEQUENCE THREE

PERSPECTIVES

AIMS
To respond to the themes of subjectivity and perspective in the production.
To mirror Pamela Carter’s process of imagining and writing moments that didn’t happen, but that might extend our understanding of Édouard Louis’ story.
To articulate some of the students’ understandings and thoughts about what motivated Vincent’s extreme hostility and violence towards Eddy.

STRATEGIES
Discussion, script reading and analysis, writing, devising, performance.

RESOURCES
Script extracts (resources two and three), ‘role on the wall’ outline (resource four).

STAGE ONE: DISCUSSION
• Start by reminding students of what the actor, speaking as Édouard Louis, says about suffering (quoted from his autobiographical novel)

‘I have no happy memories of my childhood.
Which is not to say that I never felt any happiness or any joy.
Only that suffering is totalitarian; anything that doesn’t fit within its system, it makes disappear.’

and then Pamela Carter’s interpretation of Louis’ statement on suffering.

‘So when Édouard says
‘suffering is totalitarian’ what we think he means
is that suffering is like living in a dictatorship,
a political system that requires total submission from every person living under it,
that enters and controls every aspect of your life
and leaves no room for anything else at all.’

• Ask for initial responses to the quote and reflect on what this quote said to them when they experienced the performance.

STAGE TWO: HIS FATHER SAYS GOODBYE
• In groups read the scene that the playwright imagined took place between Eddy and his Father
(resource two) when he drove him to the audition.

- Discuss with students and together try to clarify:
  - What in the scene actually happened?
  - What in the scene is true but didn’t happen in the way it is dramatized?
  - What in the scene are the playwright’s imaginings?

- Then discuss: why you think Pamela Carter included this imagined scene in her play? What do you think it offers the audience?

STAGE THREE: REVISITING VINCENT

- Together, read the scene where Vincent gets angry with Eddy and his father (resource three)

- Create a ‘role on the wall’ for Vincent (using resource four): inside the outline, write down things you know about Vincent from what you witnessed in the play, what you could confidently say are facts about him. Start with what you remember, but make sure you’re all clear that Vincent and the older sister share a biological mother with Eddy and Rudy, but had a different father.

- Around the outside of the outline, write things that you have questions about or that you sense might be true, but you don’t know for certain.

STAGE FOUR: VINCENT’S GOODBYE – WRITING AND DEVISING

- In pairs, ask students to create a scene where Vincent says goodbye to Eddy before he leaves Hallencourt.

- Just like those Pamela Carter includes in The End of Eddy, this isn’t a scene that took place in Louis’ book, but one that we could imagine. As with the scene with Eddy’s father, it may not be a scenario that we believe Vincent is emotionally or psychologically capable of in reality.

- In their scene ask students to include A) a story that Vincent shares with Eddy about his past, and B) something that he wants to say to him before he leaves his village.

- When the students have written the scene between them, ask them to choose how to perform their piece. They could include the older Eddy looking back on this event, or the writer’s voice commenting on this imagined scene and what this tells us.

- Watch the students’ work and reflect on what imagining moments that did not happen can add to our responses to Édouard Louis’ story, and the way in which the play’s form explores the relationship between subjectivity and our understanding of how people behave.
THE WIDER ISSUES

AIMS

To provide further information which helps examine the themes and issues within the play.

To signpost relevant debates in the media that raise questions and broaden the reach of the play.

To provide links to other teacher resources that have been created that help contextualise and extend the questions the play raises.

HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING

Homophobia: *The dislike of or prejudice against homosexual people.* (OED)

Bullying: *Repeated behaviour which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically, and is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, appearance or disability.* (Family Lives)

*The End of Eddy* depicts homophobic bullying in some detail, and dissects some of the reasons for the bullies’ behaviour: the nature of violence in the community; the pressure to conform; the poverty and lack of opportunity, and the extreme culture of masculinity.

It may be possible to view Hallencourt, the village where Eddy grew up, as extraordinary and extreme, However research into the prevalence and effects of homophobic bullying will contextualise the play before or after your visit and make links to the ongoing and reportedly growing issue of homophobic and transphobic bullying.

‘71% of LGBT young people experienced bullying in school on the grounds of being LGBT. This is a rise from 69% in 2012 and 60% in 2007.’ Statistic from [LGBT Youth Scotland's 2017 survey](accessible here)

Stonewall is the largest LGBT+ rights organisation in Europe, lobbying for the development of policy to protect LGBT+ people at home, school and work. Their comprehensive research on the levels of gender and sexuality-based hate crime and discrimination can be found [here](accessible here).

ITV News reported in March of 2018 that according to the Metropolitan Police, the number of homophobic hate crimes being committed in London has doubled over the last five years - rising from 1156 to 2079 in the 12 months prior to February 2018. ([accessible here](accessible here))

Stonewall education resources are comprehensive and offer a range of ways for schools to update their policies and practices and help educate and inform teachers and pupils about the issues and find out more about what can be done to support LGBT+ young people in schools. An ‘anti-bullying week secondary assembly’ resource is available and provides a powerpoint presentation that covers misconceptions, highlight the experience of gay and trans young people and offers ways to combat
homophobia within your school (accessible here)

It may be useful to start a conversation with students by using this simple activity (Stonewall’s ‘Terminology Task’) that asks students to match terminology with the definitions provided.

Ellen Jones has created a series of youtube videos for Stonewall called Queeries which offer a young activist’s perspective and an open forum for young LGBT+ people to share and discuss the issues affecting them (accessible here - search for Ellen Jones’ ‘Queeries’ playlist).

HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE LAW

We have just passed the 50th anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK (although some restrictions remained past this point: full legal equality is much more recent).

LGBT+ rights in France have traditionally been much more liberal; same-sex sexual intercourse was made legal during the French Revolution in 1791, though the age of consent was only made equal for straight and gay couples in 1982.

In the hyper-masculine community in which Édouard Louis grew up, he didn’t feel he had the protection of the law and was vulnerable to violent anti-gay sentiments and behaviours which viewed being gay as a crime.

There are still seventy-two countries in the world where it is against the law to be gay, and eight where homosexuality can result in the death penalty.

Researching the changing legal status of gay men and women will give further context to the play.

A BRIEF TIMELINE OF LGBT+ RIGHTS LEGISLATION IN THE UK

1533 – The Buggery Act outlaws same sex activity (“sodomy”) and makes it punishable by death.

1861 – The death penalty is abolished for sodomy, but it remains illegal.

1954 – Alan Turing commits suicide; he had been convicted of gross indecency and was given a course of female hormones (chemical castration) as an alternative to prison. The Wolfenden Committee is formed to call into question the legitimacy of this law.

1967 – The Sexual Offences Act decriminalises sex between two men over 21 and ‘in private’. It does not extend to the Merchant Navy or the Armed Forces, or Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, where sex between two men remains illegal.

1971 – The Nullity of Marriage Act is passed, explicitly banning same-sex marriages between same-sex couples in England and Wales.

1972 – The first Pride march is held in London on 1st July, attracting approximately 2,000 participants.

1981 – In a landmark court case, Northern Ireland’s criminalisation is found to violate the European Convention on Human Rights. The first recorded case of AIDS in the UK is recorded.
1983 – Men who have sex with men and women who have sex with these men are barred from donating blood. Today, they must abstain from sex for three months prior to donating.

1984 – The Labour MP Chris Smith becomes the first openly gay MP, 10 years after Maureen Colquhoun (Labour) came out as the first lesbian MP. The Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners campaign is launched in support of workers in the miners’ strikes.

1988 – Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, introduces Section 28 of the Local Government Act. The Act states that a local authority “shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality” or “promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship”. Stonewall UK is set up to oppose Section 28.


1996 – A landmark case finds that an employee who was about to undergo gender reassignment was wrongfully dismissed. It was the first piece of case law, anywhere in the world, preventing discrimination in employment or vocational education because someone is trans.

1998 – Waheed Alli becomes the first openly gay member of the House of Lords and one of a few openly gay Muslims.

2000 – The UK Government lifts the ban on lesbians, gay men and bi people serving in the armed forces.

2001 – The age of consent is lowered to 16 (having been lowered from 21 to 18 in 1994), making it the same as the age of consent for straight people.

2002 – Equal rights are granted to same-sex couples applying for adoption. Judges rule that the UK Government should accommodate the needs of trans people by issuing new birth certificates and permitting marriage to someone of the ‘opposite’ gender.

2003 – Section 28 is repealed. It is also made illegal to discriminate against lesbians, gay and bi people in the workplace.

2004 – The Civil Partnership Act gives same-sex couples the same legal rights and responsibilities as heterosexual couples. The Gender Recognition Act is first passed, giving trans people full legal recognition in their appropriate gender. The Act allows trans people to acquire a new birth certificate, although gender options are still limited to ‘male’ or ‘female’.

2009 – Prime Minister David Cameron apologises on behalf of the Conservative Party for the introduction of Section 28.

2010 – The Equality Act officially adds gender reassignment as a protected characteristic. Stonewall secures an amendment to the Equality Act 2010 to remove the ban on religious groups from holding civil partnerships on their premises.

2012 – Explicit reference to homophobic bullying in schools is introduced into Ofsted’s inspection framework in the UK. The Protection of Freedoms Act is passed in the UK allowing for historic convictions.
for consensual sex between men to be removed from criminal records.

2013 – Alan Turing is given a posthumous royal pardon for his conviction of homosexuality.

2014 – Same sex marriage becomes legal in England, Scotland and Wales.

For more detailed timelines, click here.

**MASCUINITY**

The name of the play *The End of Eddy* is significant. Eddy Bellegueule is the name Édouard’s father chooses because it is masculine, a tough guy’s name. In an interview with Tash Aw at the London Review Bookshop (available here), Louis describes how his father chose the name and how he could never succeed in filling the name.

‘He wanted me to reproduce his masculinity. He desperately wanted a tough, strong boy and I was born this little gay, queer boy, with a high voice and feminine body language. As soon as I was born it was already too late.’

In another interview (with Monica Zaleska for Literary Hub) Louis describes his father’s desire for him to be masculine and why he thinks masculinity was so important in that community.

‘My father would say to me, you’re effeminate or you’re bringing shame on our family. And at the time, I thought, he’s a bastard. I hate him. And then when I learned about Sociology, I saw that everything is taken from the working class - money, culture, diplomas - the only thing society leaves them is the body. It’s no surprise that they build an ideology of the body, of masculinity and strength, of violence towards gay people and women. That doesn’t mean that violence is bearable - on the contrary. But if you want the violence to stop, you have to find the real causes of it. People who suffer, they want to understand - they need to understand where it comes from.

When you look at the chapters of Eddy, my father and brother are saying boys shouldn’t cry or men don’t cry. Yet men are crying all the time, and my mother and grandmother rarely cry. The violence of the norms we uphold is not just that they impose a behaviour or a certain way of acting on us - it’s that we always fail. We can never be what they ask. We can never achieve them. There is a gap between these norms and what we are, these norms and our bodies. This gap brings us shame, and that’s why shame is so central in our lives, and in *The End of Eddy*. Eddy is representative of this shame because I was the biggest failure, the biggest loser of my family.’

**CLASS, POVERTY, PRIDE AND SHAME**

When Louis’ book *En finir avec Eddy Bellgueule* was first published, his family and people in Hallencourt were angry at the way he had portrayed them. His mother disputed that they lived in poverty.

‘But when my mother saw the book, she said, why do you say we were poor? She was so angry. We live in a society where people who are struck by violence and poverty think it’s their fault, and so they can’t talk about it.’ (Literary Hub interview with Monica Zaleska)
Louis’ links the poverty, lack of education and opportunity to the rise of the right in France. He tells how his family voted for Le Pen.

‘My mother would say it over and over: us, the little folks, no one is interested in us. It was the feeling of being invisible in the eyes of other people that drove her to vote for Le Pen, as did most of my family. My mother would say: she’s the only one who talks about us. The Front National got more than 50% of the vote in the village where I was born, and that vote was above all, beyond racism, beyond anything else, a desperate attempt to exist, to be noticed by others.’ (Guardian article by Louis)

But he is equally angry at the Left in France, accusing them of failing to speak about poverty and exclusion.

‘My father lives in the village where my grandfather and great-grandfather lived. He worked in the factory where my grandfather and great-grandfather worked. My mother left school at 14, my brothers and sisters also. Nobody is giving people like them a way out of their prison, their misery.

This social hierarchy, the dominated and the dominant, is in itself a violence. People say to me ‘Ah, but you managed to escape,’ but to me that doesn’t show it’s possible – quite the opposite. Now I’m out, I can see how difficult it is to escape. I can see the extraordinary violence of it....and who speaks for these people whose lives are shattered, who are humiliated by the system? These people feel forgotten, so they turn to someone. In France’s case, Marine Le Pen, who they think is listening and who they believe will make a better life for them.’ (Guardian interview with Kim Willsher)
- Pride.
'I don't have much but I have my pride.'
It's a very human response to feeling vulnerable or powerless. Especially the powerlessness that comes of being poor, and feeling ashamed, and being unable to do anything about it no matter how hard you try.

And if you feel powerless then shaming and humiliating some person or some other group of people with even less power than you, might give you that sense of power and pride you're missing.

(M) I don't sit on my arse all day, scrounging, living on benefits. Being poor doesn't mean you can't be clean. My kids don't wear filthy rags.

- It's this kind of pride that's easily turned to hate and violence. Into racism and homophobia.

(F) That city's full of Arabs and black people, it's like being in Africa. You go there and you'll get robbed.

(Two boys) Are you Eddy Bellegueule?
Are you the faggot?

- And in a world where masculine values are prized above any other, it easily turns into misogyny and violence against women.

(M) She says she respects us and she doesn't want any trouble but she's got to report him this time. She said she's used to him hitting her ok, but not the kids, she's frightened for the babies. You know what Vincent's like when he's had a drink. He's gone too far this this time.

- So the violence Édouard experienced isn't inflicted only on him and only because he's gay. It's experienced by all of them in his family and in the village, in one way or another, because they are all poor and all working class.
A NOTE ON READING THE SCRIPT

- indicates the next actor speaks.

/ indicates when the next actor begins speaking for overlapping dialogue, or when video is either interrupted by spoken dialogue or paused by an actor.

There are 4 TV monitors on stage.

These will show either text or pre-recorded video of the two actors speaking as 'Eddy' or other characters in his story (principally, members of his family).
GROUPS OF FOUR. Actors play Édouard live onstage, the mother and father onscreen. There is also text onscreen. This script needs at least two screens, preferably three (ipads or phones).

VIOLENCE

- It's not a word a man from my village would use. For men in my village, this is something natural, obvious. There's no need to name it.

- I don't know if the two boys in the corridor would have called their own behaviour violent. Certainly my father was violent. But no different from any other man in the village. I'd seen him bashing unwanted kittens in a bag against a wall. I'd seen him drunk, fighting with other drunk men outside the bar for as long as I could remember. But he wouldn't have called it violence.

(F) I've got a temper me, that's just how I am, When I get angry, I get angry.

- Now and then, when something annoyed him like my little brother asking to change the tv channel, my father's bad temper would turn to fury. He'd stand up, stock still, fists clenched, face turning purple and his eyes would fill with tears.

- Although only when he was drunk. Because real men don't cry. Not when they're sober anyway.

- He'd start muttering, and then pacing around the table. Round and round until suddenly, with no warning, he'd turn and punch a wall. Hard. This was normal. This was how men were supposed to act.

(Mother appears on TV.)

And he used to love it when my mother confirmed this for him.

(Father smiling.)

(M) What can you do, that's how he is your father. He's a man, and that's what men are like.
TEXT B

Groups of three. Actors play Eddy and Édouard live, and his father onscreen. This text needs one screen (ipad or phone).

- 'Mum. Mum. Mum. It's my asthma. I think I'm having an asthma attack.
Mum. I'm serious. You can die from asthma.
Granny died of / asthma so I …'

(F)Bullshit. Asthma's got nothing to do with it. It's bullshit. You're scared of the dark. Like a little girl. Is he a boy, is he a fucking boy or what? Crying all the time, he's scared of the dark, he's not a real boy. Why is he like this? I didn't bring him up a girl, I brought him up like the other boys. Why does he act like a girl? Why is he doing this?

- 'Why?'
I was asking myself the same question.
Why was I the way I was? I had no idea.
TEXT C

Groups of three. Actors play bullies live, and Eddy onscreen.

(The actors as the Two Boys have entered.)
- Ha ha ha ha ha.
- Look he’s smiling.
- What you smiling for?

(The actors start to push 'Eddy' back and forth between them.)
- Think it’s funny do you?
- Do you?
- He thinks it’s funny.
- You think we’re having a laugh.
- How about this
- Funny?
- No?

(Eddy/the tv drops to the floor.)

My head hit the wall.
Dizziness. The pain.
A kick to my stomach and the air was gone from me.
I was shaking.
My eyes filled with tears
but I didn’t want to cry
I didn’t want to make them even angrier.

(The actors might appear to be kicking Eddy/the tv.)
- Not funny now is it?
- Not smiling now are you?
- Is he crying?
- He’s crying.
- What you crying for?
- I’ll give you something to cry about.
- It was the night before Eddy’s audition.

For the last week, his father had been refusing to drive Eddy the ten miles to the station, to catch the first train to Amlens, which meant he’d have to walk because it was too early for the bus. ‘Let’s face it, using petrol on that theatre shit’s a waste of time.’

- But the night before, Jacky, that’s Eddy’s Dad’s name, Jacky said to Eddy ‘Don’t forget to set your alarm, I’m driving you tomorrow.’ And in the morning he took him to the station. They made the twenty-minute journey in silence, with Jacky speaking only when Eddy got out of the car.

- At least, that’s what it says in the book. But we’re going to diverge from the book here and imagine instead that Eddy and Jacky do talk in the car.

- We’re going to imagine that Jacky takes this opportunity on this potentially life-changing day for Eddy, to share a couple of stories about himself and his past that Eddy hasn’t heard before.

- We haven’t invented these stories. They are in the book, but it’s Eddy’s Mum who tells them in a chapter titled ‘My Other Father’.

(They get into an imaginary car and start driving.)

It’s early summer. A bright morning and the fields are yellow with rapeseed flower.

After a minute or two in silence Jacky says, apropos of nothing in particular ...

- There was this gay man lived in the village before you were born. Didn’t hide it or anything. Brave guy. This one night he were at the dance at the village hall, and there was these lads turned up started bothering him. Staring him out, bumping shoulders, you know the sketch. And then the verbal started. ‘What are you looking at faggot? You want some?’ Didn’t think it was right. He weren’t bothering them. So I went over. Told them. ‘So what he’s gay, what’s it got to do with you?’ I told them to get out. Cut the bullshit or else.

- And then he asks me ...

- Did you know I left Hailencourt when I was twenty?

- No Dad. I didn’t know that.
- Didn’t want to be like most folk in the village and never go anywhere. I quit the factory, told them to stuff their job and I went south. To the Mediterranean. Thought a bit of sun and sea would make factory work alright. Or a bar job. And I fell in with this North African guy. A black guy called himself Snow. We had a right laugh we did. Going out every night. Getting into scrapes. Girls. Always together we were. Only stuck it out a couple of months though. I came home and that was it.

- Then, after a few moments watching the road disappear beneath the car bonnet, Jacky speaks again. And this time he’ll say something no one says in the book. We’ve invented this part.

- Son. It was too hard. I didn’t know how to be different. I didn’t know who I was. Away from my family. Away from everything I’ve ever known. Everything I’ve learned to think’s normal. Doesn’t matter how sad or painful. You get used to the pain. And you get used to hurting other people just to make yourself feel better for a bit. It was too late for me to change. Couldn’t if I tried. But here’s you with a chance to do it different. And I’m proud of you, son. I’m not ashamed. I’m proud of you.

- And then we’ll imagine they fall silent. Because they’re both a bit embarrassed now. Not used to anything like emotion or affection expressed between them. And to alleviate the awkwardness Jacky leans forwards and turns the radio on. And playing on the radio at that very moment happens to be one of the few things both Jacky and Eddy have ever agreed on. Céline Dion. So they sing.

(Tentatively, they sing ‘My Heart Will Go On’ By Céline Dion.)

But none of this happens in the book of course. Because the book is an account of real life, it’s not fiction.

But what the book does say is that when they arrived at the station Eddy’s father put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a twenty-euro note and said

- Here. Take this. You’ll need to eat. I don’t want you embarrassed in front of the others because you don’t have money. I don’t want you being any different from them. And mind you spend it all. Don’t bring any back.

- And then he said something racist about Eddy not getting robbed by Arabs or black people, and then finally

- ‘Now off you go and try not to screw it up.’
(V) A f**king hiding is what he deserves, a hiding he won't forget, that's what he needs, that's how you make a man of him. That's what I had Why's he special I got s*** kicked out of me when I were his age I never had nothing like what he has Never any money, Asking for hand-outs at the foodbank. I were brought up the hard way, I got sent out in the street to beg. I didn't get away with anything. And look Look at Eddy, you brought him up soft and now look. He's like a girl ...

(M) That's all we need you hitting your little brother. Calm down, will you. And don't tell me how to raise my kids, I brought up five kids so don't you start telling me what I can or can't do, You have your own and then we'll see.

- He pushed her. Calmly at first. And only because she was in his way. But then he pushed her again. Harder. And harder again.

- Where was my father? What was he doing all this time? Maybe he'd thought my mother would be better than him at calming Vincent down.

- But then Vincent lifted his hand ready to strike.

- And there he was. He stepped in between them and begged. My father was begging. I had never in all my life seen my father beg anyone for anything. And certainly not one of his own children, whom he liked to remind everyday 'I'm boss in this house'.
(F) What do you want to hurt your own mother for?
I’ve never treated any of you different,
Please Vincent
I love you all just the same
Vincent, listen to me. Please
Vincent, I loved you and your sister the same as me own
No difference.
When we had Eddy and people said, you must be happy now you’ve got your own and a son at that, and I said
Eddy’s not my first, I’ve already got two, they’re not step kids, they’re my kids.
There’s no such thing as an half-kid.
Please Vincent, don’t
Don’t do this

- But Vincent wasn’t listening.
He was barking, and babbling, and shouting at me.

- My mother understood that the situation was about to get a lot worse and told me to run to the bathroom and lock the door.

- I ran to the bathroom and locked the door.
Everything that happened next my mother told me about later.

Vincent violently beats Jacky. Days later, Jacky is lying in bed and asks to see Eddy. He offers him his wedding ring.

(F) Come here son. I want to tell you something.
Come here. Your dad’s dying. I haven’t got much longer. I can feel it.
And something else I want to tell you.
You’re my son, my first born, doesn’t matter what.
And I love you. / And I want you to know that ...
THE CREATIVE TEAM

Director Stewart Laing
Writer Pamela Carter
Set & Costume Design Hyemi Shin
Lighting Design Zerlina Hughes
Sound Design Josh Anio Grigg
Video Design Finn Ross
Assistant Director Nima Maria Aida Séne

Alex Austin
Performer - Eddy

Kwaku Mills
Performer - Eddy
THE END OF EDDY

A Unicorn / Untitled Projects Production

Based on the book *En finir avec Eddy Bellegueule* by Édouard Louis
Adapted by Pamela Carter
Directed by Stewart Laing
Resource pack written by Catherine Greenwood and Lucy Dear