



Aisha Zia

How Does Writing Change the Writer?

I THINK IF THE WRITING doesn't change the writer then you haven't quite done your job well. For some reason every play I've written has changed me; it's taught me more about myself, the world I live in and how I really feel. I've grown with the writing as an artist and as a person. I write to explore difficult issues, and often don't realise that I have had those experiences myself until I look closely, and deeply. The danger of working this closely with your self is that sometimes the changes can be challenging and difficult in the real world, and I mean you have to learn a new way of living. That isn't always convenient or easy, but if it's for the best then it's often a necessary pain. This is why being a writer for me is terrifying and dangerous as well as invigorating.

If your writing has the power to change you, it also has the power to change the reader, and for me that's the true art of literature. It's truth and resilience, but also at times painful. When people engage with your work, they are taking a risk too, just like you're taking a risk writing. It's a risky business! Maybe that's why some people are afraid of it. It's definitely one of the reasons why I get anxiety after the excitement of starting a new project. How will it change me and what will the impact be? It can be devastating but also life affirming.

I write with the idealistic ambition to change the world. I see my work as little pieces of activism, whether it's raising awareness of issues, or getting people to think differently. Often you don't know how you feel about a situation you're writing about until you write it. Writing is and can be



so mysterious that often it creeps up on you. It bubbles away until finally you've revealed a piece of your subconscious that was buried. In a way this revelation is cathartic and again it's these hidden meanings, from your own life experiences, that connect with the characters and narrative, but also with the audience; it's that thing that heals, or infuriates, makes you sad, happy or angry. It's the thing that is dramatic, and if you don't feel the connection first hand, then the audience are less likely to feel it or care. Emotions *are* powerful, and if you are able to harness your own through the process of writing, then your work is charged with intentions, and they are felt through every action, every movement, every word. Once I've felt the change, or realised the ambition or the scale of the piece of work I'm writing, I feel more confident, I have a better understanding of form and content; it really helps me shape the world I'm about to create with the message that I have received from my understanding of it.