



[Saturday Night and Sunday Morning](#) , [Royal Exchange](#)

Adapted for the stage and directed by Matthew Dunster, from the novel by Alan Sillitoe.

Reviewed by [Jane Turner](#) March 2012

“I’m me and nobody else; and whatever people think I am or say I am, that’s what I’m not, because they don’t know a bloody thing about me” so says Arthur Seaton, Alan Sillitoe’s hard-talking, hard-drinking and womanizing “angry young man”.

Sillitoe's first-published and best-selling novel, written in 1958, has been adapted for the stage and brought back to ass-kicking life at one of my favourite venues, the remarkable Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, and by the award-winning Director Matthew Dunster, whose previous work includes [Mogadishu](#) and [1984](#) (both reviewed here on The Manchester Salon). With a high-profile cast that includes actors from

Coronation Street

,
This is England

and

Downton Abbey

, the lead role of Arthur Seaton is filled by Perry Fitzpatrick and the setting, as depicted so vividly by Sillitoe in the novel, remains true to 1950's working class Nottingham.

It's good to see such a great piece of writing re-visited, and the timing? Well might it have something to do with the outbreaks of violence on some UK streets last summer? In a pre-performance interview Dunster has said that there is a group of people who feel angry and excluded as Seaton did. But if this story *has* been resurrected because anger is back in fashion, I think it's important to make the distinction between anger from solid communities directing their rage purposefully at the state and its authorities far from their own doorsteps, and the random acts of mindless violence and destruction we saw last Summer. Seaton was angry, but he was no fool.

The novel, a story of masculinity, non-conformity and a sense of belonging was adapted into a film as part of the so-called [kitchen-sink movement](#) and starred a young [Albert Finney](#) as Seaton. Although it is a long time since I've seen that old black and white movie, Finney remains fixed in my psyche as Seaton - a role I thought he embodied, despite his dodgy accent. Vowing not to make comparisons (as I failed not to do last week when reviewing [Streetcar](#) and was unable, or unwilling, to forget about Brando), I was partly un-successful again. Note to brain – try not to be such a stick-in-the mud!



[Alan Sillitoe](#)

[book review](#)