



Parliamentary spaces, politics, power and artistic licence.

Speakers: Dr Barbara Heinzen
Author, geographer and international strategist

Oby Obyerodhyambo
Kenyan Theatre Director

Chaired by: Baroness Lola Young

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NB

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Liz Winder: Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the RSA. My name's Liz Winder, Head of Lectures here and I'm delighted to welcome you all to the RSA. We're delighted to be working with LIFT on this event so I would like to thank them very much indeed for all their help and support and now I'm going to hand over to Baroness Lola Young who's our chair for this evening.

Baroness Lola Young: Thank you very much. Welcome everybody to this evening's event which promises to be quite unconventional in terms of the normal lecture type of presentation and that is really befitting, because LIFT (The London International Festival of Theatre) is an organisation which has a reputation for putting on the extraordinary and doing the unconventional even within the Arts world. So LIFT is the co-sponsor of this lecture. Since 1981 they've been at the forefront of bringing together international contemporary theatre to London, often working with artists who are making work in very different political contexts. In the past few years LIFT has started to explore how the public can connect with international artists who use their work to grapple with global issues. Currently LIFT is engaged in the process of building a new space, a meeting place, a new parliamentary space perhaps. That's something we should all be grateful to LIFT for doing because we certainly need more spaces where people can discuss the issues of the day and this space will be launched in May this year. This lecture then is part of an extensive process of public consultation that LIFT has engaged in to determine what kind of space this space will be. So now on to the main event; what is the connection between an American geographer living in London and a Kenyan theatre practitioner? Where and how did they meet and how did their lives crisscross? I think we'll ask some of those questions later perhaps. What does their relationship have to do with the topic of today's lecture *Parliamentary Spaces, Politics, Power and Artistic Licence*? On my left Dr Barbara Heinzen has an international freelance practice in long-range planning with

corporations, governments and NGOs. She is also the author of *Feeling for Stones*, which is on sale this evening and this book describes social invention and systemic renewal in the face of extraordinary ecological change. Her book draws lessons from pre-industrial Britain and from African societies where she has worked and travelled since the mid 1970s. Her latest project which she also said to me was kind of a daydream is called *Barbet's Duet* and that will be we hope an institution based on Western and African institutional forms that helps to create income for local people in Eastern Africa, to support them and to support bio-diversity in the region.

On my right Oby Obyerodhyambo, Oby is a playwright, an actor, a theatre director, a critic, short story writer, storyteller, cultural activist radio presenter and HIV and AIDS educator. He has used theatre in community discussions of gender rights, property and inheritance rights for women, governance and constitutionalism and advocacy of minority rights. Oby has been a creative inventor of the use of the sigana art form. This is a genre of storytelling that infuses narration with song, percussion, dance, banter, riddling and contestation to raise community dialogue on controversial taboo matters surrounding such things as citizens' rights, governance, political processes and democratisation. Now he's also working on a project I understand called Obila and this uses theatre techniques again in Kenya to try and address and examine some of the cultural beliefs that are inhibiting progress in addressing the issues raised by AIDS and HIV and for that project financial support is currently being sought ... so if anybody's got any ideas on how they can help out with that? It's really needed because standard Western approaches to addressing those issues don't quite fit within that cultural context and need to be adapted to suit the local needs.

So today's lecture will take the form of a duet between these two, a duet in imitation of barbets. These tropical birds

from the woodpecker family sing in duet, creating one sound of one voice. While this evening's duet starts between Barbara and Oby, we hope that one day it will involve everyone in the room. Hand over to you two.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Ayooooo

Barbara Heinzen: Ayooooo

((They continue calling and responding to each other – getting louder then quieter))

Barbara Heinzen: My father was a surgeon. He believed in the power of scientific discovery. He was driven by curiosity observation and the power of reason. There was nothing he could not figure out. He always told me that you needed a good diagnosis before you treated anything. Get your facts right. Get your observations right. Know what you're talking about and when you have diagnosed properly you will have the ability to deliver a good cure. Answers are possible. As a surgeon and a teacher, he ordered people. He led them and he changed people's lives hoping to make them better. All his life he fought illness and disease. When his own death came, he was not so much surprised as disappointed. He thought he might have controlled this a bit better. He was a scientific man and a man of the Enlightenment. He was a product of these rooms, which I adore. The paintings in these rooms tell us of the power and the hope and the faith in reason and in science. He succeeded in that world where we believe in human progress, the progress of knowledge and in our ability to master the natural world. This is our space where mankind is powerful, able to change the course of rivers, eradicate disease, conquer mountains and even visit the stars. As people of this space, we have spread around the world bringing with us our faith in reason and our economies of conquest and control.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: And my grandfather on the other hand was called Henricus Aborobirou. Now Henricus you might wonder but his name was Henry but Henricus was because he was a catholic and when you're a catholic they always add the 'us' at the end. So you would be Petrus and Paulus

and Theophilus and all the other 'us-s'. So my grandfather he was a farmer. He lived on the land but he was also a trader. He traded in fish and traded in commodities but he also kept cattle. So he also took care of his cattle and he traded in milk and milk products but later on in his life he also served in the Queen's army during the Second World War. So he was also as part of his life a soldier. He was all these different things but he was also a parent at the same time and he was somebody's son and he was part and parcel of this whole cosmology that he lived in. Now he was a man who was schooled in diversity. He was schooled in living with the earth, living as part of the earth and not just somebody who had been thrown in it but was part of it. There was a kind of symbiotic relationship that he had developed with this earth. Now when you live with the earth., when you live on the earth, there is a certain uncertainty that you live with because you can never be sure about what the Earth will spring at you at any one time and so you learn the skills of resilience. You learn how to bend with the wind. You learn how to listen to the sounds of the birds and not try and change them. You try and walk along with the stream and not against it. You don't try and control nature. You try to live with it. You try to make it live with you and you try to use it to make your life more comfortable and more profitable and you believe that there are some things which you cannot know. There are some things which are unknowable and it's okay. You don't try to conquer the things that you do not know. You simply roll with the punches, so to speak and you continue living as long as life allows you to continue living. So this was his life and so to survive at this time he needed to be in harmony with the ecosystem to live with it and to make it support his own struggle at staying alive. This was the kind of life that he lived and he honed the skills of resilience living with life and along with it. Therefore he was able and believed that the earth regenerated itself if you allowed it, only if you allowed it. So you needed to give it time. So in his life he worked on this piece of land and

when that piece of land got tired, he moved to the next piece of land allowed that one to regenerate because he believed it would. He did not try to force it to regenerate itself because there was an intrinsic belief in the ability of the Earth to regenerate. Now he believed in compromise. He believed in letting the wind blow as it chose to live. This is a kind of non-aggressive way of living and coping with the space. Now this was his kind of life and he believed that the Earth can heal itself and was non-aggressive but this non-aggression in a way was translated as weakness. This non-aggression is translated as inability to bend nature, to bend nature to his whims and to make it do that which he wanted it to do, but he survived and he believed this powerlessness was what was thought was his undoing but he believed as they say that let the kite perch and let the eagle also perch because he believed that when the frog croaks during the day there is a reason why it does so and when the birds sing there is a reason why the birds sing and he believed that the sun shines and the moon also shines and when the moon shines it doesn't stop the sun from shining. So there was complementariness in the way that he lived his life but this was seen to be weakness. He did not believe that power was something that was to be used to dominate other people or to dominate other things. He believed in a different kind of power and he believed that there was enough and there was abundance for all. That was the way that he looked at power and the way that one used power.

Barbara Heinzen: We thought our technology was incredibly powerful that our knowledge was power that our money was power that our economy was power that our governments were powerful that our armies were powerful. We believed in our own power because we'd seen it transform landscapes. We'd seen it transform people's lives. We believed in our power and as we wandered around the world, we expected others to do the same.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: But he did not. He did not believe that power was domination of another. He did not believe that

power was domination of nature. He believed that power was co-existence and that power was harmony and co-existence and it was not hegemony and domination. This was his space. This was the space in which he lived. This was the time at which he lived and thrived but now at this current time, time and nature are changing us, all of us and we cannot control neither time nor nature. Nature is calling loudly, telling us about the changing of this time reminding us that the time of control is gone. That this time is gone that a new time is upon us that this is the message that nature is bringing to us but the question is - can we hear this message? Do we get this message as they say do we get it?

Barbara Heinzen: So how is the voice of nature telling us what we might be facing? My father once said to me "The viruses will win the war" because for him every illness and every disease was another battle that he was fighting and yet as he came to understand how biology and microbes evolved he thought "I can't win this battle. The viruses will win the war." So what is the message of nature from all the new diseases we are seeing, those diseases that creep out from under the bushes we didn't know were there? The avian flu that is now creating such panic - what is the message of these new diseases that we thought we were able to control?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: To people who had lived with the belief that it's just a question of time and man would be able to regenerate and would be able to triumph and therefore you did not try and fight against nature. You rolled with the punches so to speak. What is the message of HIV? What is the message that HIV is sending to us? What is the message that it could have sent to my grandfather? When you talked about a disease that has no cure. What kind of a disease has no cure? Because a disease that has no cure meant that it was going to wipe out all mankind but was that possible? Was it possible to imagine that there could be something that could wipe out anything? So what was the message of HIV? What was it

telling us this thing without a cure? So today as HIV kills close to three hundred people every single day in my country - this is the message to humanity. What is this message because we are told that in a short while in my country - in ten years time - we'll have about twenty million orphaned children? What is this message that nature is trying to shout at us? What is the message?

Barbara Heinzen: And when I was with my father this August the month before he died, every night we watched the television and we watched the news so we sat together and watched hurricane Katrina come roaring up the Gulf of Mexico and we watched as New Orleans was swamped and people were driven from their homes and had nowhere to go or didn't know how to get there or were not helped to get there and we watched this storm. When my father retired, he studied geology and he read all the geological theories and he would go out with the young students of 20 or 25 and hammer out limestone bits of shell from the New York hills and he told me several years ago "We don't have to worry about climate change because the Earth is cooling. We are entering an ice age. All my theories in geology tell me that we are entering an ice age." But when we sat and watched the news of hurricane Katrina he said "I think this climate business is serious. Maybe it's not getting colder. Maybe I have to take this seriously now."

Oby Obyerodhyambo: In a different space, my grandfather, slightly more than a year ago heard the message that a tsunami had hit the Earth and when you hear about something hitting the Earth, you ask yourself where has it come from, because it was something massive. We heard about something very massive. It was big and its size was exaggerated by the number of casualties close to 8,000 people had lost their lives in a single day and my grandfather must have thought "What is it that can kill 8,000 people in a single day? Where did it come from?" Because this kind of thing this kind of force must have come from elsewhere because this was not the kind of thing generated by the Earth. If we had been

in harmony with the Earth how can the Earth do such a thing? The tsunami had hit and as he listened more and more as people talked about the tsunami, he heard that it had hit villages. It had hit nations. It had hit different continents and so this thing did not respect any boundaries. It did not respect any borders. It did not even understand that the continents were supposed to be different. It was just hitting the Earth, the entire Earth, and he tried to understand this. Where was this thing coming from and what was the message? When there comes a time when something can hit the Earth the entire Earth and cause this amount of loss of life loss of property what was the message that nature was passing on? Did it mean that something had gone completely wrong somewhere? Did it mean that all these people were in the path of something that was angry, a malevolent something that had been unleashed, something that had gone wrong? It had to be something and as I told you earlier on there are some things that are not worth knowing but you try and figure out what is it, it must be something? Was it that the Earth was hitting back? Nature was hitting back at some transgressions that had been occasioned upon it. Was it hitting back? Was it fighting back? What was this? What was the message that was being passed on to mankind?

Barbara Heinzen: The scientists tell us that the threats we now face are extreme and unusual. There is no record in geological time for the CO₂ that is now in our skies. We are in uncharted waters. We are in a place where we don't know any answers and we are continuing to chip away at the fabric that has held us for thousands and thousands of years. We are ruining habitats that have helped many species survive and each time another species goes the fabric gets thinner. When will the fabric break and when will we fall through? We've never done this before. We have never been as invasive as we are now. We have never been so destructive and we do it absentmindedly without knowing the ruin we are causing because we are

comfortable and yet we are in a position of extreme and violent danger.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: The message that we get and this is what my grandfather said that this thing does not respect boundaries, that the whole of mankind, all the people together not those who do this or those who do that, not those who preserve or those who do not preserve, not those who conserve or those who do not conserve not those who use or those who abuse – everybody. Everyone is facing a common threat and everyone each one of us is facing a common destiny and it is a destiny from which there is no escape because when something is hitting upon the entire Earth, where do you run? Where do you escape to? It is a common destiny and we are all facing it together.

Barbara Heinzen: You say that we are facing it but do we know we are facing it together? Are we aware that we are in this fragile boat together? How aware, how much do we know? How easy is it for us to sense that there is someone on the other side of the world that is also in the same situation and how do we express it? Can we recognise this commonality? Can we feel it? Can we know it? Do we know it?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: The question is, do we realise it? Do we know it? Do we appreciate it? But what is even more important is do we recognise that the threats that we face need and call for a profound systemic reinvention a rethinking? We need to completely rethink. Do we realise - do we appreciate that we need to completely rethink the way that we think? That we need to rethink the way that we invent, we need to reinvent thinking and that the way that we have thought in the past might not be the way that we need to think in order to cope with the thing that we face today. Do we realise it? Do we appreciate it? Do we know how much we need to do in order to be able to cope with the changes that face us today?

Barbara Heinzen: For me the message is clear - everything I have looked at in the past 7 years of writing, everything I've

worked on with Oby, everything I've done tells me that if we, as mankind, are to survive, we must begin again. We must learn to ecologise and not industrialise, to find an ecological modernisation that is not development but is a re-imagining of the relationship we have with the Earth. We need to find a way to live in nature, not above or removed from it and we need to recognise that in this challenge we do not know what we are doing.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Ah, so we need to go back to the point at which we acknowledge that some things are unknowable and some things you do not need to know. We need to reinvent the way that we think and the way that we imagine things. In order to ecologise all the rules must change. All the rules must change because the rules that say that it's empirical and that it must always be right, that we must always be on top of it, that we must always know what it's going to be before we try and do it those rules must change. All the rules must change we must change the rules even of how we make the rules because if we are going to change the rules we cannot remain with the same rules of how to make the rules. We need to reinvent the rules of making rules.

Barbara Heinzen: So you mean to say that the rules of my father's world, the rules of this room, which have been so successful, the rules of reason, the rules of good governance, the rules of parliamentary accountability, the rules of even simple mechanical things need to change. We need to look at every rule of how we live and how we understand the world. Everything my father taught, everything my father believed in, those rules are now up for re-examination.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Not only the rules of your father but the rules of my grandfather. The rules of my grandfather must change. We must change the rules in my grandfather's world because we need to change the rules, as we have known them. We need to change rules, the rules that have

created what we have today. The rules that have created the spaces that we have today. We need to have new rules that create new rules of creating new rules so that we can create new rules.

Barbara Heinzen: If my father's rules are not enough where do we create these rules? How do we create these rules? The parliaments that have governed us so far, the United Nations that has governed us so far, the International Treaties that have governed our global relationships they have all come out of this room and out of the spirit of this room and the enlightenment that this room gave us. How do we change those rules if they are not enough? And if those institutions are no longer listening to the threat that we believe we are facing if it's too big for them to handle because it doesn't fit the rules they are given, if there's no space in their places, how do we change the rules when these larger institutions, the ones that have been governing us, are out of reach - they're deaf and they are closed?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: That is one question how we change the rules but an even bigger problem is where do we change the rules? Where do we change the rules because when you're changing the rules where are you, where you are not where you are governed by the rules that you have used before? You need to create somewhere you need to be somewhere because there has to be a place that is not governed by the rules that are current. You need to be in some other place, which is not tied by those rules. You need to be in a completely different space. You need to be in a space that is not governed by those rules otherwise you cannot change those rules because you shall be like somebody cutting a tree while standing on one of its own branches. You will come down with that tree so you have to be off the tree so that you can chop that tree. So you need to change the rules while being outside of those rules. But where, where do we evolve those rules? Where do we start Barbara? Where do we start to change the rules?

Barbara Heinzen: We must begin by talking the way that we are talking now. We must begin by talking across the boundaries that we have put between us and we must begin by talking in a different voice and with a different understanding. We must begin recognising where we are and what is threatening us and say "Yes, let's start a different conversation."

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Talking, begin by talking. Have we not been talking to each other? Have we not been having a talk in between? What is it that we have not said? What is it that has not been spoken? What is it that we have not expressed? What is it that has not been articulated? What is it that is different from the things that have been said since people started saying them? What is it that will be said in a different way in a different voice? What is it that has not been said that we still need to say? What is it that we need to say so that we can change these rules so that we can begin? Where do we begin? You said we need to begin by talking but what is it that has not been said so far?

Barbara Heinzen: We need to begin by not just talking but talking and listening and as we listen we need to create in our talking and listening a place where we can discover new rules new paradigms and new language so that we can begin to understand with our new language not just what we are facing but what might be the way out.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Ah ha, so we need to discover new rules. We need to discover a new way of talking, new paradigms a new language. A new language that will help us, a language that will allow us to imagine, a new language that will create a new world for us a world that has never existed before. It must be something that we shall imagine afresh. It has to be a world in which we can recreate. We must be able to create and we talk about the language. We talk about the place. It's a language that must allow us to imagine allowing us to create and then we must also develop a way that we can evolve. We must be at peace with ourselves as we

are. We must be at peace with ourselves so that we can move from where we are and move to the next level after we appreciate who we are so that we can use that energy to move onto the next level to create and to imagine and to be something different to create something different, to imagine something that is new and that is bright and that will lead us forward to a new beginning.

Barbara Heinzen: As a simple geographer Oby it sounds to me like you're describing an artistic space with artistic licence, maybe not enough fact but this is an artistic space that is still important to us because it is a space where we can talk freely and where all ideas are welcome and all facts are welcome and all peoples are welcome and all beliefs are welcome an artistic space where anything is possible.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Does this space not exist? Is this not an existing place an artistic space where language transcends boundaries, transcends nationalities, where we can speak through languages that bring people together so that we can create together, so that we can invent together, re-invent together, so that we can learn and find the language of failure and when we fall because we have failed we know how to rise up again and start all over again and from our failure learn to carry on and to proceed and to try again and to imagine and to re-imagine and to create and recreate to invent and to reinvent and to move on and on. We need that artistic space and we need the artistic licence to be able to invent to create and to re-imagine.

Barbara Heinzen: So we have this artistic licence I hear you saying that but what do we talk about? What are the subjects we need to discuss? Where do we begin? What are the first things we need to cover? What will be open?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: It is the things that have never been spoken before.

Barbara Heinzen: It is the things that cause us pain.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: The things that we have not named.

Barbara Heinzen: The things that we cannot talk about like our complicity in slavery and the slave trade which funded the glorious revolution of industrialisation.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: The things like racism and intolerance, racism that was the foundation of the denigration of some people and the elevation of others the basis upon which that slavery that you talk about was based upon. We need to talk about intolerance. We need to talk about our fear of others and the fear of otherness the fear of difference the fear of people who do not conform people who are not like us people who are different who are outsiders. We need to have a talk to talk about what is the outside? Is there an outside? The outsideness.

Barbara Heinzen: And can we also talk in this space about the rules of property, of what's ours and what's mine and what belongs to no one? Can we talk about these rules so that we can create a different meaning to the way we live with each other and with the land? Can we talk even about those things?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: When we talk about the land, we talk about ownership. When we talk about land, we talk about the power that derives out of ownership. We talk about who uses power, the use of power and when we talk about the use of power, we talk about the abuse of power - the usage and the abuse of power. We must be able to talk about power and how power is used and power is abused and who has power and who doesn't have power. Who uses power and how does the person who has power use power and how does that power create more power and how does that power give the people more power to use that power and to abuse that power?

Barbara Heinzen: If the space is to work we must come to it with something different. What must we bring into this space for this space to work?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Into this space, to work in this space that we have created in which there is a language, the space that we have opened up - that space is a sacred space and therefore we must bring into that space the sense of oneness. We must bring into that space an equality. We must bring into that space a sense of belongingness.

Barbara Heinzen: So I cannot come into this space thinking that my people have all the answers. I must abandon that saviour culture, that desire to help because I can give help better than anyone else in the world. I must leave that behind and come with a different mind that has both questions and answers from everyone.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Not only that, we must also come into this space. We cannot come into this space thinking that history owes a debt to us. We cannot carry the burden of the pain and the suffering and the past into this space. We cannot come into this space as victims, as people who have been used and abused in the past because that is baggage, because that into this space will not create the equalness within which the space can create an opportunity to talk and to speak and to be listened to. So we must come into this space without thinking that we are owed, without the victim syndrome.

Barbara Heinzen: So I must come into this space and be prepared to change my father's legacy and we must be ready to change our fathers' legacies together.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Yes and we must also change my grandfather's legacy. Together we have to work it we have to nurture it we have to develop it. We need to change my grandfather's legacy.

Barbara: And we must allow the space to change it with us.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: And we must work together in this space so that it's a nurturing space and an empowering space, because it's a space within which there must be life and the things that make life worth living and have life force.

Barbara Heinzen: And we must come into this space so that we can heal ourselves.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: And before we can heal if we want to heal ourselves, we must first of all think about healing the Earth upon which we stand as we try to heal ourselves, because that is a space upon which we will have the space to heal ourselves because if the Earth is not healed we cannot heal ourselves and that is the artistic space.

Barbara Heinzen: And the artistic space is where we will invent this new relationship with each other and with the Earth in which we live.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: The space where there will be freedom to speak freely and the space within which we will be able to listen freely. It is not by mistake that God created Man with one mouth and two ears Barbara. We need to speak less and listen more within this parliamentary space which has power and which makes it possible for shared power and which makes it possible for people to reinvent and to recreate the dynamics of working together.

Barbara Heinzen: Politics and power and artistic licence.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Politics parliamentary space and power.

Barbara Heinzen: Thank you.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Thank you.

Barbara Heinzen: Well I guess we take a bow.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Thank you.

Baroness Lola Young: Thank you both very much indeed. I've got masses of questions and I think what I'll do is I'll ask a couple and then I'll throw it open to colleagues on the floor. I don't know where to start really. First of all if we could talk a little bit about the form and the structure of the piece of work that you just did. How rehearsed was it? How spontaneous was it? I know you've worked together before so have

you worked together in this kind of format before?

Barbara Heinzen: Absolutely not, I have been terrified all day.

Baroness Lola Young: It didn't show. Oby is it similar to the sort of work that you've been doing in Kenya or do you use lots of different kinds of techniques?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Yes, what we were trying to work on was deriving from what I think Barbara mentioned earlier on about the duet of the Barbets which also is a contestation between two different artists and which is a very typical art form and we do quite a bit of that and two artists can have contests sometimes in poetry and in this particular place we just figured out that extending the metaphor of the barbets talking to each other and trying to negotiate something between them and finally arriving at some kind of, I don't know if we arrived at a consensus, but the idea was slowly trying to start off with two different ideas and slowly trying to work it closer together but it is very close to the kind of work that we do.

Barbara Heinzen: One of the important concepts we had when we were working together was that Oby arrived on Sunday morning and we've been just talking non-stop, except for a day I had to work with somebody else. It was just non-stop conversation and a lot of what we were aiming at was how do you create a sense of cultural equity where both our backgrounds have meaning, both our voices have equal weight and that we are physically visible in an equitable relationship.

Baroness Lola Young: Because you have obstacles to overcome before you can feel like it's an equitable relationship don't you, because you talked about racism, fear and intolerance and part of that baggage that people bring into the space whether they are talking or whether they are spectating. How do you end up by feeling comfortable that you have created somewhere that is equitable?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Well I think that with the things that are difficult to talk about, the moment we start feeling comfortable with them then I think we are in trouble because the fact that they are uncomfortable is the very reason that we are saying we need to talk about them and the fact that we have not been able to talk about things like our complicity in slave trade and slavery is one of those things. Racism is a very difficult topic to approach. So we say people need to be brave and hence the parliamentary space and the artistic licence to experiment and to talk about these difficult things that have got to be confronted because otherwise there is no other way of reaching a consensus about these really very touchy subjects.

Baroness Lola Young: How do you make that space? Obviously we've made it here because it's been set up to be made here and it's a constructed space for us here but if we're talking about trying to create a space where people, especially artists, can have the ear or the ears of people who have power and can make that feel like it's something meaningful and powerful in its own right because you know people just dismiss artists. I mean one of your lines was something like "I'm a geographer who is rational - where's your rationality?" How can you really make art speak powerfully?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Well I think what's important is that space is always contested and I think that's why we talked about contesting for space and the very first part of our presentation was contestation for space. Space is never given. Space is always contested and the artist knows this only too well that that space and we talked about physical space which is sometimes a lot easier to provide because when you provide physical space you can alienate a people in a certain physical space and pay them no attention, but a more difficult space to colonise is a space in the mind. Part of what we were trying to do, we played around with this space and something completely different was to capture that space by not standing on

a podium and doing a traditional lecture. We decided to invade the space so to speak and therefore change the dynamics within which this interaction was taking place and we felt that was one of the ways of grabbing attention and then once you've grabbed that attention you try and ram the message down the throats, so to speak.

Barbara Heinzen: I think the only thing that was important was when Oby and I started communicating on email he was very busy and I was very busy and we both said "Shoot, there's no way we're going to work this out long distance, come in early." So he came in on Sunday and I don't know how many hours we spent just talking and talking and talking and every conversation in a sense was a contestation and just an hour before we were due to come down here we hit a rewrite in our scruffy script and I said "Wait a minute, you can't say that about my father" you know and I suddenly realised that we'd hit a point where we needed to have a longer conversation and we had an hour to go and I thought "We don't have the hour." So I think the time that we've had has been incredibly important in creating an equity of mental space because you need to hear someone out and an oral culture needs to repeat quite a lot whereas a literate culture is also picking up a lot of the repetitive habits of speaking long and loud. So we needed to both have enough time to plug away at difficult ideas and to hit at something that was uncomfortable.

Baroness Lola Young: Do you think it's possible to say things and to galvanise people through the kind of format that you can't do through a lecture or through a standardised debate?

Barbara Heinzen: Yeah, I don't know you will be the test of whether we've had any effect at all. I don't know but I think that to me the most exciting space is one that has nothing in it where you don't know what language will be created but you know you can feel that something important is there and you need to name it and you need to play with it and give it an embodiment and that's very much an artistic space whether it's a theatre

space or a writer's space or a visual artist's space and it's that empty space that's probably the most important space we're facing now.

Baroness Lola Young: And is that empty space the space where you can rethink the way of thinking? Is it the space where you can rewrite the rules?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: I think when Barbara uses the term empty space, I use the term space in a different way because I think space does not exist which is empty. I think you need to create that empty space because, for example, if you think about physical space it's a lot easier, but in the mind that space is clogged up with all sorts of other different things. So you need to create that space and when you create that space then you are able to (I use the term 'colonise') it with other different ideas. I'll just let the cat out of the bag that we were expecting at the end of this presentation a standing ovation but what Barbara told me again "I don't think you'll get that with a London crowd, because culturally it's not quite appropriate and acceptable." And that is the way in which that space is closed and therefore you need to open up the space of spontaneity where one is able to feel "Yes I like that message, I'm going to run with it" but probably there are people here feeling "I'm going to run with it but you've got to be decent and kind of quiet about it and do it in your own private way."

Baroness Lola Young: That's kind of interesting. So open for a couple of questions now - I'm sure there are people who've got something to say to make a comment or to stand up and give your own individual standing ovation. Great thank you.

Question: Thank you Barbara and Oby for that lecture in stereo. My name is Chukudun(?) and I speak from the point of view of an African. As an African I'm very well versed and fully aware of what others have done to us, but I have concerns about whether we know enough of what we have done to ourselves and the point you raised

there Oby about complicity and the issue of the slave trade the point about the slave exercise, the operative word there was slave trade it wasn't slave robbery which implies that a deal was done between two parties and therefore when Africans or when people discuss the slave trade, then we expect the Europeans or the Western world to raise their hands in guilt, I think it's also important for Africans to begin to understand that we must investigate our role in that sordid act and therefore begin to raise our hand in guilt as well. If we don't do that or don't investigate enough I think we'll have an imbalance of knowledge in our approach to things.

Baroness Lola Young: Thank you. Did you want to respond to that or shall we take a couple more questions?

Question: I just wanted to make a point on something that came over about the scientific versus the artistic because I'm not a scientist by training but it does seem to me from experience and things that I've read about that the greatest scientific discoveries come after all the tests have been done and then somebody thinks out of the box in an artistic way. Somebody says "What if?" because very often the rules don't actually lead to that logical inescapable conclusion and I think that is a very interesting aspect to include within your space and thank you very much.

Barbara Heinzen: I think that comment was quite interesting because although you talk about an artistic space I think about it as a creative space so I wouldn't define it as artistic or scientific I would just think about it as creative so something that underpins many disciplines.

Question: My name is Femi I'm not an artist. A couple of thoughts that hit me when I was listening to the very wonderful lecture one of them is on incentive to reach compromise. The typical African, and I'm an African, is thinking about what to eat tonight and when you are thinking about what to eat tonight, that takes off your focus from thinking about the world we live in and how my mind can become empty and become recolonised and

thinking myself out of my problems. I think that short term thinking of what I'm going to eat next stops us from moving out of what our basic problems are.

Likewise for the developed society, if you want to come down to a stage where we are all coming into this game as equals or coming into a world of equals I think you need to have stronger incentives than the fact that the world is going to get destroyed because the Kyoto Agreement has not been signed because the US is thinking about job losses and economic losses and I think we need to create those incentives. That's one. Two, I think if you are going to create any space at all for these kinds of discussions, spaces where people can discuss as equals one important rule that people need to come into, it is the rule of absolutes.

We live in a world where it's right and wrong, yes and no, black or white. People rarely look that between black and white there are so many shades of grey and maybe within those shades of grey is where the truth is and people need to start coming in with that mindset of "Maybe I'm not right maybe that other person has something else to add to it." That's the second, and the third bit about listening, I liked the comment about one mouth and two ears. A friend's observation some time ago is when kids are growing up, when they are in their formative age, we teach children how to speak, nobody teaches people how to listen and so we grow up into adults knowing how to talk knowing how to debate but no one teaches us how to actually listen to people without thinking of what our response is going to be but listening so that we can understand what they are saying. Thank you.

Baroness Lola Young: Thank you very much, good points.

Question: My name's Maureen. I was interested in the repetition of the concern about rules and it seems to me that part of the struggle that we're locked into is a world that is rule-bound and if what you're describing is a space for an emergent process

that has never existed before it seems to me that's going to be for at least a while a rule-less space and I wonder if there's not another language that permits the possibility of emergence that's not necessarily anarchic but it isn't conceptualised in terms of rules which seems to me to hold us back into a cognitive world rather than something that's more holistic and grounded.

Baroness Lola Young: Thank you very much. If we can just hold it for a second and ask Barbara and Oby to address some of the points here - a very rich list I must say of quite dense and difficult, difficult in the sense of complex, points being raised but the things that came out of that for me, how you admit to difficult issues, how you talk about complicity in a way that doesn't appear to be blaming victims or people who've been categorised as victims. How do you shift the whole way of speaking about that in terms of blame victim etc? The whole issue of how science and arts have been separated particularly in Western cultures and how that spark of creativity is something that underpins all of those kinds of endeavours and shouldn't be separated off in the way that we tend to and this incentive to reach compromise which is a good phrase I think but is often sacrificed because there are immediate concerns that need to be addressed. Then we had that issue of absolutes, we tend to think in absolutes and I think that's linked to the issue of rules as well isn't it? So how can we escape, which was the last point, how can we escape or maybe escape is not the right term but how can we move into or grab, to use your term, this emergent space as a rule-less space that isn't anarchic.

Barbara Heinzen: They are very complicated issues. Unfortunately, I agree with everything that's been said, so I'm not quite sure how to respond to this. I liked the point about nobody teaches us how to listen. It's a really wonderful point and I will carry that with me. So thank you very much for that.

The point about artistic versus scientific - one of the great values I was given was curiosity, which can be artistic or scientific curiosity and I misspoke if I didn't get across

that value of artistic curiosity and creativity, because to me there isn't a duality there but I think that there are a set of assumptions that underline the rational revolution that have their limits and it's coming up against those limits of rationality when the world is too complex to be understood that this tradition doesn't know quite how to handle.

So it's trying to accept that there are limits to this tradition just as there are limits to Oby's grandfather's world and what are those limits and what do we want to keep coming with us? So both worlds have something to bring and something that needs to be let go. How do we get that right? It is I am sure very much a rule-less space at this point, but the emphasis on rules comes out. I see so much of the damage we're doing being governed by a set of rules and incentives that need changing. Those won't change until we have a new paradigm, a new set of goals. So the rules are almost a consequence of rethinking what matters and how do we meet it? But they become a way of understanding that perhaps.

Baroness Lola Young: Oby what's your response to some of those points?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: I don't know if I'm going to respond to all of them but I think I'd like to really agree with what my brother there has said about the difficulty to admit to some of these issues. It is a difficult thing but I think what we are saying is that there needs to be bravery on both sides of the divide and that's why at the end of it we are saying that we need to throw away the baggage of the saviour syndrome or of the victim syndrome and I think that's very important as a way of negotiating this space where there can be some kind of cultural equity that people can talk together as human beings especially considering that we are faced with a common destiny.

Something that I'd like to say is that also I think we are still thinking of science and art as two different things. I think if you look traditionally the way knowledge was organised it's later on that things were

compartmentalised as science and sometimes even went further and said pure science versus social sciences. I think all this basically should just be knowledge and people should think of it as knowledge. These are some of the rules that I think we need to begin to challenge, that one is either a scientist or one is an artist because a lot of the inventors were actually people who would have described themselves as artists and the realm of creativity is really not considered to be confined only to science.

So I think we need to begin to change the rules and talking about rules I believe that when you talk about that emphasis of rules, what is very important for me is the element of participation and we had a long discussion about this. Participation in the creation or in the determination of those rules becomes very important. As long as you have a situation where the rules are determined elsewhere and everybody else just follows those rules then you have a problem. This is why at one time we are talking about this parliamentary space, it means opening up the space where the rules are being negotiated because if we open up the space where negotiation is taking place then you do not end up with things which are oppressive which render some people powerless.

I think what's very important is to open up participatory spaces so that there can be a lot more dialogue happening among people and I'm thinking about Kenya and I'm thinking about Westminster democracy or the Westminster parliamentary system as being something that we have inherited with absolutely all the rules that it has here. I'm very sure if you walked through the Kenyan Parliament you wouldn't be out of order at all because you'd know the rules no one would have to teach you the rules because they are exactly the same rules. So that I think is an aberration of what it should be because we need to have determined completely different rules in a different context. So participation becomes the thing that is key for me.

Baroness Lola Young: And so that idea of participation will underline the notion of rules, because otherwise can you have a

rule-less space without going into some kind of anarchy and chaos?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Well it's interesting that just a short while before this, I was reading a book that talks about hierarchy and the way that people tend to believe that hierarchy subsumes some kind of rules and that is not the only way that things can happen because it's a much bigger discussion about this, but sometimes the way that the rules are set or the way the rules are followed is a description of that hierarchical way of looking at things but there are some things that are intuitive but they are not based by rules and there are some schools for example that do not have rules and they say that when you are in the school you know what is good for you and what is good for the person next to you and that is what guides the way people interact. So a rule-less community is not necessarily an anarchical one.

Question: Can I ask whether there are any spaces existing or that have existed temporary or permanent that you'd hold up as examples of the kind of dialogue you're looking for?

Barbara Heinzen: That would get us into a lot of long stories.

Baroness Lola Young: Okay well we'll hold that then.

Question: I don't think you're going to get away with it entirely though because I was going to ask a similar question. In the introduction we were promised an inkling of how you two met and I think that in the description of that it might be revealed. But my particular question to Oby actually and I do know a bit of the background here, was what was very different, if it was very different, the experience of the scenario planning in Kenya?

Question: Hello my name's Jean and I'm an ecological artist so I'm very interested in performative space. I wonder whether what was happening was that unintentionally as an audience, we were the space but we

were put in a position of being a passive space? I wonder if almost if it had been contrived and we had known that you were trying to get together back at the bottom and we'd almost taken sides and egged you on? We would have been actually intellectually involved in a physical fashion, whereas it actually just stayed in our heads and I wonder if this is something, which maybe is closer to a Kenyan model or a new model maybe there is a new model in there somewhere?

I also would dearly like to be able to say your name Oby and I would like to hear us all to be able to say your name. I think it might be very beautiful have great meaning and have a lot of rhythm.

Baroness Lola Young: Thank you.

Question: I very much enjoyed the way you started with the calling and I would be interested to hear more about what was behind starting that way.

Baroness Lola Young: Okay, and thank you.

Question: My name is Rosamund McGuinness and I've spent years teaching music students because I'm a music historian at Royal Holloway and there are two things I want to say. The first is I was fortunate enough last week to go to the recording of the first Reith Lecture of Daniel Barenboim and I urge everybody to listen to that, but much of what he said is relevant here and one thing that he said reminded me of experiences I had in teaching over the years. It's not just a question of listening it's a question of hearing and the English language is one of the languages that makes that distinction and Barenboim talks about this and he talks about why he has that orchestra of Israelis and Arabs and it isn't what you think it's for it's because he said "If you play in an orchestra you have to listen to each other and open yourself to each other."

Now I found in teaching I became rather desperate in teaching English music students who'd played a lot of instruments at least two instruments actually, because they couldn't respond in any way to music and I

taught aesthetics in the department and I found over the years that what I had to do to open up their space up here was to do a lot of lateral approach. It came about because one day I was with a group of third year students playing the opening of Tristan on a recording and asking them, "What do you hear?" And nobody could tell me anything about it. So I passed around a lot of pictures from the National Gallery and I said "What do you see?" And they didn't stop talking and I said at the end "Why can you talk about art which you're not even studying but you can't say anything about music?" So I found that what I had to do for instance in the first year, well I refused to call it history I called it Style and Criticism... I found in order to make them listen I had to make them see.

Baroness Lola Young: Okay thank you very much and I'm sorry to interrupt you there but we've got so many questions here and I'd like to try and get through some of them and maybe depending what Oby says if we can do the main thing as an ending thing that would be quite nice I think.

Okay so the first question was about spaces temporary or permanent have you come across them? Have you managed to make them? Do they work?

Barbara Heinzen: Do we link it to the Kenyan space, I don't know, that might be one possibility? We were talking at one point and I wanted us to use examples of spaces where we thought we'd had a good creative engagement and as we discussed it we realised that we had created spaces where a different engagement had taken place but they had been spaces in London that crossed London cultures or they had been spaces in Kenya that crossed Kenyan cultures, but that what we hadn't seen either one of us in our different professions and practices was a space that crossed both cultures where we as a Northern person and as a Southern person where we'd had groups meeting north and south in terms of profound cultural equity and openness. So we thought that that space was missing and that's partly why things turned out the way they

did. So that's one answer but where do these spaces exist? And so far we haven't seen it. I think LIFT has probably created those spaces in its engagement, but in our experience we hadn't really come across them.

As for you being a passive space, when I came to look at this space I said "Can't you move these damn chairs out of the way?" I'm afraid to a certain extent we were trapped by our environment which brings up another working principle you must start with where you are and with what is needed and I'm afraid fixed rows of chairs was where we were when we started. We experimented with different ideas but that's where we ended up.

Baroness Lola Young: Well we can start off by thinking about that or we can backtrack a bit to the question which was asked specifically of you Oby and we can link it to other things which, was there something that was different that happened in the Kenyan context or was it more or less the same kind of feel to it?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Well I think the person who actually is most qualified to say whether the scenarios planning in Kenya was different should be Barbara because she's the one who's got experience of different place, but having been involved in the scenarios planning process, I know that one of the things that happened there is that it brought together very different and very diverse people and my entry into that process was that I came in as an artist. I am also a social scientist by training but for that particular engagement I came in as an artist and we engaged quite thoroughly with art and why this would seem like a major thing was that a lot of the interaction that was happening in the scenarios planning at that particular moment was very much between the economists and the political scientists and the more professional people who should be involved in scenarios, so we came in as artists and as people who came as a kind of a cat between the pigeons so to speak.

So we came in and caused quite a bit of trouble for Barbara in this process, but what we also brought into all this thing was a lot of

the questioning and we started raising a lot of doubts about some of these things but for me what was most important was that at the end of the scenarios, after they had been built, I was involved intimately in a process that was part of the dissemination and we took the scenarios to about 171 venues in different places in Kenya and presented the scenarios to different groups of Kenyan people right from the villages to professionals and all sorts of people. They commented about those scenarios and we did write a report about the way they felt about it, so I don't know if it ever happened in any of the other places, but this part of the dissemination of the scenarios I felt was creating a space and more than once some people did tell me "This is the very first time that someone has come to ask us what we think about the future of our country." So this created a bit of a problem for me also because then some of them started giving me a list and they were saying "Go and tell the government that's what we think about this..." and I told them "No we are not doing this on behalf of the government. We are doing this on behalf of the organisation doing this" and they said "So why did you bring it to us anyway?" because it created a certain space where members of the public the ordinary people were for the first time asked "What do you think about the future of your country?" And this is something that ordinary people are not involved in and so in that sense, it created quite an explosive space and a lot of that information did filter back. The sense in which it informed the rest of that process is a discussion we can engage in further, but that was significant as far as that is concerned.

Barbara Heinzen: I just want to fill people in a bit - the Kenya scenarios project was one started by a Kenyan colleague of ours Arthur Mulero who said "We as a country need to think about our future" and he hired me to help design a process which actually ended up taking 18 months roughly where we met five times and we did scientific research and gathered all the evidence we could but we also used the arts to help us get

at the hard issues and in my experience it was a pretty unique process and that's why in some ways if there is an example of a space we have created in that context I think we did begin to imagine what it would be like, which is why Oby was a natural partner for this lecture with his experience in taking it out into the country.

What to me, as the facilitator, was extremely interesting - I'd travelled in Africa, I'd worked on the odd development project. My friend Lynette here has also worked on development and knows exactly what I'm talking about when I say that a lot of development is very unequal it's very distorting and it's very uncomfortable. You never know what harm you're doing by doing good and so when I was asked to do this project, I found myself as the only Western person in a completely Kenyan setting and I had all this baggage of colonialism and development riding on my shoulders and working out in my own mind what was the right relationship, testing what I could and couldn't do, finding what would create equity and what wouldn't create equity took most of that 18 months frankly and Oby was one of the people who helped me understand it in subtle ways and some of the fuss between the economists and the artists also helped me understand what I could do and what I couldn't do.

So that project was an example of this kind of space but what it failed to do was actually create an equity of culture. I was a lonely voice from my culture and what was great about that was it turned the tables upside-down, but it wasn't the kind of space that we've been trying to imagine here.

Baroness Lola Young: And was that the context in which you first met?

Barbara Heinzen: Yeah.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Yes that's how we first met. I wanted to just say one thing if you would allow me about the person who talked about feeling passive, a passive audience. Under normal circumstances we would have liked to have worked up this audience into a participatory audience and join us in the chant or something of that sort. First

of all we were constrained by time because then we would have had to teach you the chant. Generally, in my work I would have done that but having said that I think that someone said that it remained in our heads. I think the fact that there was a space that was created there and something was happening there I think is good enough.

Barbara Heinzen: It's a start.

Baroness Lola Young: And what about the call and response at the beginning of the session how did you arrive at that as a way of starting it?

Oby Obyerodhyambo: We first wanted to start off from the idea of the barbets and I think Barbara did talk about this. The barbets are birds and they engage in a call response talking to each other and then the voices actually tend to merge into one. So we figured out here we could do that so to create that idea that there is a space between us that is being contested at the beginning and hopefully eventually, (if you remember our last line) this duet will become one and we shall all become one talking together on the same plane. Now the call response also is a way of creating a unity among us here. If we would have taken it to the level where we were all engaged in the call and response we would all have felt like a single whole. Referring to the we and the you and the us, we meant everyone who was here and that was deliberate but also it works statistically and just creating that kind of dynamic and breaking like we have now where everyone is and this power relation was one of the things that we were trying to break in our discussion by just changing the power dynamics but being part of the audience as opposed to having this kind of relationship.

Baroness Lola Young: Especially with the moving up and down and the speaking across - I think it worked particularly well. We've got time for one more question.

Question: There are two formats that have come into my mind while listening

to this one is the 'open space' format and I wonder if you've come across that and could talk about the differences, because to me they sound very similar and the other is the process of appreciative enquiry where rather than having rules, you have guidelines for how you ask questions, how you handle responses and how you work towards a consensus.

Baroness Lola Young: Do you know about the 'open space'?

Barbara Heinzen: I know about 'open space' - I've been in 'open space' sessions and appreciative enquiry I haven't done, but I know what they are. What to me is really interesting at this point in our lives collectively is how many attempts there are at the moment to find different ways to talk with each other and to engage with each other. So in a sense we're not telling anybody anything new. We're just saying it is extremely necessary and that it's also necessary to take in what this cultural dimension is out of a history of conquest conquering and conquered peoples. We need to cope with that and we need to find a language for it. Otherwise we're cutting off half our knowledge, we're cutting off more than half our knowledge because you know those of us who are out of this civilisation are a tiny percentage - there's a lot more to be known out there. So I think there are many, many methods and they are all welcome because when you are facing the unknowable you try everything and you see what survives and what helps you most.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: I have in a sense experienced one of the 'open spaces' there was a time I was invited to one of the 'open spaces' in the University of Princeton, the year before last and it was supposed to be an 'open space' but in the end it turned out that it wasn't an 'open space' and I don't know if it is possible because at the end of the day the fact that the people who were chosen came from a certain discipline in itself meant that although it was an 'open space' and started off by saying "We can talk about anything". You know there is a saying that when trappers meet, (trappers are hunters who set traps) they talk about trapping and as

long as you determine who is going to be in that open space, in a sense by determining who is going to be in that open space, you determine what is going to be talked about in that open space. I think it's an attempt but willy-nilly if you bring people together who are in that scenario. We were all working in the area of HIV and AIDS and we spent three days talking about HIV and AIDS. At no time did we talk about something different because it's our passion and that's what ended up driving the whole thing. About appreciative enquiry I'm not very sure if I have encountered that yet.

Baroness Lola Young: Maybe that's something we could explore after the session has finished because sadly we've come more or less to the end of our time. Oby I don't know if you want to tell us how to pronounce your name and I must apologise again for my terrible stumbling at the beginning but perhaps it would be nice if you said your own name.

Barbara Heinzen: Your full name and your grandfather's name as well. Anyway I know him as Oby Obyerodhyambo but he also has a family name, which has even more length and meaning.

Baroness Lola Young: Well let's hear it from Oby.

Oby Obyerodhyambo: Well the pronunciation a lot of people tend to call me Oby but it's actually O-by. Oby Obyerodhyambo - that is the full name. There is a story around the name Oby. Oby actually means 'May he come' and maybe we should continue this in the bar but my great-great grandfather whose name I bear died just about seven months before I was born and when my mother was pregnant with me he appeared to her and was offering her a child which is a bit odd for an old man to be offering the child to a grand daughter-in-law? So it was like should he come and it was like Oby. So that's how I came.

Baroness Lola Young: Well I think that's a really nice note on which to finish and I'd really like to thank Oby and Barbara very

much for their performance their generosity in responding to all the questions and to all of you as well for asking such really brilliant questions I thought and of course thanks to the RSA and to LIFT for putting on this event this evening. Thank you all very much.

Liz Winder: And I just wanted to say thank you very much to Baroness Young for chairing this evening.