

Crossing Boundaries

Word count: 566

the story of how Michael lost the money in the dirt. I couldn't lie. She was Ma.

'Me see yu walkin up de path wid no fish in yu hand.'

I took in a deep breath, ready to spill out the contents of my story of where it all started with Michael tricking me into letting him count the money...

'Go wash yu hand an cum back.' 'Quick.'

You don't know how hard my chest was beating. I struggled to keep the soap bar in my hands as they showered under the ice cold water. Michael not even saying a word for fear of getting beaten.

'Come. Sit. Michael say grace.'

Our heads bowed in reverence to the meal, to ma for cooking it and to God for providing the food; I prayed my own little prayer, thanking him for letting Ma not get angry with us, and giving us the gravy from yesterday's meal on top of our plate full of vegetables, even though she kept the meat for herself.

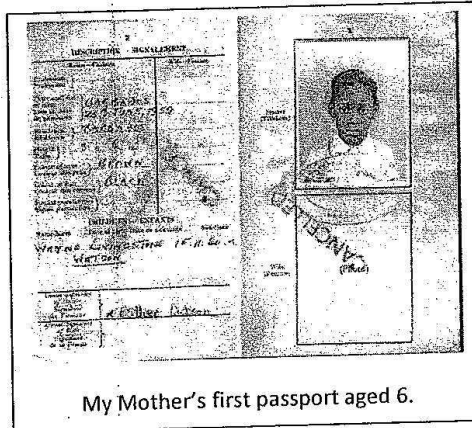
'Amen.'

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Word count: 175

Final word count: 1969

Like many other black people who moved to England in the late 1960's, it wasn't long until my Mum experienced the callous voice of racism growing up as the only black child in her school, in her town and ironically on her road in Sedgley. "Blackie",



My Mother's first passport aged 6.

"wog", they would call me. Luckily for them I didn't know they were trying to be mean. [Laughs]. I asked my Mum was this the first time you had experienced racism. 'No', she replied. 'Back home everyone I knew looked like me. Funnily enough I hadn't seen a white person before. But you didn't see me fussing! [laughs]'. Understandably this was a bit of a shock to my Mum as the word racism didn't exist in her life in Barbados. However it was more of a shock to her as she had developed a genuine friendship with the neighbours' children who were white and as intrigued by her distinct Began twang as she was about their Black Country accent.

Easter bonnet parade; a festive walk through the town, representing the renewal of the year, and an excuse to wear a bonnet and a pretty pink crimpling dress; A-line with a zip down the middle, as crafted by her mother. Strolling to school that wet morning, it was just an unfortunate coincidence that young Esther tripped on the curb and fell body first into a muddy puddle. Fortunately she was rescued from the earth and taken home to get changed. But what my Mum wanted most of all that day was not for her new pink dress to be retrieved from its irretrievable state; but to show off her one of a kind hat in the Easter bonnet parade, and walk to the park on the other side of town for the picnic. 'Walking across the park field in another flowery dress to join my class, I was just interested in drinking juice and eating biscuits with my school friends. But when I got home that day my mum hugged me and said she was very proud of me. For having no shame I guess. [laughs] She would've cried if she was that kind of person. [Chuckles]'.

After listening non stop from my Mum about her younger years, I realised that her experiences have not necessarily put her at a disadvantage; rather the combining of two cultures created for her an attitude of courage and adventure; learning not being fearful of who or what may stand in her way.

Moving to England has opened up a whole range of possibilities, through which my Mum learnt interdependence, and the reality of being able to embrace both cultures, and make them work for her. Consequently creating an individual character, where she would no longer call herself British, or even Began; but have the courage to say "I am me".

As it stands, millions of people have made similar journeys; some tougher than my Mothers no doubt, travelling to and from different countries. Adjusting to new lifestyles. Calling a foreign land home.

In the end though, my Mums life has tough me that no matter the journey, it is how the experience works for you that becomes your success story.

Word count: 538

Final word count: 1068

In setting the introduction in the present day I wanted it to help readers make the link between the past and present, and how they impact each other.

My non-fiction and fiction texts are closely linked as they are both based on my mother. The title 'Relative Values: My Mum; crossing continents... crossing boundaries' replicates the Relative Values column of 'The Sunday Times' online newspaper, in which people write about a close relative. In choosing to write a Relative Values column my target audience was aimed at 'Sunday Times readers', most likely to be female, as searching for the column I was navigated through the women's pages.

In assessing the way in which the writers express themselves I found I was able to use a conversational register with elements of interviewing though the use of quotations and facts. But as it would be an online text I incorporated pictures as visual synergy between my mother's life and the text extending the semantic field of travelling at a young age.

My choice to write an article was one of suitability to the topic. Despite my struggle in writing in 3rd person I felt I had more freedom in how the information was retold and structured.

In capturing the characters voices in my fiction piece I purposefully chose to incorporate particular Began idiolect, typical of the characters age, sex and period in which the novel is written in.

'She gon come back fi yu yano'

In adding context to my writing I felt it also added humour and an emotional connection for the reader, in which they would be able to physically hear the characters voice due to the phonetic text. However from feedback I reduced the amount of idiolect as it was detracting from the narrative, and narrowed my audience. In hindsight, I felt it made my characters appear uneducated, similar to Celie in 'The Colour Purple' using broken speech, which contradicts my intentions for my characters.

As a stylistic feature of the previous Relative Values articles I noticed that the formality of the text varied depending on the writer, therefore I was able to write relatively informally; for example the way in which I address my mother as "young Esther". Despite the comedic mode of address it reinforces the young age at which my mother underwent her experiences. From research I also noticed that it is popular amongst women's articles.

To match the conventions of a newspaper article I used several quotations from my mother, including physical directions such as "[chuckles]", to capture the interview process of the article. This alters the tone and pace of the text to be more relaxed, which is accepted amongst the female audience.

What I feel sets my article apart from the other relative values articles is the direct address to the audience from the outset.

'Imagine getting on a plane and waving goodbye to a life that was all you knew and loved.'

From my feedback this was highlighted as an effective tool as it immediately draws in the reader, allowing them to feel involved in the article because of the conversational manner, also emphasising what is taking place through the repetition of 'imagine'.

Word Count: 531

Final Word count: 1009

Small Island book review, 2004, Roots manoeuvre Mike Phillips salutes Andrea Levy's honest narrative, Small Island, Mike Philips

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2004/feb/14/featuresreviews.guardianreview10>

Andrea Levy Website, 2010

Biography: <http://www.andrealevy.co.uk/biography/index.php>

Reviews: <http://www.andrealevy.co.uk/reviews/index.php#2>

Extracts from her various books: <http://www.andrealevy.co.uk/extracts/index.php>

Famous People.co.uk, Martin Luther King Biography,
<http://www.famouspeople.co.uk/m/martinlutherking.html>

Racism and immigration in Britain, Issue 68 of INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM JOURNAL Published
Autumn 1995 Copyright © International Socialism

<http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/isj68/brown.htm>

FILM AND TELEVISION

Small Island, Historical drama, December 2009, BBC Production

The Secret Caribbean with Trevor McDonald, Documentary, March 2010, ITV production
