

**From Kashmir to
Roseberry Topping:
Tales on how migration
makes us who we are**

New Mappings of Europe | 2019

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Introduction

This slim publication is one of four produced as part of New Mappings of Europe. A partnership between four art and education institutions, New Mappings of Europe charts and brings to attention stories of migration that make up our cities and inform cultural organisations. Through it, MIMA has aimed to embed overlooked narratives and voices into the public spaces and collections of Middlesbrough. The programme at MIMA, through 2018 and 2019, took the shape of an exhibition highlighting the long histories of migration that have formed our context, and a public programme of discussions and workshops through which diverse people found points of commonality.

This book brings together the voices and experiences of some of MIMA's constituents – those who shape and inform the institution. At Community Lunch throughout 2018, we mapped people's experiences of migration, cultural heritage and creative lives. Using Graph Commons, an open-source digital tool developed by artist Burak Arikian, we brought these maps together to highlight connections between people. Following this mapping, history student Nicola Gasgoigne undertook a series of

in-depth interviews with those who had contributed. Quotations from these pepper the publication. Three beautiful, personal texts offer insights into the sometimes raw and alienated experiences of Marsha Garratt, Roisin Higgins and Shahda Khan who were critical friends for MIMA's New Mappings of Europe programme.

This publication was made possible through a fruitful and thoughtful partnership with Akademie der bildenden Künste, Austria; Moderna galerija MG+MSUM, Slovenia and Museum of Yugoslavia, Serbia and with funding from the European Commission. This cross-European endeavour has formed an important intellectual space for us at a time of political change. MIMA is made up of contributions by a range of constituents and we'd like to thank those who were part of this programme. We are grateful to the team at MIMA and associate artists, facilitators and practitioners who bring our programmes into being. As ever, designer Joanna Deans is key to making this publication and I have had the pleasure of working with researcher and curator Ashleigh Barice as co-editor to make this series of books a reality.

You live your life here and you don't think about people's stories and backgrounds but that like really fascinates me, especially 'cause of some of the stories that I heard about. Like people that my family met when they came over, so, like the struggles that people had to get here and that's why it's a bit upsetting when people are negative about this town.

Shahda Khan

From Kashmir to Roseberry Topping

"Where are you from? No, but where are you **really** from...?"
You ask.

Which Me do you mean?

Is it the Me who was born in Kashmir? The Kashmir, which India and Pakistan have been fighting over since 1947. The Kashmir, which despite UN Resolution 39 1948, remains conflicted to this day?

Or is it the Me who grew up in Birmingham, but doesn't sound like a Brummie?

Or perhaps it's the Me who arrived in Teesside as a teenager, but isn't quite a Boro lass?

Is it the Me the mainstream media encourages you to be wary of, just because I wear a hijab? The hijab, which someone once tried to forcibly remove in front of Teesside Law Courts, whilst yelling "go back where you came from, suicide bomber!"

Or maybe it's the Me who doesn't quite look foreign enough? The one with the green eyes, not brown? The one who the Aunty Jees say would be "so pretty without those brown spots on your face". Freckles, which Asians aren't even supposed to have, according to some.

Or is it the Me who has spent decades volunteering to help the vulnerable and marginalised? The Me with whom women have shared their most harrowing personal experiences? The Me who constantly challenges and duly advises those who are positioned to help?

Or possibly the Me who reads everything from crime fiction to dense government reports, with equal intrigue?

Perhaps it's the Me whose guilty pleasures are similarly embarrassing to your own, especially if you're also an Emmerdale fan?

Could it be the Me who will hear a random song on the radio, look up the band and drive miles to go and see them live, even if it means I'll be the only hijabi there?

Might it be the Me who has travelled everywhere from the mountainous region of Iran to a small town in Sweden? The Me who relishes the opportunity to explore nature, and be reminded that life is fleeting and this world belongs to us all.

Is that the Me you can't quite place?

Or is it the Me who once had an asthma attack climbing Roseberry Topping? Or the Me who was grateful for the kind stranger who graciously offered me their inhaler, which saved a call to the emergency services?

Is that the Me you're looking for?

Roseberry is a place where I feel close to God. I'm often there, finding peace and serenity.

A place that I see every day on the A19 on my way to work.

A place that is different every time I go.

A place that gives me breath-taking sunrises and calming sunsets.

A place that brings me closer to the undiminished sky with its changing and spectacular views.

A place that welcomes me, just like the hundreds of thousands before.

A place that's never worried about the time that I turn up.

A place where I'll see people from all backgrounds, and where strangers greet you with a warm hello.

A place that doesn't need to match Me to an imaginary colour chart.

A place that accepts that I have a hybrid of identities, all of which make up the beautiful kaleidoscope that is Me.

A place that accepts Me for Me, and allows Me to be whomever I am on that particular day.

A place that doesn't ask me where I'm **really** from.

Shahda Khan is currently based in the north east and just about manages the juxtaposition between working in Local Government and her social activism.

I had me own
little squad like
and we travelled
all over. It was
rough, all over
the country.
And of course
I took some
local lads with
me from here
Middlesbrough.

Marsha Garratt

Migration is never one way.

I have lived in Middlesbrough for the majority of my life. It is home. I understand it. The culture, dialect, food, the economy, industry and how the town's population has changed from when I was a child. Like many relationships though, I have struggled to feel fully accepted both here and in the UK in general. Why, you may ask? Because although I was born in Northallerton, have a northern accent, did my schooling here, hold a British passport and embody British culture; I am still asked the question where are you from?

As a person with brown skin it is often assumed that I am not British. People have this perception because we are taught to believe in the social construct of race i.e. British is white, non-white is 'other'. Every time I am asked, "Where are you from?" I am reminded of the old saying, 'There ain't no Black in the Union Jack', popularised during the 60's after an increase in migration from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

What's missing from that statement is this truth; Modern Britain and its position as a global power, was built from resources and wealth stolen when the elite of Britain 'migrated' – or more correctly – invaded the continents of Africa, Asia, North and South America under the guise of 'Empire'. Empire sounds grand, it enhances the 'Great' in Great Britain; in truth Empire means oppression. I am a visible child of migration, but ultimately every one of us living in Britain is both a product and beneficiary of migration, regardless of race.

Britain became Britain due to migration. Our school curriculum and many mainstream media outlets mis-educate us into believing the following two points:

1) Britain has always been a white country - False

The discovery of Cheddar Man, the oldest complete skeleton in Britain, shows the ideology of an historically white Britain as false. Cheddar man had dark brown skin but he wouldn't have been classified as black, as race did not exist 10,000 years ago, when he lived. So, Britain has never been a purely white country, in fact at one time Britain was not Britain at all, previously known as Albion then as the Roman colony Britannia. There is evidence of Black Roman soldiers living in Britain as early as the third century defending Hadrian's wall and the skeletal remains of the 'Ivory bangle lady' found in York, show that she was a Black mixed, wealthy Roman of African descent, who lived in York during the 4th century AD.

2) Migration is bad and migrants come to Britain to exploit it - False

During the late 17th century, wealthy Brits emigrated to other countries, and colonized them for the purposes of exploitation and financial gain. British emigration during the Imperial expansion led to sociologist Stuart Hall devising the phrase: "They are here, because you were there", which rings true in the case of my migration story.

My grandfather migrated to England from English ruled Ireland in the 1930's, where he met my Scottish grandmother. They married and had many children, one being my mother, who was born in

England. My mother left the North East of England and moved to London where she met my Jamaican father. My father was born in Jamaica when it was still ruled by Britain, his parents were raised to believe they were British citizens. Why? To prevent uprisings and keep money flowing to Britain.

It was migration out of, not into, Western Europe which changed the landscape of both the African continent (where my father originally has heritage from) and the Caribbean. Jamaica was given that name by Spanish migrants; replacing its original name, Xaymaca, meaning land of wood and water. Britain took Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655, thus it was British migration to Jamaica which created the island's current population. The British began importing African people, kidnapped and forced into slavery, to Jamaica, to work on sugar plantations, producing great wealth for the British elite. In fact, British-led slavery initiated the modern-day insurance industry and is responsible for funding some of Britain's greatest buildings, such as Blaise Castle in Bristol and financing the church. When compensation was paid to former slave owners following abolition in 1833, the church received the modern day equivalent of £500,000.

When slavery was abolished, the British establishment still profited from Jamaica, so it was made a British colony. Thousands of Jamaican men and women fought for Britain during both world wars (wars partly funded by exploitation in the colonies), enduring racism such as being banned from attending victory celebrations. Even Enoch Powell (later famous for his 'Rivers of blood' anti-migrant speech), hypocritically travelled to Jamaica to recruit workers to come and rebuild the 'motherland' - the term used to persuade Jamaicans that they were British and should come to Britain after World War 2.

When fears arose that too many of these 'others', were coming, racist immigration policies were designed, along with anti-immigration propaganda. Prime Minister Clement Attlee even tried to get the Windrush (a now-famous ship bringing Jamaican migrants to Britain) diverted to Africa in 1948, which makes recent deportations of descendants from the Windrush generation even more depressing. When Britain had got all it could from Jamaica, the British governors who ruled, plunged the country into debt by borrowing from British banks. Britain granted 'independence' to Jamaica in 1962, leaving the people with an unpayable debt and removing their British citizenship. Jamaica continues to pay this debt, spending more per year on foreign debt than on education and health programmes for its own citizens. Britain owes Jamaica.

Migration is never one way, but for too long the story of migration has been told from the perspective of the oppressor. This short piece is my contribution and invitation. Contribution to the truth, and invitation for us all to do our own research regarding the truth of migration. The truth is not always measured by mass appeal but it is truth that is needed. This piece prompts thinking; What would Britain be like if wealthy Brits hadn't emigrated and colonized? What would Britain be like now if the people they colonized and exploited didn't emigrate to us? I know I wouldn't exist, do you?

Marsha Garratt is a researcher, educator and public speaker on racism and social injustice.

**My favourite
place to go
locally is
actually the
pub close by
us, Stainton
Pub! We go to
Karaoke every
Tuesday.**

**Yeah, I was born here!
Me mother used to
live over the border
where some of the first
houses were built next
to the Transporter.
She lived there right
through the war
years...Me mother
used to talk about the
community, I mean
that was the big
thing! The war years
sort of brought the
community together
through adversity.**

Roisin Higgins

I'm from Ballymena, a market town 26 miles north of Belfast. It was a prosperous place when I was a child but now the big employers, the Braid Water Linen Mill, Gallagher's Cigarette Factory and Michelin Tyre plant, have closed. I grew up close to the town centre during the Troubles. There was a security check point at the top of the street and the centre of the town was closed after six o'clock at night. Ian Paisley was the local MP and lamp posts were painted red, white and blue and graffiti on the walls said 'No Pope Here'. It wasn't what anyone would call a carefree place in which to grow up. But it formed me and it's where I'm from and it's where I had a happy childhood in the middle of a big extended family.

I left home at 18 to go to university in Scotland and since then I have lived in, among other places, St Andrews, Edinburgh, Manchester, and Dublin. I arrived in Middlesbrough in 2013. In those early months, the lines from a poem by Seamus Heaney kept running through my head. He wrote it when he visited Aarhus where they had dug up the body of a man, killed centuries ago, whose remains had been preserved in the peat bog. Heaney wrote 'Out here in Jutland/ in the old man-killing parishes/ I will feel lost,/ Unhappy and at home.' That's how I felt sometimes: lost, unhappy and yet Middlesbrough was somehow familiar to me; it reminded me a bit of home. And, like Ballymena, it is surrounded by beautiful countryside and is a short drive from the coast.

I love to walk on Redcar beach. I think it fitted my mood when I first arrived. The old steelworks dominate the skyline and a sense of loss sometimes seemed to hang on the breeze. I love being by the sea and in Redcar the beach is expansive and sandy. When there

is mist on the water the wind turbines look like they are floating on air. It can feel mystical and, as you look outwards it is boundless, rhythmic, hope-filled. In winter, when there are only a couple of dog walkers around, you almost have the place to yourself. It's so cold you can hardly breathe at first. Then the air fills your lungs and life is affirmed and energy given as you plough forward into the wind and rain.

James Joyce described a pier as a disappointed bridge. Redcar has somehow managed to abandon the aspirant bridge and just build a disappointed pier. With a structure that goes upwards instead of outwards, Redcar pier has not been a particularly successful experiment. But that makes it even more important to value Redcar beach. It doesn't have the pretty trappings of Victoriana; it exists alongside the gritty and the tacky and is all the more beautiful for that. At dusk the lights on the landscape conjure up the imagined lives taking place in the illuminated houses: the homes that people have made and continue to make by this stretch of sea. When I walk on Redcar beach, I feel the freedom of being in a place between land and sea; neither here nor there. Not home but not foreign; somewhere in between.

My daughter
she laughs at
me a lot. Like,
sometimes
when I speak
English, she
says “oh
mummy, that’s
wrong! You
have to do
this, this, this!”

Mapping Colour Code

-  Do you have a family ritual or tradition?
-  Where would you most like to travel to?
-  Do you own something important to you?
-  What brought you/your family here?
-  Where are you/your family originally from?
-  It's your turn to pick the music- What are you playing?
-  If you could learn one new skill what would it be?
-  What do you do in your spare time?
-  You're alone with your thoughts, what language are they in?
-  What food tastes like home?
-  Where do you live?
-  What made you/your family stay?

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OUR HERITAGE:
WHERE THE PAST
MEETS THE FUTURE



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