

reflects on her relationship with her daughter and on the vicissitudes of her life, which have been set against a context of cultural prejudice and social deprivation. Towards the end, as our colleague Robert Crawshaw explains, her voice 'mutates into that of her daughter, SuAndi, who presents herself as the proud Black child of a mixed-race background, someone who openly challenges the assumptions – and presumptions – of her implied audience and the culturally hegemonic society which it represents.'

Very different – both in genre and in content – is another of her acclaimed works, her first opera libretto, *Mary Seacole*. This dramatizes the life of the remarkable nineteenth-century Jamaican nurse, who crossed the world to England to offer her services to Florence Nightingale, by whom she was ultimately rejected. Undaunted, she set about financing herself and went on to practise nursing in the Crimean War. She published her own autobiography in 1857, and SuAndi takes this narrative and casts it into a radically different genre so as to address a diversity of questions around community and belonging. SuAndi herself sees these two heterogeneous works as being intimately linked. In an interview, she said that one motivation of her work has been to question the assumption that black and mix raced people are confused about their identities. She said: 'it's not that we are confused about our identities at all, but we are people whose stories have been suppressed so much that the identity issue seems important.' This is a theme that surfaces explicitly at the end of *The Story of M*, and also lies at the heart of *Mary Seacole*.