

# Growing up

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Growing Up This is a documentary about a young black man who embarks on a journey of self discovery to Europe despite harsh opposition from his single mother. He rebels against what he feels he must run from in order to achieve his ultimate dream and find “ the real”. In his journey he experience freedom to indulge in drugs and sex in Amsterdam also in Berlin he finds himself in a position where he has to struggle with issues of integrity and ethics. The title of the documentary “ Passing Strange” according to the Stew (Oldham) represented African American who could pass as white because of their lighter skin color. In this context passing could represent the journey from city to city, it could also represent to passing form one lover to another or one musical genre to another starting which gospel choir to punk to blues to jazz to rock. Passing could also indicate passage of time and in that effect growing up.

The story begins with the Youth as a young person who is in a state of spiritual confusion not knowing what to do. As expected he wants to become a better person someone he is proud of. Despite being brought up by a conservative single mother he turns to Zen Buddhism. However this goes only for a short while before he succumbs to her mothers’ persuasion to find God. During this time instead of having a spiritual awakening his musical affinity is awakened by the gospel choir. He later joins the choir mainly because of his attraction to a girl in the choir. During his life in the choir he meets with Franklin Jones who was the choir master who introduces the youth to drugs. He develops a liking for the guitar and soon afterward deserts the choir to form a punk rock band with fellow ex-choir members. With the passage of time he abandons his band mates and starts saving

money to travel to Europe where he anticipated becoming a musician which his mother and the community disapprove.

In the film the youth says, “ Slaves have options, cowards only have consequences.” This depicts his state of discomfort with his reality and how he had resolve to go to Europe.. After a long argument with his mother the youth goes to promiscuous Amsterdam where for the first time in his life he discovers freedom. He suddenly has easy access to all the social evils such as sex and drugs he lamented “ All vices in full view “ when he say hashis on the menu of a coffee shop with topless women serving coffee. The Youth also first experiences acceptance in the form of a girl named Marianna who willingly gives her the keys to her apartment. After these experiences he discovered that the good life or paradise was not good for him as he could not write songs. He decides to leave for Berlin leaving Marianna behind. Here we see him maturing up, wanting to focus on his career and not live an entertained life.

He arrives in Berlin and makes friends with some protestors who are performing artist. He finds himself having to grapple with issues of ethics and integrity when he has to misrepresent his identity to gain acceptance from the revolutionary artists that were living with him. He feels the urge to keep his stereotype personality to feel accepted. During this time he got a new girlfriend Desi who is actually the leader of the performing artists. The story takes a dramatic twist when we are fast tracked to the funeral of her mother. It is narrated that though he rushed to see his sick mother he arrives too late. And comes to the conclusion that there is need for something beyond the “ real” and that’s love. This statement shows his maturity at this

stage.

His journey to discover the real took him across many countries and many encounters but youth can still discover themselves through proper mentoring by responsible adults which the Youth never had or were too busy like his mother. Real is a state of mind not the location or people, a form of art hence ordinary people can still find real in their own mind.

Works Cited

Passing Strange: The movie 2010

Oldham, Mardelene. Stews Interview. 2008. 27 October 2011 .