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Neelima Kanwar

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From the Editor

Asialink Residency Programme at the Centre has seen many Australian creative writers who have enhanced the academic activities. Also many Australian as well as Indian academics have enriched the Centre by way of their lectures, talks and workshops. Virginia Jealous is now a familiar name for the academic community associated with the Centre. She has published before also in the *IJAS* and now again a memoir on colonial India has been included. Ms. Suneeta Peres Da Costa too was an Asialink Resident whose poetry marks the blending of her Ausrtalian experience juxtaposed with her Indian ancestry. Her poem brings a fuel of words, and fragrance of Shimla.

There are articles from different/varied disciplines as this is a general issue. These range from multicultural themes of Australia to political establishment and current socio- economic placing. Exploring issues of identity, nation, political establishment, history, gender, commonality of culture, etc the scope of contributions is immense and adds to the understanding of Australia especially for the Indian readers. Even a survey on languages proves how identity so closely related to language, needs to be preserved. These reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the journal.

This issue has been an attempt to revive the *IJAS* again. Hence, a little delay. The forthcoming 2019 issue would be on 'Multiculturalism' which is a debatable subject in the contemporary times. Papers dealing with any aspect of this theme are welcome. The editor gratefully acknowledges the support of Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Himachal Pradesh University Prof. Sikander Kumar for his constant encouragement and the financial support extended for the publication of this issue. The editor thanks Dr. Ajay Khurana and Ms. Kesang Youdon in helping to put this issue together.

Neelima Kanwar

Past into Present: Finding a Place in Contemporary Australia for a Memoir About Colonial India

Virginia Jealous

I'm British-born, have been resident in Australia for 35 years and am based in Denmark. This, rather confusingly, is a town on the remote south coast of Western Australia: it's the landscape and seascape about which novelists Tim Winton and Kim Scott, among others, write so compellingly. My immediate family, however, still lives in England and I hold dual nationality. So realising that, from Australia, I wanted to investigate a story embedded deeply in colonial India that is also about my contemporary British family was complicated.

It raised questions about identity and offered an opportunity to rethink, in the widest sense, about who I am. I'm the daughter of British parents whose early lives were lived while Britain still had an Empire of which India was still a colony. I've also spent most of my adult life living in Australia, a former British colony whose original inhabitants continue to feel the disastrous effects of that colonisation. When in India I have a sense of empathy as a colonised Australian as well as a sense of what feels, to me, something like the burden of guilt of the colonising Brit.

Most of my writing life has revolved around poetry and travel journalism. During the last couple of years, however, family research has taken me into a new writing world – that of long-form narrative non-fiction. It has been a journey of both discovery and recovery during which the story became a memoir of sorts. Called *Rapture's Roadway*, it's at the publishers as I write this, and is due in bookshops in February 2019.

Its title comes from the first stanza of what was, in the early part of the 20th century, one of the most famous poems in the world: 'Kashmiri Song', by Laurence Hope.

Pale hands I loved behind the Shalimar
Where are you now? Who lies beneath your spell!
Whom do you lead on rapture's roadway, far,

Before you agonise them in farewell?

In the 21st century, at least in my father's house in England, it remained famous. This passage is from the start of the book:

> He was sixty, and she'd already been dead for eighty years when he became obsessed with her.
>
> My father, in his retirement, had reinvented himself as a bookseller, running Books about India from his study in Yorkshire. It's unclear if the bookshop was cause or result of his late-blooming obsession with Laurence Hope, but for the last twenty years of his life Hope's presence was palpable in the house. He collected many and varied editions of the poems and related paintings; made regular trips to India tracing the poet's life there; entered into a voluminous international correspondence with booksellers, readers and historians; and edited an idiosyncratic Laurence Hope newsletter for a small but stalwart group of fans worldwide. He also tended towards regular outbursts of her poetry aloud.
>
> He loved the reveal – 'Yes, really. Her poetry!' – and would tell the story of how, in the early decades of the twentieth century, LH was as famous and infamous as a writer could wish to be. She was born Adela Florence Cory in 1865, spent her childhood in England, and in her teens moved to India, where her father was editor of *The Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore. Her friends and family knew her as Violet, for the colour of her eyes; after her marriage to high- ranking Bombay Army officer Malcolm Hassels Nicolson she was widely known as Violet Nicolson. We knew her, familiarly, as 'LH' and her husband as 'the General.

Laurence Hope's first collection of poems, *The Garden of Kama*, was published in 1901. It bears startling witness to the years that LH spent – so the story goes – disguised as a Pathan manservant, accompanying her husband on campaign on the North-West Frontier and, dressed somewhat more conservatively as the Commanding

Officer's wife, at the military cantonment of Mhow, in central India. Described as 'translations arranged in verse', her poems depict an exotic, eroticised colonial India where love is always passionate, usually forbidden, often unrequited and occasionally sadomasochistic. This was, to put it mildly, an unusual subject for an English memsahib, especially one who was also the wife of a senior officer: using Laurence Hope, a man's name, allowed her freedom to write the heady stuff that set well-corseted Edwardian bosoms heaving across the Empire and beyond – America, too, embraced LH.'

So that's some background to the story. But – apart from my personal interest – what possible resonance or relevance could this family obsession with an almost-forgotten poet who wrote from and about colonial India have for contemporary Australia? Or, for that matter, for contemporary India?

In 2012 during a trip to Shimla, as Asialink writer-in-residence hosted by the Centre for Australia and New Zealand Studies at HPU, I was just becoming interested in the LH story. I found myself mentioning her name in passing and watching for reactions. Here's another passage from *Rapture's Roadway:*

> Mr Rajiv Sood, proprietor of the wonderful Maria Brothers Antiquarian Booksellers in Shimla, said, "Yes, yes, of course I know of Laurence Hope. We last sold a volume of her poems in the late 1970s. It was on that shelf there"… His natural history section spills across one wall, onto a couple of tables, under the tables. Almost every volume depicts the Brits' obsession with being in nature, whether observing it or killing it or both. It's a quite different take on the great outdoors to that of LH who, rather than viewing landscape through a rifle lens with a hunting companion, is more likely to write about lying down in it with a lover:
>
> We laid us down on a steep hillside,
> While far below us wild peacocks cried,
> And we sometimes heard, in the sunburnt grass,

The stealthy steps of the Jungle pass.
We listened; knew not whether they went
On love or hunger the more intent.
And under your kisses I hardly knew
Whether I loved or hated you.
(from 'The Teak Forest')

On a trip in 2014 to Calicut, now Khozikode, I visited a house where LH had lived in 1904. This was the year she killed herself, aged 39, by drinking perchloride of mercury two months after the death of her much-loved husband the General. I have an e-introduction to CK Ramachandran of the Calicut Heritage Forum. From the book:

> We meet for tea at the Raj-era Beach Hotel and I tell CK about my quest. He looks astonished and thrilled, and tells me he is an avid LH fan who spent much of his working life in Kashmir, hiking at the weekends carrying a copy of The Garden of Kama in his backpack and trying to identify the location of 'Kashmiri Song'. He knew nothing of her connection with Calicut. We are inordinately pleased to have found each other.

My father's main contact further south in Madras – which, with LH in mind, is difficult for me to think of as Chennai – was journalist and historian S. Muthiah. Muthu, as he's widely known, is now well into his eighties and still editing the fortnightly journal *Madras Musings* which is how, online, I'd rediscovered him. In 2014 he hosted an evening in the Madras Club's library where I spoke – as my father had done in 1989 – about LH's connection to Madras, my father's connection to her and my connection to both.

The audience comprises Indians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans and all have heard of LH. When a recording of 'Kashmiri Song' plays, a collective humming of the tune is audible. In the dining room, afterwards, Muthu greets a man in a peacock-blue shirt, and introduces us. He's a descendant of the Maharajah of Pithapurum who in 1910 had bought Dunmore House – the place where LH had killed herself in 1904.

In Mussoorie, writer Stephen Alter had discovered LH when he was researching a history of the Tata company: an American steel engineer had described being drawn to work for Tata in India in the 1940s because of an obsession with LH poems depicting India and its passions that 'scorch and freeze'. From *Rapture's Roadway*:

> Many bookcases line Steve's study walls. One is glass fronted, its doors closed and locked: the case of precious books. He takes out a mock-morocco-bound volume that I recognise immediately. It is an edition of The Garden of Kama published by John Lane in 1906, companion volume to the copy of Last Poems that I am travelling with, its covers embossed with an Art Nouveau spray of lotus lilies forming a stylised candelabra, and the title and author's name in gold. Steve's missionary mother's name is written in faded ink on the inside cover. We imagine what she might have made of LH's fondness for local rites and rituals and for those passions that scorch and freeze.

In late 2018, on the bookshelves in an old bungalow in Ranikhet in Uttarakhand, I came across Kamala Das's autobiography *My Story*. In a section describing her life in Calcutta in the 1950s – about fifty years after LH's death – she writes about visiting a bookshop where she 'picked up some gilded volumes of Laurence Hope and presented them to the man I used to be infatuated with'. Coincidentally, a few days later, I noticed the same book on the shelves of a house in Shimla.

So, in India at least, in some small measure, LH's tenuous presence remains witness to my father's obsession. But what about in Australia?

In 2015, using a combination of Laurence Hope's poems, stories from the archive, and music, I make a show about her life. Its working title, *On Rapture's Roadway*, is again that phrase from 'Kashmiri Song', and it's performed in the geographically unlikely setting of the annual festival of voice in Denmark, Western Australia. We are a cast of four: a narrator, the voice of LH, and two musicians.

I'm the only one familiar with LH but soon after we start read-throughs Victoria, the narrator, sorting through her late father's library, finds a 1922 edition of LH's Selected Poems and gives it to me. During our first rehearsal with music Cathy, a sitar player who trained in India but is as Australian as can be, startles at the mention of 'Kashmiri Song'. At the second rehearsal she brings from her shelves her grandmother's copy of the song's sheet music. It is dated 1903 and embossed with the stamp of the aptly named Nicholson's music store in Perth, Western Australia. We imagine 'Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar' being sung at soirées in this, the furthest of the colonies, even before LH's death.

In 2015 I had spent some weeks in Mhow, in Madhya Pradesh; it's the military cantonment where LH and the General were stationed between 1895 and 1900. After that trip, late in the year, I was driving across Australia on the Nullarbor Plain and thinking about LH when I stopped at Madura Pass, overlooking the shrubby vegetation of Madura Plains Station (a 'station' is an enormous rural property, not a railway yard). From the book:

> 'Settled in 1876, [Madura] specialised in breeding Walers, an agile and hardy breed of horse originally from New South Wales, for the British Indian Army. From this isolated property, horses were led by drovers to the Southern Ocean at Eucla, on the edge of the Great Australian Bight. At the jetty, using hoist and sling in rough weather, they were boarded on to a ship bound for Bombay and then dispatched by train or rider around the country. Mhow's horse troops were famous and the 5th (Mhow) Cavalry Brigade served with distinction on the Western Front during World War I – after another long sea voyage from India to Europe.
>
> What a journey. Looking out to the horizon I imagine parallel lives and landscapes – LH and the General in Mhow, riding horses that came from Madura Plains through the flatlands of

> central Indian remarkably similar to those stretching across the Nullarbor.'

The show plays to two full houses – about three hundred people! In context, that's big. Afterwards, many of the audience comment on the strange familiarity of the story, about how it is both absolutely of its time and contemporary, too. They mention the struggle for a woman's voice to be heard and judged on its own merit; unfathomable and unmanageable depression and suicide as a response to grief; the socially sanctioned separation of children from parents; the power of words; the pull of history. And, not least, the thrill of great passion, of love that transgresses borders and that lasts beyond death.'

Back in Denmark, during the making of the show *On Rapture's Roadway,* an Australian poet on the other side of the country gets in touch. Michael Sharkey has heard about my interest in LH, is also a fan of hers. He has spotted two tatty volumes of LH poems in the second-hand bookshop that he buys and sends to me. They are the Heinemann Windmill Library editions of *Stars of the Desert* (1920) and *Indian Love* (1919). Scanning the publication dates I see that each volume had been reprinted three times between 1914 and 1918. Love poetry set in exotic places was, it seems, an antidote to the horrors of World War I for the men in the trenches (including, possibly, those of the Mhow cavalry) and for the women at home, wondering if they'd ever see them again. From the book:

> After the show's performance, a woman approaches the stage. She's a visitor from Perth who cares for an elderly man there. She tells us that he often recalls a childhood memory of standing beside the piano, watching his father weep while singing 'Pale Hands I Loved Beside the Shalimar'. Months later a Denmark local returns from holiday in Malaysia where, lolling on the verandah of the 1885 Eastern & Oriental Hotel in Penang, he'd been reading Somerset Maugham and had recognised LH in the story 'The Colonel's Lady'.

The show plays to two full houses – about three hundred people! In context, that's big. Afterwards, many of the audience comment on the strange familiarity of the story, about how it is both absolutely of its time and contemporary, too. They mention the struggle for a woman's voice to be heard and judged on its own merit; unfathomable and unmanageable depression and suicide as a response to grief; the socially sanctioned separation of children from parents; the power of words; the pull of history. And, not least, the thrill of great passion, of love that transgresses borders and that lasts beyond death.'

I'd like to reflect on some of these responses and comments, in the context of the resonance that the story has in Australia (and beyond) in 2018, and consider what it might be – in this instance, at least – that allows a cross-cultural multi-generational post-colonial story to work.

In common with other issues that transcend race, class, culture and education, the notion of the 'struggle for a woman's voice to be heard and judged on its own merit' strikes a global chord. In my own area of work, Australia's annual Stella Prize celebrates women's writing (it's named for writer Stella, better known as 'Miles', Franklin) and includes the Stella Count, which is a survey of gender bias in Australian publishing. The 2017 Count notes that although women account for two-thirds of Australia's authors, almost every publication analysed reviews more men than women and that "several publications are skewed strongly in favour of men in non-fiction reviews…" I don't know if or how this compares with India but I'd be surprised and delighted if it was more equitable.

The audience of *On Rapture's Roadway* recognised LH's suicide as 'unfathomable and unmanageable depression as a response to grief'. Again, a familiar universal experience – whether it's our own, or whether we've supported others who suffer from depression. World Health Organisation data from 2016 suggests that in India there are almost 250,000 suicides each year; in Australia there are 3,000. Which sounds like a huge difference but of course our population is tiny and the effects

of suicide ripple as widely, if not wider, in small communities than in large. In Australia, for example, Aboriginal people are disproportionately represented in the suicide statistics.

One of several themes running through the LH story addresses the relationships between fathers and daughters, and mothers and sons. As was customary throughout the Empire, LH's son Malcolm was, aged three, sent 'home' to England, to live with relatives. He never saw his mother again and the ramifications of her suicide shaped his – and, subsequently, his own son's – strange, isolated lives. A different sort of 'socially sanctioned separation of children' from parents has been and remains a huge issue in Australia, from the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents as part of a singularly unsuccessful (not to mention immoral) assimilation policy to the solo child migrants from Britain who were dreadfully abused by the institutions that were charged with their welfare to present-day issues of asylum-seeking children separated from their families while in immigration detention. And the seeming inability of governments and their agencies to stop child trafficking worldwide, even though of course it's not socially sanctioned, remains a source of shame to us all. In India, as in Australia, it falls largely to underfunded NGOs to do the ground work and keep the issue on the table.

The audience of On Rapture's Roadway commented too on less tangible but equally powerful elements of the LH story: 'the power of words', 'the pull of history', 'the love that transgresses borders and that lasts beyond death'.

As humans – whether we're able to read and write ourselves, or whether we rely on oral histories and folklore to be told to us – we know deeply and instinctively how words can make and unmake us, can show us our own lives reflected in those of others.

Wherever and whoever we are, we are the products of history. Whether we venerate our ancestors and/or clean our houses ahead of new year to bring good luck and/or believe that nothing matters more

than the result of the next cricket test, we know that past affects present affects future.

Laurence Hope transgressed her own society's norms when she married a much older man, flouted convention by accompanying him on campaign and killed herself rather than live without him. And in 2018 we still recognise the inevitable outcomes of transgressive love – whether it's the fairytale ending of beauty and the beast, the ramifications of a same-sex relationship in a family or community that disapproves, or something darker and more sinister like the murders called 'honour killings'.

So my sense is that yes – however surprising it may seem, there is a place for this memoir about colonial India in contemporary Australia. It's a story that has become in some unintentional way greater than the sum of its parts. It draws out our shared humanity while reflecting the past back to us, offering us a chance to respond from the present and, depending on our responses, perhaps to change the future: a purpose and possibility of storytelling that was beautifully articulated in Kazuo Ishiguro's 2017 Nobel Prize in Literature lecture:

> Stories can entertain, sometimes teach or argue a point. But, for me, the essential thing is that they communicate feelings. That they appeal to what we share as human beings across our borders and our divides…Stories are about one person saying to another: This is the way it feels to me. Can you understand what I'm saying? Does it also feel this way to you?

[This article is a revised version of a keynote speech given in October 2018 at the conference 'Multicultural Present and Political Identities: Australia and India', hosted by the 'UGC Centre for Australia and New Zealand Studies' at HPU.

Rapture's Roadway will be published in February 2019 https://www.venturapress.com.au/books/#/raptures-roadway/]

Shimla Street Cobbler

Suneeta Peres da Costa

The strap of my bag had become
worn and tatteredon my travels.
Could he mend it? I asked, bending
to show him and suddenly aware
I had no word for 'mend' in Hindi.
He gestured for to me to put it down.
Before him, his small workshop –
oldbottlesfilled with zippers
and hooks, spools of thread, glue
and shoe polish, brushes and tools–
open to the dust of Sanjauli, passing
traffic,people out late, shopping
and enjoying Gandhi jayant .
He gestured that he would have
to sever the entire strap in order to
re-join it. Again, I could not say 'cut',
so surrendered my will to the sky,
the Deodars below and the dexterity
with which he wielded a large pair
of iron scissors (by the sounds of it
as recalcitrantas the nation-state).
Snipping neatly throughthe fibre,
cutting on either side of the tear
(when the damaged centre piece
fell away, he let it drop into the bag
where I would find it days later).
Doubling the fresh ends of leather
to join and face each other he
pushed a needle through, before
handingit back for me to inspect:
his twenty-rupee handy-work stronger,
if a little cruder, than any kind of Kantha,
Kashmiri or Lucknow embroidery.
He wasn't taking chances, though, and
hammered the join to keep it in place.
[Gandhi's Birthday; in India a National Holiday.]

"'Where Do We Belong Now'? Fear, Nostalgia, and Resilience of Refugees in Libby Glesson's *Mahtab's Story*"

Hem Raj Bansal

Homeland always lends one a sense of place, space, and security. However, the hostile living conditions in one's native land and a perpetual threat to life and liberty triggers people to unwillingly move to safer pastures. The forced movement is actually sudden and unexpected and therefore, even the adopted homelands may not be accommodative and welcoming of refugees. After the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, lives of common people became shattered as with their strictly puritanical religious dictates, the Taliban disrupted the basic life fabric of the Muslims, adversely affecting girls' education, and keeping women strictly out of jobs and employment. Similarly, many Muslims fled Iraq during the reign of Saddam Hussein. The acceptance of these refugees was a big question for neighbouring countries, especially sea-bordering ones and Australia being one of them. Since the adoption of the policy of multiculturalism by Australia in 1970s, thousands of migrants have found a new home there. However, during the tenure of Prime Minister John Howard (1996-2007), Australia framed very strict and stringent rules for the immigrants and the boat people were largely detained in detention centres. More recently, however, during the tenure of Tony Abbott (2013-2015), Australia has given shelter to more than 24,000 refugees because of the ISIS threat in Iraq and Syria as Ben Doherty says, "Australia accepted more refugees to its shores last year than any year since it began a dedicated humanitarian migration program" (Doherty n.pag.).

This paper attempts to analyse Australia's multicultural fabric with respect to asylum-seekers. Exploring the pain of being uprooted from their home in Afghanistan, and braving many odds to reach Australia, I would argue how an Afghan family finds a safe haven in

Australia in Libby Glesson's novel *Mahtab's Story*. The novelist avers that she wanted to write "about the experience of being a Muslim girl in Australia in the twenty-first century" (Glesson 183). Though based on a true story as narrated to her by an Afghan student Nahid Karimi, the novel is not a biography. It captures the emotional trauma of a twelve year old girl Mahtab and her family's persecution in Herat, their eventual forced departure, harrowing land, air and water journey and eventual acceptance in Australia, thereby projecting this country as a small cosmos, accepting people from various diverse ethnic backgrounds.

During the British settlement of Australia, majority of population was British. After the discovery of gold in 1851, people began to pour in from other countries as well. The arrival of the Chinese to Australia was met by severe hostile environment with the result that their entry was barred for nearly a century. In 1901, the six colonies of Australia agreed to put a bar on Asian inflow of immigrants. The Immigration Restriction Act, passed in 1901, codified a completely "White Australian" national identity. The question was who would be accepted into Australian society and who would not be. Clearly Australia wanted economic growth but also desired to filter the immigrants.

> In making this invidious distinction between whites and nonwhites, policy-makers relied on the Social Darwinian racialist theories of the era, with their conviction that the "inferior" races would lower the quality of life and that miscegenation was a distinct threat that must be prevented at all costs. (Kivisto 107-08)

A document on this Act in the National Archives of Australia discusses how it adversely affected the immigrants, "The Dictation Test was administered 805 times in 1902-03 with 46 people passing and 554 times in 1904-09 with only six people successful. After 1909 no person passed the Dictation Test and people who failed were refused entry or

deported" (web). During the World War II, the Japanese were repatriated and Asians were also refused entry. This Act continued until 1958. However, after the war, the assimilation policy was not effective given the trade with Asian countries especially Japan. This is what led to the adoption of Integrationist Policy which recognized the need of cultural diversity. Brian Murphy observes, "Assimilation aimed at cultural uniformity: integration envisaged a community built on diverse cultural patterns" (164). Learning from Canadian Multicultural Policy, Australia brought in Multiculturalism, bringing in the Racial Discrimination Act (1975) under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Though there were mixed responses but from 2000 onward, John Howard exploited the popular sentiment. "In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attack in the US, fears of terrorism were exploited by the Prime Minister, John Howard, in his re-election campaign. His pledge to get tough on illegal boat people is thought to have contributed to his victory" (Kivisto 112).

Multiculturalism in the broadest sense implies acceptance of difference. Any nation founded on democratic principles politically always espouses diversity and lends space to various ethnic minorities. On the other hand, a blind cult of nationalism and patriotism may prove disastrous as is the case with countries like North Korea, Saubi Arab, and Somalia where dissident voices are often suppressed based as these are on oligarchy and monarchical forms of governments. As a way to not only accommodating difference but also respecting it, multiculturalism has proved a blessing to both immigrants and refugees. Peter Mares in his book *Borderline* (2001) that came out after the Norwegian merchant vessel *Tampa* crisis, highlights how the Australian laws underwent sea change after this incident with reference to refugees and asylum seekers. He convincingly avers, "I recognise that the unauthorised arrival of asylum seekers in Australia poses complex policy issues and I am mindful of the fact that a majority of Australian voters have clearly

indicated their support for a government that promises to control the borders and run an orderly migration program"(x). Mares highlights the basic concerns of any nation with the huge influx of unauthorised asylum seekers and its immediate response to problem solving. The policies became so rigid and harsh that

> Between November 2001 and August 2002 no new asylum boats were detected trying to reach Australia from Indonesia. There are many factors that may have contributed to this change, such as the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, increased efforts by the Indonesian authorities to crack down on smuggling operations and the tragedy of 19 October 2001, when 353 people drowned on an overloaded boat that sank in the Indian Ocean. (3-4)

However, there are some basic problems concerning multiculturalism. Though the objective cannot be doubted, the same policy can be dealt a blow by the diversities that it seeks to protect and promote. Peter Kivisto, for example, in his book *Multiculturalism in a Global Society* (2002) questions its viability, saying "how do liberal democracies promote multiculturalism in situations where one or more ethnic groups engage in practices that are il- liberal, intolerant, or work against the interests of individuals?" (37) My concern is do we create mini-nations in multicultural societies, and if yes, how would the host nations view it. A ghettoized existence and not moving beyond it is shutting your door for any external influences, be it cultural or others. Does not it thwart and discourage pluralism? Why in multicultural societies, there are often incidents of racism against the ethnic minorities? Perhaps it is ontological insecurity that the host nations remain concerned of. It is the fear of becoming a minority in their own countries which drives governments and people to check this influx. Anne Phillips defines multiculturalism thus: "Multiculturalism considers itself the route to a more tolerant and inclusive society because it recognises that there *is* a diversity of cultures, and rejects the

assimilation of these into the cultural traditions of the dominant group" (15).

Though Multiculturalism aims at preserving the minorities, but it can prove disastrous to minorities within minorities. Anne Phillips in her book *Multiculturalism without Culture* (2007) argues that it draws attentions "to the way groups can oppress their own internal minorities— which might be women, but could also be children, homosexuals, or the poor—and the risk that policies of multiculturalism will reinforce the inequities of power" (12). Fear about social unity is a further concern over attitudes towards minorities. Wide spread terrorism now in West and by Muslim fundamentalists and Jehadis has turned the attentions towards the plight of even innocent Muslims who may again be branded the terrorists. One journalist in London critically reported after the London blasts in 2005 that "These British bombers are a consequence of a misguided and catastrophic pursuit of multiculturalism" (qtd. in Phillips 13). Abdullah Saeed in *Islam in Australia* (2003) refers to the diversity of Islam and that "one cannot put all 1200 million Muslims of the world in one basket and label them all as terrorists" (iv).

Mahtab's Story delves deeper into contemporary issues through the eyes of an innocent girl. Like the child narrator Lenny in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Ice-Candy Man*, twelve year old Mahtab becomes a silent yet critical observer of disturbing developments around. The peaceful life of the Afghans is reflected through the memories of Mahtab who along with her younger sister Soraya, brother Farhad, and parents, finds herself secretly dumped in a truck to escape the Talibani militants' gaze. She is reminded of the time when her uncle Wahid and his wife Mina's wedding took place, it was a time full of hope and joy. It was also a time when dreams reigned high as Mahtab wanted to be a doctor. However, now all those hopes have shattered as she records, "There would be no education for girls, Mahtab could no longer go to school. The women

almost never left the house" (6). Mahtab manages to hear the emergence of Taliban and their fundamental dictates in the subdued voices of her family members: "Men in black turbans...whips...beatings...the knock on the door in the middle of the night...hanging...shooting...public stoning...Taliban" (6). The militants take a heavy toll on their lives, leading to the severe beating of Mahtab's father and disappearance of her grandfather forever. Caught in this quandary, the family now decides to leave their birth place. Aunt Meena deplores: "Our family has lived in this city forever. You were born here. Your children were born here. All of the family is buried here. You will be strangers in a strange land. You will be leaving everything you know and love behind" (8). Equally broken is Mahtab's mother who cannot let her children be buried alive as she lets her heart out: "But I do not want my young children to be buried before their time or to have to bury me while they are young. I want them free from fear, free of all this. It is too dangerous to stay" (8). This sad rather tragic emergence of sorry state in their home in Kabul makes it incumbent on the family to take refuge somewhere else. This forced movement is strewn with countless ordeals as they have to leave surreptiously in a truck. The decision to go to Australia is actually taken as a man from Australia who had once visited Afghanistan as his great, great grandfather was from Afghanistan and wanted to know about this country. He had presented Australia to Mahtab's father as a safe haven where gender equality reigns supreme and people need not be afraid of terrorists or fundamentalists who play havoc in the lives of people in Afghanistan. He enlightens his daughter:

> If we go to that man's country, you would not stay at home. You would go to school you could dream again of being a doctor like your great aunt or a teacher or whatever you wanted to be. The women work as they did here, *before.* You and Mum could walk in the sunshine with your faces bare and there are no men in black turbans who can take you and beat you because they do not like the way you dress or what you believe or what you say.

There *whips are for horses and camels*. (emphasis added 10)

After the Taliban wave swept across Afghanistan, lives became sapless for people, especially women. Girls' education was forbidden and working women were forced to give up employment. People were punished like animals with whips if they tried defying the Talibani decrees. Jan Goodwin in her article "Buried Alive: Afghan Women under the Taliban", writes how the Taliban was publicizing its repressive measures on innocent women and men:

> It was announced over the airwaves that 225 women had been rounded up and sentenced to a lashing for violating the dress code. One woman had the top of her thumb amputated for the crime of wearing nail polish. And when the Taliban castrated and then hanged the former communist president and his brother in 1996, they left their bloodied bodies dangling from lampposts in busy downtown Kabul for three days. (Goodwin 9)

Malala Yousafzai's story titled as *Malala* (2014) is well known to the world whose resolve to continue girls' education nearly cost her life. She writes in her biography about the mayhem created by the Taliban regime:

> Schools for the girls had been burned to the ground and all women were forced to wear a severe form of burqa, a head-to-toe veil that had only a tiny fabric-grille for their eyes. Women were banned from laughing out loud and wearing nail polish and they were beaten or jailed for walking without a male family member. (Malala and McCormick 24))

David J. Whittaker in his book *Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Contemporary World* (2005) discusses the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and its strict codes on the common populace thus:

> Under their strict code of Utopian fanaticism, the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, with its own squad of police, would secure public obedience and deal

> ruthlessly with dissension and uncomfortable behaviour among 'subversives.' There would be no doubts or debate allowed, no music or gambling, no cinema or TV, and for women total inequality and subservience. (82)

Fear of life and the wish to continue his daughters' education propels the father in the novel to undertake this perilous yet inevitable journey to Australia via Pakistan. Mahtab's friend Leila's family's secret departure to Iran further shatters the little girl as she was like a sister to her and the thought of never meeting her again aggravates her pain. Her grandfather's poetry books and her grandmother's golden bracelet is all Mahtab hurriedly clutches on to while leaving the house. These tokens of love are the only material objects that she carries along to cocoon herself in the memories of those left behind. During their two-three week long secret truck journey to Pakistan, the mother tries to lift the spirits of her children through stories of Ali Baba and Chalis Chor. Ali Baba's courage to open the door of the cave and take gold and jewels is compared to the family's courage to take this journey and then find gold metaphorically in Australia. The gold and jewellery obviously imply better living conditions there. She also encourages their children to face everything bravely as in Australia there will be "nothing bad or nasty. No weeping and crying in the houses because someone has been taken by the bands of Taliban carrying whips and guns. No whispered conversations of beatings and shootings, of disappearing, of hangings and stoning" (18). In such hour of crisis, refugees need immediate shelter and it is wherein the policy of multiculturalism gains added significance. The policy of one country, one religion, one language proves inadequate to serve the humanitarian goals as refugees largely feel stranded in no man's land.

Amidst the tossing of the truck and the impeding fear of being detained, Mahtab's memories time and again sail back to her home, her uncles who had gone to Paris and her grandfather who would read out to her Persian poetry. But what she also recalls is the determination of her

female teacher who would dare visit her home, hiding books under the burqa. This female teacher of her, Mahboubeh was now jobless and the little girl becomes more concerned for her, worrying "how would she earn a living now?" (34) This female teacher's brother had also been forcibly recruited by the Taliban army to fight in the north. Libby Glesson presents the defiled psychology of militants who oppress girls in the name of Allah, thereby not only insulting Islam but also dealing a blow to the aspirations of girl students.

Spending weeks in cool icy breeze, huddled in a truck, Mahtab misses the literal and metaphorical warmth of her home. When they are given a shed by a burly bearded man to live and hide in Pakistan, her eyes swell up with tears. Jamal, the truck driver secures their passage to Pakistan with one of his friends there. The question that they were still alive makes this little discomfiture, however, somewhere dissipate. Even this helpful man in Pakistan realizes that even his country is not safe for them and hence asks them to leave for Australia after making arrangements for his family. He says about Australia, "It is not a Muslim country but there are many like us who have made it their home" (44). This knowledge further makes the sheltered family joyous as Australia is a multicultural nation and hence, will accept refugees and moreover, many Muslims have already made it their "home". However, the turning point in the narrative is that as per the suggestion of this man, Mahtab's father goes to Australia first to make arrangements for the family. Mahtab's mother is quite sensible at this stage as she persuades her husband to go and she prepares herself to take care of the children behind. Though it is a hard decision for her, she is determined to do anything for the sake of her children:

> Maybe it is more expensive than we ever imagined. Go quickly. Discover the way and then, when you are there and are able to send more money, we will come too. We are safe here. The man will bring food and I will keep the children here, with me. I will not let them go out into the streets or put themselves in harm's

> way. When you are safely there, you can send us word and tell us what we have to do. (47)

The father entrusts the young but the eldest of his children Mahtab to help her mother out and let not the spirits of the children be drooped in his absence as there will be no toys, no friends and no books. He again makes her realize the importance of his early departure without them, "We will be together again. We will be free, free from the fear and all that we have seen and we have suffered" (48). After his departure, Mahtab's mother tries to make her siblings happy, revealing that once they are in Australia, they can watch television, can take education until fifteen, cannot be married until eighteen, can travel anywhere and there won't be any war. All this underscores the taboos back home on girls and the freedom that Australia holds for its citizens and thereby to immigrants.

However, no word from the father for weeks and months makes the family plunge in deep despair. Since he had promised to send word, the absence of the same worries them. After the months, the burly man has sad tidings as he reveals how now the gangs of robbers were trying to kidnap the wives and children of those men who had been to Australia and were making money there. Therefore, Mahtab's mother is bound to keep all her children hidden from anyone's view as that could have landed them in trouble. Mahtab compares her father to Sindbab who might be undergoing various troubles but eventually would emerge victorious like the fable hero. However, when he does not send any word even after eight months, the family becomes worried. The family then thinks of moving to Australia on its own to find out the head. The burly man helps them secure passports and fly to Malaysia from where they had to go to Indonesia and then to Australia. Though the path remains struck with countless difficulties, they have to take this decision not only for having safe lives but also for finding out about their father who had gone nearly missing now.

The family has to remain in Malaysia for a week. It is there that

they befriend another family leaving for Australia. Another woman Hamida's son Ahmad and Farhad become friends and both imagine their future in Australia. Ahmad's mother Hamida delivers a baby girl in a hospital, again signifying how helpless she must have felt to leave her country in her last stages of pregnancy. The Indonesian police detain the refugees from boarding the boat for one day, demanding bribe. When the police demand more money for the newly-born baby, she is left dejected. Mahtab's humanitarian tendency overflows as she parts with her grandmother's gold-studded bracelet to help pay Hamida for her family's reunion. Further, when her mother feels afraid that the boat might sink as it is not sturdy, Mahtab persuades her to board it, "It'll be all right, Mum. They wouldn't sail this boat if it wasn't strong enough. We have to stay on board. It's the only way we'll get to Dad" (102). Though still a child, the harsh circumstances make her a tough character, a responsible elder sister and a conscientious daughter, trying to dissipate the shades of grey.

On the ship, the mother again tries to cheer her son Farhad by narrating to him the story of Sindbad. Sindbad, while undertaking the perilous sea journey with other crew for trade, had happened to take rest on a whale thinking it to be an island. The moment the whale tossed up, everyone fell into the water, leaving Sindbad heart-broken. However, he is saved in that tale as he lands on an island and grows rich there. Similarly, on the fourth day onward the sea roars and the sails nearly break. In this hour of crisis, the mother encourages her children, saying that her husband will also be successful like Sindbad in the new island country, Australia. These stories provide a lease of another life to the panic-stricken children and crew as they derive inspiration and courage from Sindbad and Ali Baba.

For refugees on boat, a courteous welcome in the host nation acts like a succour. The moment fierce wind blows and the water seeps in, they pray for life. The sight of a boat at this stage fills them again with hopes of life. They wonder if this ship has come from Australia to save

them. But the initial moments bring pain and suspense as the ship draws near but does not rescue them. The captain reveals:

> 'They say we are not welcome.'
>
> 'We must go back.'
>
> 'Turn around.' (125)

For Mahtab, these orders from the other sea captain smack of insincerity and insensitivity. She just tries to cope up with this confusion by stuffing sense in them to feel their situation by entering in their shoes:

> How could this be? Didn't they know what had happened? Didn't they know about the whips, the dogs, the beatings, shootings, stoning? The trip through the mountains? The hiding on the truck? The months, the months with no father? The tears? The tears? (114-15)

However, things turn optimistic as the Iraqi ship captain allows them to move forward but in the dark. Eventually they reach Australia into the harbour of Darwin. As they land ashore, the police officers inquire them for passports and identity cards. However, all had been lost now as the wind had been relentless on the sea and moreover, they were not tourists coming there on their own choice but helpless refugees. Mahtab's mother has full faith in Australia as she says, "We are not going back. There are laws to protect us in this country" (121). They are not handled roughly and are provided with cold meat, bread and cheese. Mahtab feels rather confounded over seeing women with "no burqas, no veils, not even a scarf" (122). When these refugees are put in a vehicle and driven for hours, they feel apprehensive of their fate. Their helplessness is reflected in these lines:

> 'We have done nothing.'
>
> 'We are refugees, we have escaped Saddam.'
>
> 'We have fled the Taliban.'
>
> "They said this is a free country.' (125)

The refugees are taken to detention camps, barbed by wire

fences all around. But they know that this is a free country where they will be treated according to the law.

Glesson emphasises that refugees are not ill-treated in her country and that before their acceptance, they are put in detention centres where inquires concerning their identities are conducted. In the absence of documentary evidence, they may have to face stringent action. However, it is unlikely, that in most pressing situations, refugees would carry their identity cards along as in the first place they flee for life. Moreover, the influx of endless wave of refugees also equally makes it difficult for the host nations to accept all. The arrival of many people in boats may prolong the process of acceptance. The novelist is also aware of the fact that in the absence of a common language, there are bound to emerge other problems. A bad translation of refugees' account fails to deliver the intended message and it is exactly what happens with one of the refugees in the novel as the translator inadvertently fails to convey the true account. It defers not only the immediate acceptance but also the hopes of the concerned victim.

Glesson also emphasizes that some noble and good souls from the privileged side can be an inexhaustible source of hope, strength, and sustenance. The emergence of one such woman, Catherine makes things easier for little Mahtab and her family. She does not only give books to Mahtab to learn English but also spares time to teach her in the detention centre itself. She teaches the twelve year old Mahtab as one would a nursery kid, apart from performing her duties as a nurse. She tries to dissipate Mahtab's gloom, saying, "I'm the nurse. I'm your friend" (150). Without papers, it is said that they "are illegal" (138). These sad developments further prove too much for Mahtab as she falls seriously ill and barely recovers from her illness, all this time cursing this endless wait for acceptance. However, it is only by her toughness that Mahtab survives the physical illness and mental trauma. Even Catherine acknowledges her toughness, "You Afghani girls must be made of very tough stuff" (157). It is equally true of Malala Yousafzai who survived

the bullet injuries by dint of sheer strength.

The moment Hamida's family receives visa, mixed feelings surge up. While their reunion elates Mahtab and others, the hopes of their own freedom weigh down on them more heavily. It is found out that Hamida's husband was in Sydney and was looking for them. A team of generous lawyers help her secure this knowledge. Ahmad, who had spent now many months with Farhad, wants him to come along. This overwhelming scene makes Mahtab's heart sink as she again has bouts of depression and gloom.

The writer also underscores the fact that writing serves a healing purpose when things go awry. While tears are outward manifestation of inner turmoil, writing lends the emotions flow more profusely. Mahtab now wants a diary as her father also wanted her to own and write in one. Catherine, benign as she is, buys for her one diary which becomes a mode for the little girl to pour her heart out. Taking off from the detention camp, this diary records everything that happens there. She writes about the departure of Hamida for Sydney and curses this "unbearable now" (164). On the third day of writing her diary, she has hope that her mother's interview with the authorities will be successful and they will be granted safe passage to the city from the fenced area. The visit of an Afghani man, Moustafa to the camp brings along inexpressible joy as he happens to be Hussein Ahmady's friend. This revelation, that Ahmady is alive and is also held back in another detention camp for months, makes their entire struggle bear fruit. After undergoing the long identification process, Ahmady has now visa. The telephonic conversation that takes place between them, has more emotions in it than words as the words do not easily issue forth from Mahtab's mother's lips and there are "long, empty silences" (168). Though Ahmady has English classes to adapt to the new country, he retains his original identity as well. This reunion sees the light of the day because of mild stance of the host nation on the asylum-seekers. But still many weeks pass before they get the final nod to meet Ahmady. In the

meanwhile, Mahtab keeps learning English.

Mahtab reveals a very abiding concern while noting in her diary:

> I do not want anyone to know that I am scared. Scared of who I must be to live in this new country. Scared I have to change the way I look and think and feel. I don't want to change. At least I don't think I want to. I want to wake up in my own bed, in my old room and find Grandma is making the tea in the morning and there is the smell of bread. How dare someone stop me from being with that part of my family! (172)

Little Mahtab speaks with the sensibility of an elder. The wisdom of a twelve year old girl is more worthy, thought-provoking and humane as compared to the matured ones. That she may have to change herself to be fully accepted in Australia is not a welcome idea to her. Immersed as she still is in her home memories and her Grandma, Mahtab wants that warmth to be embraced again. However, that can only be through what William Safran calls, "memory route" (Safran) and not at the cost of lives. Confronted with countless difficulties to reach Australia and months' long wait there in the detention centre makes her question not only terrorism but also man-made artificial inequalities and hence a plea to welcome those in trouble with open hands and warm hearts. "Immigrants from regions outside the Anglo-Celtic sphere, from Asia in particular, are now gradually being socially and economically integrated, while the migrant flows of refugees are still met with sharp resistance" (Larsen 77).

Long wait in detention centres often grates on the nerves of the detainees. Their resistance to the host nation's treatment may find outlet in varied ways. While some may turn to silent protest, others may become violent to the extent of claiming lives or committing suicides. It is exactly what happens with the refugees in the novel under discussion. Writhing in endless despair, some men climb on the roof and jump "at the wire" (173) while many sew "their lips together in silent protest"

(173). A number of asylum seekers resort to violence, setting buildings ablaze. Peter Mares also writes that long wait for acceptance results in "break-outs, protests, riots and acts of self-harm behind the wire" (3). While host nations may follow stringent to soft norms concerning acceptance and non-acceptance of refugees, their plight remains largely sewn with their homeland turmoil. Harold Bilboe, who spent some time with the detainees in the Woomera Detention Centre, says:

> Initially, 90 per cent of asylum seekers do not have a problem with detention on arrival. They understand that health and security checks need to be made. Serious problems begin to emerge after people have been locked up for six months or more, with no understanding of what is happening to them or why the process is taking so long. He thinks that traumatisation of detainees is so serious that Australia could be guilty of psychological torture. (qtd. in Mares 92)

Being driven from native place is never pardonable and being held in detention centres is equally shameful, making it incumbent on the international bodies to come to a consensus concerning the refugee problem.

Libby Glesson ends the novel on a note of hope. Survival is of utmost importance and the reunion of Ahmady Hussein with his family after such a long time illuminates their otherwise darkened existence. The beautiful imagery that Glesson introduces at the end of the novel has to do with the now settled life of the refugee family. The last scene, which is set during the Festival of Winds, is quite significant and symbolic. The novelist reveals that "kites from every nation are there", signifying the multicultural fabric of the nation, accepting people of all ethnicities, religions, creeds, etc. It is important to discuss here that the Taliban regime banned even kite flying and bird-keeping in Afghanistan and decreed that "such pastimes were unIslamic" (Podelco). We remember a scene in the beginning of the novel where Ahamdi scolds his

children for flying kites as that would invite the wrath of the Taliban. Now Mahtab, Soraya, and Farhad's pleasure in flying kites is symbolic of the liberty that Australia as a multicultural nation offers to refugees and other citizens. Further, the movement of the kite in a "cloudless sky" signals better life prospects now for this Muslim family, free as they are from the clutches of Talibani regimented life. "Many Muslims find that they experience little difficulty in living as practising Muslims in a country like Australia where there is religious freedom and no interference from the state in matters of belief, practice, and theological orientations of Muslims" (Saeed 124). The novel, thus, traces this trajectory of forced movement of a family from an oppressive dictatorial regime in Afghanistan to a free democratic country Australia, thereby highlighting the importance of pluralism in present times. The issue of belonging is settled with the acceptance of this family in Australia and resistance and resilience ultimately leads to survival.

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Language Use in Multi -Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Societies of Australia and India

Suneela Sharma

India and Australia make a curious case for the study of Language use in Multi-ethnic and Multi-cultural societies. Just as India is a country that boasts a bouquet of a multi cultural, multi ethnic, multi linguistic society; so does Australia, with its population comprising a mosaic of several ethnic and cultural communities living together since centuries now . The other big similarity between both India and Australia is the two-century-old Colonial legacy. In India many Indians would say that India's national language is Hindi. They would say it with pride if they are from the north and with a good-natured grouse if they are from the south. But this is a misconception. The fact is that, according to the Indian Constitution, the country does not have a national language. Similarly, although Australia has no official language, English has been entrenched as the *de facto* national language. To understand the status of language use and status of English in these societies this paper proposes to study, as a case pertaining to the history of language use and practices of multilingual contexts in both of these societies.

Language Use in India

Multilingualism has been the fabric of Indian society for centuries and India's pluralism manifests in its linguistic diversity. The Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution lists twenty-two languages which have been referred to as scheduled languages and given recognition, status and official encouragement. The scheduled languages of India are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri. In addition, the Government of India has awarded the distinction of

classical language to Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. Classical language status is given to languages which have a rich heritage and independent nature. According to the 2011 Census the language data of which was released on 26 June 2018, there are a total of 122 languages and 234 mother tongues in India. According to the census, Hindi and it's regional varieties of dialects and languages, clubbed together under one umbrella, continue to be the most widely spoken language in India at 43.6% of the population, and continue to grow at a rapid pace, mostly driven by higher population growth in Hindi speaking states. The number of Hindi speakers increased by nearly 25% between 2001 – 2011, an increase of 100 million speakers in absolute numbers. This is reflected by online usage trends as well. At the same time surprisingly, English too shows an increase of 26% in the 2011 census. There are reasons for this phenomenon.

When Indians move to other parts of the country for work, they take their languages along with them. These speakers sometimes learn the local language, but remain more comfortable in their mother tongue, while interacting with other speakers and consuming media and content in either the local language or using English as the language of convenience. These speakers account for India's vast linguistic minorities, often with concentrations in urban areas. This large population dominantly relies on the use of English as a link language at their workplaces, formal negotiations or for financial transactions. For example, Mumbai has significant Hindi and Gujarati speaking minorities in addition to Marathi speakers, and Hyderabad's Urdu speaking minority is not much smaller than the Telugu speaking majority. However, they all use English to communicate for their common benefits, thereby giving rise to the use of English.

The linguistic diversity of India poses complex challenges but also a range of opportunities for language use. It is worthwhile to note that India has recognized the importance of its multi-cultural and multi-ethnic social realities by accepting multilingual education and recognizing indigenous and minority languages in its Constitution since

its independence from the British in 1947. According to the constitutional provisions for the use of languages in India, the use of English as a second official language was supposed to be phased-out by 1965. In the event, as 1965 approached, India's then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri prepared to make Hindi paramount with effect from 26 January 1965. This led to widespread agitation, riots, self-immolations and suicides in Tamil Nadu and the government had to bow down in favour of national unity and peace.

Eventually the Act itself was amended in 1967 and India adopted a policy called the "Three Language Formula" (TLF) in 1968, according to which Hindi became the national language and English the language for official businesses along with Hindi, and the third language was a state-wise recognized language. For example, Gujarati is the language of the Gujarat (Western Indian state), and Telugu is the language of Andhra Pradesh (Southern Indian state).

The Indian Constitution has also provided some safeguards to diverse linguistic and cultural identity of the nation so as to sustain multilingual India. As Article 29 of the Constitution states the following about distinct identities of indigenous and minority communities, "Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same." Article 30 (1) specifically refers to education in indigenous and minority languages, and guarantees indigenous, religious and linguistic minorities the right to sustain their languages and cultures through education: "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice."

The dilemma of India for English language education is also manifested in the report of National Knowledge Commission (NKC) (2009)

> English has been part of our education system for more than a century. Yet English is beyond the reach of most of our young people, which makes for highly unequal access. Indeed, even now, more than one percent of our people use it as a second

> language, let alone a first language....the time has come for us to teach our people, ordinary people, English as a language in schools....build an inclusive society and transform India into a knowledge society (p. 27).

Language Use in Australia

Historically a part of the British Empire and now a member of the Commonwealth Australia is a relatively prosperous and independent society. Australians are in many respects fortunate in that they do not share the borders of their continent with any other country. Extremely remote from their traditional allies and trading partners, Australians have become more interested in the proximity of huge potential markets in Asia and in the highly competitive industrialized economies of China, Japan, South, Korea and Taiwan, Australia, the continent and the country, may have been quite isolated at the beginning of the 20th century, but it entered the 21st century as a culturally diverse land brimming with confidence, an attitude encouraged by the worldwide fascination with the land "Down Under" and demonstrated when Sydney hosted the 2000 Olympic Games. Australia has a federal form of government, with a national government for the Commonwealth of Australia and individual state governments (those of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania). Each state has a constitution, and its government exercises a limited degree of sovereignty.There are also two internal territories: Northern Territory, established as a self-governing territory in 1978, and the Australian Capital Territory (including the city of Canberra), which attained self-governing status in 1988. The federal authorities govern the external territories of Norfolk Island, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island, Ashmore and Cartier islands, the Coral Sea Islands, and Heard Island and McDonald Islands and claim the Australian Antarctic Territory, an area larger than Australia itself. Papua New Guinea, formerly an Australian external territory, gained its independence in 1975.

Though Australia has no official language, English is regarded as the de facto national language of Australia and is spoken by all. Even so, Australia is a linguistically and culturally diverse country with influences from more than 160 spoken languages. Australian English has a unique accent and vocabulary. Collectively, Australians have more than 200 spoken languages. In the 2011 census, 76.8% Australian spoke English at home. Mandarin is the biggest non-English dialect spoken in Australia. Immigration patterns have had a significant influence on the most widely spoken language in the country other than English. Early European settlement in Australia almost eradicated the indigenous languages, and few of these Aboriginal languages have survived today.

The 2011 National Statistics of Languages Spoken in Australia of language spoken at home indicate that a majority of Australians speak only English as compared to non-English Speakers. Overall about 76.8% of the people speak only English, 18.2% are non-English speakers. Apart from English, Mandarin is the dominant language spoken at home by 1.6% (336,178 people) speakers. Other emerging languages include Punjabi, Filipino/Tagalog, and Arabic.

Aboriginal Languages Spoken in Australia

Australian Aboriginal community which constitutes five per cent of Australia's population, has the longest cultural history in the world and dates back to around 60,000 years. By the time the First European Fleet arrived in the country in 1788, Australia had around 250 indigenous languages. These languages are believed to have originated and evolved from a single language family which comprised 700 dialects. Out of those 250, only 20 survive today, and they are spoken regularly and also taught in schools.In the last ten years Aboriginals have been given the choice to learn their mother tongue in addition to English. All Aboriginals use these dialects in Central Australia but English is used in coastal areas which are urbanized.

Objective of the Research

This paper, an experimental micro research, focuses on the following objectives-

a) To initiate a preliminary study of the situation of the Language use, especially of English vis- a- vis the other native, regional, ethnic or foreign languages being used in the societies of India and Australia.

b) Learning about the environment of language use in India and Australia.

c) Identifying the status of English vis-a-vis other languages in both societies.

d) To formulate a preparatory plan for a major research project on the findings of the present survey with a minimal corpus of fifty informants from each society as respondents.

Therefore, we approached our study with the Hypothesis that:-

a) The contextualities of the Indian and Australian societies are similar on one level, in that they both constitute a multi-cultural population. At the same time both the societies are contrastive in that –India has now enjoyed freedom from Colonial rule for more than seventy years whereas the colonizers never left Australia. The majority of Australian population comprises immigrants from countries and places all over the world whereas in India the society comprises people from different states, regions, religions, castes and ethnicity.

b) Members of both societies find it easy and convenient to speak and write in English due to English having been used as a lingua Franca for over more than two centuries.

c) Members of both societies prefer to use their mother tongue in order to maintain their ethnic/cultural identity.

d) English is preferred as the medium of education and for formal use in both societies.

e) It is felt that English enhances the global reach of its users and helps in trade and international business.

f) Members of both societies want their children to learn and speak English fluently.

g) English has a superior social status in both the societies in terms of enhancing personal and social esteem.

h) Considering all the above points English should be adopted as National/Official language by the Governments as a part of language policy.

i) Multi cultural /multi ethnic societies are comfortable and prefer to use their mother tongue at their homes,in spite of relying on English for survival in a multi lingual society.

Method of Survey

The survey for the research was carried out through qualitative as well as quantitative methods of research. The data was collected through a questionnaire that comprised twenty questions in all, out of which sixteen questions were objective while four were descriptive and open ended. The questionnaires were filled by informants from both societies- Indian and Australian. All the informants were above the age of twenty years and belonged to different ethnic,regional and cultural backgrounds. In all, a sample of fifty informants was collected from both the societies. The fifty informants from Australia included Anglo Saxons, Phillipinos, Fijjians, Japanese, Chinese,Sri Lankan,Indian Hindus and Christians, Spanish and Australian natives. Amongst the fifty informants of the sample data from India, informants from Jammu Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, U,P, Bihar, Assam, West -Bengal, Tamil Nadu ,Andhra Pradesh, Kerela were included . The size of the sample was restricted to fifty because of the nature of the present project. This was planned as an experimental preliminary pilot research to be used as a synopsis for a major research project in future.

a) Lack of time. We had a period of about six weeks to pursue the project.

b) Lack of sufficient resources like manpower, funds, etc. At least two dozen research associates in all parts of Australia and India would be required in order to collect substantive data in terms of representation of all the speakers of the various languages in both the societies. Nevertheless, internet and Whatsap were used to collect sufficient authentic data to derive our conclusions that can act as a reference for further research in this area.

c) The limited sample size of fifty informants comprised representatives of the different communities, ethnicities and regions in equal proportion.

The survey in Australia was assisted by associates of the researcher in Australia- Ms Nameeta Roy in Australia, working as Early childhood teacher in Sydney, Australia and Ms Sunaina Sharma, working as a corporate trainer,at Corelogic, Adelaide, Australia.

Scope of the Research

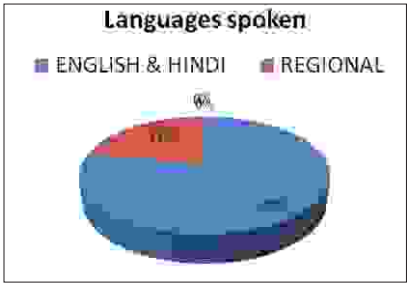
This research and the brief survey thereof have provided valuable insights into the Language use in Australia and India. Moreover, this study not only gauged the trends of Language use in the societies of Australia and India, but it has also given a very clear understanding of the current status of English in the both societies because our associates interacted personally with the respondents. This paper is an open ended research into exploring the possibility of a variety of linguistic phenomena, challenges and opportunities existing in the societies of Australia and India.The sample for the survey, the size of the data collected, recorded and tabulated maybe small, however, it is still a valuable reference material for further research in this direction. The project brings out the latent tendencies in the language users of both societies, especially when the informants from all the various nationalities/ethnicities and states/Regions were carefully identified for the sampling in Australia and India, respectively. The informants came out openly and shared their opinions and choices unreservedly as they were assured that their response was to be used purely for academic

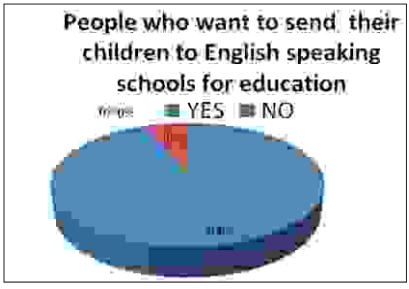
purpose and their response was recorded online, through mail or Whatsap.

Analysis

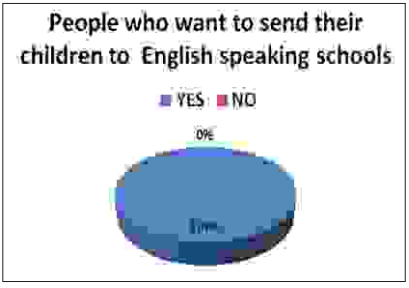
The data collected after the survey was compiled in the form of Tables and analysis was drawn on the basis of the majority trend of the response to each of the twenty questions from the questionnaire.

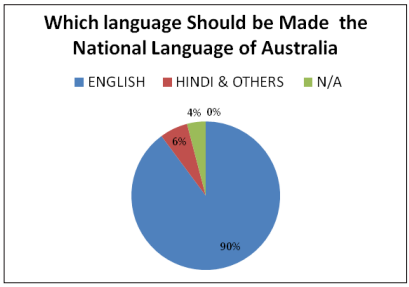
Language use in India





Language use in Australia





1.Whereas hundred per cent of the Australian informants claim to use English, seventy-eight per cent of the Indian informants claim to give equal importance to the use of Hindi along with English 9 - see the pie charts).

2.Australian informants feel comfortable using their mother tongue for informal environment and so do Indian informants.

3.At the same time it was found that seventy-six percent of Indians can write in their mother tongue while sixty two per cent of Australians can only speak their mother tongue and cannot write in their native languages at all. This may have happened because in Australia all schools are English speaking schools and teaching of regional/ethnic or foreign languages is not encouraged. Contrary to this, in India , the government has adopted the Three Language Formula whereby English and Hindi are compulsory languages in the schools but along with them the option to study one regional language/mother tongue is offered to the learners, thereby enhancing the multilingual skills of Indian learners.

4.Indian society showed a hundred percent trend of a preference for educating their children from English speaking schools as the State Board run schools do not encourage the use of English as the only medium of learning whereas Convents run by the Christian Missionaries or the other Private and Public institutions encourage the use of English as the medium of written and spoken learning. This tendency dominantly exists in Indian (Question 8,9 of the questionnaire, see the pie chart) because they feel that the ability to

speak English enhances their status, global reach and employability.

5.In case of Australia, the informants are unconditionally in favour of the status of English as the National Language while the situation is curiously strange in the Indian society. The Indian informants seem to be contradictive in this case. Whereas a hundred per cent of Indian informants want their children to study in convents/English schools, they themselves prefer to use only their mother tongue or Hindi dominantly: yet they are in the favour of declaring Hindi as the official National link Language of India with forty two per cent in favour of making Hindi the National language because they feel that it is easy to use and is their mother tongue (pie charts).

Conclusion

From the above analysis we can draw the following conclusion

1.India and Australia both, as multicultural, multiethnic societies face the challenge of Language Use with a varied spectrum of heterogeneous language users living together in a conglomeration of a national body of huge population.

2. In spite of a contextual similarity like colonial legacy, both societies differ from each other in the nature of the challenges of language use they face. Australia faces the challenge of accommodating millions of migrants from countries like China, Japan, Africa, Fijji, Spain, India, Afghanistan and Phillipines, apart from the large population of Aboriginals using their own languages .devoutly. On the other hand, Indian society faces a challenge of different nature of regional and linguistic prejudices between the southern, northern and North-eastern states, with every state fighting and struggling for its independent linguistic and cultural identity.

3.Whereas English brought to Australia by the colonial settlers survived and thrived in Australia to gain the status of the National Language of the continent, it is still fighting for a place in Indian society in the wake of the three language formula adopted as the Language policy by the

Indian Government and with the different ideologies of the various political parties that came to power in successive Governments after freedom from colonial rule.

4.Whereas Australian Aboriginal language has survived in a meager proportion as compared to the English in Australia, Hindi along with the regional languages gave a tough competition to English as they were consciously preserved by their users as a part of struggle for survival against the colonizers during the struggle for freedom and used for cultural identity after independence.

5. In today's global world, much as the Indians may claim to use Hindi as their National language and project it as the same, at the same time they cannot ignore the importance of English communication skill in the field of trade, economy, industry, banking, education, internet and technological environment. The proof of this is the response of Indian survey to question fourteen of the questionnaire where sixty per cent of the informants feel that the knowledge of English enhances their employability and that hundred per cent of them want their children to go to the schools where English is the medium of learning. Contrary to this fact, majority of Indians want to continue using Hindi as their language of everyday use and forty two per cent voted for Hindi to be chosen as the National language of the country.

To sum up, societies with multi-cultural, multi-ethnicity will have to adopt English as a Lingua Franca if they want to survive the demands of the globalization in the field of trade, economy, knowledge exchange and knowledge generation. In the case of India, our society seems to be contradictory and confused. At the one level we cannot do without English as the source of enhancing our career, our global reach and social status but at the other level we want to preserve our cultural and linguistic identities as well. In Australia on the other hand ,people are facing the challenge of losing their ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity in the absence of any teaching and learning facilities of their native languages.

This micro experimental study can act as a valuable base to

launch a major project of research on a larger scale, to verify the above stated findings and to evaluate the solutions to the uniquely different needs and challenges of the societies of India and Australia.(See the Questionnaire)

Questionnaire

Survey on Language Use and Status of English in Australia and India

This questionnaire is a part of a survey being carried out to collect data regarding the situation of language use and status of English in Australia amidst a population comprising a variety of ethnic, cultural and religious communities .The survey results will enable us to study and derive accurate analyses and conclusions. We request our informants to respond with utmost frankness as their information will be crucial for accurate conclusions. Thank you.

Name : …… Sex: ……

Age: ……..

Nationality/Religion/Ethnicity: ……

Mother Tongue:

……

Educational qualification

……

Q1. How many languages can you speak? Mention them in descending order of competence.

……

Q2. How many languages can you write/read? Mention them in descending order of competence.

……

Q3. Which language do you prefer to use in work places/offices/ Banks and other formal situations ?

……

Q4.Which language you find convenient to use on social occasions/ leisure parties?

……

Q5. Which language do you prefer to use while travelling inter-state or abroad?

……

Q6.Which language do you use to talk with your friends from other regions , countries?

……

Q7. Which language do you prefer to use while :-

- Searching information on internet (Google)
- writing Emails
- checking E news

……

Q8. Would you like to send your child to an English speaking school? Give reasons for either choice.

……

Q9. In which of the following situations is English more popularly used in Australia?

Business meetings ……

Politics ……

Education ……

Music ……

Literature ……

Medical consultation ……

Q10. Do you think that English communication can enhance your relationships in formal and informal friendships?

……

Q11. Do you think knowledge of English enhances your confidence ?

……

Q12. Do you think knowledge of English enhances your global reach?

……

Q13. Which language do you use with tourists ?

……

Q14. Do you think competence in English skills will fetch you a better job?

.....

Q15.Which is the most predominantly used language in your country and why ?

.....

Q16.Do you think that the English skills of your children/family improves by watching English films/TV ?

.....

Q17. Do you think the majority of people around you can use correct English grammar in their speech\writing?

.....

Q.18. In which language do you think you can express your ideas and feelings better?

.....

Q.19. Please give 2 reasons why you feel this language is best suited.

.....

Q.20.What language should be adopted as the National link language by your country? Why?

.....

Thank You

Dr. Suneela Sharma

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India- Australia Strategic Partnership: A Political Analysis

Bhawna Sharma

A strategic partnership is a long-term interaction between two countries based on political, economic, social and historical factors. Such a partnership manifests itself in a variety of relationships. For instance, India has strategic partnerships with the United States, China, Russia Japan, UK, France etc. It is basically a relationship in which both nations have common interests of security, defence and investment. The respectable nomenclature of a 'Strategic Partner' should be bestowed only on those countries with which there are strong and mutually beneficial relationship in all the three sectors of political-diplomatic, defence and economic co-operation.

Bilateral relationship between the nations is generally because of economic purpose. The respective states may exchange different products like electricity, general commodities, or any defence equipment but the basic purpose would be the economic benefit for both the countries. Pakistan and India have bilateral relationship but are not strategic partners. The 21st century has witnessed a new pattern of international relationships in which nations enter into freewheeling partnerships with other nations based on complementarities of interests in specific vital areas. These partnerships, unlike the cold war era, do not bind nations to support each other on all strategic issues and in all situations. The partnerships are entered into for those areas of common interest where mutual help and collaboration can be of long-term benefit for both the nations. Being bilateral in nature, they do not have the stigma of a multilateral alliance, which may be presumed to be a power bloc meant to countervail some big power or another power bloc. These partnerships are considered strategic in nature because of the importance of the issues involved and the long-term nature of co-operation that is visualised.

India has entered into strategic partnerships with more than a dozen countries in the last 10 years. They pertain to core areas of national interest like supply of defence equipment and technology, military exercises, cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, trade and investments, diplomatic support on critical issues, co-operation in science and technology, education, agriculture, information and communication technology, banking, insurance, and various other sectors. Each partnership has a specific character focusing on certain issues. It is in the nature of things that some partnerships are more comprehensive than others, depending on the number of areas in which the two sides can fruitfully and actively engage to mutual benefit and the scope and depth of their relations. *(http://www.fnsr.org/files/Indias_Strategic.pdf)* Regarding India and Australia, both are strong, vibrant, secular and multicultural democracies with open liberal world order as well as trading order. Both the nations have a free press and independent judicial system. The relationship has grown phenomenally since India's economic reforms in the nineties and has made rapid strides in all areas - trade, energy ,mining, science and technology, information technology, education and defence.

Australia has desired strong ties with India from the days of former Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies. During a state visit to the then newly independent India in 1950 Menzies declared, "We must learn to think together and to act together". *(https://www.lowyinstitute.org/ the-interpreter/australia-india-ties-closing-gap-between-intent-and-action)* The relationship between India and Australia can be accessed in two distinct phases.

Phase 1: 1947 to the end of cold war

Australia and India established diplomatic relations in the pre-Independence period, when the Consulate General of India was first opened as a Trade Office in Sydney in 1941. In March 1944, Lieutenant-General Iven Mackay was appointed Australia's first High

Commissioner to India.India's first High Commissioner to Australia Sir Raghunath P. Paranjpe arrived in Canberra in 1945.*(https:// india.embassy.gov.au/ ndli/Australia-India_Relations.html).* The US and Australia fought the Second World War together. In 1947, the year of India's independence, Australia and India worked together to bring the conflict between the Indonesians and the Dutch about Indonesia's own independence before the United Nations Security Council against the wishes of the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US) and the Netherlands. Since then India and Australia have become a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, including East Timor and Sudan.*(https://foreignminister. gov.au/speeches/ 2008/0809011_ newdelhi.html)*

All political scientists are aware of the fact that the United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who is known as war time President (1933-1945) gave vision of world order based on the experience of the interwar period. He suggested the new liberal world order based on the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton woods institutions that are international Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank,General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade(GATT). However, US's vision of world order was challenged by the communist bloc (2nd World) and the non-aligned countries (3rd World). In this context India and Australia,ideologically drifted apart as Australia became an ally of the US while India advocated for Non-Alignment Movement.Australia, New Zealand and United States signed a treaty named The Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty, or ANZUS Treaty, in 1951,to protect the security of the Pacific Ocean.The agreement has neither been formally abrogated, nor the ANZUS was ever expanded. In 1954 when the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) was formed the purpose of the organization was the same as that of ANZUS to prevent communism from gaining ground in the region. SEATO included all the ANZUS powers, as well as Britain, France, and several other Asian powers, eliminating the impetus to change the foundation of the ANZUS Treaty. Over the course of the decades that followed the

signing of the ANZUS Treaty, the members met annually to discuss their shared interests and concerns. *(https://history.state.gov/ milestones/1945-1952/anzus)*

In 1954 when SEATO was created, ANZUS was brought within its ambit but the ANZUS continued to be the bedrock of the US-Australia relation. Australia supported the US in Vietnam War and even allowed its territory to be used by the US for docking nuclear ships. On the other side Indiagot the presidency of the International Control Commission (ICC) was established in 1954. It oversaw the implementation of the Geneva Accords that ended the first Indo-China War and the partition of Vietnam. It reported on the progress of the ceasefires including any violations. The International Control Commission had troops and officers from Canada, Poland, and India, respectively representing the non-communist, communist,and nonaligned blocs.*(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ International_Control_ Commission# cite_note-Moise-1)* India decided to be a part of the British Commonwealth in 1949 without allegiance to the British Crown. Australian constitutional law on the other hand provides that the monarch ofthe United Kingdom is also the monarch in Australia. *(https://www.legislation.gov.au /Details/C 2013Q00005)*

Australia provided aid to India under Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan is a regional organisation that represents collective intergovernmental efforts to strengthen the economic and social development of member countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It's a type of economic forum and primary focus is on Human Resource development. Australia supported India in its War against China. In spite of all this,the ideological difference and their different approaches to the British Commonwealth prevented the relationship to be taken to the advanced level. After 1970 domestic politics of Australia also changed. Robert Gordon Menzies was replaced by21st Prime Minister of Australia, Edward Gough Whitlam (1972-75). Edward Gough Whitlam brought changes in the Australian international relations. He successfully intervened to end Australian participation in Vietnam War.

After Indo-Pak war in 1971 and the subsequent Indo-Russia treaty of Friendship, the relationship between India and Australia began to slowdown. The dip in India and Australia relationship came in 1975 when Malcolm Fraser, Australian Prime Minister criticised India's proximity to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). He also took a dig at India's condemnation of the US base in Diego Garcia,(Singh E99),only 1800 km from Trivandrum, that is India so a serious concern for India from security point of view. Still there is the US base in Diego Garcia which is a threat for our strategic environment. It made us to redesign our strategies.

Phase 2: After the cold war

After the end of cold war, the then US president George Herbert Walker Bush proclaimed new world order and talked about the victory of Liberal world order. American political scientist Francis Fukuyama described this moment as the "End of History". History is a continuous process; it does not end but he uses it in a specific context. Fukuyama meant that the history of ideological battle has ended,the battle between capitalism versus communism, free economy versus state control economy has ended and the US with its liberalist and capitalist model has won the history.

The end of the cold war raised hopes for an increasing international co-operation and a fresh commitment to strengthen the role of international organization, United Nations to address a set of global issues such as social injustice, economic inequality, armed conflict, environmental issues and much more emphasis on human rights, democracy, rule of law, better justice and freer society. In the Indian context it was the time when Indian Prime Minister P V NarasimhaRao and his government introduced new economic policies, liberalization in India was initiated in 1991 to make the Indian economy more market oriented,service oriented and expanding the role of private and foreign investment.

A solid base for the relationship between India and Australia was laid with the establishment of the Australia-India Council (AIC), which was established by the Australian Government on 21st May 1992 in response to the recommendation by the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.The AIC is a non-statutory body with a Chairman and a Board appointed by the Government on a part-time basis for three years. The AIC programs and activities are a form of "second-track diplomacy" conducted parallel to, and in support of, government-government- contacts and exchanges.

The mission of the Council is to advance Australia's foreign and trade policy interests by building awareness and understanding between the people and institutions of Australia and India.

The AIC objectives are to:

- raise awareness of Australia in India, and of India in Australia in a way that encourages further growth in relations between the two countries, including the trade and investment relationship
- promote exchange and collaboration between Australian and Indian organisations in fields of relevance to the bilateral strategic partnership
- deliver high quality programs that demonstrate Australia's economic credentials and technical excellence to influential audiences in India
- seek community involvement in, and private sector support for meeting the AIC's objectives including by encouraging corporate investment in collaborations that advance Australia-India relations
- Publicise the AIC's activities as a means of encouraging broad support for the AIC's role and the bilateral relationship. (https://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/foundations-councils-institutes/australia-india-council/pages/australia-india-council.aspx)

The Australian High Commission in New Delhi provides support for the AIC's activities in India. The AIC initiates or supports activities, in partnership with other funding agencies, that promote substantial and enduring collaboration between Australia and India and which serve Australia's long-term interests in India. When Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao launched India's free market reforms that rescued the nation from economic collapse, he accelerated the dismantling of the license raj. This is the period after June 1991 onwards when India allures other countries because of the biggest market, growing economy, growing middle class, consumerism, urbanization, and geostrategic importance because of its strategic position between Pacific and Africa. Along with this India believes in Soft Power diplomacy. Joseph S. Nye in his article " Public Diplomacy and soft Power" calls soft power as power of attraction.(Nye,95*)* Although, it is true that soft power diplomacy does not get immediate result, but soft power is not compelling, less costly and requires more time to build. Soft power suits to India most because we believe in democratic values and soft power is premier of democratic politics. Along with this we are having tradition of rich culture, values and our policies especially foreign policy is perceived as legitimate and having moral authority. This extends from time immemorial to the present times also.We can use our values to affect others to obtain the outcomes we want through attraction. In the world of economic interdependenceit can be said that the world order is in a state of complex interdependence and therefore has increased the scope of soft power.

The Indian Government established a counterpart to the AIC in the form of the India Australia Council (IAC), in 1995.

The objectives of this council are-

- fostering the deepening and strengthening of relations between the two countries
- demonstrating to Indians, Australian excellence in education, arts, science and technology, sports and other fields

- promoting knowledge in India and Australia of each other's society and culture. *(https://india.embassy.gov.au /ndli/aic.html)*

The report, India's Economy at the Midnight Hour: Australia's India Strategy, was produced by the East Asia Analytical Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 1994 and was arguably the first thorough examination of trade and investment opportunities for Australia in India. The East Asia Analytical Unit was directed by the Standing Committee of Deputy Secretaries in early 1993 to undertake a study of the then economic reforms in India, likely prospects for economic growth and future opportunities for Australian trade and investment. It had been suggested that a strategy for Australian business and policy makers designed to promote mutually beneficial economic co-operation would strengthen the bilateral relationship. *(www.aphref.aph. gov.au_house_committee_jfadt_ india_indiach2%20 (1).pdf)* Report acted as strategy document for Australian businesses.

India and Australia both identified economic co-operation as an area for strengthening bilateral relations. In 1995 Australian Trade Minister Bob McMullan visited India and developed Government to Government ties for the institutionalisation of trade. *(https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian?MPID=5I4)* Australia has a unique way of undertaking research to fill the gap in awareness of a target market in future. The East Asia Analytical Unit in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade prepared the report to guide the future course of action. It also outlined education as a core area and encouraged Australian education industry to tap India, on priority, as a market for higher education.

However, the relationship after the cold war was not very smooth and some speed breakers did slow the pace of the unfolding relationship. In 1990, Australia sold Mirage aircrafts to Pakistan at complete displeasure of India. Initially, Australia also showed reluctance to support India at Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation(APEC) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).The 1998 nuclear tests by India saw a deeply negative reaction by Australia. After the nuclear tests

Australia withdrew its High Commissioner from India and halted all ongoing defence, security and trade co-operation. The phase of undulation gave way for effective convergence of strategic relations only after the 11th September 2001, terrorist attack against the United States. Australia, the United States and India came closer to contain terrorism.The relations saw further normalization after the Indo-US nuclear deal post July 2005. The relations between the two nations further deepened as India supported Australia being granted observer status at the South Asian Association for RegionalCooperation (SAARC). *(https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/ 2008/0809011_ newdelhi.html)*

Australia joined SAARC in the capacity of a observer state along with Myanmar, in 15th SAARC summit which took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka in August 2008. The 2016 census of Australia shows Indian population in Australia has grown to 455,389 up from 295,362 recorded in Census 2011 of Australia's 24.4 million people, Indians comprise of 1.9% of the total population. Victoria recorded highest number of people born in India and Hindi came out as the top Indian language spoken in Australia. *(https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/ hindi/hi/article/2017/06/28/census-shows-indian-population-and-languages-have-exponentially-grown-australia?language=hi)*Indian-born immigrants are among the most highly qualified of any group in Australia. A high number of them hold post-secondary qualifications, and many are employed in professional and technical occupations. This Indian diaspora in Australia is expected to play a big role in building the economic linkages. In 1994, the Australian National University established an annual K.R. Narayanan Oration, both to honour this distinguished statesman and to build on his intellectual legacy. *(https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian? MPID=5I4)*

Australia announced a white paper on defence in 2012. The title of the paper is "Australia in the Asian century". Australia believes that since India is a rapidly growing economic power and the centre of

gravity has shifted to the Indo- pacific region as the new theatre of commerce and power, they need to explore new opportunities in Asia. In this context, Australia has advanced an idea to co-operate with India in the economic area and the maritime security. This has raised the importance of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), which is an international organisation formed in 1995 with the initiative of Mauritius.

In 2009 India and Australia announced their strategic partnership agreement when the then Australian PM Kevin Rudd visited India. The major reason is the increased assertion by China in the South China Sea. Both the nations felt the need to cooperate at multiple strategic levels to ensure protection of sea lanes of communication. A need was felt to establish and conclude alternative security architecture aimed to balance China's hegemonic Oceanic ambitions. Both sides understand that architecture should be bilateral or regional with no power outside the region but should include US as a net security provider. As China in recent times has become excessively assertive, the strategic partnership agreement can have a balancing influence and promote stability. Thus, the co-operation at strategic level between India and Australia can stabilise the region and both have a shared concern for China in the strategic sphere. The time period from 2000 to 2010 is usually called as the lost decade in the India Australia relations. The reason may be that whatever the two nations could achieve was not achieved and the outcome was not satisfactory. Suhasini Haidar in her article published in *The Hindu,* titled"Not time yet for Australia's inclusion in Malabar Naval Game", said that involving Australia in Malabar exercise would send a political message, which India is not prepared to do.India's Asia -Pacific associations could be read by China as hostile to its interests. Even Australia does not want to upset its economic ties with China, its largest trading partner. Any question of Australia re-engagement in Malabar Naval agreement that raises China's concern poses as many problems for India as it does for Australia. Malabar exercise began as bilateral naval exercise between India and the

United States in 1992 and has grown in scope and complexity in recent years. In 2015 it became trilateral with joining of Japan. However, India has not accepted repeated requests from Australia to be included in the Malabar Naval exercise.

For India Malabar Naval Exercise is a corner stone of geopolitics, it is a trilateral Naval Exercise between Japan, the United States and India, but MahendraVed in an authoritative monthly Defence magazine,"India Strategic" wrote in September 2007 that in this exercise, Australia and Singapore also participated in 2007.Australia was represented by a frigate and a tanker, Japan by two destroyers and Singapore by a frigate. In Malabar Naval Exercise 2008,Australia and Singapore withdrew, which created mistrust.Australia and Singapore tried to join this exercise in 2012. India, however, perceived that engaging in such a dialogue could upset Australia - China relations, because China is Australia's biggest trading partner mainly due to China's strong demand for iron ore, coal and liquefied natural gas. Because of this import China becomes Revisionist Power* and Australia due to export gets huge economic gains.

AUSINDEX is a bilateral maritime naval exercise between India and Australia It is a biennial bilateral exercise between the Royal Australian Navy and Indian Navy. The First bilateral exercise took place in 2015 on Eastern Coast of India, beginning at Visakhapatnam.This exercise was aimed at strengthening professional interaction, both in harbour and at sea, and was considered as a start for attaining interoperability between the two navies. Both navies have a mutual interest in promoting peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean and this was a natural progression of navy -to- navy relationship.*(https://m.economictimes.com/news/defence/ausindex-15-bilateral-maritime-exercise-between-india-and-australia-begins/amp_articleshow/48935135.cms)* So, the main motto is to strengthen Maritime co-operation between the nations and further the ability to undertake

regional joint and/or combined operations such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.The maritime exercise is a tangible sign that will strengthen defence co-operation between the two countries as envisaged in the Framework for Security Co-operation. The second bilateral maritime exercise AUSINDEX-17 took place in Freemantle, port city in Western Australia. The latest third bilateral maritime exercise AUSINDEX-19 held off the coast of Vishakhapatnam, India. This Exercise also witnessed the largest ever deployment of the Australian defence group to India. Australia also proposed logistics sharing pact with India. Logistics sharing means sharing of management of stuff and information regarding stuff.

India and Australia signed Civil Nuclear Agreement in September 2014 during a state visit to India by Tony Abbott, Australia's Prime Minister at that time. Australia holds 31% of the world's known recoverable Uranium resources. Australia has always insisted that its nuclear supplies would only be granted to Non-Proliferation Treaty(NPT) signatories having proper safeguard agreements in place as per the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),in order to ensure that it is only for civilian use. As India is a non-signatory to NPT despite having acknowledged good non-proliferation credentials, Australia had been reluctant to export Uranium to India. India was effectively isolated from world nuclear trade until 2008,when it signed a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) agreed to exempt India from rules prohibiting trade with non-members of the NPT. Since then, India has signed nuclear cooperation agreements with several countries including Australia. This supply deal with India signed in 2014 is the first of its kind Australia made with a country not party to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi said, signing of civil nuclear co-operation agreement was “a historic milestone”. Further he added “It is a reflection of a new level of mutual

trust and confidence in our relationship". On the other side Australian Prime Minister, Tony Abbot said that India has"absolutely impeccable nuclear non-proliferation record". "India has been a model global citizen. India threatens no one. India is the friend to many. India is a world's emerging democratic superpower, and this is the important sign of the mutual trust that exists between Australia and India."(Deccanherald.com5 Sep 2014).The first shipment to India was sent in July 2017. In international arena both India and Australia share profound values and viewpoints that give direction to both countries to pursue common interests and confront common challenges. The relationship between India and Australia has significantly grown in recent years encompassing greater political, economic, defence and scientific fields and people to people co-operation. For greater strategic stability focus should be on strengthening the intelligence and counter terrorism co-operation. China is Australia's largest trading partner. But China's action in South China sea is the serious concern. It is a matter of worry for all the sovereign nations. China is not a democratic Power as per the Western model. China's rising power will be obstacle for the United States presence in Asia Pacific Region. It is believed that India can be a power to stabilize the region. Natasha Jha Bhaskar, who is a policy analyst associated with the Australia–India Business Council,usually describes Australia–India relations as "loaded in intent, limited in actions." She further adds that it is under-appreciated and unnoticed that Perth and Chennai are closer to each other than Sydney is to Seoul, Beijing, or Tokyo (South Korea, China, and Japan are top trading partners of Australia). The two-way trade in goods and services between Australia and India stood at $19.4 billion in 2015–2016, which is far below its potential.

Conclusion

Both India and Australia need to be mindful of their contemporary realities, needs, compulsions, and limitations, for further progression of their relations. It is also a reality that the more Australia undertakes

commerce with China and continues to remain a US ally, the more will be the Australian dilemma in choosing a long-term relationship with India. (Singh, E101) If we talk about the prospectus of India- Australia relation, then it is the reality that the signing of Civil Nuclear Co-operation Agreement is a sign of trust between India and Australia. we should consider the fact that world looks more disorderly in the present times than till 2015. We can say this becausethe United States president's Donald Triumph's attitude is unpredictable, The United States -Iran conflict regarding withdrawal of the United States from the Iranian Nuclear Deal, growing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, The United States and-China Trade War which is becoming a technology war, The process of Brexit and the EU's internal preoccupations. The United States-Russia breakup of arms race and a new kind of arms race covering nuclear, space and Cyber domains on the near edge, challenge of dealing with rising China and on other end including Taliban in the political process of Afghanistan are some of the developments that add to the complexity of India's Foreign Policy. In such scenario Australia can play a pivotal role in external balancing to create a conducive regional environment.

Note:

Revisionist Power means the state which has newly acquired power. Example China, in international relations one state acquires power it would like to revise the rules of the games to its own benefits. This makes the existing Hegemone insecure (US). Existing Hegemone will favour the status quo.

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Feminist Concerns and Redistribution of Power in Hannie Rayson's *Falling From Grace* and *Scenes From a Separation*

Subhash Verma

Ever since the professional theatre began in Sydney in 1830s women have been there as playwrights, actors, managers and directors. "Despite social prejudice and the constraints of domestic life, they have written, danced, sung and acted with talent, versatility and resourcefulness and sheer hard work. They have initiated and administered theatrical ventures with flair and success" (Parsons 650). Australian theatre has developed a tradition of feminist plays written by female playwrights since the beginning of twentieth century but the importance of feminist drama was never more obvious than in the 1980s and 1990s.

A number of female playwrights started blossoming in the 1980s as a result of growing interest in the women's movement worldwide. The feminist drama by the eighties began to turn away from the political and methodological norms of the seventies. It favoured liberal feminism rather than focusing on socialist feminist projects. Leftist agit-prop drama went into decline but in the eighties the liberal feminists desired to achieve change from within. Women's theatre groups began to focus less on broad social change and more on working within the existing theatre system. Towards the 1990s women were in the forefront of experimentation in the Australian theatre and pushed the boundaries of theatrical convention simply by placing female characters at the centre of their plays. A new form of feminist theatre emerged in 1990s with feminist playwrights like Hannie Rayson, Tobsha Learner, Katherine Thomson, Joanna Murray-Smith and Patricia Cornelius[1], who not only go beyond producing merely feminist plays, but also commit to give women opportunities and work experience in all areas of theatrical production which had heretofore been dominated by men.

Over the past thirty years the cultural expectations of what it means to be female have changed dramatically. Hannie Rayson, a Melbourne-based writer who is widely regarded as the most influential

female playwright of the contemporary Australian Theatre, believes,

> The emphasis on new and innovative Australian drama meant that women in the Australia theatre became not only the puppets but the puppeteers. And with women pulling the strings, women characters came to life. As Dorothy Hewitt said, until women became writers, the only strong female character in contemporary theatre was that of Coralie Lansdown, in Alex Buzo's 'Coralie Landsdown Says No (13).

She agrees that there are plenty of roles for women in the plays. One of her aims is to bring female sensibility to the stage. She desires to "create wonderful, huge women who are bouncing off the walls" (Cafarella 13). Rayson points out in an interview, "As I look around the table of women from 25 to 67 years of age, I feel the spirit of shared womanhood. As the youngest I feel the distance between your youth and mine is too great for me to be "the girl you once were", yet I look at you and see "the woman I might become" (1982, 16). Rayson wants to harness the energy and creativity of the women she sees around her – like the women, their children and mothers with whom she regularly holidays. She says, "I want to create witty women. If I've got a punchline, I never give it to a man" (Cafarella 13).

According to Rayson women are getting more power day by day and with full energy they want to utilize it. She likes to place women in positions of power. In her plays male characters are outnumbered by female ones, who dominate and take the leading role. While women are the energy centers of most of Rayson's plays men take peripheral roles. As she says, "My plays reflect a desire to focus on the arenas where women are power brokers – the domestic arena, (*Hotel Sorrento, Room to Move, Mary*) a women's magazine (*Falling From Grace),* the arts Faculty of a University (*Life After George),* the local council (*Competitive Tenderness*)" (Murdoch 17). Rayson believes in fairness, equality and justice for all people. She believes that all people should be treated fairly: women, refugees, indigenous Australians, homosexuals, disabled people, the elderly, children and anyone who is vulnerable.

Rayson does not see man as the enemy and also writes strong roles for men, as her *Two Brothers* (2005) is openly based on the lives of

two brothers who are public figures. Her plays *Falling From Grace* (1994), *Scenes From a Separation* (1995), *Room to Move* (1985) and *Life After George* (2000) clearly show that although not explicitly defining themselves as feminists, young women have incorporated feminist principles into their gender and kinship practices. This approach Rayson believes, includes many recent gains: women's work opportunities, combining work with family, sexual autonomy and freedom, and male participation in domestic work and child-rearing. Rayson is always interested in women's experience as in an article by Dina Ross, she says, "Gender has always been a key issue in my plays. I want to write plays about the experiences of women" (18).

The present paper focuses on the analysis of Rayson's feminist plays *Falling From Grace* and *Scenes From a Separation*, where she discusses current opportunities for women in terms of expanded educational and career choices, which have in turn led to women's independence from men and to new family arrangements. The female characters in these plays are powerful and complex. Power and responsibilities are in their hands. They are in high positions and take their own decisions. At the same time these plays reveal that still women continue to face many problems, including sexism, violence against women, difficulty in balancing work and family demands, greater responsibility than men for child-rearing and domestic work. The plays also examine how far women are able to find their space because women in power positions still face many problems.

Professional Prejudices and Bonding Among Women in *Falling From Grace*

Falling From Grace (1994), along with *Scenes From a Separation* and *Room To Move,* is among the most overtly feminist of Rayson's plays. The play directed by Aubrey Mellor and dedicated by Rayson to "my dearest women friends" was first performed by the Playbox Theatre Centre on Tuesday 9th August, 1994. "*Falling From Grace* is a humorous, yet often poignant, play which "presents the tangled friendship of three women all about 40 years old" (Romney 24). Suzannah Brompton,

Maggie Campbel and Janet Brock are friends and colleagues, in a self-employed creative team that runs *Metro Magazine*, a magazine for the liberated woman.

Suzannah, the editor, is forty-one years old divorced mother of sixteen years old Tessa. Maggie, forty years old, is the sub-editor and a divorced mother of two primary school children. Brock is a writer who, at thirty seven, is happily married and pregnant with her first child. The women try to balance two goals: the 'emancipated' one they have inherited from their feminist mothers and the traditional one of marriage and children. Brock wants to publish Miriam Roth's research on a new drug, currently under trial for the treatment of pre-menstrual syndrome. But when it becomes evident that the drug may produce birth defects if women become pregnant while taking it, conflicts start emerging among the three women friends. As Helen Thomson elaborates:

> The three friends, Suzannah, Maggie and Brock, are all mothers; they are also journalists with a fair share of the power of the fourth estate. When faced with the dilemma of whether or not to blow the whistle on Miriam Roth, a brilliant medical researcher battling misogynist professional establishment on behalf of women, but just possibly ignoring birth defects as a side-effect of a new drug, the three are confused and torn apart by the tangle of issues and loyalties. (14)

The play ends with the reconciliation of the three friends.

Hannie Rayson's own bonding with Hilary Glow, her dramaturge, is probably a strong factor behind constructing the play around female friendship. Rayson herself enunciates in an article by Katherine Kizilos : "These days women make friends with other women for life, whereas, their relationships with their men are perhaps more transient – and that's something that's borne out by the divorce statistics. We will still know our women friends when we are old." (20)

Hilary Glow and Hannie Rayson became friends in 1986 when Hilary asked Hannie to help her to teach a course at Victorian College of Arts.

Hilary is now a project officer at the Australian Film Commission. Then they collaborated with each other for *Hotel Sarrento.* They had collaborated for *Falling From Grace* also. Hannie Rayson's *Hotel Sorrento* (1990) talks about the relationship among three sisters. Rayson, who has no sister but two brothers believe that the bond between women friends is both more fragile and more tender than familial sisterhood. In *Hotel Sorrento* the reconciliation or reunion of the three sisters could not happen because they could not resolve their conflicts and so they are separated at the end but in *Falling From Grace* the three friends reunite at the end after resolving their conflicts. Thus, Rayson gives more importance to female friendship than familial sisterhood as she herself exclaims, "Sisters can slag each other mercilessly. It's a pattern that has developed over years and years and years. Women friends are more concerned with bolstering one another… There is a sense in which they support and nurture each other in the world" (Kizilos 20).

For Rayson female friendship is, in a sense, a new subject for women. In *Hotel Sorrento* the mother of three sisters suffered a lot and died of cancer and she had no friends while her husband spent his time fishing and drinking with his mates. Rayson observes that feminism has legitimised female friendship, and it can flourish despite husbands or men as *Falling From Grace* clearly shows. The play explores the meaning of friendship among three women; who work together and share their thoughts, fears and joys. In this context Rayson narrates:

> I find the bonding women have is very rich. Friendships are precious. I know, for me, that the support and strength I have received from my women friends over the years has been both rewarding and, at times of crisis, the only thing that has pulled me through. I wanted *Grace* to be a celebration of friendship between women. But because I like to write about contradiction, I wanted to explore the kinds of situations that could threaten that bond and drive a wedge between them. (Ross 18)

Suzannah, Maggie and Brock have a close friendship, as the long first scene establishes and the play "presents a multi-layered relationship of three women" (Eggleton 144). The opening scene also sets the

feminist tone of the play. The three friends offer a critique of the values of the white male norms. They consider their friendship as their foremost priority. The conflicts start erupting among the three friends because of the complexities of professional life. The first dilemma occurs as Suzannah tells the pregnant Brock that she cannot print the story about Roth and the new drug. Its publication may save an unborn child, a matter close to Brock's heart, but it could also lead to a costly defamation case if their information is wrong. Suzannah remains confused as to what kind of ethical framework should be adopted to take a decision in this case. Maggie leaks Hugh's story to the press. Brock is pained to know that Roth's reputation is in tatters. Despite these tensions, the play treads lightly to a comic resolution. The play ends happily with the women reunited in the maternity ward, designated as a place of reconciliation and forgiveness. In a final note of irony, Brock's baby, a girl, will be called Grace.

In the play it is friendship which becomes the ultimate value, and Miriam, fellow-feminist though she is, is sacrificed for it. So too are the men in these women's lives. Above all, this is a play about the celebration of three warmly attached individuals with a shared sense of humour. Rayson suggests, "Her dilemma is exacerbated by her sex; by her sense of sisterhood – in the large sense of the feminist project to improve things for all women – coming into conflict with the love she feels for another woman's husband" (Thomson 14). *Falling From Grace* is not simply pitting the claims of women against those of men, but the big picture against the smaller, the greater good against merely selfish satisfactions. The main theme of the play is female friendship and how women value it, and how it provides valuable support. In the absence of an oppressive patriarchy in the office, the women have the power to make critical decisions that affected their own and other women's lives. "Now (women) operate more in the public arena, more than we did in previous generations" (Kizilos 20), Rayson says.

In *Falling From Grace, Metro Magazine* is aimed at an educated female readership that expects to be served more than food and fashion. The magazine wants to make the feminist voices audible. Setting the action within a women's publishing group brings the play into a vital

strain of feminist cultural enterprise. Perhaps the biggest change that has hit the publishing industry is the advent of a large number of women-run independent publishing houses. Earlier women had less visibility and the levers of powers were controlled by men. Over the last twenty years the face of publishing has been changing and what was considered a male job a few decades back is no longer so.

Many feminist activists in 1980s and 90s entered the publishing world. Magazines such as *Ms Magazine* founded by Gloria Steinam in 1970 and edited by Australian feminist Anne Summers, claimed to have made feminist voices audible, feminist journalism tenable and feminist world-view available to the public. Several more feminist magazines continue to keep feminist issues in circulation and drive a wedge through the masculine domination of media ownership and publishing. In India in 1984, Urvashi Butalia left Oxford University Press and co-founded "Kali for Women" with Ritu Menon. In 2003, she formed her own strongly feminist publishing house, "Zubaan". She narrated, "It was my involvement in the women's movement that made me realize how lacking publishing was in bringing to light the writings of women, and how much needed to be done (Daftuar 12).

By the 1990s women's magazines, many with women as editors, promoted a popular non-academic feminist discourse, with a focus on women's stories and issues like domestic violence, sexual harassment and homophobia. In the play *Metro Magazine* actively resists stories of home and family as Rachel Fensham and Denise Varney observe, "Drawing on the reputation of feminist publishing *Metro Magazine* signals that the play is about clever, articulate and enterprising women, professional dolls, whose work is connected to and a product of feminist politics" (290).

Falling From Grace revolves around a story Brock is researching for the magazine's "Top Girls" series on prominent women. Her subject for the next edition is a brilliant research scientist, Miriam Roth, "a champion of women's health" (12) and a woman who has challenged the male medical establishment. A Community Health doctor, Dr. Hugh Storey, ex-husband of Suzannah, attacks Roth for misleading people and enunciates many problems related to the drug which Roth is not willing

to acknowledge. Instead Hugh wants Brock and his ex-wife Suzannah to run his story in the magazine. The drug Roth was preparing may or may not be responsible for birth defects. Is she avoiding unpleasant truths to save her career or is it just scare mongering by a paternalistic medical hierarchy and an ambitious male doctor who does not want to see her on the top? And that's why he conducted research specially on the defects of the drug. Is Dr. Hugh Storey, a "rabid careerist", intent on gaining publicity by any means necessary? Or is Dr. Roth a "ratbagzealot", for whom the medical profession is a prime site of institutionalized sexism? These questions are left unresolved in the play. The play also depicts the conflict between patriarchal medical establishment and an able female doctor. Men on Medical Board have suspended the drug trial and Miriam Roth is devastated.

In conclusion *Falling From Grace* is about "women and power and what they do with it when they get it, is going to kick-start a few arguments both in and out of feministic circles" (Thomson 14). It asks some of the really hard questions about gender differences such as whether women are ethically superior to men, and whether all female friendships are stronger and more enduring than love relationships between men and women. The answers are 'yes' to the latter question and 'not yet but they are learning to be better than men' to the first. Other issues central to the play are idealism, betrayal, friendship and women's health.

Evolution of Her 'Self': *Scenes From a Separation*

Rayson's *Scenes From a Separation* which is written in collaboration with Andrew Bovell was first produced by the Melborune Theatre Company at the Firefax Theatre, Victorian Arts Centre on November 15, 1995. Both Andrew Bovell and Hannie Rayson wrote half the play each. The play received positive reviews. Helen Thomson pointed out in her review, it is "a disturbing snapshot of the 90s, performed with style and panache" (16).

Scenes From a Separation presents the breakdown of a marriage. Rayson chose this subject because "It seems like a very current thing,

people splitting up all around" (Matheson viii). It is a story of Mathew Molyneux and Nina Moss, who have been married for twelve years and have two children. He is forty and is the director of the Molyneux family publishing company at Sydney. She is thirty eight and is a former journalist who has returned to work for the company and is writing a biography of Lawrence Clifford, who is fifty years old and a tycoon, Australian of the year, a former ruthless businessman. He has re-invented himself as a philanthropist. Nina throws herself into the project with great enthusiasm.

Scenes From a Separation offers two versions of a marriage breakdown. It unfolds the pain of a divorce. Some causes which lead up to the separation like lack of trust, extramarital affairs, lack of communication, finding the partner unattractive, lack of respect, lack of feelings and emotions, resistance to change, lack of appreciation and lack of emotional intimacy are beautifully woven in the play. The play can be seen as a feminist text also where the heroine is able to move beyond the need for a man. She criticizes the concept of marriage, brings a transformation within herself and liberates herself from the chains of futile social norms and meaningless marriage.

Every marriage has two sides. The first half of the play is penned by Bovell and it presents Mathew's perspective or the husband's perspective. The second half is written by Rayson and it mirrors what has already happened in the first half but from Nina's point of view or the wife's point of view. In both the acts Mathew is primarily to be blamed for the breakdown of marriage. The first half describes Mathew as emotionally and intellectually lazy, self-centered, shouting at his subordinates, intolerant of the new genre of Sydney's gay literature, intolerant of change, work-oriented and opinionated. "Mathew is one of the species" Chris Boyd observes, "that believes obsessive jealousy is a sign of real love. He'd no more compliment his wife than let her drive" (Boyd 16) Even though the first half is written from Mathew's point of view it is feministic as it puts the blame on the man. His mother takes Nina's side and both develop a female bonding.

The second half, written by Rayson from Nina's point of view makes the play even more feministic. Rayson has chosen to write the

latter half of the play because according to her she "wanted to have the last words" (Matheson xvi). In Act Two situations get complex. Not only is Nina tougher than her husband, she also understands that he is a victim of culture where men feel threatened by female independence. Now in the second half Nina takes crucial decisions. The result is Nina's departure from the family home and the break-up of the marriage. In the first half self-centered Mathew handles the steering wheel while in the second act Nina takes the driving seat. Across the two acts, scenes intersect and repeat.

Mathew makes fun of Nina and she feels humiliated when she is with him. Lawrence shows respect to her that's why she wants to go with him. With him she discusses herself, her interests, her family and everything she wanted to share with Mathew. It is true that lack of sharing joys and emotional details of one's life leads to loneliness and sadness. Nina has been leading a lonely life while upbringing her children for a long time. She wants someone to share her feelings and when she gets the opportunity to cross the threshold she finds Lawrence and an opportunity to share her dreams, concerns, hopes and desires with him. Mathew places his decisions constantly above her emotional needs which leaves Nina feeling unloved. Both start drifting apart as he is consumed by his job as a highly successful book publisher and she has found new meaning in her life with Lawrence.

Perhaps more directly harmful to his marriage is the fact that Mathew is cynical about change. This patriarchal aspect of Mathew's belief system affects directly his personal life, not only distancing him from Nina, but effectively preventing them from reconciliation. Mathew is skeptical about the change in Lawrence. He is unable to think of kindness and compassion as anything other than misleading things. Mathew's cynicism about human nature, together with his belief in the separation of ideology and reality, lead him to construct a static version of others as well as himself as unchangeable and Nina dislikes him for this aspect of his personality. Chris Boyd observes, "The emotionally, sexually and professionally frustrated Nina, not surprisingly, is attracted to Lawrence. And he, in turn, is touched by her genuine interest" (16). However, Mathew is unable to conceive of Lawrence's action in anything other than selfish terms.

Margaret takes the responsibility to look after the children, "I have just told Nina I'll look after the children" (88). Margaret supports Nina because she herself suffered the same agony in marriage but she did not have the courage to walk out of it. Nina's leaving of Mathew is inspired by Lawrence's belief that life can change. She fights the assumptions that she is leaving to be with Lawrence: "How many times can I say it? I'm not leaving one man for another. No-one, not even Lawrence, could believe I was making a choice for myself" (92). She represents a rejection of the privileging of the nuclear family and traditional heterosexual relationship evident in *Falling From Grace,* arguing that life outside these structures can be more fulfilling than that within. Nina is able to see that change is a positive thing as against the status quo of the patriarchal setup.

The ending of the play echoes the ending of *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, which ends with the slamming of the door as Nora Helmer turns her back on her husband, Torvald Helmer and leaves to make her own way in the world. It seems that Nora has gone through a kind of personal awakening. She has come to the conclusion that she has a duty to herself and that she has to spend some time figuring out who she is as an individual or she will never be anything more than someone's doll. This would be impossible under the smothering presence of Torvald. Regarding *A Doll's House* David Thomas rightly points out that at the end of the play "Nora is in the state of shocked awareness. For the first time, she sees her life for what it is, and rejects it. She is determined to discover her real potential as a person, which means she has to reject the role of doll wife and doll mother" (72). Even as Nora decides to leave, Helmer desperately wants her to stay back for the sake of his name, his social reputation. Likewise, *Scenes From a Separation* ends in the present time where Mathew is asking Nina to come back but she does not.

> MATHEW…. I'm asking you to come back. I'm asking you to begin again. [*Silence*]
>
> NINA. Oh Mathew. Do you think I haven't asked myself the same thing a thousand times? Do you think I don't yearn for it too?...To find out who we are as separate people…How do you know what I am seeking? How can you be so sure that you know

> who I am and what I want? … Matt, you talk about changing. But I never get the feeling that you're actively doing anything about.
>
> MATHEW. I know I want you back. And all I can say is that I'll try and be more what you want me to be. (92-93)

The exchange between Nina and Mathew has strong echoes of the exchange between Nora and Helmer just before she finally walks out slamming the door behind her.

The repetition of the lead up to the separation in the second act presents an opportunity to compare the male and female authored versions of the separation. The gender dichotomies are clearly visible. In Bovell's version, Mathew wants Nina back because he says nobody knows him as she does and he cannot imagine building that kind of knowing with another person. While Mathew hates himself for becoming nostalgic, Nina in Rayson's script enjoys her new freedom. Moreover, she 'wants this new life' (94), no matter how hard it is.

Scenes From a Separation echoes Peta Murray's *Wallflowering* and Murray-smith's *Love Child*. Like Nina of *Scenes From a Separation*, Peg in *Wallflowering* gets inner awakening and starts questioning her meaningless marriage. Peg reads some feminist literature, and under the influence of her friends, she grows to question her relationship with Cliff, her husband: "Why is it my femininity is questioned whenever I express a sentiment that distinguishes me from a doormat? (Murray, *Wallflowering* 28). Like Mathew, Cliff in *Wallflowering* has strong patriarchal ideas.

> PEG. I want to lead.
>
> CLIFF. Women don't lead. The man is supposed to lead
>
> PEG. I want to lead.
>
> CLIFF. No. The man is the one who's supposed to lead. That's how we were taught. Remember? (Murrary, *Wallflowering* 45).

Cliff believes that successful marriage is based on conformity to unchallenged, traditional beliefs. Peg, however is growing away from this notion. She claims "I'm tired of dancing with you. We always do the

same routines, the same combinations" (Murrary, *Wallflowering* 46), while Cliff admits that "They're all I know, Peg. The old steps, the old ways. You know me…" (Murray, *Wallflowering* 49). Both Nina and Peg want change in their lives. However, the endings of both the plays are quite different. Nina chooses a different life for her and leaves Mathew while Peg returns to Cliff on the condition that "We're ready to learn a new dance" (Murray, *Wallflowering* 63). Nina's decision to live a separate life resembles Anna's decision to live alone. Anna in *Love Child* (1993), a play by Joanna Murrary-Smith, declares "It takes courage to live alone. Not to ponder to anyone's whims […] There is tremendous freedom in living alone" (13).

At the end of *Scenes From a Separation*, Nina walks out on her husband and her children, leaving behind her a bewildered and confused man who is still completely imprisoned within the conditioned assumptions of patriarchy. She is critical of the perception that marriage is the natural state for people to be in. The play closes with a question mark left in the mind of audience. Will Mathew ever learn to see and to understand the way that his wife has, or will he continue to allow his responses and actions to be controlled by social conditioning? Bovell's Mathew wants his marriage back; Rayson's Nina does not. Beyond that, Nina sees the future as a place of opportunity and locates marriage in the more restricted past. The closing of the play full of optimism as Nina has left with a positive aim of discovering who and what she is and what she can become. Nina realizes towards the end of the play that her first duly is her duty towards herself, as an individual, to think things out for herself.

Rayson's genuine concern for the welfare of women is reflected through their realistic, powerful and sensitive portrayal in her plays. She writes strong roles for women and one of her aims is to bring out women's issues to the forefront. The playwright realizes the fact that women in Australian plays written by men are usually either mothers or wives. In some way they relate to men either as a wife, a mother, a lover or a companion but they do not figure in their own right. The three plays discussed in the paper deconstructs these traditional roles as Nina in

Scenes From a Separation represents a rejection of oppressive marriage arguing that life outside these traditional family structures can be sometimes more fulfilling than within.

Notes

1. Hannie Rayson, Tobsha Learner, Katherine Thomson, Joanna Murray-Smith and Patricia Cornelius are the feminist playwrights of Australia and their plays have gained worldwide attention. *Wolf* (1992), *Miracles* (1998), *The Gun in History* (1994) and many of Tobsha Learner's plays move the reader emotionally and tend to have epic plotlines – ordinary women placed in extraordinary circumstances. Katherine Thomson is a great observer and recorder of the lives and struggles of marginalized people in general and women in particular. *Barmaid* (1991), *Diving for Pearls* (1992), and *Wonderlands* (2003) are some of her famous plays. The plays of Joanna Murray-Smith reflect the confusions of individuals in the 1990s and social injustice of the period just as the plays of Katherine Thomson. Her plays *Honour* (1995), *Redemption* (1997), *Night fall* (1997) and *Rapture* (2002) gained popularity. In 2006 Murray Smith wrote *The Female of the Species*, a farcical comedy about second wave feminism. Patricia Cornelius, a founding member of Melbourne Workers' Theatre, has written over twenty plays, including *Last Drinks* (1992). Issues of particular concern to women have been the subject of her plays – including domestic violence, exploitation and discrimination in the work place, female ordination and racism.

2. *Coralie Lansdowne Says No* (1974) a play by Alex Buzo depicts a woman's struggle for independence and for her sense of self. Coralie is a strong, vibrant and articulate heroine of the play, who has retreated from the awful social world and lives alone in her eyrie on the cliffs above Sydney Palm Beach. In the play, three males make advances to her. Her response to each of them is a firm 'no'. She is the one who thrives on transience, and is not about to throw away her independence for any male. The

feminists attack the play because at the end Coralie says yes for marriage to Stuart.

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Sense of Harmony in Select Short Stories from *Of Sadhus and Spinners: Australian Encounter with India*

Vinod K. Chopra

'Multiculturalism' is defined by Oxford Learner's Dictionary (9th ed.) as "the practice of giving importance to all cultures in a society" (1017). Multiculturalism is the co-existence of diverse cultures, and as a policy in various countries around the globe is aimed at fostering harmony of various sorts, e.g. religious, linguistic, cultural and so on. As a way to provide free space to ethnic-religious minorities, multiculturalism has proved a blessing in modern democratic states. Multiculturalism could be defined as ideology or a normative ideal of how a diverse society should be organised to maximise the benefits of cultural and religious diversity (Ozdowski 2).

Multicultural literatures serve as a powerful tool in enabling the readers to gain a better understanding of the inside-outside cultural aspects. Such literatures create a sense of belonging, forging a connection between home and host cultures. Multicultural literatures serve many purposes and their potential to bring people closer is remarkable.

Though Indians and Australians enjoy their shared history of British imperial ambition and constructive legacies such as the English language, democratic institutions and inestimable game of cricket, they know very little about each other's literature. It was in 2009 after the series of attacks on Indian Students in Australia that Australians had been projecting Indians—as the newspapers in India reported that year—as dirty, evil, uncouth, treacherous, and so on which can certainly cloud the mind of some with suspicion and insecurity finally leading to violence inflicted on the 'other' (Singh 125). Not only this, even an Indian newspaper described former cricketer, Kerry O' Keeffe as 'racist' who had mocked Indian cricketer, Cheteshwar Jadeja and made snide comment against the Indians which could be interpreted as "racist and

certainly xenophobic."(*The Tribune* 16). Keeffe's comment, obviously, did hurt the feelings of every Indian. However, such isolated incidents cannot shake the efforts of the governments of India and Australia to construct mutual trust and understanding to strengthen their bilateral relationships. In modern times, when we talk about the world as a global village, it is high time we understood and respected the ethos and culture of both the countries. Friendship, amicable relationships and harmony will ever be a distant dream among diverse groups until or unless people generate understanding, respect and acceptance between them of others' different colour, creed and culture (Singh 125). And this is possible by going through contours of multi-cultural literature.

One gets extensive insights from contemporary Australian literature about Australian society that has changed fast and is still changing from a patriotic settlement of British Empire whose inhabitants merely some years ago believed in the dominance of the white race and in the "white man's burden" to bring true civilization to Asia and the Pacific. Contemporary Australian literature also gives evidence of a new Australian society that is painfully re-thinking its historical prejudice and learning new attitudes to Asia/Pacific region (Patra 124). At present, the emphasis on multiculturalism in Australia inspires and enthuses "unity within diversity". This is the national objective to which the government is committed. Added to this is the fact that development of a multicultural policy has been a prominent feature in Australian politics over the past two decades (Jayasuriya 50). Things have tremendously changed in the last few decades. The majority view that Australian multiculturalism has, at its core, some common elements of the established culture such as; the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, civil liberties and freedoms, equality of sexes and English as a national language. The non-dominant cultures are seen as contributors and not as pollutants. (Ozdowski, 3)

Of Sadhus and Spinners: Australian Encounter with India (ed. Bennett et al 2009) opens up a window on the Indian culture and its impact on Australians. The select stories from the anthology attempt to

focus on the cross-cultural encounters which result in positive relations. These stories do validate Australian responses to India. The book contains cross-cultural narratives that come from nineteenth century writers as well as from more contemporary Australians. John Lang's "The Mohammedan Mother" is about a beautiful Muslim woman, Dooneea, who represents every Indian woman embodying love and sacrifice for her husband and child. Her love for her child assumes the shape of devotion.

Longford, the narrator, shows curiosity to know about Dooneea who keeps on standing on the mall by the roadside near the rock in Mussoorie. She talks to no one, just waiting for someone. After much request she confides in him the whole story of her life and tells the narrator that he had once been a friend of her husband. Her husband was a white Sahib who loved her much and gave her due place in his life. He never treated her like a slave and she was dear to him. She tells the narrator how the Sahib consoled her, when she felt a degraded outcast after he kissed her for the first time, saying, 'his God and his prophet should be mine, and that in the world and the next our destinies should be the same' (10). And it was after marriage that like an Indian wife she ruled his household and shared his "pleasures and his sorrows". The Australian writer has projected her as a good and sincere wife, an archetype of every Indian wife. Dooneea says,

> He was in debt; but, by reducing his expenses, I soon freed him,…. I suffered no one to rob him, and caused the old woman, who was a great thief and cheat, to be turned away. I loved him with all my soul. I would rather have begged with him than have shared the throne of Akbar Shah. When he was tired, I lulled him to sleep; when he was ill, I nursed him; when he was angry, I soon restored him to good humour: ….. That he loved me I never had any reason to doubt. He gave me his confidence, and I never abused his trust. (10)

The love of both epitomises mutual trust, understanding and

harmony between two cultures. Unfortunately, very soon after the birth of her son, her husband dies owing to illness. However, before death all the possessions are passed on to her. She takes to opium and smoking hemp as the death of her husband shatters her completely. The child is taken away by her husband's brother not by violence but Dooneea herself gives him keeping in mind the child's future. However, soon after longing to see the child comes over to her. That is why she keeps on standing by the rock on the roadside so that she may see her child going to school. She expresses her desire, "I pray that I could speak to him, give him a kiss, and bless him but he is never alone." (12)

It is here that the narrator, an Australian, comes to her help, and the story assumes a fine manifestation of an Australian man who symbolises goodness and humanity by showing empathy to an ill-fated woman who longs to see her child. The narrator emerges as a godsend angel who not only unburdens and relieves her sorrows by sharing her woes but also helps her meet her son. Her woes are unlimited. The narrator explains, "she knelt at my feet and supplicated to listen to her entreaty—a sight of her child, a few words with him, and a kiss from his lips" (13). The narrator wants her to be sure that she will not play him false if he arranges her meeting with the child. She binds herself by an oath that she will do all that the narrator requires.

The scene of the meeting between the mother and the child is so heart rendering that even the narrator sheds tears of pity for her. The narrator, though an Australian takes a big risk to arrange a meeting with the child secretly at his house. Both Dooneea and the narrator keep their promise. He helps her meet the child and she does not let the child know that she is his mother. It is very painful at the end for the narrator to get the mother and the child separated. Though he does it somehow and the separation is so painful for Dooneea that she dies then and there as the doctor declares, "Her troubles are over! She is at rest." (17)

The story portrays, from an Australian writer's perspective, positive traits of Indian women. Dooneea, as a devoted wife and loving

mother, embodies every Indian woman having the rare ideals of love and sacrifice for her family. Equally does the story portray the harmony between an Indian and an Australian who respect each other's feelings and keep themselves bound to their promises. The story conveys a good message that the harmony between diverse groups is possible for amicable relations across physical or psychological boundaries if one understands and respects cultural values of the 'other'. Of Sadhus and Spinners also contains stories about Indians in Australia—as immigrants or temporary visitors.

Mena Abdullah deserves special notice as a pioneer writer of Indian descent. She was born in Australia in 1930, the daughter of a Punjabi man who had arrived in Australia in the 1880s. Mena was brought up on a farm in New South Wales. In "Kumari" the narrator describes herself as a dark girl in a white man's country, a Punjabi Muslim in a Christian land…' (82). The incidents depicted in the story tell us of social prejudice in rural Australia as well as compassionate Australian who cares for the newcomers. The story reveals the attempt by members of the narrator's family to keep the culture of their homeland alive together with the pleasures and perils of attempting to do this.

The words like curry powder, coriander, cumin, black peppers and chillies remind one of India in Australia. This suggests how Indian culture is kept alive in strange surroundings. Use of Indian spices and food in Australia enable immigrants to enjoy their culture and values as they desire otherwise the survival becomes miserable in strange milieu. Not only this, the narrator's mother has created 'Indian place' in the latticed yard that is full of Kashmiri roses and pomegranates and jasmine and tuberose (83). Besides, the pets in the house have Indian names. The peacock is Shah-Jehan, the goat is Jasmin and the cub of a vixen is given the name Kumari.

Rashida, the young sister of the narrator represents Indian values of benignity and hospitality. She rescues a puppy—that later

turns out to be a cub of a vixen—nurses it for three days and keeps it hiding in the shed away from other members of the family. Little Rashida reminds us of Shakespeare's most innocent creation, Miranda, who, too, cannot bear people who suffer and says,

> Oh, I have suffered
>
> With those that I saw suffer. (Shakespeare, Lines5-6.)

The puppy is sick. So the narrator insists Rashida to take it to father who tells them that it was a vixen and warns Rashida, "Kumari will get well if you feed her with raw meat, if you give her water to drink, if you don't touch her food and don't touch her much. She is not used to the smell of wild little humans" (85). Rashida plays with her and arranges Kumari in a box in the shed at night. Soon Kumari starts yelping and whimpering. It is then that mother (Ama) tells Rashida that Kumari must go. She says, "You must let her go. She is a grown thing now, and she wants to go away" (86). Rashida is very sad and she will not let Kumari go away. Mother (Ama) persuades Rashida saying, "She is a fox, and she knows it now. When she was small she did as you wanted, ran round like the dogs, but she knows that we are not her kind and this is not her life…. She is a stranger here" (86).

The narrator attempts to suggest that even animals do not survive in strange surroundings, if their movement is restricted and their activities are confined to some particular area. They will languish and die a sad death if they are not permitted to behave in their natural way. Same is true as far as human beings are concerned. One needs freedom to move about; one needs freedom to express their joys and sorrows. Only then one can thrive and survive. If draconian and stringent policies are thrust on the immigrants; if their identity is at stake, if unsolicited restrictions are imposed on them to shun their culture, they are bound to suffer wretchedly. And it was what the Australian governments did in the 1960s when restrictions imposed through white only policies were done away with. By the mid-1960s, Australian policies of assimilation had given way to integration, which expected migrants to become

indistinguishable from existing Australian by speaking English, wearing conventional clothing, eating local food and even changing their names (Fouweather 18). The focus on 'assimilation' was, thus, replaced by a focus on 'integration', and then on to 'multiculturalism' in recognition of the challenges facing migrants in setting into Australian society and acceptance that new arrivals may not want to lose their identity. (Web)

In "Kumari", Rashida is somehow wheedled to let Kumari go to its natural surroundings. Sadly one morning Kumari comes back injured and dies in front of them. Father tells them, "She should have gone before. You see how thin she is…. She had not learnt how to kill and hunt" (88) . He also tells them, "The other foxes did not want her now. She had not their ways. She smelt of humans. There was no place for her" (88). Kumari is buried in the morning with the tennis ball beside her with tears from the narrator and her brother, Lal. That morning father does not go to work. He sits in the verandah with Ama and talks about India.

The story conveys a message that it is not possible to survive in 'other's' land if one does not find homely environment. One is bound to die a sad death if forced to shed one's culture and ethos. Similarly, one has to adapt to the new surroundings if one wishes to survive. One must strike a harmony between one's own culture and that of the host culture. So the Australian writer of Indian origin wants to negotiate a compromise to confirm that harmonious relationships in unfamiliar surroundings are what one needs for happy existence.

In her delightful story "My Sister's Mother", Manik Datar brings the comedy of cultural difference into play within the setting of a suburban Kitchen. The story is a fine example of multicultural aspect as it is here that we find harmony and balance between two cultures that is need of the day in countries like India and Australia having people of different castes, religions and cultures.

The title is itself comic as it hints to the fact as if the narrator and

her sister are having two mothers. However, the reality is that both have the same mother who is a fine example of adaptation of two cultures. Since the sister is born in India her mother brings her up under the influence of Indian culture and hence she epitomises whatever virtuous is in Indian values and culture. On the contrary, the same mother gives birth to the narrator in Australia and brings her up there under the influence of Australian culture signifying harmony and adaptation in the new location. That is what makes the narrator mention her mother as 'my mother and my sister's mother'. The mother is a symbol of solidarity and accord between two cultures and her figure suits to the present scenario emphasising the need of better understanding between cultures. The narrator says:

> As we cook I begin to understand that my sister's mother is different from my mother. My sister's mother is a demure and loyal lady who always backs down in any difference of opinions with my sister's father. My mother is a matriarch, firm in her views and not slow to contradict my father. (184)

Here, the mother implies Indian values. She represents every Indian mother and when she joins Australia as an immigrant, she adjusts comfortably to the Australian environment. Her dual personality, as per the prerequisite is very clear in the following lines:

> My sister's mother was at home cooking pakoras and halwa when my sister came home from school.My mother was programming computers and rang me at three-thirty every afternoon and asked, 'have you had afternoon tea dear? There is some change in the Kitty we've run out of biscuits' (184).

The narrator's sister who lives in India and has been married there, too, recognises that there might be differences even in India. The narrator highlights ironic situation when she says,

> My sister who has always lived in the country of our ancestors in a town where she belongs as a native, believes fervently that outsiders from other provinces in India should recognise they

> are guests and not demand equal rights as the local people. I, who am an emigrant in a country already, taken from its local people, point out that particular irony of her thinking (185).

The story, in the same line as "Kumari", is a satisfactory endeavour to depict how Indian culture is kept alive overseas through the continuous love for Indian food. Here, in the story, Indian food and festival signify Indian culture. The story opens with "I wait for the oil in the saucepan to smoke then throw some fenugreek seeds and turmeric asafoetida and coriander…" (183). Everything they do there has Indian sense and aroma of its own. They celebrate Diwali in Australia, "… The fifth day of Diwali. Our brother comes to visit us, he gives us sisters a gift each and we serve him a meal and honour him with little wick lamps and with auspicious red rice grains which we sprinkle on his head. It is the custom. Then our brother bows down and touches my sister's feet as she is elder to him and she blesses him" (183). Whatever they do there has signs of Indian culture and custom. Even the narrator has passion for marble "mortar and pestle, her "proudest possession" which her Australian friends call 'a piece of Taj Mahal', in a joke.

If the narrator's mother and the narrator, herself are symbols of harmony striking a fine co-ordination between Australian and Indian culture by giving respect to both, so is Peter, narrator's Australian husband who in the same breath enjoys Indian food. When the narrator turns to husband asking, 'Peter, d' you mind setting the table please?' He responds positively with a fine gesture of harmony, 'Hm. Smells delicious' (186). He readily sets the table. Food and ritual of eating as a signifier of bonding, requires no special argumentation. The specially prepared food of a group is representative of its cultural uniqueness. For the migrant it remains the tangible tie with the lost homeland. This reminds of Mena Abdullah's *The Time of the Peacock* where the preparation of condiment for cooking has the air of family celebration. The 'Australianised' grandchildren are doubtful about their Hindu grandmother's visit and a possible meatless diet but as they grow to love her, realise: "We loved her food too. The dhal she cooked was wonderful,

full of spices and strange tastes. She made curries from eggs and from all sorts of vegetables that we had never thought were vegetables at all…(36) "

Mena Abdullah's "Kumari" a tale of an upbringing in rural Australia has its counterpart in "A Pocket Full of Stories" by urban or sub-urban Indians in Australia in the twentieth or early twenty-first century. "A Pocket Full of Stories" by Sujatha Fernandes, Australian author of Indian origin, too, is full of glimpses of Indian culture with its qualities of love, compassion, sympathy and adjustment. Nandini, a 16-year-old Manglorean girl is brought to Australia as a helping hand to the narrator's mother who was expecting a baby. Nandini denotes goodness as she loves birds and nurses them when injured. She loves the narrator as her own sister. In the same way the narrator does adjust her in her room. The family, too, represents love and feeling of adjustment as the family adjusts in the small two- bedroom-house to accommodate Auntie Jessy and Uncle Paul who migrate to Australia a few months after the baby sister of the narrator is born. The story suggests if a family can accommodate more guests in its fold why Australians cannot adjust 'others' amicably in their country? Indian culture underlies feeling of love and adjustment as it is all- embracing.

The charm and fascination that Indian folklore can hold for an Australian reader or listener is evident in Mary C. Elkington's "The Soul of the Watermelon". Mrs. Seymour listens closely to the narrative of her Ayah, which implies the value of renunciation, a virtue often seen as central to Indian philosophical thought. Here Ayah herself represents values such as charity and selflessness that are at the core of Indian culture and philosophy. She believes in 'giving'. Ayah has only two pâns one of which she gives to the poor woman who has not even a single. She says to her, "You must have it woman. After all, I had one pân already this morning and I do not need this: but you—you had none since yesterday: that must be hard to bear. Why, it is a great joy to give you mine." (22)

In Indian culture the joy of 'giving' gives supreme satisfaction.

A life devoid of all selfishness is more fruitful than earning lots of wealth. Ayah, thus, epitomises Indian virtues like self-sacrifice, self-denial and love for others that lifts her to the stature of an angel. She finds satisfaction in the gratification of others.

"Masterpiece" is really a masterpiece by Sri Lankan born Australian author, Yasmin Goonratne. The story, based on a tale the author had heard on a train trip from New Delhi to Hyderabad in 1995, presents a clash between the 'modern' egalitarian expectations of Australians and traditional Indian notions of the 'genius' of a poet. The author, in a consummate skill, creates an amusing comedy of competing cultural styles, values and issues.

To some extent it seems that the author validates her deference for Indian classic literature, myths and basic customs. Besides, Indian women are projected as "dutiful, obedient and homely" as they stand by their husbands through thick and thin. The story illustrates how Jaidev's *Gita Govinda* was completed mysteriously—when he despondently failed to do so—by none other than Lord Krishna himself. At least the villagers think so. The clash of opinions is brought forward by the author when an Australian audience questions the authenticity of the belief of the storyteller. The Australian audience here presents modern views and opines that the poem might have been completed by Jaidev's wife herself when she observed her dejected husband who was not able to complete the piece. Both the Indian storyteller and the Australian listener express their respective views without any clash and the listener gives due regard to the storyteller with his "carry on" remarks. Besides, the story does establish a harmony even after having difference of views. There is not a single moment when the Australian listener makes fun of Indian beliefs.

The Australian audience represents every Australian who encounters India having respect and love for Indian values and ethos and never manifests, even in passing, dislike for Indian beliefs. Such an understanding for multicultural ideas ensures strengthening of democratic set up of both the countries that, today, stand unique with

fusion of variegated religion, languages and culture.

David Malouf's autobiographical essay-story, "A Foot in the Stream" reveals a relaxed, liberal and democratic attitude and certain awe as the narrator observes the patience of Indian crowds. Others might have disliked India for her over crowdedness. But Malouf is awe struck at the capability of every Indian who has mastered the knack of earning livelihood through various skills. Initially, he, like other visitors to India, has fears about India:

> The fear of India. It comes in many forms. Fear of dirt, fear of illness fear of people: fear of the unavoidable presence of misery, fear of a phenomenon so dense and plural that it might, in its teeming inclusiveness, swamp the soul and destroy our certainty that the world is there to be read but is also readable. (142)

The author describes the various Indian scenes with minute details. His journey from hatred to surprise finally reaches appreciation for Indian crowds. He says, "There are no slouches or shuffles here. They walk with purpose, and it is this that makes these crowds so odd to the Western eye" (145). He appreciates Indian culture for its "inclusiveness". He describes promiscuousness of India, its plenitude as "immemorial, endless, indestructible" (146). Malouf has words of appreciation even for those who show tricks on the roadside to earn some coins. He does not call them beggars. He affirms, "These are not beggars, they are small-scale entrepreneurs of their own skill and readiness to serve….and these tiny actions will be gathered into the dense, shifting economy of the place, that passage of coins, goods, services from hand to hand that keeps a whole sub-continent honourably alive and moving from one day to the next"(146). The author finely understands the spirit of India and its rich culture and finds himself unfit to explain inexplicable freedom Indians enjoy as he says, "It is difficult to explain the sense of freedom. I feel at being for a moment outside history as we conceive it." (147)

Conclusion

Lastly, Australians should go through Indian literature and ethos to have deep insight into Indian culture, values and philosophy. India has a rich culture of which every Indian can boast of. Indians are not 'bad', as sometimes projected by some Australians. They are a hospitable lot who love and respect everyone's 'otherness'. Problems do occur sometimes due to momentary period of hatred for the 'other' which results from the non-acceptance and fear of the 'other' due to the ignorance about the 'other'. The best way to remove the fog is to know the 'other' by restoring belief in their culture. One should go through Upanishads and Vedas. They are rich treasures of deep rooted values. Had Indians been 'uncouth' and 'treacherous'—as several blogs by some Australians claimed in 2009—T.S. Eliot would never have looked back to Indian Upanishads for spiritual survival and resurrection and would never have espoused threes Da's –Datta, Dayadhavam and Damyata in The Waste Land (Eliot 90). Eliot looks back to Indian culture and philosophy that offer a comprehensive solution to the problems of the modern age by combining the wisdom of the East and the West. In Australian context, too, respect for multicultural values can surely bring harmony, friendship and peace in society.

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Catching 'Ignis Fatuus': Migration in *Alien Son* by Judith Waten

Sanjana Shamshery

Chipping away at the dreams of one Jewish family is a journey that they undertook from Russia to Australia in search of better prospects. They are unable to eke out a living in the new country, which they have heard is producing gold. Their patois, strange customs and weird garb make their stay all the more painful. The riveting story skillfully and tenderly unravels the trials and tribulations of the migrant family in 1950s. Judah Waten, who is a champion of realism in Australian fiction, has personally experienced the trauma of migration and presented it in *Alien Son* (1952).

The present paper will focus on the dilemma faced by the migrant community which experiences nostalgia, identity crisis and crisis of survival in a foreign land. Diaspora studies come into play as the short-story collection is dotted with these characteristics. The mother of the child narrator reiterates many times "how can we build on shifting sands" (28), which unravels the troubled mental state of the migrants. The paper proposes to fathom the distraught mindset of such communities.

Enumerating the characteristics of "Diaspora", Robin Cohen states that it is initiated due to "Dispersal from an original homeland", "in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions. (17) The migrants often have a troubled relationship with the host societies and try to get with their co-ethnic groups in another country" (17) Most of the migrant groups have a "desire" to return to their homeland. The migrant community often sticks to their customs. In the past, the Jewish community had to leave its homeland- Babylon due to various reason and most of the Jewish folklore literature is a sort of retelling of their actual trauma (Cohen 22-23).

Judith Waten was the most popular short-story writer in

Australia. Waten was involved in politics as well as in literary career. Around the age of nine, he was interested in politics. His parents left his birthplace Odessa to be in West Australia as refugees due to the Pogram in Russia in 1914. Waten reacted emotionally against Czarist Russia and was highly encouraging of the Russian Revolution in 1917. He was familiar with writers like Lenin and Trotsky. Due to his education in Perth and following the ideas of his mother, Waten identified with the oppressed. At the age of 14, he joined the communist party and his works are highly dotted with these influences.

Earlier, he was influenced by the fusion of socialism and Australian nationalism which was promoted by Vance and Nattie Palmer and his writings were dipped in the hues of Aussie battlers and Aboriginals. But his writings took a new turn when a Yiddish author, Pincha Goldhar inspired him to write about his own Russian Jewish immigrant experience (153). Consequently, he adopted "Pseudo-Joycean style" inspired by realistic writers.

David Carter in Bruce Bennet's *Australian Short Fiction* has aptly remarked about the well- thought title of the book. "the son/narrator shares the alienation of his parents but is also alien to them" (153). This "duel alienation" of the son forms the crux of the book. The child-narrator is trying to "assimilate" with his immediate surroundings while the parents, especially the mother, clings to her Yiddish (Jewish) culture and some sweet memories of their residence in Russia. In the present story, like the Jewish family of the writer, the Jewish family of the child-narrator in *Alien Son* has to shift from Russia after the anti-Jewish riots that swept through the South -West Imperial Russia (Ukraine and Poland nowadays) from 1881 to 1884. Nearly two hundred Anti- Jewish riots occurred in the Russian Empire in Kiev, Warsaw and Odessa, where the narrator's family lived.

They were called "pogroms" in Russia which means "a violent riot, meant to massacre an ethnic and religious group, particularly to one

aimed at Jews" (web). So the migration of this Jewish family comes under "Victims diaspora" (22-23) as Robin Cohen has termed it in his book *Global Diaspora: An Introduction* "Jews were seen as helpless chaff in the wind"(22).

The child narrator in the story "Mother" recounts the journey of his mother through various places. Simultaneously, he acquaints the reader about the circumstances that made his mother a stronger person.She was a hard task master and took strong decisions for the family. She was the last child of the old and the weak cotton trader, who was "hardly aware" of her existence as he was perturbed by his offsprings, all of whom were girls. She used to hide in the basement most of the time due to the *pogroms.* When she was fifteen, her parents died and she had to live with an aunt who kept an inn. The visitors in the inn took pity on this lonely girl and decided to give her some basic education. She was taught Yeddish, Russian, grammars, primers and Arithmetic by some visitors, were sympathetic. The mother, excited after reading all these books, regarded this knowledge as 'treasure' that would emancipate her from her sorrow. She travelled alone at the age of eighteen to join a Jewish hospital, but her dreams of a new life were soon crushed. She again started reading some books on nursing and passed examinations. She was able to acquire a diploma in nursing, which fetched her a job in a medical mission. She had to live out of her suitcase due to the job as she was in charge of controlling the cholera epidemic. But in 1905, this mission was aborted as due to the uprisings in Russia, some Jewish nurses were killed. She attended patients at home and during one such visit, she met the narrator's father. He was guileless and jolly fellow. So he added some joy in the mother's life. But father's business lacked stability. He was "trader in air" as was remarked at one place(179). Soon, his plans of "making a great future" got dissolved due to some faithless friends. The mother reached the conclusion that "migration to another country will bring about any real change in their life and with all her persistence she began to urge him to take the decisive step" (180). The family was ready to move from their native place in search of better

prospects.

She considered that Australia was the best place for them because it was so "different" from other countries like America, France, Palestine, etc. The idea seemed "fantastic" to the father but he had hardly ventured beyond some streets in Russia. During their ship journey, they met a delegation of Jews, who had been to Australia and they said it was a "free country" where people "ate with knife and fork and with no one's hands. Everyone could read and write and none shouted at you. There were no oppressors here as in the old country" (181). As soon as they landed in Australia, the father started meeting some fellow merchants and planned to start a new business in the new land.

The mother had forced the father to migrate to this new country,however, she never tries to assimilate in the new culture. She would not attend classes to learn the new language. In an attempt to keep her children linked to their homeland, she would tell them the stories of Tolstoy and Gorky. She often urged them to uphold their ideals as "they would save us from the soulless influence of this barren land" (182).

It is a difficult task for the family to assimilate in this new environment.The story "To a Country Town" narrates the hardships of the father to establish a new business in the new country. He tried to find a drapery shop in the town but failed. He had ambitious plans but they were only "flights of fancy"(9). The mother always kept her bags packed because she knew that the "father was a cripple when it came to real job" (9). She saw "sorrow" ahead. She expected hardship in the future life. But the father was optimistic and he said, "the country would do the children a lot of good, now wouldn't it? Say only for a year or two. The children would grow strong and healthy there" (10).The mother agreed to his views as she also wanted "a great future" for the children. As the father was unable to establish business in the town, they shifted to a small country place near foothills. They were able to get a "dingy, brown wooden cottage" with broken fence and neglected fruit trees. The

neighbors were not friendly. The child was eager to assimilate to his new surroundings. The child narrator was very excited to see their new home. He was impatient to join a group of children in the neighborhood. The children laughed at his, "buttoned up shoes" and "white silk socks, he was able to tack himself on to the tail end of a group of boys who were prancing down the street. He removed all songs of his culture that they have found strange". The boy said, "… I was proud of my own courage and of the attention the boys paid me, though I didn't know a word of what they were saying" (14). The mother was worried that the boy had run away twice the very first day they shifted to the new house. The boy was spared because he had made acquaintance with a person, Hirsh, who was a Jew. The diasporic people easily get along with their community in a foreign land.

The migrant community always has a strong ethnic group consciousness. Consequently, the new visitor- Hirsh, who was a Jew by religion, was welcomed in the household of the narrator. He was a coach man of a wealthy man in Russia but he had to run away from the country to evade military service. He used to curse Czar Alexander, the third. His final wish was to die in The Holy Land of Palestine (18). He helped the narrator's family to find a new business for the migrated family. He said, "believe me this is very hard, foreign, inhospitable land for a Jew to live in" (19). The child narrator also agreed with Hirsh, "Hirsh was right it was a foreign country. How could we ever learn to know the people here? At least in Russia we knew where we stood, programs and all. The devil you know is better than the devil you don't" (19).

The family agreed with Hirsh that the host country was "inhospitable" to the Jews. The mother was impressed by the courage and devotion of Hirsh. She said ,"he belonged to our imperishable people surrounded by foes who frequently desired our blood, our people always triumphed in the end through courage and devotion" (24). Soon, the house of the narrator became the meeting point of the entire Jewish community and "thousands of pounds were made, journeys planned children futures mapped out- all in our kitchen"(24).Memories

of "home" often perturbed this uprooted Jewish community. According to Robert Rubenstein home "not merely is a physical structure ,a geographical location but always an emotional space, home is among the most emotionally complex and resonant concepts in our psychic vocabularies" (1).

Another man from Russia – Mr. Osipov- became a regular visitor to the narrator's house because he shared a common memory. The mother thought that he was the only person, who was able to understand her thoughts, since he was also a victim of persecution and idealisms.

Memory plays a significant role in reinstating the past of immigrant peoples. As defined in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, memory is "the encoding, storage, and retrieval in the human mind of past experiences" (web). Memory is an act of remembering that can create new understandings of both the past and the present. Giles argues that "memories are an active process by which meaning is created; they are not mere depositories of fact" (Agnew 8). Memory may look back in order to move forward and transform disabling fictions to enabling fictions, altering our relation to the present and future. (9) Memories are persistently constructed and reconstructed as people endeavor to make perception of the past. They settle an affiliation between our personal past and our mutual past, that is to say, the origins, heritage and history. Past remains always with us and guides our present. That is how the story progresses. The entire Jewish community was at a loss when news of the death of Hirsh's son,who was in jail,arrived. Everyone was afraid and sad, "This is the end of our community" mother said, "Come the first puff of wind and it blows away. How can we build on shifting sands? If we can't go back home immediately we must shift to a big city" (28). Thus, the entire story is a sad saga of an immigrant Jewish family's experience in a foreign land.

The story of *Alien Son* is a saga of the pain suffered by the diasporic societies. The past and the memories of the 'home'keep on making dents on their minds as well as on their wounded psyche. Like 'Ignis Fatus', a fire which is a chimera, they try to capture their past but it keeps slipping away from them like sand granules.

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Australian National Discourse and the Absence of Women: Revisiting Henry Lawson's "Drover's Wife"

Nisha Misra

The white girl-wife in the hut alone,
The man on the boundless run,
The miseries suffered, unvoiced, unknown-
And that's how the land was won.
-Henry Lawson "How the Land Was Won" (1899)

Ah how I bless the pioneers
The women lost to fame,
Who braved the bush for strenuous years
To make Australia's name.
-Louisa Lawson "The Women of the Bush"

The history of the masculine Australian nation has always had the man central to the national discourse as is apparent from the lines of Henry Lawson. However, women also contributed to the nation formation and they were conscious of their contribution which is evident from the words of Henry Lawson's mother Louisa Lawson, yet in history and even in literature they do not get their rightful representation.

Australia as a continent was always in existence but Australia as a country is just a few hundred years old. The first colonial settlers on this "original and unspoilt, pastoral landscape" (Ackland xiv) were faced with an overarching and awe-inspiring presence, at once primitive, untamed, seemingly unwelcome and fiercely 'unEuropean people'. The difficulty, danger, adventure and challenge posed by "imagination numbing monotony of" (Ackland xiv) the place made it appear more conducive to the survival and existence of men than women. In fact, the

essential Australianness of Australia was often associated with the inherent (rather imposed) maleness or masculinity of the Bush. The legendary Bushman or Bushranger concept of mateship and the ANZAC myth form the core of the Australian identity, given their intrinsic masculine character. In fact, Russell Ward in his seminal work *The Australian Legend* elaborates the qualities of an Australian as embodied in the Australian legend:

> . . . the "typical Australian" is a practical man, rough and ready in his manners. . . . He is a great improviser, . . .he normally feels no impulse to work hard without good cause. He swears hard and consistently, gambles heavily and often, and drinks deeply on occasion. . . . He is. . . . sceptical about the value of religion and of intellectual and cultural pursuits generally. . . . He is a fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority. . . . Yet he is very hospitable and, above all, will stick to his mates through thick and thin. (1-2)

His use of the pronoun 'He' leaves no scope for women to be incorporated in what can be called the process of formation of Australian nation and identity.

1890s was a decade when malehood was being conceived and by implication womanhood presumed. Bush was no place for woman (Schaffer 121). However, this does not mean that no woman ever inhabited the Bush. But those who did had some sort of masculinity about them. Women were expected to be strong, rugged, hardworking, independent and adventurous, like the men, to be able to survive in if not overcome the Bush. In fact, the trials and tribulations of the Bush were big enough to churn out the masculine character in the women. Hence, the 'Bush' and the 'man', the "true Bushman, the Bushman pure and simple, the man of the nation" (Palmer 47) always was the pivot of Australian legend. Settlement of Australia and the Bush found its basis in Social Darwinism and women unfortunately were considered a weak link in its theory of 'survival of the fittest'. It was always the Bush 'man'

and never the bush 'woman' in the making of Australia. Imagining Australia, was and is, imagining the Bush and vice versa—"the central image against which the Australian character measures himself" (Schaffer 52). However, the Bush is also assigned a feminine role. Whereas in its masculine 'self' Bush is perceived as progenitor of manhood, in its feminine 'self' it is seen to represent the 'fallen' aspect of the landscape, "one that is imagined as particularly harsh and unforgiving" (Schaffer 4). Hence, all that is positive about the Bush takes on a masculine color and all that is negative becomes the feminine. They were either convicts who got an opportunity to polish or learn new skills and improve their lot; or the wives of the military who monitored the convicts and preached Christianity or else they were free settlers lured by the charm that the newly born land offered. However, irrespective of the category they belonged to they were considered demonic in their own way. Where the wives of the military were abhorred as "God's police"—equating them with England, the law and Christianity—the others like ex-convicts, the Irish and the free settlers were perceived as "the unregenerate feminine" (Schaffer 31). Such typecasting speaks volumes of the prevailing sordid masculine mindset of the times that to a large extent was carried forward. Thus, the women in Australia were pushed to the two extremes considering them unfit for the mainstream.

Though unacknowledged in nation-formation women contributed immensely in various spheres, including farming. However, "for many years the bush was seen as the archetypal Australian place and the bushman as the archetypal Australian" (Elder 73-74). Interestingly, one of the "latest manifestations" of the Australian character is in the character of Paul Hogan, hero of the film Crocodile Dundee . . ." (Shaffer 11). Another aspect closely related to Australia (at least in the Indian imagination) in the present times is again a masculine symbol—the Australian cricket team. It is an irony that "though Australians live in a nation that has over ten million women, when they are asked about typical Australian, many people still imagine a man"

(Elder 65). The maleness of the national character is so deeply entrenched in the Australian psyche that most of the Australian narratives reverberate with all that characterises the Bush—danger, adventure, isolation, loneliness, desolation, madness.

As already discussed the last decade of the nineteenth century echoed with the call for nation, nationhood and nationalism. The narrative of the nineties celebrated the Bush and the values that it represented but it was also a deliberate effort to undermine the role, status and existence of women. The contemporary Australian women's writings time and again challenge and question the gender stereotypes, gender (mis)representations, gender roles and gender politics of the time. Sue Kossew is of the view:

> While often idealised as the 'Australian Bushwoman' or the 'Bush Mum', more often women were characterised as 'drover's wives' – 'longsuffering and resigned to neglect' (Ferres 1993b: 1). Such characterisation and confinement to the realm of the domestic rather than the public sphere profoundly alienated women from discourses of nation. As Marilyn Lake suggests, despite their early enfranchisement (white Australian women were given the vote in 1902), they felt 'oppressed by national mythologies and histories, by a national culture that insulted and trivialised them' with the 'nation' and 'women' seemingly 'mutually exclusive categories'. (24)

Through Henry Lawson's "Drover's Wife" the present paper seeks to analyse the position of women in the rural heart of Australia and the politics of representation and re-presentation in the narrative discourse.

"Australia is Lawson writ large," said Manning Clark (qtd. in Schaffer 40). "There is not a word in *all* his [Lawson's] work which is not instantly recognised by his readers as honest Australian. . . . he is the *first* articulate voice of the *real* Australian" (qtd. in Schaffer 112). Popularly known as the man who gave the bush its capital "B", he through his

works raised the Bushman to a pedestal wherefrom he became synonymous with Australia and vice-versa.

Henry Lawson's story "The Drover's Wife" enjoys an iconic status in the Australian literary canon. Any discourse on the position of women in the Australian context will be incomplete in the absence of this historic text. The significance of this text can be gauged from the fact that since its publication in the year 1892 it has been subjected to various versions, reworkings and revisitings. "'The Legend of the Nineties' (the title of a book by Vance Palmer that describes the growth of the 'Australian legend' and the 'Australian type') established what have become commonplace stereotypes of Australian identity: in particular, the roles assigned, mainly by white male writers, to 'bushman' and 'bush women'. These narratives depicted mostly men at the helm of affairs and women as mere props. Women were always 'the acted upon'—passive rather than active forces. Lawson, was a pioneer in male centric Bush writing. However, in "The Drover's Wife" he seems to weave the plot around the 'woman' protagonist, dragging her from the periphery to the centre. But the fact remains that she is defined and perceived largely in terms of and in relation to the masculine forces around her. This is 'made' obvious by Lawson even in the title of the story, she is just somebody's wife, in this case the drover. She has no name in the story, no identity but ironically her dog does have or rather is given a name—Alligator. One may argue that even the drover has no name in the story but the fact is that men are born with their identity intact, their gender being name enough. In this case too the drover's shadow looms large on the narrative; he is made conspicuous even by his absence, his wife and the Bush being a constant reminder. In fact, the drover's wife is denied not only a name and identity but also a voice. She hardly speaks, is rather spoken about by the narrator who is the mouthpiece of Lawson.

The Australian literary tradition is all about the struggle and search for a national identity against the Otherness of the bush; where everything but the man is "Other": woman, "blackfellow," and snake (Schaffer136). The drover's wife, though confined to the domestic

sphere is, in the words of Schaffer, the "phallic mother" filling the absence of her children's father. He is out and about, she is in and inset. Free to walk the wilderness his cares of home and hearth are taken care of by her. While defining the national character the female character was defined by default—a collateral damage—and drover's wife fits into the role completely. "Her husband is an Australian and so is she" (198). His freedom is at her cost while "He may forget sometimes that he is married" (198). Seen in the larger context that the national discourse keeps women out when their contribution in the nation formation has been immense. Gail Reekie in *Contesting Australia: Feminism and Histories of the Nation* (Ed.) rightly argues:

> Despite its necessity to the construction of the nation in material terms, women's work in both reproductive and productive realms has had to be silenced in historical constructions of the nation. I conclude therefore that women have, symbolically and materially, carried the burden of an essentially sacrificial relationship to the "nation" in Australia. (Whitlock 146)

National identity is an imaginary and as Richard White says "invented" construct and so betrays the mindset of the people who try to make it. By defining Australia purely in masculine terms Lawson and editors of *Bulletin* promulgated a definition of Australian identity that made women insignificant and redundant in the eyes of men.

The plot of the story revolves around the drover's wife who is alone in the bush along with her four little children and a dog named Alligator. She has not heard from her husband, a drover and an ex-squatter, for the past six months, but the protagonist has now somehow become accustomed to his long absences. In fact, she does not even feel the need for a male companion braving alone all that has befallen her and her family. As Carrera-Suarez observes, Lawson has created "the archetype of the pioneer bushwoman, a heroic mother left on her own by the drover husband, resigned to her fate, battling against the elements and winning" (140). SusanBarrett rightly points out that while women

may exist in the work of Henry Lawson, they are only seen as "appendages of men: "The Drover's Wife," "The Selector's Daughter"" and they are "left at home and are shown to be contented with their role as homemaker" (86). Shorn of any sense of 'self' and space these women are left adrift in the Bush exposed to all kinds of dangers. The wooden shanty with cracks on the floor and walls in which drover's wife lives with her children does not even come close to being called a 'home'. In fact, these cracks become symbolic of her fractured identity.

The bush pervades the narrative right from the beginning. It, in fact, is a gothic presence:

> Bush all round-bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. . . .The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few she-oaks . . . sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek. Nineteen miles to the nearest sign of civilization—a shanty on the main road (195)

The she-oaks here become symbolic of her isolation and melancholy. The use of she-oaks in the description also seems to serve Lawson's specific design. She-oaks, also referred to as the Casurina trees, look like the oaks but are actually inferior to it. There are about ten varieties of she-oaks found in Australia. These have narrow leaves resembling the willows, and hence make a rustling sound when the wind blows. Like the willows are symbolic of mourning and melancholy so are the she-oaks which are personified by Lawson as 'sighing'. A woman may try to look or act like a man but she cannot be a man just as the she-oaks that look like the oaks are just an inferior variety of oaks.

The overpowering Bush is awe-inspiring and eerie at the same time—a dangerous place for a woman to survive and lonesome enough to drive her crazy. ". . . it was sometimes so powerful that it induces strains of madness" (Moore 152). As Susan Elizabeth Rowley observes:

> Lawson saw women as lacking the imaginative capacity for delusive madness, then they also appear to lack the imaginative

> capacity to form a mental horizon beyond which a better world might await them. The bush with no horizon not only describes the physical world but also the mental world that women appear to inhabit. (227)

This Bush, like the man, is a mute witness to the trials and tribulations of the bushwoman. Lawson's protagonist, however, tries her best to create a make-believe-world of normalcy in the abnormal conditions that she has been thrown into. Every Sunday she dresses herself and the children smartly and goes for a walk through the bush. There is no fear of the unknown during these strolls. She seems to have struck a chord with the bush. This act of hers may seem a little eccentric to the reader as there is no one in the Bush except for herself to admire her efforts. ". . . there is nothing to see. . . . and not a soul to meet" (200). But for her this is the only way that she can save herself from succumbing to the Bush. "In Lawson's fiction generally female rather than male characters go mad in the bush" (Schaffer 121). This is the only way she can bring about some change in the never changing surroundings of the Bush where "all days are much the same to her" (200).

Though the drover's wife has put the relics of her girlish hopes and dreams behind her, these strolls do give the reader a hint of the embers still burning in some quiet corner of her heart. She comes across as a strong and bold bushwoman who has very finely fit into her husband's shoes. She can face the dangers and protect her family on her own. Lawson paints her strength and fortitude but with masculine strokes. She should become a man to overcome the Bush. "Here Lawson suggests that 'the bush woman can stand in place of her husband, lover or brother and take on masculine attributes of strength, fortitude, courage and the like in her battle with the environment'" (Schaffer 14). However, this transformation that the Bush brings upon the protagonist is at the cost of losing, forgetting or ignoring the feminine side of her existence. In the patriarchal society the 'female' is born and the 'feminine' is made. In this context patriarchy and the masculine forces act as a double-edged sword. First she is made feminine to fit into the

patriarchal set-up and then she is compelled to give up those very attributes for the masculine ones necessary for survival. However, one does get a glimpse into the protagonist's feminine instincts and desires not only in her Sunday strolls but also the *Young Ladies' Journal* where " She finds all the excitement and recreation she needs" (198). This may also be seen as an attempt on her part to be in touch with the woman within her—her real self.

However, time and again in the course of the narrative Lawson tries to emphasise the strength of maleness/masculinity vis-a-vis the weakness of femaleness/femininity. There is a crisis as a snake intrudes into the house. As the nameless protagonist vigils over the snake with her kids safe on the kitchen table and Alligator by her side, many memories from the past revive. She remembers how at different points of time she has bravely fought the challenges thrown at her by the capricious Bush— the bush fire, the flood, pleura-pneumonia, the mad bullock, crows and eagles and ". . . a bushman in the horrors" (200). Lawson through these incidents portrays the strength of the protagonist but the patriarchal machinery comes into play with the subtle undertones of feminine weakness, for instance in the bush fire incident. She vainly tries to douse the bush fire but ultimately has to put on the old worn out trousers of her husband to beat it out with a green bough. Thus, Lawson makes it very clear that she has to be the man to fight the Bush and "[act] in a masculine role as a pioneering hero" (Schaffer134). In fact, to beat the fire she has to accept the help of the four bushmen "who arrived in the nick of time" (199) to rescue her. There is a sense of urgency that is conveyed in the phrase "nick of time", that had it not been for the four bushmen perhaps the fire would have engulfed them. It is as though Lawson is trying at every step to justify the pride of place that he gives to the legendary 'Bushman'. If one were to consider the green bough in her hand to be a feminine symbol then too it proves to be insufficient to overcome the fire.

The drover's wife also becomes a butt of ridicule for her son Tommy who finds her rather funny in his father's clothes and is "greatly

amused" (199). The child's innocent reaction is actually the patriarchal gender construct at play at the subconscious level. Right from the time a child gains basic awareness of his surroundings the gender differentiation is gradually implanted in his psyche, as "Each society, at anytime, . . . sets up any particular gender coding – what people of different genders should do, think and be" (Duncan and Pfau-Effinger 12). It is no surprise then that instead of addressing the drover's wife as the 'hero' Lawson prefers to give this title to her excited son Tommy while she is dwarfed in her struggle and relegated to the private sphere where her small baby is howling for his "mummy". The juxtaposition of the two words "hero" and "mummy" in the text immediately clarifies the position of the woman in the patriarchal discourse. She cannot be the hero. The focus of the narrative is more on what she ought to be and what she has become in the process neglecting or forsaking what she is supposed to be. The socially constructed feminine role is inherent in this single word "mummy" which exerts a pull on her maternal instinct which for a moment she had forsaken. When the entire drama is over the ". . . glor[y]ious time [is all] for the boys" (199), with the woman cuddling the child, back to her feminine self, hardly granted any recognition for her bravery. Sue Kossew very perceptively sums up the implications of the narrative:

> . . . despite being able to take on the appearance of a man, she is still too weak, both physically and emotionally, to do a 'man's work', and, if she attempts to do so, she is seen to be neglecting her role as mother. This seems to clearly encapsulate the double bind that Rowley suggests: if she tries to take on the role as both mother and father, she becomes an object of fear and ridicule. Safer, after all, it seems, for her to remain simply 'the drover's wife'. The ironic tone of the narration, while seemingly presenting a woman's point of view, maintains a sense of amused distance, particularly in its 'summing up' at the end: the incident was memorable not for her bravery, but for being, tellingly, a 'glorious day for the boys'. (28)

In another incident the drover's wife tries to save the dam built by her husband over the years from being flooded away. The whole night she stands in the rain completely drenched but in vain. She cries, disappointment writ large on her face. Here too the focus is not as much on her efforts as on the failure, as the narrator remarks, "But she could not save it. There are things that a bushwoman cannot do" (199). However, she had successfully killed a mad bullock opening fire through the cracks in the slabs so that by the morning it was dead. She had then skinned it and sold the hide for seventeen-and-six pence. She is also able to shoo away the crows and eagles that hover over her chickens though here again the important role of the children is stressed. The narrator is sarcastic when he remarks that "The crows leave in a hurry; they are cunning, but a woman's cunning is greater" (199). A few victories granted to the woman are only to emphasize the strength, fortitude and the will required to survive in the wild untamed Bush.

Another danger lurking in the Bush are the "bushman in the horrors" and the swagmen who, knowing that the drover is away, keep frequenting her asking for a tucker or something else. On such occasions she always pretends that her husband and two sons are working at the dam nearby. Again the much needed masculine support is implied. On one occasion she had let lose Alligator and the swagman had left saying "All right, mum" (200). However, all through the narrative "the woman's heroism is established textually through a flashback reminiscence structured to build suspense as she maintains her all-night vigil awaiting the confrontation with the snake" (Schaffer 134). Like the she-oaks in the story who are her only companion in her loneliness and struggle the drover's wife despite her external vulnerability (for being a woman) is internally strong. As Moore observes, "She has vitality, pluck and endurance. It is in these human qualities, too, that she trusts in her struggles with death and disasters" (26).

In the course of the narrative Lawson mentions another of her painful experiences when she had walked nineteen miles for help with her dead baby in her arms but Lawson hardly seems it necessary to

devote some space or importance to her pain and anguish. It is more like a passing reference in the narrative. On another occasion when she was going through the labour, her husband had brought a drunken doctor to do the delivery. And Lawson, the narratorial voice, still has the audacity to remark, "He is careless, but a good enough husband" (198). An Aboriginal woman referred to as Black Mary had come to her rescue that night.

Bush is basically a man's domain where a woman in spite of using masculine tactics for survival is still at the receiving end. Lawson makes this fact apparent when the protagonist discovers that the woodpile that 'King Jimmy' had built for her is hollow and comes tumbling down, leaving the drover's wife in tears. She had paid him an extra fig of tobacco for the seemingly good job that he had done. Lawson here again emphasizes the vulnerability and hence, the inherent weakness of a woman in the Bush (even at the hands of the Blacks). In a very subtle manner Lawson tries to underplay the helpfulness of the Aboriginal man by juxtaposing it with his treachery in the process of propagating their negative image.

That Henry Lawson, through his works, played a pivotal role in what Schaffer refers to as the "masculinization of national culture" becomes obvious in the climax of the story where the courage of the woman is underplayed through certain subtle but strong masculine standpoints. Following the instinct of Alligator the drover's wife waits for the "black brute" to appear and once it is out she violently snuffs the life out of it with her club. Then she throws it in the fire while the rest watch it burn. The boy who is overwhelmed by the entire episode seeing his mother in tears throws his arms around her and says "'Mother, I won't never go drovin, blarst me if I do!"(202). One cannot but appreciate the courage of this woman but Lawson here too does not fail to emphasize the need of the masculine characteristics. As on other occasions this time too drover's wife is able to accomplish the task with the help of the dog Alligator. Even though she had restrained Tommy, her son, by holding him back his remark that he would never leave her

alone is a telling statement on the vulnerable status of the bush woman always in need of some masculine protection, even if it is a male dog or the assurance from a male child. The feminine in her is not at all glorified, not even her grief finds a mention.

Henry Lawson seems also to critique the institution of marriage which he feels cannot sustain in the Bush where man and woman are compelled to stay away from each other for very long periods. Men rather seem to be closer to other men folk, the mates. No wonder that the drover at times forgets that he is married.

The purpose of Lawson's writing is to create characters that advocate his vision and belief of a masculine Australia and in the process advance a definition of Australianness. Hence, the men are supposed to be adventurous and spirited enough to tame the land and conquer the Bush. Women though portrayed, particularly in Lawson's "The Drover's Wife", as strong, laborious, and of the spirited kind actually are just the add-ons—appendages. They do not have a place or space of their own but simply tend to fill in the gap left by their husbands who are most of the time out in the Bush. They appear to have taken the centre stage but are actually dwarfed as compared to men. Whatever they stand for or exhibit is ironically masculine in nature like the protagonist in "The Drover's wife". The bush women reinforce the traits of the masculine national character. They are bush women not by the virtue of their feminine qualities but the assumed masculine ones. The iconic status accorded to Henry Lawson is, therefore, sad as his works have been instrumental in the 'masculinization' of the Australian national identity.

The drover's wife is not simply some character in some random bush narrative but an embodiment and definition of an entire class. She is 'that' integral component which yet could not become the yardstick to measure the Australianness—a footnote essential but not central. She is not just nature versus woman but bushman versus the bushwoman—masculine principle versus the feminine. Hence, several

rewritings and re-presentations both from the masculine and feminine standpoints of the same story have emerged. It is rather intriguing to note that a single story or character can have the pull to inspire not one but many versions. Perhaps Lawson had never imagined that while upholding and promoting the Bush ethos and the Bushman as the nationalistic figure, the nameless 'drover's wife' would become his identity.

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Indians in Multicultural Australia: An Assessment of Political Struggle

Abha Chauhan Khimta

History is never more than agreed fiction and the history of Australia is indeed a story crackling with incongruities, contradictions and incredibility. People from across the world come to live in Australia with their different reasons and dreams. Some may come to live a different lifestyle and others may seek a less crowded place or one that provides special facilities. At the same time, some people come for a short time, others may stay longer and some even decide to become Australian citizens. A large scale migration programs were triggered after World War II. Agreements were reached with Britain, some European countries and with International Refugee Organization to encourage migration; including displaced people from war-torn Europe (Australia's Immigration Debate 1).

Since Federation in 1901, Australia's population has increased by over 16.1 million persons. As per the figures provided by the US Census Bureau's International Data Base of 227 countries arranged in the descending order, Australia's population ranked 52nd in the year 2003 and is projected to rank 65th in 2050 *(The Population Debate,* Vol. 224 1).

Australia approached the last century as a land of great opportunities. The existence of Terra Australia, of a continent in this part of the world, had been the subject of speculation since the time of the Romans (It's all about Australia Mate 52*)*. Willens Janz, a Dutch, sailed along the west coast of Cape York Peninsula in 1606 and was probably the first European to see Australia and reported to the Dutch East India Company that there was little good to be done there. In 1770, Captain James Cook landed at Botany Bay near Sydney. He took the possession of the country for King George III under the name of New South Wales (Australia for Record: Achievements from the Dreamtime

to the New Millennium 10-11). Governor Lachlan Macquarie had officially adopted commonly used name Australia in 1817 (Gregory 52).

Captain Arthur Phillip, a retired British naval officer took a fancy to Sydney Harbor in 1788. He arrived from England with 11 ships in the first flex carrying the first settlers, 564 male and 192 female convicts, 450 crew and marines, 28 wives and 30 children, half of them belonging to the convicts. Arthur Phillip decided to settle on the banks of a freshwater creek at Park Jackson. The fleet landed on 26 January and the day is now celebrated as Australia Day *(It's All about Australia Mate* 52-53). The first century of European settlement in Australia was marked by periodic conflict and outbreaks of violence between the settlers and the Aboriginal people.

It is argued that until 1824, Australia was not completely claimed by the British Government. By 1824, the western boundary had been extended to the 129th meridian (Early Australia and Australia's First Century 50000 BP-1899 14). In 1829 Western Australia became a separate state followed by South Australia in 1836, Victoria in 1851 and Queensland in 1859. By 1901 state division appeared, except ACT (Australia Capital Territory). ACT was established in 1911. In 1926, the Northern Territory was divided into central and northern Australia, and it was re-united in 1933. In 1901, when Australia became one nation, it was a huge, empty land populated by only 3.8 million people *(Australia's Yesterdays: A Look at Our Recent Past 7).* On January 1, 1901, more than 2,00,000 people gathered in Centennial Park, Sydney, to witness a ceremony that proclaimed the federation of the six colonies into the new Commonwealth of Australia (Early Australia and Australia's First Century 50000 BP-1899 25-26). Immigration was a contentious issue. The new federal nation was to be a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. The new system of government was adopted from the British System with three organs of government – the legislative, executive and judiciary. A new office of Governor-General was created and he became the head of the state and represented the monarch.

The Racial Discrimination Act came into existence on 31st October 1975. The Racial Hatred Act, introduced in October 1995, extended the coverage of RDA (Racial Discrimination Act) so that people could complain to HREOC (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) about any racially offensive behavior. According to this Act, social discrimination occurred if a person or a group of people were treated less favorably because of their national or ethnic origin and that they were stopped from fully enjoying their human rights and basic freedom. Australia ratified the convention on 30 September 1975 against racial discrimination. This meant that Australia promised not to racially discriminate against individuals, groups of people or institutions, not to sponsor, defend or support social discrimination by any individual or any institution. Further, it was decided to review government, national and local policies and to change or abolish laws and regulations which continued or promoted social discrimination, ban organizations and propaganda that promoted social superiority, racial hatred, social violence or racial discrimination. It was also decided to provide effective protection and solutions for victims of racial discrimination, to take any special measures needed to make sure that disadvantaged racial groups had full and equal access to human rights and to basic freedom, to tackle the prejudices that lead to racial discriminations and to eliminate the barriers between races. (*Racial Discrimination: Issues in Society, 1).*

Indians in Australia

If, the theory that the ancient descendants of the present-day Australian Aboriginals came from South or South-East Asia is set aside and weight is not given to the other theory that there might have been possible contact made by Indian and Japanese traders with the northern shores of the antipodean continent in the early centuries of this millennium, and further discount the likely presence of Macassans in the northern part of the continent for a few centuries, it could be assumed that Indians were among the first Asian arrivals to the Southland . There were few Indians

in the first few fleets that brought settlers and convicts to Australia from 1787 to1823. They came from the British possession in India and others came in subsequent convict ships (Bilimoria and Ganguly 17). A native of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) was probably the first Asian settler in Australia (Blainey 62). Trade commenced between India and Australia as early as 1792. Ships docked out of Calcutta and Madras carrying Indian products and Indian crews on board. The East India Company achieved some success in its trade with British Companies operating in Australia. Australia's first national drink, Bengal Rum, was introduced in this way (Blainey 63). In the early years of the 1800s trading, ships brought loads of Indian and Chinese people to the shores of Botany Bay in New South Wales (NSW) and some other small groups of Indians were brought to work in other parts of NSW. In 1800, Governor Hunter corresponded with the Duke of Portland about Indian government's request that convicts from that country be admitted. However, Hunter did not disapprove the scheme and had no doubt that the Indians might be usefully employed and would probably be far more manageable than most of the other convicts. However, behind the request were the hopes of the officers and respectable settlers for acquiring the offenders as servants (Lepervanche 36). In the 19th and 20thcenturies, a large number of Indians were brought to work on sugarcane plantations and also to assist with pastoral developments under the scheme of recruited labour coolies as they were called (Willard 2).

It was the expedition led by Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth, which became the first successful crossing of the Blue Mountains in NSW by European settlers. The crossings enabled the settlers to access and use the land west of mountains for farming and made possible the establishment of Australian first inland settlement at Bathurst. The pastoral industry developed rapidly after the crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813. With this, a strong call for cheap rural labour went out. Properties were not fenced until the 1850s and shepherds were in great demand. By the 1830s, a decade of inflation, speculation, drought and falling wool

prices the pastoralists seeking cheap labour turned to Asia as a likely source. At the same time, some retired Indians settled down in New South Wales. By 1830s, other settlers joined in the demand for labour because of their sobriety, trustworthiness and efficiency (Dwight 114-116). The growth of Britain's textile industry favored pastoralism over agriculture in the colony. John Mackay recommended an immediate introduction of Indian laborers in 1836 and 1837, who were ideally suited to be shepherds (Lepervanche 18).

The Dhangars a hardy industrious race of men, free from various religious castes in India were regarded as the most suitable skilled coolies to be recruited in the colonies. They were from the hill areas of Bengal Province in India. However, a committee of the legislative council in 1837 was hesitant about the proposal and they, therefore, recommended a small experiment with 300-500 coolies. Governor Bourke was also receptive of the recommendations of the committee by commenting that the attempt would prove a sacrifice of permanent advantage to temporary expediency. His reticence was endorsed on humanitarian grounds by his successor, Governor Gipps. According to Governor Gipps, it would have a prejudicial effect both on the interests of the colony and on British emigration (Yarwood 12). But this did not stop private recruitment of Indian coolies by New South Wales (NSW) swatters. Indian government passed the Indian Emigration Act in 1839 to prevent the uncontrolled recruitment of coolie laborers from the subcontinent (Lepervanche 41).

Suggestions of limited indenture that required assurance of return passage to Calcutta were proposed because of the pressure on the Australian authorities to import coolie labor. In 1844, amid the 1842-45 depression, Captain Robert Towns, an NSW magistrate, ship-owner and pastoralist, introduced for himself and his friends a little more than100 Indians, as domestic servants to avoid Indian regulations. During the acute labour shortage of 1853-4, when local laborers were rushing to the gold-diggings, Towns sent four more ships to Calcutta and Madras but finding Indian regulations still inflexible and the NSW

government still unwilling to make the necessary official arrangements sent them on to China. However, little is known about these hill coolies arriving in Australia (1837-44). Some of them returned to India after five years contract and others stayed on as pastoral and general laborers. Few of them became independent farmers or carriers in 1854 (Price 42). A few Indians immigrated to Australia independently and went to work on farms or became an itinerant salesman.

Henry Parker, the Committee Chairman, in November 1854, laid before the legislative council the committee's report which advised that 'with the prospect of a continuous stream of population from the mother country, all ideas of a renewal of Asiatic, immigration at private expense, would be abandoned' (NSW Legislation Council (1854) Select Committee on Asiatic Labour 5). Thus, this ended the NSW pastoralists experiment with cheap labour which had lasted twenty years.

The Indian mutiny also reinforced the attitude against Indians in 1857-58 and they were not looked upon as more than potential laborers. They were also approached as being somewhat troublesome Asiatic like the Chinese. The incidents were reported both in NSW and Victoria and a mutiny relief fund was set up with the view to provide aid to the suffering families of the British soldiers killed in the incident. The relief fund and the horrors of the Indian mutiny were kept alive in the memory of the colony through parliamentary minutes and published reports.

D'Cruz argued that "even though the Chinese were the initial cause of this anti-Asia hysteria, it was the Indian mutiny that precipitated action" (Bilimoria and Ganguly 2). It was this general action that, as Willard (1967) argued, eventually paved the way for the 'White Australia Policy' (99).

The Premiers at the International Conference of 1896 resolved to extend the provisions of the draft Restriction Bill of 1888 'to all colored races'. Although restricting Indian immigration by this bill meant that members of the British Empire were discriminating against

each other and the authorities in London did not approve it. Mr Chamberlain, then-Secretary of State for colonies advised the colonies to implement their discriminatory measures diplomatically. Thus, he suggested that the solution was in the Natal method of exclusion which was an education test (Williard 111-112). Therefore, separate legislation was enacted in New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania and undesired immigrants were restricted by a language test.

The 19th legislation against non-Europeans controlled their entry to the colonies and restricted the rights of those residents in the country. Much of the legislation was directed against the Chinese; however, they were not the only victims. In addition to being restricted in mining, non-Europeans were excluded from citizenship and voting right. In 1882 South Australia legislated to prevent Chinese and Indians from voting in the northern territory. In the same way, the South Australian Electoral Code of 1896 discriminated against the Asians. In Queensland, the Government Elections Act (13 of 1885) included a clause prohibiting the enrolment of any 'Aboriginal native of Australia, India, China or the South Sea islands… except in respect of a freehold qualification' (Price 178).

In 1879 Indians were blamed for the lack of employment opportunities supposedly suffered by settlers in the northern NSW sugarcane belt. In the same year, Queensland banned Asian migrants from working in mines, and this led to curtailing of Indian laborers engaged in the sugar and banana industries in the north. Griffiths, an Australian judge and a politician, initiated moves to repeal the 1862 Act and in 1886 the Indian Coolie Act was finally repealed (Bilimoria and Ganguly 21). This put an end to the possibility of official recruitment of Indian Coolie Laborers of Queensland. But it did not prevent the arrival of free Indian emigrants, who found their way to the sugarcane plantation in Queensland. Off springs of some of these early migrants are still livings in the NSW. There were 1800 Indians in NSW by 1896, and they were engaged in agricultural and dairying pursuits on the Northern Rivers (Yarwood 124).

By 1896 one firm of Hyderabad merchants had branches in Melbourne and that about 30 Sindhi merchants settled there. Among the traders were Gujaratis, Bengali and Sikhs. In 1896, Coloured Races Restriction Bill was proposed by Premier Reid of NSW, reviving the 1881 and 1888 arguments against the immigration of Asiatic people. Therefore, the Premiers of the colonies resolved to extend the 1888 Bill to apply to all coloured races. That Indians were British subjects and had certain rights accruing to them as British subjects did not alter the situation. Thus, following the Natal Immigration Restriction Act, a literacy test was proposed to be undertaken by any intending migrant. Immigration Restriction Act 1901 and its amendment kept Australia White (Bilimoria and Ganguly 22). Apart from Aboriginals, after 1901 some non-Europeans were permitted to stay and for administrative purposes recognized as permanent settlers and a few selected newcomers were allowed to enter. The Indian government was outspoken in its opposition to Australia's immigration policies. Even before obtaining independence in 1947, Indians were very sensitive on questions relating to color and the differentiation of people based on skin color caused resentment. Professor G. Greenwood wrote,

> There is little room for doubt that the policy itself has been a tremendous obstacle to the creation of goodwill between Australia and India. That this is so can be demonstrated despite assurances from Pakistan, Ceylon and India that wholesale migration is no solution to their problems and that Australia's migration restriction policy is her own affairs (London 193).

After 1903, applications for domicile were generally approved on the evidence of good character for at least five years. When the Act was amended in 1905, the return of the great majority of Asians from abroad involved only routine checking and cancelling the certificate of domicile or the certificate of exemption from the dictation test (Yarwood 70). However, most of the Indians did not intend to settle in Australia. Between 1901 and 1947 only wives and children of Indian residents, and in some cases the foreign-born children of Australia

citizens were permitted to come in for permanent residence. In 1912, members of the Indian Australia Society complained to the Indian office of the disadvantages they suffered. The burden of their request was to petition, for the right of Indians who had been in Australia before the Immigration Restriction Act to re-enter and for resident Indians to be allowed to bring in their wives and children. They also requested for voting rights and that Indians should receive British justice concerning citizenship rights and fair treatment by the police (Lepervanche 59).

During and after the First World War the matter of Indian immigration again came to public notice. India's wartime help was rewarded by a decision to deal as generously as possible with applications by former Indian residents who wished to return to the commonwealth and who had failed in some cases because of the tough policy of the early years, to obtain the usual certificates prior to their departure from Australia (Yarwood 132).

Several Punjabis were in Australia before the legislation discriminated against them and had been given entry before the Immigration Restriction Act. Some of them were able to secure evidence of domicile and then commute between Australia and India (Lepervanche 56). From Wollgoolga settler's account, most Punjabi Indians did not bring out their wives at this stage but some began to introduce their sons to work, like their fathers, as agricultural laborers. In the succeeding years, Indians commuted between Australia and Punjab. As the children grew up, the father would bring his son to work with him in the canefields, or else in the agricultural areas of Victoria. With few exceptions, the wives and daughters remained in India. In 1922, Sastri (British government delegate to Australia) advocated the removal of various obstacles to these residents including their exclusion from the commonwealth franchise and pension benefits. Concessions were not granted immediately, although only about 2000 Indians in the country qualified for the franchise and they were dispersed and unlikely to affect the vote in any electorate (Lepervanche 61).

However, as a consequence of the pressure of imperial considerations and their small number, the Indians in Australia had been granted a civil status superior to that of any other Asian minority and were permitted to bring out their immediate families. Thus, within four years the relevant statutes were amended so that by 1925 Indian residents could vote and in 1926 they were eligible for pensions. As British subjects, Indian immigrants enjoyed this advantaged legal status at the federal level. The social and economic conflicts generating colonial legislation did not suddenly disappear with the twentieth century, instead, the status reinforced many discriminatory practices against aliens (non-Europeans in particular) and introduced some new laws (Lepervanche 61).

During the Second World War, Indians could become permanent residents if they satisfied requirements to become permanent residents and were recognized as British subjects. In 1956, modifications to the White Australia Policy included a new category for entry and extended stay for highly qualified Asians. Thus, arrangements previously available to Indian immigrants were extended to other non-Europeans. Until 1973, non-European British subjects could not obtain Australian citizenship after twelve months as other British subjects could and non-European aliens could not acquire citizenship after three year's waiting as could other aliens. In 1973, these inequalities were finally removed. Australian Citizenship Act was amended and non-European along with other immigrants were required to wait three years before becoming an Australian citizens (Lepervanche 71-72).

India has been Australia's biggest source of migrants since 2016. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistic, preliminary estimates suggest that 592,000 Indians are living in Australia as of June 2018. This is a 30 per cent jump compared to census 2016 figures which recorded 455,389 Indians living in Australia. Indians now accounts for 2.4% of the Australian population. The number of Indian students studying in Australia has also increased. According to November 2017 figures, close to 70,000 students were studying in Australian universities and colleges *(www.sbs.com.au).* Indians are the largest group coming to Australia

each year, and the fourth-largest group of overseas-born Australian. However, the participation of Indians in political activities is very less and very few Indian-Australians can make it to the parliament. The biggest reason for few Indians running for the Parliament is that most of them have arrived in Australia recently and it is too early to expect them in large numbers in the Parliament. Similarly, racism present overtly and covertly is also responsible for the discouraged participation of Indians in political affairs. Tim Soutphommasane, a Professor at the University of Sydney, says that there are few politicians from Indian background at the federal level in Australia compared to the U.K, Canada and U.S because minorities fear that their families may become exposed to racist abuse and threats *(https://economictimes.indiatimes.com).* According to Kaushliya Vaghela (first India born Member of Parliament in Victoria), it was tough cracking into Australian Parliament at both state and federal levels, to be reflective of the diversity. Stating that the scenario was slowly changing, Vaghela who arrived in Australia as an international student over two decades ago said," I am the classic example of that. I am the first generation migrant to become an MP last year" *(www.ndtv.com)*. In a recent example, Dave Sharma, a second-generation Indian, won in an election to the federal Parliament of Australia from a seat in suburb Sydney. Sharma is a liberal candidate and former Australian ambassador to Israel. He became the first Indian origin lawmaker in the country's parliament *(https://mediaindia.eu/category/ diaspora/)*. However, it can be noticed that with an increasing number of Indian origin people now contesting elections in Australia, the political scene in the country is showing signs of diversity.

Indian migration to Australia is very recent compared to Indian migration to other parts of the world like USA, UK, and Africa, etc. It is believed that the first Indian had come to Australia as part of Caption Cook's ship, the first settlers in Australia. More Indians followed suit and came to Australia through both Australia and India were British colonies. Some Indian professionals started arriving in Australia from

1976 onwards in pursuit of better opportunities and quality of life. The predominant reason stated for migration to Australia has improved job prospects and a better life. At the same time education for self and children in terms of providing a better future and opportunities for the off springs seems to be another major factor for migration. Multiculturalism has given a richer and more varied society, a little more trusting and tolerant in respect of cultural differences. Indian diasporas have gradually assimilated and participated in this multicultural pot.

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Revisiting the Aboriginal Myths: An Ethnographic Study of Rolf De Heer's *Ten Canoes*

Kesang Youdon

Australia is a nation made up of Aboriginal Australians and a myriad of immigrants, some of the earliest of whom trace their ancestry to Britain. Regardless of whether one is for or against cultural diversity in Australia, the fact remains, Australian identity and Australian policies are being shaped by cultural diversity. The history of Indigenous people in Australia is mostly a history of exploitation, dispossession and discrimination by white settlers. Since the Western invasion started in 1788, the cultures of Aboriginal people were seen by Western settlers as primitive, inferior, and valueless. Their rights to land were not admitted. Despite cultural diversity among Aboriginal people, all Aboriginal people were seen as being homogenous. This discriminative view towards Aboriginal people was emphasized by the way the media represented Indigenous people and their culture. Indigenous representation in the media was hardly under the control of Indigenous people. The subjugated Aboriginals were either marginalized or omitted from the historical accounts. As Jennifer Sabbioni observes:

> Before the 1960s historians glorified the achievement of the European on the continent and ignored or underestimated, and in many cases executed, the disastrous impact of colonization on Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people (xxii)

As land rights protests and civil rights movement began in the 1970s, the demand for self-representation by Indigenous people increased. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Aboriginal response to a racist media representation was to demand control of their representation. Indigenous media is the use of the media by Indigenous people to represent themselves. The importance of Indigenous media as self-representation is increasing, and thus, Indigenous media is the fastest growing sector in Australian media today. Nowadays writers and film makers deal with history to represent an authentic Aboriginal past, which was devalued and distorted by European colonizers. In 1992, Professor Marcia Langton was commissioned to write an essay for the

Australian Film Commission (AFC) with a view to "establishing policies and guidelines for the funding of future Aboriginal film projects". In her essay 'Well I Heard it on Radio and I saw it on Television', Langton reflected on these reports saying that a "young crop of new filmmakers carne after the AFC revised its policy ... [and the] Australian Film Commission [developed] policy, funding and support for Indigenous filmmakers" (124). This policy added to the growing interest in Aboriginal film seen in the 1980s. Langton's essay addressed the need for Aboriginal people to control the means of production in film and reaffirmed that Aboriginal people need to make their own self representations. Langton does acknowledge that "simply being Aboriginal does not necessarily mean that you will make better films about Aboriginal people" (27). Now both Indigenous and non-Indigenous filmmakers have a greater understanding of, respect for and access to the aesthetic and cultural values of Aboriginal film and video production. Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart define Indigenous Media as:

> Indigenous media have also been defined as media which have defied all efforts by western media to cannibalize them… the continuous process of information dissemination, entertainment and education used in societies which have not been seriously dislocated by western culture or any other external influence (1987).

Australian cinema has seen a shift in the representation of Aboriginal people: from representations produced by non-Aboriginal filmmakers, to representations that are developed and controlled by Aboriginal people and filmmakers as "Representation is important as a concept because it gives the impression of 'the truth'". (Smith 35). Many recent films with Indigenous themes and characters offer cross cultural representations, and explore contemporary issues, which are also explored in an increasing range of contemporary literary works in print and in multimedia platforms.

This paper will explore the film *Ten Canoes* directed by Rolf De Heer and Peter Djigirr (2006)as a mythical narrative of oral traditions

discussing the importance of 'Story Telling' in the Yolngu Tribe of North Arnhem land in Australia. The technique of ethnography used in the making of this film will also be discussed. The paper also aims to analyze the film as a representative film by Aboriginals to reclaim the cultural identities of Indigenous people from the past and will dwell on the ancient rituals and practices of the Aboriginals which are now disappearing in modern times. The paper will reflect how filmmakers and the Aboriginals are striving to preserve the Aboriginal memory through the myths and stories told by elders and their ancestors.

Story-telling (oral narrations) in modern times

Ten Cannoes is a film which combines adventure, comedy and anthropology to explore an Aboriginal mythology. It is a film about the Indigenous Australian Yolngu people, who live in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. It combines Yolngu storytelling traditions with a Western approach to narrative cinema. It is a belief that in order to explainYolngu storytelling to non-Indigenous people, one must tell a story. *Ten Canoes* illustrates the power of storytelling and how it creates a relationship not just between all the characters from the various parts of the film, but with the audience watching the film.The Yolngu people have a long tradition of mythological storytelling as a means of teaching each generation the tenets and laws of the tribe. *Ten Canoes*, through its narrator, introduces such a myth, but it does so through the device of an inner story that is a thousand years old.

David Gulpilil, Australia's leading ambassador of Aboriginal culture, is the film's heart. He is the invisible narrator of the film. He tells the viewers a story that took place thousands of years ago, a story about his people, and to follow the local tradition, 'a good story must have a proper telling', even though 'sometimes they [the stories] take a long time to tell'. But a good story cannot start somewhere in the middle, it has to start at the very beginning. With these lines Gulpilil starts his narration:

> Gulpilil:Once upon a time in a land far, far away…No, not like that. I'monly joking. But I am goingto tell you a story. It's not your story…it's my story…a story like you've never seen

> before. But you want a proper story, eh? Then I must tell you some things of my people, and my land. Then you can see this story, and know it.

The structure of storytelling in *Ten Canoes* is multi-layered and just like the men on the goose egg hunting[1] expedition who peel the bark off trees to make their canoes, the layers of the story are peeled back for the audience so that we can get to the heart of the story. However, like the bark of a tree, each layer has significance and importance to the whole. In the prologue (the external layer) the Storyteller describes the creation of the land and his own birth. His description is a combination of legend and myth and introduces magic and spirits as elements that facilitate the logical chain of events within the context of the story:

> Gulpilil: Look at the flood! You can nearly see it. We are so long agonow. It is after Yurlunggur, Great Water Goanna, and namedthe trees, andnamed the birds, and named the plants, and named the people. It is after Yurlunggur gave the old ancestors the ceremony of Djungganwhich gives us the law we all learn.

The framing of the narrative is threefold- present, ancestors of the present and the Dream Time[2]. The present is the voice over of the narrator and a coloured showcase of the lands of the Yolngu tribe from the Arnhem Land. Ancestors of the present are represented by Mingolulu and Dayindi who along with other men go on Goose egg hunting on canoes which are shown in black and white. The Dream Time is shown colourful who belong from the mythical past. When writing about the Yolngu way of storytelling Caroline Josephs comments, 'Outside or exterior experiences will always be parallelling interior internal experiences in symbolic ways, in feeling states and in states of mind.' (174). In *Ten Canoes* the interior/subjective story of Ridjimiraril and Yeeralparil is paralleled to the exterior/objective story of the men of the goose-hunting trip. A story is being told within the other, the Storyteller gives equal importance to both the stories, the same actor plays Dayindi and Yeeralparil and there are strong visual links. Though the story telling is long and takes time yet it keeps the listeners involved.

> Dayindi to Mingolulu: you take long time to tell a story…Mingolulu: A good story must have proper telling, even though 'sometimesthey [the stories] take a long time to tell'and thisstory isgrowing like a young tree that is flowering for the first time.

Ten Canoes is the story of Dayindi, played by 17-year-old Jamie Gulpilil (son of David Gulpilil). Dayindi covets one of the wives of his older brother, and to teach him correct tribal protocol, the crafty older brother, Peter Minygululu tells Dayindi an instructive ancestral story; a tragicomic fable from the mythical past. The ancestral story from the mythical past deals with another young man Yeeralparil who covets the youngest wife of his elder brother, and the multiple conflicts and tragedies that result from him attempting to defy the rules of conduct in his clan. What this story ultimately conveys is that an individual's actions affect the entire group to which they belong, not just an individual's life.The final key to understanding the significance of the storytelling within *Ten Canoes* is to be aware that the stories contained within the film do not just resonate through the different layers of the film, but resonate beyond the film itself. Within the film audiences will recognise aspects of daily life that reflect their own.

Ethnography and the film

Ethno Cinema, from Jean Rouch'sscine-ethnography and ethno-fictions, is an "emerging practice of intercultural filmmaking" (393) being defined and extended by Melbourne-based writer and arts educator, Anne Harris, and others. Originally derived from the discipline of anthropology, Ethno cinema is one form of ethnographic filmmaking that prioritizes mutuality, collaboration and social change. Ethnographic film and video projects as stated by Rouchare created with the intention of going beyond "preserving", "empowering" or "giving voice" to marginalised cultures, ethnicities, communities or individuals(394).

Ethnography is the study of people in their own environment through the use of methods such as participant observation and face to face interviewing. Rolf De Heer used the technique of ethnography in

making this film. The great Aboriginal actor David Gulpilil also acted in Rolf de Heer's film 'The Tracker', and at that time he suggested a possible project set in his native Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Gulpilil showed De Heer a photo of ten canoes taken by anthropologist Donald Thomson, who was working in the Northern Territory during the 1930s. Thomson took thousands of pictures that provided a reference for the filmmakers. Images in the film such as an early shot looking down on ten canoes was carefully recreated from one of Thomsons pictures. Other photos provided insight into Aboriginal culture and were used by the film as well. The ethnographic photographs of the anthropologist Donald Thomson taken in Arnhem Land in the area of the Arafura Swamp in the 1930s, were pivotal in the genesis and production of 'Ten Canoes'. 'Ten Canoes' draws heavily on Thomson's photographs for both its look and content. Thomson's image of ten canoeists on the Arafura swamp inspired the narrative of the film, and his images and field notes were also used as cultural source documents; for example, as documentation of techniques of body ornamentation in the 1930s—such as armbands—which were then duplicated as closely as possible in the film. The images and notes were also used as a guide to the construction of the canoes, mosquito huts, tree platforms and other elements of material culture. The overall look of the film also draws on Thomson's photographs for its inspiration. In the director's account of the origins of the film, it was his recognition of the cinematic quality of the ten canoes photo that convinced him in a flash that this could be the focus of the film. The black and white segments reproduce the ethnographic visual codes of many of Thomson's photographs.

Firstly, before making the film, the producers of *Ten Canoes* made the Ten Canoes Agreement through discussions with the Yolngu people of Ramingining. The producers of *Ten Canoes* were aware of the need to respect the people's moral rights. Therefore, the Agreement admitted Aboriginal cultural paradigms of authorship and ownership by giving Ramingining community the property rights for all artefacts made for and used in the film.It was decided that the story would be made their way, in their language and would be set a long time ago, before the coming of Balanda (white settlers).In a meeting with the locals of Ramingining, Rolf De Heer expresses his intentions of making this film:

> Rolf: I came here at the invitation from somebody from here, who asked me to make a film here, with the people here. David Gulpilil inspiredand often invited me to make a film on the Yolngu Tribeand their rich culture. We have been working on making the film from two years.
>
> Pascoe: This balanda (Rolf) is following in Dr. Thomson's footsteps.Dr.Thomson walked withmy grandfather. My grandfather was naked
>
> and he was not ashamed before the balanda. Dr.Thomson was with Ganilbingu Tribe so they took him everywhere in the swamp area. A long way out. It's why we are making this filmfor the future, for our kids.We don't want the miningcompany, we want the acting. Stay on the track. I will act so my grandfather is remembered.

Secondly, De Heer respects Indigenous culture and follows Indigenous story-telling traditions in making this film. For instance, De Heer made the film using a combination of "color", and "black and white" following Yolngu cultural requirement. Their history as it now exists in and through the Thompson photograph needed to be depicted accurately, which means in "black and white" As De Heer had been contracted to make a color film, he combined "color" and "black and white" to follow the cultural requirement. He shot the story of the ancestors in the distant past in black and white, and the story of the mythical past in color.In cinematic storytelling; as Bordwell writes, relatively few films engage in significant 'temporal reshufllings' (1958: 33). There are three versions of the film in existence so far: there's the version that has Yolngu language with English subtitles and English storytelling by David Gulpilil; there's the version that has both Yolngu languages dialogue and storytelling in Mandalpingu by David, with English subtitles; and there's the Yolngu version, no subtitles, everything in the languages of the people whose film it is.

Thirdly, Casting in the film also followed the Indigenous cultural requirements. According to Yolngu culture, characters that are meant to be in relationship in the film should be played by people who have a proper kinship relationship in real life. It made casting difficult,

but De Heer respected the culture and let the people decide the casts.Many of the actors in the film were from the Yolngu Tribe itself who were the descendants of the ancestors in the pictures of Dr. Thomson.Thomson's research material—field notes, photos and collection of artefacts—make up the Donald Thomson Collection, which is known as 'by far the single most important ethnographic collection made in Australia'. His work, and stories about him, are widely known in Arnhem Land, where the 1930s are commonly referred to as 'Thomson Time'.Rolf De Heer's interview to Rollin's Review Show broadcasted on 15th August 2011 reveals:

> *Ten Canoes* is sort of Australian Aboriginal fable. It is a journey into the 100 years ago what life may have been like in Australia. None of the cast had done any acting before and it was one of the issues concerning me. The photographs of Donald Thompson from 1937 were an important reference. The people in these photos are the direct ancestors of people working in the film and so during the shooting of the film the actors were their own ancestors. None of the cast had done any acting before and it was one of the issues concerning me. They were innocent acting out of story that was ancestral in away. The photographs of Donald Thompson from 1937 were an important reference. The people in these photos are the direct ancestors of people working in the film and so during the shooting of the film the actors were their own ancestors.

Aboriginal identity and myths

Myths, or legends, are the oldest surviving narratives of human cultures. Myths serve as explanations for the existence of the Cosmos, for the history of the Cosmos, and for the properties and functions of the Cosmos. Humans migrated into Australia about 50,000 years ago, and they became isolated there, which caused the Aboriginal Australian culture and mythology to develop independently.The Aboriginal people reject all scientific approaches to their origin. They consider the dreaming to be their story of origin. According to Jennifer Sabbioni, "The dreaming determines the system of values, beliefs, behaviours, and

relationships that draw human beings, and natural world, landscape, and the spirit world into interconnected entity…Given the history of oppression and resistance in the two hundred years since white settlement, the dreaming also functions as the basis for indigenous identity" (xxi)

The Ancestors created the world as Aboriginal people experienced it, and laid down the rules and cultural practices that their descendants continued to follow. As Dr. Philip Clarke observes:

> The Dreaming Mythology comprises an Aboriginal system of beliefs that provides answers to great universal religious questions of human kind, concerning the origin, meaning, purpose and destiny of life. Dreaming Ancestors are central to Aboriginal religion and the sharing of beliefs and customs, helping to bind together Aboriginal people from a wideranging area (382)

In Northeastern Arnhem land, Yolngu people celebrate the ceremony of the arrival of two sisters and a brother, collectively known as Djangau, during Dreaming Creation period. The narrator in the very beginning of the film tells about the Dreamtime and the myths of how the lands were created and laws were made for the people:

> Gulpilil: The time is after the big flood came that covered the whole land. Look at that flood! You can nearly see it, we are so long ago. It is after Yurlunggur, Great water Goanna, and named the trees and named the birds and named the plants and named the people. It is after Yurlunggur gave the old ancestorsthe ceremony of the Djunggan, which gives us the law we all learn. It is after the people learnt to live to that law.

In the film, the goal of Minygululu is to tell his younger brother, Dayindi, about the ancient ancestors' laws whilst teaching him about how to do goose egg hunting with the other men of the tribe and how to build canoes. Dayindi is interested in Minygululu's youngest wife and therefore listens carefully to the recognisable story of the ancient ancestors. This way he learns the ancient goose- egg hunting.Minygululu teaches Dayindi the process of making canoes while Dayindi learns by watching:

> Minygululu: Listen now. Proper trees for canoes grow far away from the swamp. You must put the barks in the water to soak. One bark already soaked needs to be put on the fire to make it hot and soft. When the bark is almost ready you must cool it down to make it easy to bend. This is the way we do it with our people.

The Aboriginal's early hunter gatherer style of life is now replaced by the Whites' highly industrialized life. As a result, lots of traditional skills have vanished. These myths and stories are being told in order to bring back the lost brotherhood and bonding within tribes in Aboriginal society.The film focuses strongly on the Aboriginal laws which they believe were created by their ancestors to teach them the way of life. When Ridjimiraril kills the wrong stranger, thinking he has kidnapped his second wife, the law causes the men of the stranger's tribe to do a spear throwing act; where the men from the stranger's tribe are allowed to throw one hundred and fifty spears at Ridjimiraril and Yeeralparil. The tribe members of the deceased stranger demand for Makarata[3] from Rigimiriril which if denied by him would lead to a war between both the tribes. Rigimiriril's death is mourned by his tribe and they too learn lesson from it.

> Mingolulu: Rigimiraril knew the law. He knew it was the way of his people. He knew that people needed the law, so they could stay living the right way, with the right land. And he knew he had broken the law. Without the Makaratta, there would be a bad war between the two tribes. Law has been followed.

After the stranger's tribe had hit spears at Rigimiriril right in his guts they ceased the makaratta and disappeared. Rigimiriril wounded badly, is taken back to his camp where all his men had gathered for his death dance.[4] The film shows the Death Dance of Ridjimiraril and the funeral rites performed by his men to help Rigimiriril find his ancestor's spirits:

> Gulpilil:Slowly he walks to the middle of the space in the camp. And there near the fires, so that every one can see… Rigimiriril begins to dance… his own death dance. Rigimiriril wants his men to sing his death song for him, so that all his fathers will

know that he is dyingand come to him.

Linking past and present through myths, the film highlights the significance of dance, music, songs which are an expression of the deep spirituality of the Aboriginal people, and have been passed down by the oral tradition from their ancestors since the beginning of time. The Aboriginal spirituality is still alive in the forms of myths, stories and beliefs of the Aboriginal people and the film is an attempt to bring back the spirituality in modern times.In April 2005at Muruwangi station during the making of this film, Peter Djigirr, a key member of the Arafura Swamp people and the co- director of the film speaks on 'what the film means' and what were the ancient laws of their society?

> Djigirr: We come from this land. People, Balanda, always come, miners and that, and we always say no to them, no mining, because we don't want to lose our culture. White man's ways will just destroy us. We have our law from long time ago, important law for everything, but all them white men come more and more and we can't stay in that law. That law just dropping away. If we go more further with losing our law then maybe white men can tell us, "Where's your culture?...Nothing, you're lost, all bad luck for you." But you film mob came here to lift up this law for us, to show how they used to sit a long time ago, them laws. So white men can see, we can see, anyone can see, we got that law. If we can't do this movie, all them Balanda put us down, but you people just come to lift us up, to teach them, because we don't want to lose our culture, you know. We gonna try and lift up that law for us with this movie, so they can recognise, "Ah, these people still got that law for them, culture, all that." It's really important this movie get done from the start to the end. We gonna show this film, and then they can recognise, all them white mens...that's nicer.

Most of the Indigenous people understand identity in terms of social practices- kinship relationships, laws, community acceptance and way of life. The film shows the kinship relationships, ties to the land, religious rites and practices, as well as their shared history since European invasion. These are significant ways in which these people

identify themselves as Aboriginals. From the Aboriginal point of view of the mythical past and its impact on present, it is not wrong to quote the words of Eliot, "a perception not only of the pastness of the past but of its presence…"(109). This consciousness of the presence of the past in the present instigates writers and film makers to write and show the truth of the Aboriginal people and their lives. They want to present their culture to the world to have it recognized and have it valued.

Revisiting the past is not a retreat from the present, but recognition of the past is integral to the present, and is an important agent in determining who we are now. It is often useful to recapture the past to clarify and ascertain some meaning for the events in the present. In Aboriginal communities, memory about the past is fading away, especially among the younger generation. Born in westernized surroundings, these young Aboriginals are barely in touch with Aboriginal tradition in their daily life. Compared with older generation's lamentation of the past, the younger generation of Aboriginals care less about their Aboriginal heritage. Remembering and storytelling keep the younger generation connected to the past. Films like *Ten Canoes* is like a journey to the Ancient Aboriginal times and learning the rich culture. In June 2005 at Muruwangi station during the making of this film, Djulibingan actor of this film states his reason to participate in the film:

> Djulibing: This film is for the kids' future, so when they grow up they're gonna see, because not enough of the older people is trying to teach the younger kids. It's very important what we're gonna do here with the acting so everybody can see and understand how people was first like this. This is not just only for me...I'm doing this for my grandkids and for the next one generation to generation. They can learn what's in this film, this movie is gonna remind them about our ancient ancestors. Everything is changing, everything is going and gone now. The only thing they know is some ceremony...they not even normal kids anymore. Maybe they gonna keep this film with them so they can put it in their head.
>
> The film contributes in representing the Indigenous culture as

narrated by the ancestors of the Aboriginals to their next generation and it has proved itself as a source for reclaiming the lost identities of the Indigenous people of Australia in its cinematic portrayal. Such type of films should be promoted and made in order to understand and spread awareness among the masses of both the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous audiences about the long-lost culture of the Indigenous people and to be proud of it (cherishing the memories of the ancestors). Michael Dawu, who plays one of the ten canoeists, describes his experience of working on the film this way:

> Dawu: Ten Canoes brings me my memory back and my energy. You wake me up. I have to thank you [Rolf] for it, because you was like this 'Hey, come on, get up, you'll have to bring your memory.' But memory gone. 'Here, you'll have to follow like that then, like the old people, and you can make this one film and bring that memory back!'

Conclusion

*Ten Canoes*has had a significant impact on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. For Indigenous people, *Ten Canoes* has provided an opportunity for cultural renewal and helped them bring back an Indigenous cultural memory and integrate it into the present. For non-Indigenous people, it has helped them recognize the cultural difference and value it.As an Indigenous film which has a Western perspective, *Ten Canoes* facilitated the cross-cultural recognition between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The film has brought laughter, pride and joy to an entire community, even to those who'd had their doubts about the film being made at all. For days afterwards it was a dominant topic of conversation and set off many tangential conversations. Old ways were questioned, new ways were questioned. Culture was discussed, and history, and what it meant to be Yolngu. And number of people who were in the film, and those who'd made contribution to it, were changed by it. They had a confidence of their place in the world not seen before. *Ten canoes* shows many ancient beliefs and rituals of the Aboriginals. One can say that the film has revisited the ancient cultures which still have connections in the daily lives of the Aboriginals and this film has

become a brand ambassador of the Aboriginals representing the ancient cultures.

The media plays an important role in legitimizing an ideology. In Australia, the mainstream media has helped legitimize the discriminative and misleading view toward Indigenous people. History not only gives a sense of belonging to the Individuals but also helps to form a group identity. The Aboriginals of Australia do not have a written history, so memory becomes a key instrument to reconstruct their history. Memory enables them to make use of their oral traditions and non-written sources such as stories, songs and narratives, to rewrite their own history.Self-representation by Indigenous people emerged as the best way to contest such colonial representation. Films like *Ten Canoes* are in contemporary times, becoming a tool for the Aboriginals as a means of self-representation through their point of view and to represent and revive their ancient culture to the world.

Notes

[1]Goose Egg hunting is a traditional expedition of Aboriginal men to hunt goose eggs in the forest swamps.Goose Egg Gathering: Also known as Goose Egg Hunting. Expeditions by canoe of up to a week at a time used to be launched onto the swamp towards the end of the wet season, when the magpie geese had laid their eggs. Eggs were collected in numbers and the birds hunted for their meat.

[2]Dream time is the Aboriginal understanding of their ancestors' being, beginning of the world and the creation of the world. It is the myths such as these which are the source of what Aborigines call the dreaming.

[3]Makaratta or pay back:A formal and ritualised form of punishment or retribution, usually with attendant ceremony. Warriors from the aggrieved tribe throw spears at the perceived culprit until blood is drawn. Sometimes the wound is fatal, sometimes only minor. Occasionally a partner is chosen by the culprit, and both face the spears. Justice is deemed to be done when either one, the innocent or the perceived guilty, is hit.

[4]Death Dance: When someone was at the edge of death, ceremony would start. People would gather and initially a dance would be performed for the dying person, to help him begin to make connections with his ancestors in the spirit world. Occasionally a person, still capable but knowing he was going to die, would perform the death dance himself. Ceremony would continue on and off for up to twelve months after the person had died.

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History, Culture and Human Bonding: An Exploration of Diversity in the Works of Kirsty Murray

Megha Katoria
Neelima Kanwar

Culture is a complex term that includes the way of life; the customs and beliefs; art and social organization of a particular country or group. The social set-up with respect to the roles associated with men and women, the rituals, celebrations, myths and folktales all form a part of the culture of a community. The stimulating and captivating writings of Australian writer, Kirsty Murray are replete with cultural, political, historical and social aspects of the society. She explores the diversity of life of different cultures like that of Australia, India and Ireland in her texts— *Bridie's Fire*, *The Lilliputians* and *The Year It All Ended*, which would be the focus of study for this paper. The present paper intends to discuss and focus on Murray's works as a part of multicultural literature where varied historical events, as well as cultural aspects of the people are explored and irrespective of cultural differences, human bonding holds its own importance.

Literature is a reflection of the society that induces us to contemplate upon varied aspects of society. The writers inspired by life events, weave them into the characters of their works and through their words, these intricacies of life are brought forth for us to read, visualise, explore as well as reflect. Kirsty Murray's works imbibe a spirit of history and her works of historical fiction are riveting. She lays stress on the importance of family histories and culture even in writing. As defined in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, history is all the events that happened in the past or the past events concerned in the development of a particular place, subject, etc. (Hornby 737). It is an umbrella term that may include political, economic, social or cultural history. The history may be of a particular era, an individual, a

community or a country. History when weaved with artistic mastery of characters and words of the literary artist, gives a historical work of merit to the readers as are the works of Kirsty Murray taken up for study. The historical incidents of World War I, the demise of Pollard's Lilliputian Opera Company, the Irish Potato Famine and the Indian Freedom Movement are some of the historical events woven into the artistic historical fictional works of Kirsty Murray.

Bridie O' Connor, the protagonist of the novel *Bridie's Fire*, portrays the plight of the girls who were victims of the Irish potato famine and were shipped out to Australia to work as indentured labour. "The famine, or An Ghorta Mor, as it was known in Ireland, was a terrible event in Irish history that left more than a million Irish dead and drove almost two million people away from their homeland," writes Kirsty Murray (Author's Note 251). The people affected by famine in Ireland were starving, dying or were being dislocated from home. Murray brings to light the pitiable plight of the people of Ireland. She says: "There were no children voices any more, not even the low, whining voice of the dying. Nearly everyone was gone…. All six of the O' Farrell children had died one after the other, their bellies swollen with hunger, their eyes too big for their faces….All along the laneways the houses lay empty, as if the people had gone for an evening walk but then never returned" (24). The Irish have had a great influence on Australia as when they came away from their homeland, they brought with them their ideas and stories too and "over 30 per cent of Australians have at least one Irish ancestor" (Author's Note 251).

The Lilliputians is based on a true incident of the demise of a real theatre group—Pollard's Lilliputian Opera Company, when in February 1910, the children of the troupe walked out refusing to stay with Mr Arthur Pollard with whom they had come for the tour in July 1909. In India, the children attempted to earn their fares to go back to their home in Australia while the legal proceedings took place in the High Court of Madras (Author's note 319). During their stay in India, the children also got to know about the stirrings for freedom from the

colonial rule going on in India. When the troupe performed at the Minerva Theatre in Calcutta, it was only half full. The next day in the morning, Lionel, the fourteen-year-old troupe member sat reading the newspaper and said: "Since the Alipore bombing, people aren't keen to come out at night" (156). The thirteen-year-old Charlie says that the Indians want independence to which Lionel adds that they want freedom from the Britain rule. They talk about the nationalists and how "Ghosh is being painted as a freedom fighter" (157) and the *babu* lawyer has given statement in the newspaper that says: "Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India but across distant seas and land" (157) Alipore Bomb case was a historic trial in which the British Government tried to implicate Sri Aurobindo in various revolutionary activities (Web). There is also a reference to the Swadeshi Movement when Mr Arthur, the troupe manager says that the "Swadeshi business" is ruining their show. Poesy asks Tilly as to what it meant to which Tilly replies: "They are boycotting British goods…Anything British for that matter. They think if none of the Indians buy British things or come and see our shows, that it will drive the Britishers out of the country" (158). They also discuss how the "Indians are marching up and down the streets, protesting" (159).

The Year It All Ended deals with the aftermath of the First World War which lasted approximately for four years starting in July 1914 and ending in November 1918. Kirsty Murray wrote this work to recognize the contribution of women to World War I as she felt that the "stories of their fortitude and suffering in the face of grief" were largely forgotten (Author's note n.p.). Writing about Murray's novel and exploring the characters that represent people during those times in Australia, Ananda Braxton-Smith writes:

> The post-WW I period of *The Year it All Ended* is rife with governmental broken promises, half-truths and xenophobic law-making. The returning soldiers are learning that their democratically elected representatives will deploy them freely as weapons, but will not recognise them as human beings when

> and if they return from duty. After fighting for freedom in Europe they must now fight for it again at home. (7-8)

Tiney, the protagonist of the novel, makes a pilgrimage to post-war Europe for her broken family in order to visit the graves of her brother, Louis and cousin, Will who fought in the war and died. Streissguth in his book, *World War I Aftermath* quotes: "The war had resulted in the deaths of approximately 15 million civilians and soldiers on all sides. There were approximately 8.5 million battle deaths and 21.2 million wounded out of 65 million men mobilized for war" (14). In "her journey through the blackened post-war landscapes that spread over every border," Tiney realises that "everyone is suffering regardless of nationality or moral intent" thereby, opening her to "a more nuanced view on the war and war in general" (Smith 3).

Culture involves social relationships, the way of life, family structure and hierarchy; the political and economic functioning and the rituals, myths and folklore of a particular tribe or community. The diverse multicultural aspects of the people and community can be well explored in the works of Kirsty Murray. Her works beautifully capture the experiences and thoughts of those visiting another geographical arena for a while or the longing of the immigrants for their homeland as they try to retain their cultural roots by following their own customs while being away from their roots and narrating their folktales to the people of the other community. Perceptions about other places or cultures are at times influenced by things read in books and seen in movies or the stories passed on through generations.

In *The Lilliputians*, the apprehensions of Poesy Swift about visiting India are evident. When the thirteen-year-old Poesy, who is a part of the troupe of the Percival's Lilliputians Opera Company, comes to know that instead of travelling to America from Australia they would first be travelling to India, she says: "I caught my breath. Tilly had told me so much about America that I could see it, taste it, long for it – but India? I'd read Mr Kipling's books. India was wild and strange, full of

boys and men, wolves and tigers…in my mind it was a dark place full of monkeys and snakes, holy men and soldiers" (47).

Murray gives vivid and elaborate descriptions of India in her novel, *The Lilliputians*. When the members of the troupe reach India, they see certain things and some other religious and cultural aspects which are not known to them in the least. On reaching Calcutta (now Kolkata), the fifteen-year-old Tilly felt that it was beautiful as well as terrible at the same time. She could not associate in a pleasant way with the effigy of the Hindu goddess Kali and felt fearful as Mr Arthur Percival, their manager and director, told them that it was a part of the Hindu religion and rituals. This is how the voice of Tilly describes it:

> Calcutta wasn't what I had expected. It was beautiful and terrible with its Eden gardens, wide avenues, dilapidated mansions and piles of rotting figurines on the bank. The Butcher said they were effigies from *puja* ceremonies that the Hindus held, and he knew the names of their Gods: Kali and Shiva. He made a remark about Kali being a teenage girl. As if that black-and-blue monster effigy with water washing through her was a girl. It made me shudder. (142)

Navratri is a holy time for the Hindus and different forms of the Goddess are worshipped on all nine days. The effigies or statues of the Indian goddess are immersed into the water on *Vijayadashmi* as a part of the Hindu ritual.

In Bombay, now renamed Mumbai, the children of the troupe while walking on the road feel frightened as they encounter a giant wild animal. As Mr Arthur pretends to defend them telling the giant to stay away from them, the beast does not attack them but starts dancing and shrieking. They realise that it is "a man dressed in a bizarre costume, rather like a giant monkey" (218). Charlie knew that he was just a street performer and told Mr Arthur that he would not hurt them. Charlie says: "He's dressed as a monkey god and he goes about collecting alms for the Hanuman temple" (218). The reference is to a Hindu God, Lord Hanuman— the "Monkey leader" who is considered divine and is

worshipped in many parts of India (Wilkins 405).

Poesy had her own different view about the city of Calcutta. She remarked that "the city smelt delicious – a sweetness of milky tea and spices" and on seeing a woman "hanging out coloured cloths, a line of *saris* floating in the breeze," she thought that it was a lovely sight to see (144). In Madras, now renamed Chennai, Poesy also wears an Indian costume for women called *salwaar kameez* with a *dupatta* that Prem, an Indian boy who was Charlie's friend, had borrowed for her from his sister Meenakshi. Poesy wears it and describes it as a "strange outfit" (249). She says:

> The light cotton pants were almost like pyjamas, with drawstring waist. The indigo blue shirt …had long sleeves and came down to my knees, almost like a dress. But the shawl was the piece I liked best…it was so long that I could wrap it around my head to hide my blonde hair and fair skin and still have enough to cover my shoulders and drape over my wrists (249).

Charlie, Prem and Poesy eat together from a little stall along the seashore. Charlie gets a *dosa* which Poesy describes as a "great big crispy pancake" while she eats "rice, curry and tiny fried cake on a banana leaf" (249). At some places in India, people eat with their fingers without using a spoon and Poesy felt that she was not "very dainty at eating" with her fingers. She says: "It seemed to be terribly untidy way to go about things but Prem ate quickly, deftly, without making a mess at all" (249). Also, banana leaf is used for plates especially in Southern parts of India.

Murray also uses many words from Hindi in her work like *ayah, anna, babu, chamcha, fakir, ghat, nowker, nabob, punkah, sadhu, topee, vakil*, etc which intensifies the flavour of India as she writes about it. She gives the meaning of all these words in a section referred to as Anglo-Indian Words, towards the end of the novel. One gets a glimpse into the culture of India where spices form an integral part of the food and the Indian traditional attire for women is *sari* and *salwaar kameez* with *dupatta*.

Murray gives a scintillating description of the Indian festival of Diwali in these words: "…they were everywhere—tiny little heart-shaped earthenware lamps burning brightly in the soft evening light. People had lined them up along the roofs and windowsills. Servants knelt outside every house to set lamps on the steps and at the gateways, filling them with oil and touching a flame to the wick until the streets glowed with flickering light" (181). Poesy and others saw tiny lamps lit everywhere and they could make only guesses about them but it was Charlie who told them that the lamps were lit on the occasion of Diwali— the Indian festival of lights. He says: "It's Divali….Later, there will be fireworks. Like Guy Fawkes Night at home" (181). Poesy thought that it was a very beautiful sight that made her catch her breath. We also see a reference made to the Guy Fawkes Night, also known as Bonfire Night or Cracker Night which was celebrated in Australia during the time in which the novel is set. Bob Bryne in his article on childhood memories describes the Guy Fawkes Night in these words: "Once the sun went down, the bonfire would be lit and kids would be running around letting off crackers, lighting sky rockets and having a lot of fun" (Web). It was celebrated on 5th November every year that involved a display of fireworks but was later discontinued being celebrated due to "risk of bushfires" and other "firework related injuries" (Web). So a festival of lights and crackers is celebrated in India and Australia, though the reasons and time for the celebration are different. In India, Diwali is celebrated commemorating the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after fourteen years of exile. Guy Fawkes Night is celebrated on account of the survival of King James I in spite of an attempt on his life as Guy Fawkes was arrested on November 5, 1605 for placing explosives beneath the House of Lords. The lavish palace of the Maharaja of Mysore at that time in India "with its murals and gold leaf and all the elaborate tiling and fretwork" (279) is well described by Murray.

In *Bridie's Fire*, we see that Bridie is a good storyteller like her father and she quite often refers to certain folktales of Ireland which she

had heard as a child while being in Ireland. As Bride is leaving for Australia, she assures her brother, Brandon that she would bring him to live with her and draws an analogy with the story of Ossian that her father used to tell them way back home. She tells Brandon:

> …I'll come back for you. You remember the story of Ossian? Remember how our dad used to tell it? How even though the most beautiful fairy princess in all the worlds took him beyond the ninth wave to the land of wine and honey, and loved him forever and kissed him with honeyed kisses, still he never forgot his brothers. And remember how the love of them brought him back to Ireland? I'll be like Ossian, but I'll bring you to me, to the Land of Forever Young, like in the stories except it will be Australia… (72)

When Bridie reaches Australia from Ireland, she is indentured as a scullery maid in Melbourne's De Quincey family. She narrates many Irish stories to young Gilbert De Quincey who eventually becomes very fond of these tales. Reference to St. Brigid appears quite often in the text. St. Brigid's Eve was celebrated by people of Ireland and they would make St.Brigid's crosses and scatter shells praying to the saint to keep them safe from hunger for another year. Bridie's father also narrated to her the story of St. Brigid and said that he had seen in Bridie the same fire like the saint that would keep her strong. Time and again Bridie is seen yearning for her homeland. While going back to her workplace at De Quincey's from the market, Bridie has a longing for Ireland: "…she thought of Ireland with such longing that she had to press her hands against her chest, as if to stop her heart from breaking" (129). On another occasion on their way to Miss Charity's house, they passed by the seaside village of St. Kilda and Bridie was again filled with longing as she looked out over the sea and she "wanted to imagine that the hazy blue peninsula was Ireland – that she could simply cross that body of shimmering water and be home again" (130). On many other occasions, Bridie feels this yearning for her native place.

In *The Year It All Ended*, there is a practice of people going to

visit Mrs Constance-Higgens who claims to be a communicator of the dead people. Many people go to her especially to communicate with those of their family they have lost in the war. The people have a belief in spirits talking to people who are alive. Also, folktales form an important part of their lives like Paul tells Tiney of the tale of *Zauberer*, the sorcerer who fought the devil to save all of them.

Human bonding and kinship are inseparable aspects of our lives. The aspects of love, support and care imbued in the working of our lives make us true human beings. The idea is not only fixated of being helpful or kind to our family and friends but to all humans irrespective of different religions, cultures or communities. Kirsty Murray deeply imbibes this spirit of humanity in her works. There are a variety of characters in the works that have been taken up for study. Though some characters are fixed to just their own kin and community, there are others who are helpful even to the unknown and as they traverse the path of their life, they also develop a bond of love, friendship or just humanity with the people they meet.

In *The Lilliputians*, we would especially like to refer to the bonding and friendship between Charlie, from Australia and Prem, from India. Irrespective of being from different places and different cultural backgrounds, they form a strong bond. Charlie was interested in learning magic and he held the *fakirs* and *sadhus* of India to be very skilful. Prem assisted Charlie in his endeavour to learn and do magic by bringing for him things that he needed for his magic tricks as Prem's uncle was a pharmacist. They would also go out together to eat and watch the tricks performed by the *fakirs*. Prem also borrowed his sister's *salwaar kameez* for Poesy when she insisted on coming out secretly with Charlie to see the splendour of Indian magic of the *fakirs*. When Poesy is out of sight and loses her way, both Charlie and Prem split up to search for her. Finally, it is Prem who is able to locate her. As Poesy and Prem walked along the road, Prem said: "Charlie will be most relieved I have found you. And I am also very relieved" (254). During the performance

of his magic tricks at the Adyar Club, Charlie says: "Before I came to India, I imagined it a country of darkness. But in India I have found friendship and I have found light" (290).

In Mysore, the girls were taken to the old Maharani's palace and with the falling apart of the Percival's Lilliputian Opera Company, Poesy did not feel good and had a yearning for her home in Australia. Poesy had fever and fell asleep on the cool tiles. The Maharani whispered to her stroking her forehead: "May I suffer instead of you child" (281). It made Poesy weep to hear a stranger speak to her with such concern. The Maharani made arrangements and the servants took proper care of Poesy. The Maharani then came to check out on Poesy again later in the morning and gave her a small silver nightingale brooch as a gift. The maternal affection showered on Poesy by the Maharani of Mysore and the bonding as well as love that developed between them is quite visible in the narrative.

In *Bridie's Fire*, we see a lovely bonding between Gilbert and Bridie. Gilbert, the younger son of the house reminds Bridie of her own brother Brandon whom she had to leave behind when she came to Australia. Her wonderful ability to tell stories draws young Gilbert De Quincey to her and she tells him delightful tales which her father narrated to her when she stayed in Ireland. They also walk down to the river together and Gilbert writes a letter to Brandon on Bridie's behalf and posts it for her.

In *The Year It All Ended*, Tiney develops bonds of humanity and love with many people not otherwise closely associated with her. When Tiney goes alone to visit Louis' grave, she is stranded there as the car does not return to take her back but she is greeted by Madame Sentier, a French woman of approximately eighty years as Bridie could guess from her appearance. Tiney stays with her, for it took three days for Madame Sentier to arrange another car for Tiney. As Tiney bade her goodbye, the old woman held Tiney's hand saying "*Bon courage*" (206). Tiney says: "You have been so kind. One day, I hope to come back to see you again" (206).

On another occasion, when Tiney goes to look for Will's grave in German graveyard, she meets a woman who too had lost her loved ones in war. Tiney looks at the woman with great empathy that it makes the woman weep and the "woman suddenly, unexpectedly, embraced Tiney….Then the woman kissed her swiftly on one cheek and turned and hurried away" (223). Tiney had developed a bond of friendship which eventually changed into love for both Martin and her and it all too had started while Tiney's was on her tour to Europe to visit her brother's grave. She thought that the stranger, visible from far was trying to commit suicide and she had run to stop him. Later this stranger named Martin helped her in her endeavours and eventually they fell in love and married.

Reading, exploring and discussing about different cultures makes one more awakened to the unknown territories of culturally diverse life in this world. In the Author's Note towards the end of *The Year It All Ended*, Kirsty Murray writes:

> History, as written, often focuses on violence. But history as lived is a tapestry of daily rituals; of eating, cleaning, studying, playing, nurturing, working, loving and grieving— of all small pleasures and large emotional challenges. The history of living is a story of the interconnectedness of families, friends and lovers; the things that matter in the lives of every single human being. (n.pag)

Though the way of life, customs and beliefs of people may differ from one another, there are many similarities which make them unified humans above everything. Through her gripping narratives, Murray not only brings to the fore the history and culture of different places but lays emphasis on humanity and traces the journey of life where the magical powers of care, affection and love connects human beings.

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Survival in a Multicultural Society : A Comparative Study of Maya Angelou's I Know *Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Sally Morgan's *My Place*

Divya Sharma

> '[...] I always thought Australia was different to America, Mum, but we had slavery here, too. The people might not have been sold on the blocks like the American Negroes were, but they were owned just the same.' (Morgan 149)

The above quote from Sally Morgan's *My Place* very appropriately places the African American and Australian Aboriginal experience on the same platform, where they have had to wage a constant battle against racism. Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) and Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987) are two autobiographical works that connect two cultures and communities across boundaries. Both America and Australia claim to be multicultural societies, where people from diverse ethnic cultures are given equal space, acceptance and respect. But the lived experience of non-whites in these countries contests the claims of an equal space for diverse cultures. People from different race and culture are seen with suspicion and discriminated against on various levels. bell hooks, the American author and Black feminist, in the preface of her book—*Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*, explains the agony of living as part of the marginalized section of a larger American community. She says: "To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body" (hooks xvii). She further explains the predicament of black Americans in the following passage:

For black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the railroad tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. Across those tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, .

. . We could enter that world, but we could not live there. We had always to return to the margin, to beyond the tracks, to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of town. (xvii)

Amongst these marginalised were the black women who were at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Both Angelou and Morgan give voice to these triply marginalised women, who have long been forced to live on the margins of so called 'Multicultural Society'.

A comparative study of Maya Angelou's *Caged Bird* and Sally Morgan's *My Place* brings forth the similarities and dissimilarities in their dealings with racism. Angelou being from African-American descent and Morgan an Aboriginal Australian, both had to face discrimination on the basis of their race and colour. They and their families were persecuted for being non whites, the pain of which is honestly captured in their autobiographical works. In *Caged Bird*, it is through Angelou that we get to know briefly about the past life of her mother, Vivian and her grandmother, whom she calls Momma Henderson. But *My Place*, isn't just Sally's story, it also has autobiographical sections devoted exclusively to her uncle Arthur, her mother Gladys and her grandmother Daisy (who is called Nan), where they narrate their own stories, which is then written and edited by the writer, Sally Morgan. While Maya herself has to bear the brunt of racism and segregation and see her close ones being humiliated and subjected to insults on a day to day basis during her childhood, Sally, on the other hand, in her pursuit to know about her ancestral history, relives the horrors of her Aboriginal past through her mother, grandmother and Arthur's story.

The lived experiences of Sally and Maya are quite different because of the difference in their skin tones. While Maya is black, Sally is comparatively light skinned as a result of three generations of white fathers. Her mother and grandmother's lie that they were Indians, acts as a shield against the onslaughts Sally would have had to face, had she owned up to being an Aboriginal. Many people around her know about her Aboriginal lineage, but Sally is totally ignorant about the fact till the

age of fifteen. It is the realist Jill, Sally's younger sister, who opens her eyes to the fact that they were Aboriginal. Sally is also not much aware of the social stigma attached to being an Aboriginal. Jill is aghast at her ignorance as she says: " 'You still don't understand, do you,' Jill groaned in disbelief. 'It's a terrible thing to be Aboriginal. Nobody wants to know you, not just Susan. You can be Indian, Dutch, Italian, anything, but not Aboriginal!...' " (Morgan 98).

Maya on the other hand is acutely aware of her displacement as a black girl in a white society, since early childhood. In fact as a child her earnest wish is to be transformed into a white little girl. At the beginning of *Caged Bird*, we see little Maya on the Easter day celebrations at the Church. Trying to escape her ugliness in the thin, lean, black body, she creates a "cruel fairy stepmother" (Angelou 5) and a father who, "must of been a Chinaman" (4) to explain to herself more than to anyone else, the real reason of her ugliness. She also foresees the much awaited transformation to happen soon enough by wearing the "lavender taffeta" dress on the Easter day, which shall make her look like, "one of the sweet little white girls who were everybody's dream of what was right with the world" (4). Until she is converted back to her real white self, she would like to be excused for her temporary ugliness, which she believes hasn't come to reside in her body forever. Thus, her choice of poem:

What you looking at me for?

I didn't come to stay...(3)

She cannot remember the rest of the poem. Maya's acutely self conscious image as a child and her "well-known-forgetfulness" (3) is reminiscent of Sally's childhood as she tells us in the beginning pages of *My Place*, "I was a grubby five-year-old in an alien environment" (Morgan 15). She also faces difficulty with words. We see her incapacity to give answers to the other patients at the hospital where she goes to see her father. She writes: "Actually, I was more scared than shy. I felt if I said anything at all, I'd fall apart. There'd be me, in pieces on the floor. I was full of secret fears" (16).

The women in the African American and Australian Aboriginal

societies have been at the lowest rung, as they were easy targets of sexual exploitation by the whites as well as the black males at times. Both the books highlight the economic as well as the sexual exploitation of the black female and how they are still able to survive and eventually emerge as successful women by the end of the books on various levels. The very decision to write their lives down is in itself an affirmation of the past that the protagonist is proud of.

Angelou gives us vivid images of the lives of blacks in the segregated world of Stamps. When Maya and Bailey were three and four years of age, their parents amidst a failing marriage, ship them all alone from California to Stamps, Arkansas to their grandmother like sundry goods. It is here that Maya sees racism at its ugliest. Except for Mrs. Flowers who is "the aristocrat of Black Stamps" (Angelou, *Caged Bird* 101); Mr. McElroy, who is an independent black man, which according to Maya is "A near anachronism in Stamps" (24); and Mrs. Henderson the successful business woman, the rest of the population of Stamps mostly comprises of black peasants. Maya minutely observes the lives of these peasants in *Caged Bird*.

Though slavery has been abolished, the poor peasants continue to work in the "remains of the slavery's plantations" (Angelou, *Caged Bird* 9). Now the whites make them toil under the harsh sun picking cotton in the fields owned by the white masters for meagre wages. Life of cotton-pickers is physically taxing with negligible reward for the effort. Like the little caged bird, Marguerite Johnson, these peasants are perpetually caged in those cotton-fields which are constructed by their white cruel masters. Angelou writes "But I had seen the fingers cut by the mean little cotton balls . . ." (11). The white cotton balls which exact incessant labour from the workers are as mean as the white ruthless master and are also symbolic of the tyranny and oppression of the white man, whose humane feelings are never aroused by the magnitude of the sufferings of the poor blacks.

Such was also the case with Sally's grandmother and mother. Both Gladys and Nan had a tough life full of physical labour and

drudgery. If peasants in *Caged Bird* were chained to the cotton fields, these women were slaving in the houses of the whites. Nan's description of her duties at Ivanhoe the house of Drake-Brockmans in Perth is heart wrenching. She tells Sally:

> I did all the work at Ivanhoe. The cleaning, the washing, the ironing. There wasn't nothing I didn't do. From when I got up in the morning till when I went to sleep at night, I worked. That's all I did really, work and sleep....
>
> The house had to be spotless. I scrubbed, dusted, and polished. There was the floors, the staircase, the ballroom. It all had to be done.
>
> Soon, I was the cook too. (Morgan 326)

Similarly, Sally's mother also had a tough life. Her Aboriginal heritage and her decision to marry Bill a white man, who had been a Prisoner of War in Germany, makes her lead her early married life under a lot of financial strain. A husband who is totally wasted by the after effects of the war, and takes to drinking as his full time job, it is Gladys who has to find some odd jobs usually menial household jobs to keep her house running. After her husband's death she at times even takes three or four part-time jobs a day, to provide for her family. Nan and Gladys both had seen hard times and known hunger too well to let the kids go hungry even for a day. Gladys remembers her childhood days, and says: "I was always hungry, I was like Pooh Bear, I couldn't get enough to eat. My stomach used to rumble all the time" (243). Nan has a similar account to offer, as she says: "Seems like I was always getting into trouble over food. I'm like a lamb that's never been fed" (323).

Apart from their endless drudgery, the blacks were also economically exploited by the whites. The peasants in *Caged Bird* worked throughout the day at the cotton fields, often the "women's feet were swollen to fill the discarded men's shoes they wore" (Angelou 131). Despite the hard labour, there is no financial reward, as Maya tells us, "No matter how much they had picked, it wasn't enough. Their wages

wouldn't even get them out of debt to my grandmother, not to mention the staggering bill that waited on them at the white commissary downtown" (10). Likewise, we see the Drake-Brockmans pinching away Nan's wages, whatever meagre sum she earns. Alice her mistress, the rich white woman just exploits Nan and never gives her any financial reward for all the hard work. Similar accounts are also narrated by Arthur, whom many a master promised money but none of them gave any. By these measures, the blacks were kept at the lowest ebb of the financial structure of the society.

Other than their incessant labour, the meagre wages, what was more in store for them were the beatings, the lynchings and the brutalities. In *Caged Bird* Maya refers to the lynchings in the third chapter, where her crippled Uncle Willie is forced to spend a night under the layers of potatoes and onions because "A crazy nigger messed with a white lady" (Angelou 19-20). The slightest incident could prove fatal for the black men in town, as the white boys could come riding and lynch any black man they could put their hands on. The cruel whippings and beatings were a part and parcel of Arthur, Gladys and Nan's life as well. Once in his childhood, Arthur took a tomato from the vegetable garden, on which his white uncle, Dudley Drake-Brockman, gave orders to Arthur's Aboriginal father to beat him. He remembers: "I was beaten with a stirrup strap. I spun round and round, crying and crying" (Morgan 175). Nan also remembers being beaten, as she tells us about her first mistress, Nell, who "was a cruel woman...When she wasn't whippin' us girls with the bullocks cane for not workin' hard enough, she was hittin' us over the head. She didn't like natives" (323). Similarly, Gladys used to get beltings at the Parkerville Children's Home. She tells Sally how she was once beaten for no reason at all by Miss Moore—"She grabbed me by the arm and started belting me across the head. It was nothing new, she'd given me beltings before. Sometimes, she hit me so much I'd go deaf for a couple of days" (253). Ironically, the female who should have been the protector of these kids who were torn apart from their mothers at a very young age, acted just the opposite and made their

lives even more miserable. Gladys was later also beaten by her husband Bill whom she had loved and married against her mother's will.

Women who were triply marginalised in the African American and the Australian Aboriginal communities, became easy targets of the white male lust, and were even exploited at the hands of black men. In *Caged Bird* it is no white man, but rather Vivian's boyfriend, Mr. Freeman, a father figure to Maya, who molests and then rapes her at the tender age of eight. After the rape he threatens Maya not to tell anyone or else he would kill Bailey. Suzette A. Henke, notes that after the threat is administered, "the benevolent father figure turns out to be a demonic predator enacting a torturous nightmare" (111). In *My Place*, Sally makes a very apt observation at the beginning of the chapter "Growing Up", she says: "At school, we had been warned over and over about strangers....What no one ever warned us about were friends or relations" (Morgan 81). That is the reason Maya in her innocence misinterpreted Mr. Freeman's sexual advances as fatherly love, and eventually gets raped by him. Correspondingly, Sally also has a narrow escape from the sexual advances of a family friend when they spend a summer vacation with them, whom they call Uncle and Aunty. Sally tells us that the Uncle "was a boozer and very friendly to Jill and me, often patting us on the head or shoulder" (81). He manages to lure them to a lonely shed twice on the pretext of showing them some beautiful jewellery. But Sally is shrewd enough to see through his real intentions and manages to escape right on time. She is on guard for her sister Jill from then on. She says: "It was a reversal of roles for us. Jill had always been physically stronger than me and was always fighting my battles. Now, it was my turn to look out for her" (82).

Morgan's *My Place* alludes to the issues of miscegenation and the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women, "by the implication of Drake-Brockman as Nan's father, and perhaps Glad's father as well!" (Broun 27-28). Howden Drake-Brockman was Nan and Arthur's father as is confirmed in their respective stories. But it is hinted that he is also the father of Gladys, by the reference to the stark resemblance in her and

Howden's looks. Such sexual exploitation resulted in mixed-blood children who were then cruelly taken away from their mothers at a very young age. Jody Broun in her essay, "Unmaking White Myths: Your Laws, My Place" writes:

> Central to the whole story of My Place are the policies concerning miscegenation; in particular, the abominable policy of removing Aboriginal children from their mothers. Morgan's novel exposes only a fragment of the discriminatory practice of removing Aboriginal children which affected a huge proportion of Aboriginal families. In fact it is difficult to find an Aboriginal family which was not subjected to this cruelty. (26)

Nan remembers the ill treatment of Aboriginal women and perhaps her own, during her young age. She tells Sally: "We had no protection when we were in service. I know a lot of native servants had kids to white men because they was forced. Makes you want to cry to think how black women have been treated in this country" (Morgan 329). Similarly, we find a passing reference to the issue of miscegenation in *Caged Bird*, when Bailey informs Maya of the two daughters fathered by Mr. Cullinan by a coloured lady. Maya realises that it is the Coleman girls and tells us: "They were very light-skinned and certainly didn't look very much like their mother (no one ever mentioned Mr. Coleman)" (116). Thus, sexual exploitation of black women was rampant in Australia as well as America.

Both *Caged Bird* and *My Place* abound in instances where one is insulted and humiliated because of one's race and colour. One out of such incidents in *Caged Bird* is the episode where poor white girls referred to as "powhitetrash" come to Momma Henderson's store and make fun of her. We see little Maya raged, when poor white girls come to the store and ape, mock and ridicule Momma Henderson. Though some of such poor white families live on Momma's farm land, still the "powhitetrash" children have an acute sense of their superiority over blacks and know the amount of power their colour can exercise over them (Angelou 30). The girls keep on trying to provoke Mrs.

Henderson, but she bears the whole clumsy drama calmly, without any outward sign of agitation. Finally, the girls are bored and leave, while Momma wishes them goodbye. Maya's initial rage and frustration is later calmed when she looks at Momma and she understands her moral triumph over the powhitetrash girls, which is also noted by Dolly A. McPherson in her essay, "Initiation and Self Discovery":

> On the one hand, three white girls, attempting to use their race as an overbearing instrument of power, treat a black woman like another child, practicing the rituals of white power with the full sanction of the white community and attempting to reduce the black woman to their level. On the other hand, the black woman chooses the dignified course of silent endurance. (29)

Sally on the other hand was many a time considered a bad influence by the parents of her friends, even when she was herself unaware of her Aboriginal lineage and the bad influence it was supposed to carry. One night a church deacon, whose daughter Sally had recently befriended, asks Sally to stop mixing with his daughter Mary. In his very polite sugar coated voice he continues to insult the child. He says: "You're a bad influence, you must realise that...This is Mary's Leaving year, the same as yours. I don't want her mixing with you in case she picks up any of your bad habits" (Morgan 102-103). Her Aboriginal descent is enough to make people feel that she is a bad influence and a store house of bad habits. The conversation leaves Sally very hurt and baffled as to how she was a bad influence.

Dentist Lincoln, a white man in *Caged Bird* refuses to treat little May of her rotten cavities. At repeated requests by her grandmother the dentist says: "Annie, my policy is I'd rather stick my hand in a dog's mouth than in a nigger's" (Angelou 203).Though Momma reminds him that he owes her a favour, he does not change his mind. Momma then has to charge a fresh interest on the money she had lent him during depression, with which she is able to take Maya to a coloured dentist in Texarkana. The entire incident highlights the status of blacks in those days. They were considered worse than animals. In *My Place* also, there is

reference of Nan being called a mongrel at some point in her early life. When one day Sally calls her dog, a bloody mongrel, Nan on hearing this mistakes these words for an Aboriginal boy sitting opposite their house. She is deeply hurt and she requests Sally: "Don't say that Sally, it hurts me here, she patted her chest....I been called that... it makes you feel real rotten inside" (Morgan 141). The word mongrel reminds Nan of the verbal insults she was often subjected to during her younger age.

In the graduation episode in *Caged Bird*, when the graduating class is brimming with excitement and hope for a better future, there comes Mr. Edward Donleavy, the white speaker from Texarkana to give his condescending speech on the occasion of the graduation ceremony. He not only shows the budding little children, their limited opportunities, but also emphasizes the superiority of the white kids. Maya says: "The white kids were going to have a chance to become Galileos and Madame Curies and Edisons and Gauguins, and our boys (the girls weren't even in on it) would try to be Jesse Owenses and Joe Louises" (Angelou 192-193). This passage is an excellent example of a racist and a sexist society. The black boys who are physically stronger are thought fit only to be athletes or wrestlers and the higher level of intellectual activity is reserved for the supposedly superior species that is the whites, while the black girls have no place at all in this society to fit into. But when Henry Reed the true class valedictorian, after delivering his speech as rehearsed, suddenly turns towards the proud graduating class of 1940 and sings the Negro National Anthem—"Lift ev'ry voice and sing" by James Weldon Johnson, it fills the children with pride and love for their race and hope for the future. Maya proudly remembers: "I was no longer simply a member of the proud graduating class of 1940; I was a proud member of the wonderful, beautiful Negro race" (198).

In *My Place* Sally applies for the Aboriginal scholarship, which is granted to her by the authorities. But someone, probably a friend of hers complains to the Commonwealth Department of Education that she had received the Aboriginal scholarship under false pretences, and she is called by a senior officer for an inquiry. She is infuriated but is able to

convince the officer about the sincerity of her claims to Aboriginal lineage. But there is more to it than what meets the eye, as she explains to the reader: "I felt very angry. It was obvious I had been judged guilty already, and I knew why. It was because Jill and I were doing well. The department never expected any of their Aboriginal students to do well at tertiary studies. They would have considered it more in keeping if we both failed consistently" (Morgan 137). The whites believed blacks to be an inferior race, who were not cut out for the finer things or any sort of intellectual activity.

With all the discrimination, subjugation and exploitation these black women were still able to move on and give their children a better future. We see strong matrilineal ties in both *Caged Bird* and *My Place*. The absence of a male head of the family is common to both the books. In *My Place* we see Bill, Sally's father as the head of the family who remains more at the hospital than at home, and soon succumbs to the after effects of the war and commits suicide. Here we see a more patriarchal family structure as compared to *Caged Bird*, where there is no hint at patriarchy; rather the women stand out as very strong independent individuals. Maya's father Bailey Johnson is shown as a frivolous man who has nothing to offer to his kids. Both Maya and Sally shared a deep bond with their mothers and grandmothers. Their success as individuals and as writers to a great extent is a result of the love, care and support they received from their strong maternal bonds.

Angelou is deeply influenced by the teachings, habits, values and creativity of her mother and grandmother. Vivian and Momma not only taught Maya the vital lessons of life, but also passed on their creative spark to her which finds its fullest expression in Maya's artistic endeavours. Similarly, it is Sally's love for her mother and grandmother that makes her want to go in search of her ancestral history, and be proud of her aboriginal past. The small beautiful poem, "Motheroot" by Marilou Awiakta, holds the essence of mother/daughter relationship as depicted in *Caged Bird* and *My Place*:

Creation often
needs two hearts
one to root
and one to flower
One to sustain
in the time of drouth
and hold fast
against winds of pain
the fragile bloom
that in the glory
of its hour
affirms a heart
unsung, unseen.
(qtd. in Walker, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" 230)

Momma, Vivian, Nan and Gladys are the nurturing 'roots' that enabled Maya and Sally's creativity to blossom and flower in all its glory in the form of their autobiographies. They gave Maya and Sally the sustenance, love and support in times of pain. In Angelou and Morgan's creative triumph and success also rings the affirmation of 'a heart unsung and unseen' which in their lives were their mothers and grandmothers.

Momma in *Caged Bird* tries her best to insulate Maya from the racist oppression. She stands like a rock to save her granddaughter from the onslaughts of a racist society. She is also the one who with the help of Mrs. Flowers at Stamps is able to get Maya to finally talk after she had lapsed into a mute state for some years because of her rape. While Momma taught Maya, the value of religion, belief, discipline, duty and humility, Vivian her biological mother has many other facts to enlighten her kids about. She teaches Maya and Bailey, "the facts of life, like personal hygiene, proper posture, table manners, good restaurants and

tipping practices" (Angelou, *Caged Bird* 235). While Momma dealt with the abstract, Vivian deals with the material and practical part of life. She also admits being a terrible parent of small kids, thus, her decision to send the kids away to their paternal grandmother. Her decision later turns out to be a blessing in disguise for Maya, as she later proves to be an amazing mother to young Maya. She stands by her daughter, be it her decision to become a cable car conductor in San Francisco or to bear her teenage pregnancy as a single mother.

Similarly, in *My Place* we see Gladys and Nan supporting each other financially and emotionally throughout their arduous journey. Their camaraderie is about love, care, trust and lots of hilarious moments. Because of their companionship they are able to overcome innumerable obstacles and make their home a safe place for the little kids. Sally wistfully remembers her childhood days as she tells us: "Whenever Dad was in the hospital, Mum and Nan went out of their way to make home a nice place for us. We were allowed to stay up late, and we didn't have to worry about keeping quite. It was much more relaxed" (Morgan 40). Bill's death, turns out to be a blessing in disguise for the whole family, as he was draining the family financially and emotionally because of his own horrific past, which he wished to drink down with alcohol. After his death Gladys is able to take up multiple part time jobs only because of Nan's help at home, who did all the household work and also looked after the kids. Both Nan and Gladys had been hiding their past for too long for the sake of the kids. Sally's quest of her Aboriginal heritage and her pride in reclaiming her past upsets Nan at first but slowly she is able to share her story with Sally and is able to finally make peace with her past, which is Sally's greatest triumph.

Thus, Momma, Vivian, Nan and Gladys were the phenomenal women behind the success of the writers Maya Angelou and Sally Morgan. Their undaunted spirits continued to inspire, love and nurture despite all the cruelty and hatred in their lives. They are exemplary in terms of the success they and their children achieved amidst a hostile

environment. Momma Henderson and Gladys were both successful business women at a time when most people of their race were into menial jobs. Their children grew up to become writers and doctors. The black matrilineal structure is the most striking similarity in both the books, and it acts as the support mechanism for Maya Angelou and Sally Morgan throughout their lives.

Both the texts—*Caged Bird* and *My Place*, bring forth all the evils related to racism but at the same time they also focus on the happy and close nit family and community structures amongst the marginalised. Their spirit to thrive and hope for a better future is always alive. Angelou at the end of the last volume of her life writings, *A Song Flung Up to Heaven*, wonders at the strength, courage and pride of Black women, which is equally relevant for the Aboriginal women in Australia. She writes:

> I thought about black women and wondered how we got to be the way we were. In our country, white men were always in superior positions; after them came white women, then black men, then black women, who were historically on the bottom stratum.
>
> How did it happen that we could nurse a nation of strangers, be maids to multitudes of people who scorned us, and still walk with some majesty and stand with a degree of pride? (Angelou, *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* 171-172)

She is amazed, as are we, at the potential of black women, their strength and endurance. Sally and Maya are both indeed phenomenally 'Phenomenal Women.'

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Australia is not Our Enemy: Celebrating Everyday Multiculturalism in Nadia Jamal's *Headstrong Daughters*

Shikha Thakur

Australia expects its citizens to abide by core beliefs - democracy,
the rule of law, the independent judiciary, independent liberty.
-David Cameron (n.pag.)

The paper aims at positing multi dimensional experience of Muslim women living in and around Australia, through *Headstrong Daughters* (2018) by Nadia Jamal. *Headstrong Daughters* is a lucid compilation of first hand interviews conducted on young Muslim Australian women, reflecting their issues and concerns, pertaining to their determination to flourish robustly while staying true to their idea of faith. The paper quintessentially delineates the fascinating multi-cultural experience of these women revealing their Australian life style, while adhering to their religious values. The paper not only celebrates the heterogeneous practice of Islamic faith in Australia but also shudders away from the Islamic absolutism prevalent in Middle East countries. Therefore, this paper coherently assures the co-existing comfort level of Muslim women coming from different Islamic countries and concomitantly projects Australian platform to eloquently redefine Islam in the pursuit of self emancipation.

Australia has a prominent history of primitive Muslim settlement. "Muslims in Australia have a long and varied history that is thought to predate European settle." ("History of Islam in Australia" n.pag.). Therefore, Nadia Jamal, a former Sydney Morning Herald journalist, presently working as a financial analyst, through *Headstrong Daughters* aims at exploring the lives of young Muslim Australian women based on "her interviews with them in the community around Australia . . . reflecting the issues and concerns these women experience in their daily lives, and their understanding of religious principles and

traditions" (Jamal xi). Based on these interviews Jamal, a Lebanese Australian, trots out the dichotomy of being a staunch Muslim woman and a liberal Muslim woman depending upon her adaptation of Islam in totalitarian and Islam in plurality respectively. *Headstrong Woman* formidably hits against the stereotypical image of Islam as propounded by its absolute functioning in Middle Eastern countries. Hence, the present paper quintessentially lays bare Australia's heterogeneous take on Islamic practices: intercaste marriage, single female pilgrim, inheritance law, broken engagement, iddah protocols and hijab. Plausibly by juxtaposing Australia's pluralistic discourse and Middle East's authoritarian discourse, this paper magnifies Australia's multiculturalism.

Intersect Marriage: Remonstrating conventional Animosity.

Islam has been bifurcated into Shia and Sunni denominations, wherein Shia occupying ten percentage and Sunni occupying eighty five percentage of the total population. Although they both centralize their Islamic philosophy around divine Quran as revealed by Prophet Mohammad, yet there are differences in terms of "historical events, ideological heritage and issues of leadership" (Mohammad Shoib n.pag.). Over the years the conflict between these sects has staggeringly aggravated, trying to prioritize one's belief system over the other. "Sunnis chose the closest supporter of the Prophet Muhammad _ Abu Bakr_ as his first successor, or *caliph*, to lead Muslims in the seventh century. Not long afterwards, Shias threw their support behind Ali ibn Abi Talib (or Imam Ali), who was the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, and therefore his kinsman" (Jamal 2). Amidst this difference there rose an acute animosity between the two sects, marking an intersect marriage between them as a grave sin and a matter of intense concern in Middle East and South Asia. However, Australia sheltering Muslims coming from across the globe seem to circumvent this unpalatable enmity, instead fosters hospitable environment to all.

The staggering conflicts between these sects in Middle East, has disconnected the relationship to an extent that they tend to deny each other of very basic rights. The difference in terms of selection of hijab as for shia's "preference for dark-coloured clothing . . . and Sunni's prone to choosing more colourful hijabs" (13) marks the distinction and thus subject each other to despicable ways. Reminiscent of past this distinction reminds Ola, a Lebanese Shia Muslim, "of denied education in popular Sunni school of her time and her grandmother's haplessness in Palestine, who was refused service in a shop" (13). However, after stepping in Australia Ola is amazed to embrace the congenial home detached from sect based petrifying experiences. The first chapter entitled, "Bridging the Divide" demonstrates how Australia demolishes these differences and further nurtures intersectional love marriage. Ola, a Lebanese Shia and Abdul, a Lebanese Sunni living in Australia "grew up unaffected by the differences between Muslims . . . believe in the same God and brought up to believe that all Muslims are brothers and sisters in Islam" (4-6). Australia provided them an amenable lap where after twelve years of marriage they had three kids whom they nurtured with equality in Islam making them learn that if anyone ever asked them "whether they are Sunni or Shia, they will be sufficiently informed to respond: 'I'M Muslim" (10).

Single Female Pilgrim: A Religious Elation.

A pilgrimage to Mecca during the month of Dhu al-Hijja at least once in a lifetime stands as the fifth pillar of Islam. Muslims from every nook and corner of the world are expected to adhere to all five protocols, fortifying five pillars of Islam. However,

> a woman cannot make the pilgrimage on her own if she is young and single. Muslim women who travel to Mecca must do so with a *mahram*- either their husband or a Muslim man who can act as a protector or guardian. In Middle East women regardless of their age or marital status, are forbidden from travelling or going on excursions alone, even for a short time, if they are not

> accompanied by a *mahram;* this extends to activities such as booking a hotel room, which a single woman would be unable to do on her own (21-22).

This undoubtedly controls women's ability to move and think freely, Nonetheless Australia being developed country adopts humanistic version of freedom. Zara, an Australian migrant, mentally frustrated with her present job has been looking forward to undertake *Hajj*, but the misogynist *Hajj* norms she has been embedded with, forces her to believe, "When I go, it will be with my husband." (24). Neverthless, soon after Zara befriends Hanan, a single Australian migrant woman in fifties called Ustatha, feels jaded with questions like, "what if a woman isn't married, or never marries, and wants to go to *Hajj*?" (27). *Ustatha* was a dedicated Islamic preacher whose deepest concern was to liberate Muslim women in Australia and foster them to work in public domain and seek education. She meticulously frames her idea of being Muslim by liberating conventional Muslim women from the prejudiced clutches of extremist stereotypes. Zara after much coaxing finds a way out from conservative Islamic norms and decides to visit Mecca with Hanan and comes back spiritually courageous giving her life "a whole new direction" (24). Zara's experience in Australia made her flexible in terms of conservative Islamic norms of *Hajj* and thus her succession on undertaking *Hajjj* paid off well, for post *Hajj* she grew as a subject of agency having independent voice and will; thereof catering to the true sense of *Hajj* which meant "a cleansing process" (30).

Islamic Inheritance Law: An Alarm Claiming Gender Equality.

Inheritance is considered as an integral part of Sharia Law. Sharia Law, marked with predefined set of protocols derived from the religious precepts of Islam; the Quran and the Hadith, therefore, acts as a way of life to be adhered by all Muslims without question and intervention. "Islamic law is therefore the expression of Allah's command for Muslim society and, in application, constitutes a system of duties that are incumbent upon a Muslim by virtue of [its] religious belief." (Coulson

1). Chapter four entitled, "Time Willing" lucidly lays bare the lopsided inheritance law where "a son takes double the share of a daughter . . . and If there is no son, daughter gets half a share" (Piplani n. Pag.). This stringent execution of Islamic property right astutely denies women the sense of equality, however "Muslims in secular countries follow these practices voluntarily," (Jamal 63). Ayesha, born and raised in Australia has disliked her brother's take on inheritance law, who condones it stating, "I get more than you because I'm a boy!" (Jamal 62). Plausibly Ayesha grows contemptuous of any partial dimension snatching her volition. She eulogizes Australia for embedding in her an agile zeal to combat this prejudice. She therefore, glorifies Australian multiculturalism where "specific inheritance practises- are not enshrined by law and thus remonstrates any decision that gives her brothers a bigger proportion than her or her sister" (Jamal 65).

The traditional Islamic society believes in complete disconnectedness amongst the couple from their engagement to their wedding. However in Middle East, "a couple can sign an Islamic marriage contract, but will have to wait to live together following a formal wedding ceremony, which might take place months or even years later" (73). During this tenure the couple is expected to mind the gap and respect the sanctity of relationship. Chapter five entitled, "Broken Engagement" represents Jihan, a twenty three year old Lebanese Muslim migrant girl and Mazen, a twenty four year old Australia born but Iraq raised boy, holding antipodal mental setup. After signing Islamic marriage contract, they are not permitted to spend time alone but in urgent case are allowed to meet in presence of Jihan's younger sister. Mazen claiming to be a devout Muslim accepted the restrictions, however, Jihan's craving for "greater freedom" (Jamal 75), consequently rekindled her quest to know the person well before marriage. In an attempt to do so she abruptly trails Mazen's car one night and finds him dating a fellow woman colleague; triggering her sense of esteem Jihan feels shattered and thus calls for a break up. In Middle East, Islamic marriage contract comes with women maintaining sexual purity, and

respecting the complete disconnectedness from men. However, the Australian lifestyle instils in Jihan the zeal to fight the wrong, Jihan's call for divorce (the term used in the book for separation/break-up pre-marriage) reflects Australia's heterogeneous take on women rights. In Australia "divorce in Islam is allowed and can be initiated by either the husband or wife" (Jamal 80). This apparently redefines Islamic Marriage contract, making it all the more humanistic than patriarchal, subsequently liberating women victims from conventionally lacerating confinements and protecting them from being labelled burdensome objects.

Iddah Protocols: A Liberating Call from the Despicable Shackles

Iddah or *Iddat* refers to the waiting period to be observed by woman after her husband's death or after seeking divorce, "which should consist of four lunar months and ten days, totalling roughly to one hundred and thirty days. During her *iddah*, a Muslim woman is also not allowed to make any arrangements for marriage or wear anything overly decorative . . . . and is forbidden to spend night outside her own home" (Jamal102-104). Nasreen, a staunch Lebanese Australian twenty nine year old woman, after having lost her husband in a car accident decided to observe the stringent rules and rituals that came with being a Muslim widow. She left home thrice in four months during *Iddah*, seldom spoke to people around, and wore dull clothes; so as to adhere to Islamic norms and seek salvation. Nevertheless, she found herself drenched into the whirlpool of questions, like: "Why has my child been left without a father? Why do I have to be a widow at such a young age? Why did my husband have to die?" (Jamal 104). She thereafter found answers to these questions by voluntarily observing *Iddah* her way; she read Quran in order "to search for answers within the meaningful verses and seek peace" (Jamal 110). Hence, chapter seven entitled, "Good Mourning", demonstrates Australia's heterogeneous canopy of permitting people coming from varied religions to exhibit their idea of religious customs differently, without totalizing any particular religious narrative.

Hijab is an Arabic word referring to a veil covering the head and the chest of a Muslim woman. Islam encapsulated in Quran doctrine "instructs Muslim women to dress modestly", where Muslim women are expected to cover themselves in front of any male member. In the present era Hijab has multiple connotations, varying from Muslim women using it as a means of oppression to Muslim women using it as a means to glorify one's identity. "In western countries, women have been promoted to remove it to reduce the possibility of experiencing discrimination, however hijab is not a fixed marker in Australia" (Jamal 181). Mehal and Widyan, Muslim migrants living in Australia since childhood take pride in wearing Hijab and claiming a sense of modesty and freedom of choice. They choose to cover because they believe it is liberating and self magnifying in nature. Mehal after having berated by one of the Iraqi Muslim women living in Australia for having worn colourful hijab, retaliates stating that "after having varied experiences in and outside Australia in the end I decided I didn't want to restrict my movement instead liberate myself by wearing it my way" (Jamal 176). Australia redefines hijab as a versified symbol of choice referring to progression and regression depending upon an individual's will.

Conclusion

This paper establishes multiple migrant Australian Muslim women's fortified endeavour to transgress the fanatic Islamic boundaries that tend to circumscribe their dreams and aspirations. The collection of twelve stories by twelve different Muslim migrant women from inside and outside Australia fight the Islamic fanatic regime in Middle East while simultaneously adhering to their heterogeneously eulogizing Islamic faith. The paper formidably posits the agile zeal to decontextualize the despicable identity imposed upon women as enshrined in Sharia law, which on conflation with Quran authenticates women as an object of treaty. However, Australia advocating freedom irrespective of religion, questions absolutism and thus, aids Muslim women in celebrating their idea of Islam in multifaceted domain.

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Modes of Marginalization in Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*: Reading the Politics of Silencing the 'Other'

Apoorva Dimri

> *But we'll get you all in the end… There's such a bleeding lot of us*. He had a quick piercing memory of Butler's Buildings, the coughing and cursing of dozens of men and women pushed in together. He could hear the great machinery of London, the wheel of justice chewing up felons and spitting them out here, boatload after boatload… *There won't be no stopping us,* he said. *Pretty soon there won't be nowhere left for you black buggers*. (229)

William Thornhill, the speaker of these lines in Kate Grenville's novel *The Secret River* (2005), serves as a mouthpiece of the colonial mission of silencing the "black buggers" or the racial 'Other' constituted by the Aboriginal people of the colonized land. In doing so, he recognizes the pioneer role of the Emancipists or the pardoned British convicts in the penal colony of Australia in establishing White settlements in the land of the Blacks. Ironically, he also obliquely acknowledges the 'Otherness' associated with the "bleeding lot of us", that is, the economically exploited and the socio-culturally marginalized people of the Western world, who are trapped in the "wheel of justice" in London only to be released in the other world being taken over by the colonizers. The 'Otherness' associated with the likes of William Thornhill, which can be attributed to their socio-economic position within the borders of the colonizing nation, encourages the reader to question the center-periphery equations of the colonial era by diverting attention to those who inhabit the socio-economic margins at the centre of the colonial empire. This enables the reader to identify various markers of 'Otherness' as well as multiple modes of silencing the 'Other' which operate in the text. However, Thornhill's acknowledgment of the power of the "dozens of men and women" ensnared in the "great machinery of London" to eradicate the "black buggers" from the latter's

lands is indicative of a larger system of oppression and exclusion wherein the categories of the 'oppressor' and the 'oppressed' may alter as one traverses time and space even as the systematic silencing of the 'Other' remains the focal strategy of the politics of the oppressor.

Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* simultaneously documents the systematic silencing of the Australian Aboriginals by the colonizing forces of the Western world and the socio-economic marginalization of the working class of the colonizing world by its ruling class. The aim of this paper is to explore the way the text reveals multiple layers of oppression wherein the categories of class and race emerge as the most significant in the project of silencing the 'Other'. While the working class of London is systematically marginalized by the ruling class of its society, the natives of the colonized world, as the racial 'Other' of the White, Western civilization, are systematically silenced and annihilated by the forces of colonization, so that the property owning, White male emerges as the prototypical representative of the established order. This paper also seeks to juxtapose the categories of 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' to interrogate how the dynamics of the same continuously alter in the text, as the oppressed of the colonizing world, when transported to the colonized world on the other side of the continent, eventually emerges as an oppressor in its own right, working in conjunction with and on behalf of the colonizing forces. This will enable us to further explore the general dynamics of class societies with respect to structures of stratification and hierarchization wherein the systematic marginalization of the socio-economic and the cultural 'Other' emerges as a necessary by-product of maintaining the socio-economic and cultural dominance of the ruling groups. Another main concern of this paper pertains to the question of the representation of the socio-economically and the racially 'Othered' and how the same aids and abets the project of silencing the 'Other' by manufacturing popular consensus against the groups and people 'Othered' by the established order to consequently privilege the figure of the White, property owning male as the representative symbol of the established socio-economic and cultural order.

"With no more trouble from the blacks, new settlers had taken up land on every bend. Unmolested, their crops and families flourished, and trade on the river was good." (331). These lines from Grenville's *The Secret River* narrate the aftermath of the successful silencing of the Aboriginal people of the hinterlands of the colonized world wherein physical extermination of the natives is accompanied by their socio-economic and cultural marginalization achieved by the colonizing forces through a systematic dispossession of the indigenous people of their lands, natural resources, cultures, socio-economic systems, and so on, and their subsequent relegation to the socio-economic and cultural margins of their own world in a state of destitution and complete dependence on the colonial masters. The literal and metaphorical silencing of the 'Other', accomplished through forced assimilation or a methodical imposition of the White man's culture and civilization on the natives of the colonized world combined with the use of coercive force and violence with their aim as the organized annihilation of the Aboriginals, emerges as the most significant part of the project of a colonial takeover of the world beyond that of the White man in Grenville's novel. In his book *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia* (1981), Henry Reynolds emphasizes the material connotations and consequences of the colonial invasion of Australia with respect to its socio-economic and cultural ramifications for the natives of the colonized land wherein the author observes:

> Increasingly the newcomers impinged on accustomed patterns of life, occupying the flat, open land and monopolizing surface water. Indigenous animals were driven away, plant life eaten or trampled and Aborigines pushed into the marginal country-mountains, swamps, waterless neighborhoods. Patterns of seasonal migration broke down, areas remaining free of Europeans were over utilized and eventually depleted of both flora and fauna. Food became scarcer and available in less and less variety and even access to water was often difficult. (91)

The process of the systematic dispossession and disempowerment of the Aboriginals, as it unfolds in the wake of encroachments in the form of White settlements and other modes of colonial invasion, can be identified through the course of *The Secret River* in which the socio-economic and cultural systems of the natives, premised on principles of self-sufficiency and necessity-driven production and consumption and marked by collectivist and egalitarian ways of living, as described through the following lines from the novel, "The difference was that in their universe there was no call for another class of folk who stood waiting up to their thighs in river-water for them to finish their chat so they could be taken to their play or their ladyfriend. In the world of these naked savages, it seemed everyone was gentry." (245), witnesses a gradual decay and demise such that toward the end of the text, "Of the blacks, Long Jack was the only one left on that part of the river. Such others as there might have been had retreated to the reserve that the Governor had set aside at Sackville, and lived on what the Governor was pleased to provide." (345). Thus, the novel's end with respect to the condition of the Australian Aboriginals signifies the characteristic colonial silencing of the colonized indigenous people who are reduced to complete dependence on the colonizers in their own land.

The marginalized and destitute condition of the Aboriginals in the wake of a colonial takeover of their land and resources is faintly evocative of the material realities of the other 'Other' that can be identified in the text, that is, the working class of the Western world, as represented through the early life of William Thornhill. His life is characterized by unjust and exploitative conditions of survival as suggested by the picture of his living conditions painted by the following lines from the novel,

> In the rooms where William Thornhill grew up in the last decades of the eighteenth century, no one could move an elbow without hitting the wall or the table or a sister or a brother…There were the terraces of low-browed houses hunched down on themselves, growing out of the very dirt they

> sat on, and after them the tanneries, the shambles, the glue factories, the malting, filling the air with their miasmas (12)

and the utterly inhuman and brutal conditions of his work as encapsulated in the following imagery, "His blisters never got a chance to heal. They grew till they burst, then they formed again, burst again, bled again." (32). The 'Otherness' which characterizes the life of William Thornhill is a function of his socio-economic position, and is symptomatic of the 'Othered' condition of the working class existing at the socio-economic and cultural margins of the Western world. The living and working conditions of William Thornhill correspond to those of the urban worker as described by Friedrich Engels in his book *Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845) wherein the author notes:

> Cast into the whirlpool, he must struggle through as well as he can. If he is so happy as to find work, i.e., if the bourgeoisie does him the favour to enrich itself by means of him, wages await him which scarcely suffice to keep body and soul together; if he can get no work he may steal, if he is not afraid of the police, or starve, in which case the police will take care that he does so in a quiet and inoffensive manner. (45).

As an 'Other' of the socio-economic system governing the Western world, William Thornhill, a worker and a convict, emerges as a representative of that expendable and conveniently disposable class of individuals from within the borders of the colonizing world deemed most suitable by the rulers from the West to further the colonial mission on the latter's behalf even as the former continued to constitute the other 'Other' of the colonizing world in the colonized land. In this regard, Robert Hughes in his work *The Fatal Shore: The Epic of Australia's Founding* (1986) observes:

> One saw gangs of convicts everywhere. All around Sydney, on the Blue Mountain roads, or south toward Bowral, Goulburn and the Monaro plains, the visitor heard the colonial carillon of ringing leg-irons partly muffled by leather and coarse wool- the

> sound of chained men hewing the sandstone, dragging their fetter as though wading in air. Free settlers tended to conventionalize the sight, to turn these sweating, shuffling, unknowable Others into voids, mere yellow uniforms, man-shaped holes in the social landscape. (533)

Kate Grenville's *The Secret River*, in simultaneously documenting the systematic silencing of the Australian Aboriginals by the colonizing forces of the Western world and the socio-economic marginalization of the working class of the colonizing world by its ruling class, reveals multiple forms of 'Otherness' and various modes and layers of oppression which in the text operate primarily through the categories of class and race. Beyond the boundaries of Grenville's novel, the simultaneous project of a systematic silencing of the socio-economic and the racial 'Other' or the working class of the Western world and the Aboriginals of the colonized lands, respectively can be historically contextualized with respect to the origins and the subsequent development of the capitalist mode of production which had to rely on a system of an uninterrupted flow of exploitable labour provided by the proletariat of the Western world, and a continuous search for readily available raw materials for the rapidly growing industries of the colonizing world and new markets for the products of Western capitalism that translated into Western colonialism. The relationship between Western capitalism and Western colonialism has also been emphasized by V.I. Lenin in the preface to the French and German editions of his work *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917) wherein, commenting on the economic aspect of imperialism at the end of the First World War, the author observes:

> Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries. And this "booty" is shared between two or three powerful world plunderers armed to the teeth (America, Great

> Britain, Japan), are drawing the whole world into *their* war over the sharing of *their* booty. (28)

It can be argued that while the metaphorical silencing of the working class of the Western world emerges as the direct by-product of the capitalist mode of production, the literal and figurative silencing of the native inhabitants of the colonized lands also surfaces as a necessary consequence of the system of Western colonialism designed to ensure the unbridled growth of Western capitalism. The inevitable result of this inextricable connection between Western capitalism and Western colonialism is that the categories of race and class emerge as significant markers of oppression in the spatial and temporal context in which Grenville's novel has been set.

In the light of the context outlined above, it can be argued that gender, along with race and class, also emerges as a marker of inequality and as a category of oppression in Grenville's novel. However, the question of gender as a distinctive category of oppression in a male-dominated and patriarchal world is complicated and problematized due to its interaction with the categories of race and class. Thus, the category of gender colludes and collaborates with those of race and class to beget multiple and specific forms of marginalization. In the case of the White woman from the Western world, capitalist patriarchy which is premised on a strict gendered and/or sexual division of labour ensures that the woman's class position is determined by that of her male kin. In Grenville's novel, Sarah, who is disadvantaged by both class and gender as the wife of a working class man, can aspire to a life of comfort and luxury to "become something of a queen, celebrated for her Christmas entertainments, complete with Chinese lanterns and string bands" (331) only as the wife of the propertied White settler that William Thornhill becomes at the end of the novel. Thus, the upward socio-economic mobility of her husband leads to the same for Sarah, thereby modifying the form of gendered oppression she experiences as the logic of the patriarchal bourgeois family sustains that of Sarah, who as the wife and William Thornhill as her husband adhere to the respective gender

roles bequeathed to them by the system of patriarchy. On the other hand, the black women of the colonized land, insofar as they are dispossessed of their resources, cultures, socio-economic systems and so on and are pushed to the socio-economic and cultural margins of their own world along with their male counterparts, emerge as the doubly disadvantaged victims and survivors of capitalist and colonialist patriarchy. Furthermore, the gendered and sexualized body of the Black woman becomes a target of systematic attack and control in the White man's racial war, thereby revealing the distinctive gendered dynamics of the process of colonization wherein the silencing of the women from the colonized populations emerges as a significant part of the politics of conquest and domination. The most brutal expression of the racial and gendered exploitation of the colonized woman at the hands of the White male oppressor is available in the image of a "black woman, cringing against the wall, panting so he (Thornhill) could see the teeth gleaming in her pained mouth, and the sores where the chain had chafed, red jewels against her black skin" (268) as she lies enslaved by a White settler in Grenville's novel. Herein, the notion of intersectionality with respect to gender can be particularly useful to appreciate the doubly and distinctively marginalized position of native women of the colonized lands. An intersectional approach in this regard is based on the recognition that gendered and racial discrimination combined with socio-economic impoverishment beget unique forms marginalization for women of colonized lands, which distinguish their lives and experiences from those of White, Western women of different class positions. The significance of the notion of intersectionality to understand gendered oppression in the context of Western colonialism can be further comprehended in the light of Nina Lykke's observation that "…the emergence of the concept of intersectionality is linked closely to anti-racist and postcolonial feminist struggles to establish platforms for the analysis of the intertwining of processes of genderization, racialization and ethnification…" (52). Herein, it can also be noted that the systematic marginalization of non-White, non-

property owning and non-male identities emerge as central in establishing the socio-economic and cultural order of the West which designates the White, property owning male as its prototypical representative.

The tragic irony of Grenville's *The Secret River* lies in the way the categories of 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' continuously alter in the text, as the socio-economically and culturally 'Othered' of the colonizing world, when transferred to the colonized world, eventually emerges as an oppressor in its own right, working in union with and on behalf of the ruling class to marginalize the racial 'Other'. Thus, the consistent socio-economic upward mobility of White settlers, like that of William Thornhill, who at the end of the text emerges as "…something of a king" who "When he was not on the river, he sat on his verandah, watching with his telescope everything that went by the river" (331) is simultaneous with the marginalization of the racial 'Other' of the Western civilization. That the relegation of the Australian Aboriginals to the socio-economic and cultural periphery of their universe emerges as a necessary by-product of the material progress of an erstwhile convict like William Thornhill hailing from an impoverished socio-economic background, can be read as an insightful comment on the dynamics of class societies in general and that of the capitalistic colonial enterprise in particular. In such a context, the material and cultural rule of the dominant group necessarily translates into and can be achieved only through a literal and metaphorical silencing of the 'Other' characterized by either socio-economic and cultural or racial 'Otherness'. The simultaneity inherent in the process of the upward mobility of the ruling class and the White colonizers and the gradual impoverishment and marginalization of the working class and the natives of the colonized land draws attention to the conflicts and contradictions inherent in the socio-economic and cultural relationship between the ruling and the subjugated groups. The process whereby one socio-economic or racial group can emerge as dominant only at the cost of the subordination of other groups leads us to consider the inevitability of the categories of the

'oppressor' and the 'oppressed' in the context of Western capitalism and Western colonialism wherein the systematic oppression of the 'Other' emerges as central to the rule of the socio-economically and the culturally dominant group. The mutually opposed interests of the ruling and the subordinated groups have also been emphasized by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) who, premising their arguments on their fundamental claim that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (9) point out the class contradictions between the bourgeoisie or the owners of the means of production and the proletariat or the working class:

> The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society, has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones…Hitherto, every form of society has been based…on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes…The modern laborer…instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. (9, 21)

In the context of Western colonialism and in the light of the historical relationship the former shares with Western capitalism, the logic of the oppressor and the oppressed inherent in the class relations of capitalist societies can also be extended to study the interactions of the colonizing White, Western world and the colonized, non-White, non-Western world. Another instance that lays bare the tragedy characterizing the world of Grenville's novel pertains to the fact that it is only as the prototypical representative of the established socio-economic and cultural order, that is, as a property owning, White male that William Thornhill emerges from the periphery to the centre of the system he comes to represent. However, this tragedy is rendered ironical as the stigma of being an Emancipist or a pardoned convict remains attached to the likes of William Thornhill even in the aftermath of their upward mobility, and continues to characterize their socio-cultural

stigmatization by the socio-culturally elite White settlers. This internal stratification within the social category of White colonizers is best captured in the novel in the encounter between Suckling, captain of the convict transport Alexander and William Thornhill, one of the convicts brought to Australia in that ship who is an owner of a hundred acres of land at the specific juncture of the encounter wherein the former "shooed Thornhill away with both hands as if he were a dog" while shouting at him, "*Stand back for God's sake, man…You harbour the flies so*!" (185). The relationship between the convicts and the Emancipists and the other White settlers suggests how the socio-economic and cultural hierarchies of the Western world are carried over into the colonized land even as the process of colonization begets new forms of 'Otherness' premised on the White man's perception of his civilizational and racial superiority to the natives of the colonized world.

The centrality of the figure of the White, property owing male as an emblem of the status quo with respect to class, race and gender is cultivated at the expense of a systematic representation of the 'Other' while the latter is posited against and is used to legitimize the self-representation of the former. Essentially, the 'Other' serves the function of negatively defining the prototype of the established order by stating what the latter should not be. The creation of socio-economic and racial 'Otherness', which is a function of the representation of the 'Other' by the socio-economically and the culturally dominant, is crucial in manufacturing popular consensus in favour of the project of systematically silencing the 'Other' which emerges as central to the maintenance and reproduction of the status quo. Edward Said's conception of Orientalism as "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" wherein as "one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other…the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience." (1-2), can be extended to understand the power of representation on popular perception of the racial 'Other' of the White man. In Grenville's *The Secret River*, White

settlers often echo characteristic Western conceptions of the natives of the colonized land as is also reflected in the irony laden speech of a White pioneer in the text who observes,

> No set of people in the known world were ever so totally destitute as these are of industry and ingenuity!...Their innate indolence renders them inattentive to the very means of subsistence…Our sable brethren, lazy savages as you so rightly call them, reap by stealth and open violence the produce of a tract they are themselves too indolent to cultivate.(275).

This perception of the natives is accompanied and supplemented by a hierarchized view of the cultures, lifestyles, value systems and worldviews of the colonized populations as inferior to those of the White man. Furthermore, discursive and popular representations of the 'Other' aimed at supplying a justification to its organized silencing are not limited to the racial 'Other' but also include the other 'Other', or the materially deprived and the working class from within the colonizing world that exist at its margins so that the socio-economic system which benefits a privileged minority while simultaneously marginalizing a vast majority can generate popular consensus and legitimacy in its favour. Robert Hughes, while commenting on the representation of the economically marginalized and the working class as infested with criminality or criminal tendencies, makes the following observation:

> ...it was all too easy to assign criminal propensities to the marginal, the outcast, the rag-and-boner- in short, to those who might be seen as English *sans-culottes*. For that large tract where the unpropertied survived, where tricks of subsistence had to be invented from day to day, where the cunning, the illicit and the illegal blended into one another without fine distinction, they had only one name: the criminal class...Illustrators depicted the "criminal type" as a mask of low cunning, stunted but alert. In fact there was no difference between the look of English criminals and that of the working-class from which they came. (266, 277)

In the light of the same, it can be argued that hierarchies based on class, race and gender and the corresponding forms of 'Otherness', propagated and preserved through hegemonic modes of discursive and popular representations of the 'Other', are effectively employed in the project of securing material and cultural dominance while silencing the 'Othered'.

Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* problematizes a simplistic understanding of the relationship between the colonizer of the White, Western world and the colonized of the non-White, non-Western world by focusing attention on the 'Other' which exists within the borders of the colonizing world, that is, the working class of the Western world. The text, through its simultaneous documentation of the socio-economic and cultural marginalization of the working class in London and the exploitation of the convicts in the penal colony of Australia as well as the colonization of the natives of the colonized land through brute force, reveals multiple forms of 'Otherness' and various modes of oppression, which in the text operate primarily through the categories of race and class even as gender functions as a distinctive category of oppression in a patriarchal context that, in collusion with class and race, produces multiple and specific forms of marginalization. That the 'Other' from the Western world, that is, the socio-economically and the culturally marginalized which exists at its margins, becomes an oppressor in its own right when transported to the other side of the continent, provides an important insight into the dynamics of class societies wherein the literal and metaphorical silencing of the 'Other' emerges as a necessary by-product of securing material and cultural dominance. While the centrality of the figure of the White, property owning male as an emblem of the established socio-economic and cultural order is contingent on a systematic cultivation of an image of the 'Other', the peripheral figure of this 'Other', propagated and preserved through hegemonic modes of discursive and popular representations of its 'Otherness', emerges as central to the politics of silencing the 'Other'

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BOOK REVIEW

The agony of being Homeless in Australia

Ajay Khurana

A Review of *Narratives of Estrangement and Belonging: Indo-Australian Perspectives,* Edited by Neelima Kanwar, New Delhi: Authorspress, 2016, pages 289.

The significance of one's home can be realized when exhausted from the day's work, one virtually runs towards it in the evening. On reaching, takes the breath of relief, lies on the couch, sips a glass of water or cherishes a cup of tea or coffee. There is knowledge that the anxiety of living will ease-down or subside totally because one has a home. One can concentrate on the art of living then. Otherwise, life like sand simply slips away from one's grip and it becomes a burden to live satisfactorily. This ennobling truth of home applies to one's birth-place or home-town and one's country. After all, these are just different names of one's true home. Their size, whether small or too large, hardly matters. Whether it lies in the third world or is rich with the diversity of nature, hardly matters. What really matters is that they define one's fundamental identity of race, culture, religion and nationality. Moreover, to follow the same culture and religion freely is possible only in one's home.

During normal and peaceful times these facts cannot be realized. Only when a powerful outsider by brutal force controls your political power and exploits, tortures, control your social behavior and pushes you towards the margin, then one realizes the value of one's free country. On the other hand, if one migrates to another home-country and settles down with a new beginning, aspiring for a dream life, then there is the realization of one's true home and identity. The human kind is so deeply attached and related to one's birth-place, culture, religion and nation that these identities have become integral parts of one's body-mind-soul experience. If under any circumstancs, forces or voluntarily, some or all the parts are renounced, life appears incomplete and hollow. It does

generate nostalgia and action to reclaim the lost part along with the broken identity.

Literally strange is the story of the home called Australia. History is a witness that since times immemorial, Australia belonged to the different Aboriginals. All this, however, changed with the arrival of Captain Cook in 1788 to Botany Bay. Australia was claimed as a British colony and in time it became the new home for the white-settlers, the convicts, the explorer,etc. The Aboriginals were killed or uprooted from the mainland and pushed towards the margins in all walks of life. The story did not end here. Liberal migration policies encouraged first the Europeans and later the South-Asians to move to Australia and claim it as their new home. As a result, Australia today is truly heterogeneous, multiethnic and multicultural nation. But the harsh truth that just lingers below this diversity of people, is an active quest of one's true home. This quest is the guiding light of the Australian literature. The very quest of the ideal, lost home is also the subject of this very anthology, which reflects the agony of being the homeless in Australia. It presents fifteen papers by writers, critics and scholars divided into three sections. Part 1, with five papers accounts for the agony of the white settlers. Part II has six papers about Aboriginal concerns. Part III with four papers, is about the experience of the South Asian migrants. Besides, there is a Foreword by Professor David Cater who has acknowledged it as a valuable addition for critical studies. He is delighted by the literary activities at the Australian and New Zealand Centre, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla under the leadership of Professor Neelima Kanwar.

The first paper is by the historian Richard Nile. He pays a glowing tribute to *Flesh in Armour* and does justice to its contents and reputation. He provides the necessary historical and literary background to it, like, who Thomas Mann was, why did he choose to write a novel on war rather than history, why was it initially, invariably denounced by every critic and publisher. For instance, one of the remarks labeled it as

"impure literature" for "people of high moral worth"(22). Than with a precise dissection, there is a detailed account of the various aspects of this very "impurity". Indeed it is repulsive, the ugliest, tragic and horrific, but that is the very nature of war—it is ugly. The paper is full of historical facts, like, who and how many were these soldiers and what shocked them. It bursts the myth of having a superior, stronger body for the naturally born Australian soldiers than their counter parts from England. The paper is an appeal by an Australian to his fellow Australians not to be estranged by the dark and ugly history of their past, but to have the courage and the courtesy to acknowledge it with an open heart. After all it is about their children, themselves and their homeland.

The second paper is by Virginia Jealous, a figure familiar at Shimla. Through an analysis of two poems she offers a rare glimpse into the hearts of two migrant poets, herself and her friend, Kaye Aldenhoven and reveals the source of its beatings. In the first part she explicates her poem, "Nothing Remains". It clearly expresses her belongingness to Australia. Eventually, with the passage of time, as she felt, it turns out to be a poem by an outsider only. She asserts that as a migrant she is "obsessed to obverse not participate in the life of this (Australian) landscape"(49). It reflects one part of her belongs to Australia while another has its beats elsewhere. In the second part, Kaye's poem, "Stitching her disappointment" shows how integrally she and her narrator belong to the history, landscape and the culture of Australia, related even to the Aboriginal.

In the third paper, Supala Pandirajan gradually unfolds the layered meanings of two poems by one of the most important writers of Australia, Judith Wright. It is one of the most important papers as it touches the core of this anthology. It presents what a sensitive white native feels about this eternal conflict of the homeland.

"At the Coolaalaah" simply presents how a blue crane merges with the landscape at sunset. But the poet infuses life into it by symbolizing the crane for the Aboriginals, suggesting their presence in Australia as the Australians before the arrival of the white people. "For

New England" exposes the concept of the cultural cringe. It clarifies two kinds of native Australians – "the swarthy (dark) nature", who are the Aboriginals, and "the homesick native", who are the white-natives. In the depth of their hearts, they long for "a natural human passion for a home – the need for a native land and identity; a desire to belong". The home it refers to is clearly England.

Deepkumar J. Trivedi offers glimpses of the cosmopolitan or "modern culture"(75) of Australia which was established in the post-war period, through three novels. The characters of *Remembering Babylon* aspire for a promising life, Gemmy, Lachan and George in their Australia. Though Janet gets easily "acclimatized to the Australian outback, and especially, the land"(78) but Jock with his Scottish roots longs to see the snow of his country. He takes time to become an Australian. *Kullark* traces the lives of the three generations of the Noongar people of Western Australia. It is about the difficulties they face while living with a white community and dealing with the acts of discrimination and segregation"(83). It also traces the typical word structure of their language. Woman and her presence came to the forefront during this period. In *Joan Makes History*, Joan is a wife, a mother and a grandmother who makes woman alive in about two hundred years of Australian history.

Akshay Kumar's paper gives an insight into the psychology and perspectives of the white emigrant children to Australia, through the study of Kirsty Murray's the Quarter of *The Children of the Wind.* The first book, *Birdie's Fire* accounts for the Irish Birdie and her brother Brandon. They came to Australia under "The Earl Gray's Famine Orphan Scheme". In Australia, she learns the English ways of life but never ever forgets her myths, legends and omens she had learned back at home. In due course of time, these get exchanged over to her Australian counterparts and gets due recognition by them. The other three novels in the series provide more such examples. On becoming adults these children feel proud of being Australians but deep down in their hearts they are nostalgic for their real homes left behind in time and space.

By far the most interesting paper in the second section is by Dr. R. Azhagarasan. He has a great passion for his mother tongue, Tamil and has translated Tamil Dalit literature into English. He prepared his rural students; he has his justification for that choice, and taught them Aboriginal literature by translating it in their mother tongue, Tamil. His team of students translated poetry of Oodgeroo, songs of Judith Rodriguez, a short-story, "The Letter" by Sally Morgan, poems of Alf Taylor, some writings of Mudrooroo in one go and within two years, of Archie Weller, Jack Davis and Lisa Bellier. It was a rewarding experience even though initially it appeared to be vague, difficult and confusing. The students could fairly understand this literature and its language. A meeting with some of the writers at the university enhanced their connectivity with it.

Why did he follow such an untraditional approach, that is where he seeks justification from our own Dr. Jaidev's view on how to learn and teach English, and its literature, to our students whose mother tongue is Hindi, etc. He quotes Dr. Jaidev, students should learn " to compose their thoughts in Hindi (Tamil) before writing them in English"(126). So reading Aboriginal/English writing through translating it in one's mother tongue is the best way to appreciate it. The paper deserves attention because of its unique approach.

Hem Raj Bansal's paper is based on the noble prize winner Patrick White's *A Fringe of Leaves*. It is an adventurous story of Ellen Roxburgh, a white woman, which is not completely fictional as it imaginatively recounts the story of a real woman, of how she was rescued from a ship wreck by the Aboriginals and lived with them for a while, as one of them, and then escaped with the help of a convict and lived with him a happy life, who helps her reach to her white community but refuses to live with her for he hates them for being inhuman to convicts. The paper rightfully explains whether Ellen's female- identity and white-identity remains uniform in her diverse locations with different groups of people and if it changes, where her true belonging is and why. It is also the only paper which clarifies the attitude of the convict towards the white Australia.

Priyanka Shivadas's paper does the same through *That Deadman Dance*. It traces the contact history between the white settlers and the Noongar tribe of Western Australia, between Dr. Cross and the central character Bobby respectively. Initially it's a happy contact as both the groups welcome and look towards each other, but then things change and Bobby becomes an object of laughter, ridicule and denouncement for his weird dance. Then there are glimpses of how the white people killed Noongars or deprived them of their children in their own country and how Bobby hates them and anything English for it. The paper also explains the concept of cultural memory and shows how the novel is constructed through the landscape with "a rock, a boulder, a hill, a river, and all typological, plant and minerals features"(!70).

Abhinaba Chatterjee's paper continues in the same stream in four novels of Mudrooroo – *Master of the Ghost Dreaming*, *The Undying*, *Underground* and *The Promised Land* and explores how a small Aboriginal tribe of Tasmania was haunted down by the colonizers, deprived them of their land and killed them as if they were some kind of demons or deformed creatures. An additional interest in the novels is their technique. They are narrated in the Gothic tradition. There is an evil vampire, Amelia, who is "a straight forward Gothic metaphor of the pernicious impact of western civilization on the Aboriginal Australia"(198).

Vaishali Ghalot's paper on *That Deadman Dance*, *Carpentaria* and *The Songlines* addresses the theme more objectively by raising the Aboriginal issues category wise, like, "religion, education, ecology, laws, land rights, ordinary myths and questions of authorship"(217). She picks up a character from a most appropriate situation in the novels and shows how the Aboriginals have been colonized, maltreated, misbehaved and deprived of their own homes, lands, rituals, ceremonies, language, etc. and also shows how they resisted and revolted against their losses. For instance Bobby "grumbled if you spoke anything but Noongar language"(210).

Another paper that accounts for children's literature is Ramanuj

Konar's. Children's literature does not exist is isolation but is institutionalized by the parents, the academia, the policy makers and, the most important of all, the publishers. As such, it aims to formulate a typical "identity and selfhood of a child reader"(153), which is determined by the local, native spirit of a community. The institutional gatekeepers of Australia found it obligatory to provide its children an exciting world so they feel proud of it , curious about it and could easily imbibe its history and value easily. One such important anthology that caters to adventure, exploration and the benign myth of Australian settlement is Eve Powell's award winning *The Australia Book*. Many such books emphasized "the strange and exotic elements about Aboriginality"(155)However, the Aboriginal writer projected an altogether different picture for their children. One such landmark book is *The Aboriginal Children's History of Australia*.

With Amit Sarwal's paper there is an entry into the world of the South Asian Diaspora in Australia and have an understanding of their preoccupations with home and the consequential estrangement or belongingness to it. It is based on the study of a few short stories by the South Asian writers, mainly Indian Fiji's, like Satendra Nandan, Brij Lal, Manik Datar and many others. The English emigrants to Australia had a positive feeling about their homeland, but with the South Asian Diaspora there is a twist in the story. When in Australia, some part of them longs to go back to their birth-place and be immersed in its heaven like atmosphere,on the other hand, when they actually revisit it, they are disappointed as they come across a new atmosphere, quite different from their imagination, and are repelled by its harsh socio-political reality. So the host land does offer security, safety and the consequential peace of mind. One naturally feels proud of the adopted home. Through many illustrations Sarwal reveals the divided self of the South Asian Diaspora regarding their home.

Dr. Rashida Murphy's paper focuses, more or less, on the literary activities of her book-reading club made for her Iranian and Indian friends. She organized reading session of English literature but

her Iranian friends were unfamiliar with it. They were also unwilling to explore it for the simple reason that it is not promoted by their culture. In other words, they have a very strong sense of community and their heart lies in their own culture only. She also discusses two novels, Azar Nafisi's memoir *Reading Lolita in Teheran* and Dalia Safer's *The September of Shiraj.* She asserts its time "to Question the representation of race, gender and class in our national literature"(245).

Natasha Narain is a visual artist. Her passion is painting and soft sculptor. Being a Bengali, she paints in the "traditional craft of Bengali Kantha"(265). In her paper analysis a few of her works. Her diverse exposure to the Bengali, Australian and English landscape, culture and literature has enriched her personality, which duly finds an appropriate expression in her two arts. She explores the "sacred feminine" as well as the true position of woman is society, whether in the present or at some point of time in the past. For instance in the books there is a picture of one of her soft sculptors – a discarded doll, beautifully transformed through her art to show a girl's feelings of sorrow, servility, helplessness, of being tied down by innumerable rounds of chains.

The last paper is by Vikram K. Koshal and Rabindra Power. It explores two novels to show the fate of more migrants to Australia. Suneeta's *Homework* showcases the ordeal of a girl child Mina. She is a child of Indian emigrant parents in Australia, who are deeply attached to their home country and she is caught between the two worlds. She is bred not only on the stories of Kali but also on the adventures of Alice. This dilemma is represented by the two horns that grow on her head and is certainly a source of problems and embarrassment for her. So the novel explores her true home. She continues to live in two worlds but at the accidental death of her parents a change happens that changes her life forever. Her horns disappear and then, "she starts inventing her Australian self"(280). Bem Le Hunt's *There, Where the Pepper Grows* is about a Jewish, Olek and his eventual settlement with his community in Sydney. It is more or less a private story for the character replicated the story of the writer's father-in-law. At the time of India's partition this

character is forced to leave his home in Calcutta and migrate to Sydney. How he comes to accept Australia as his new home is what the novel is all about. His settlement is important because he is a Jewish, the people who have a very strong community feeling.

With an analysis of about twenty one novels, many short stories and a few poems, the anthology presents a comprehensive view of its theme, namely, estrangement or belongingness to one's home. It does not refer to one's personal home but the true home of the white settlers, the convict, the Aboriginals, the white-native, women, the children and the South Asian migrants about their home country Australia.

CONTRIBUTORS

Abha Chauhan Khimta, is presently working as an Assistant Professor, in the Department of Political Science, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. She has thirteen year of teaching experience to her credit and has been teaching in the Department since 2016. She has attended various national and international seminars and conferences and has contributed various articles to reputed journals. Her area of specialisation includes PoliticalThought and Political Theory.

Ajay Khurana is an Associate Professor of English at Government College, Arki, in District Solan of Himachal Pradesh. He is Co-editor of *Under the Spotlight and The Curtain Raised: Five One-Act Plays*. He worked for his Ph.D. on "Narratives of Quest in Tim Winton's Fiction". His areas of interest include Australian literature, Canadian literature, contemporary world fiction, philosophy (Existentialism in particular) and psychology.

Apoorva Dimri has done her graduation and post-graduation in English literature from St. Stephen's College (Delhi University) and Jawaharlal Nehru University, respectively. As a literature student, she likes to explore the interdisciplinary nature on issues related to gender, class, caste, culture and post colonialism.

Bhawna Sharma is working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political science, Himachal Pradesh university,Shimla.Her area of Interest is International Relations and Indian Thought. Her research area is European Union, and she has availed UGCPost-Doctoral Fellowship. She has contributed more than 17 research articles in reputed journals and Newspapers.

Divya Sharma is an Assistant Professor of English at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government Institute of Engineering and Technology, Pragatinagar in Shimla District of Himachal Pradesh. She is currently pursuing her doctoral thesis on African American Literature. The main areas of her interest are African American Literature, Australian Literature and Feminist discourses.

Hem Raj Bansal is working as an Assistant Professor of English in the

Department of English and European Languages at Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala. He has co-edited two books, *Mapping Diaspora Identities: India and Beyond* (Anamika 2017) and *Homogeneity in Heterogeneity: Memory, Culture, and Resistance in Aboriginal Literatures from around the World* (Authors Press 2018). He also writes poetry in both Hindi and English. He has recently published his book of poetry in Hindi titled *Haanfti Zindagi* (Authors Press 2018). His other poetry collection in English will be out soon. Having more than twenty research papers to his credit, his recent article has been published by Palgrave McMillan, London. He got the Best Research Paper award at national conference organized by JCDAV College Dasuya, Punjab in 2015. He has also been awarded the one-month long fellowship by Forum on Contemporary Theory in 2009.

Kesang Youdon is working as a Project Associate in the 'UGC Centre for Australian and New Zealand studies' at the Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla and is also pursuing her Ph.D. in the Department of English.

MeghaKatoria is presently working as an Assistant Professor of English at St. Bede's College and she is pursuing her Ph.D. from Himachal Pradesh University. She has contributed her writings in the form of research papers, poems, stories, articles, and book reviews in various journals, magazines, and newspapers like the Sad Girl Review, Fiction Quest, Penmanship Personified, The Criterion, Galaxy, Dialogue, Ruminations,Research Chronicler, Keekli, Gen-Next Times, in Dangerous Women Project (IASH) of The University of Edinburgh and more.

Neelima Kanwar is a Professor of English at International Centre for Distance Education and Open Learning (ICDEOL), Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. Author of *Narratives of Estrangement and Belonging: Indo- Australian Perspectives*(Authors Press: 2016), Co-author of *The Dark Room*: *A Comprehensive Study* (OUP:2014) and author of *Resistant Voices* (Anamika:2008), to her credit are also several papers on

postcolonial literature, especially on the 'First Nation' writers of Canada and Aboriginal writers of Australia. She has been recipient of prestigious Australia- India Council Fellowship (2005) and Shastri Indo- Canadian Fellowship (2007). At present she is involved in the study of interface/ interaction between gender, race, culture and politics of difference in contemporary writings, besides working on life-narratives and Young Adult literature. Professor Neelima Kanwar, also, is the Director, 'UGC Centre for Australian and New Zealand Studies' at Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla.

Nisha Misra is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Amity Institute of Corporate Communication, Amity University NOIDA, Uttar Pradesh (India) where she teaches both English Literature as well as Communication Skills. She has done her Ph.D in Australian Short Fiction from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. She is actively involved in presenting papers in seminars/conferences apart from varied publications to her credit.With a penchant for writing, both critical and creative, her area of interest is fiction as well as poetry.

Sanjana Shamshery is an Associate Professor in the Department of English, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. She has worked as Chairperson in the Department of English from 2016 to 2018. She has supervised seven Ph.D. theses and presently guiding five Ph.D. students. She supervised thirty M.phil dissertations. Her areas of interests are New Historicism, Feminism, Post Feminism and other theories related to it.

Shikha Thakur is pursuing PhD in English from Central University of Himachal Pradesh.She has completed her M.Phil.in English from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. Her area of specializations is gender inequality, Islamic discourse and feminism.

Subhash Verma is an Assistant Professor of English at RNT Government College Sarkaghat, Mandi (HP). He did his M.A., M. Phil. and Ph. D. from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla-5. He has twenty-one research articles to his credit and has presented many papers

in national and international conferences in India and abroad. He has supervised one M. Phil. thesis and presently one Ph. D. scholar is working under his supervision. His areas of interest include Australian Drama, Aboriginal Literature, Canadian Drama, Postcolonial Literature and Contemporary Literature. He has also worked as Project Associate in the Centre for Australian and New Zealand Studies at H.P. University Shimla-5.

Suneela Sharma an Assistant Professor of English at The Jawahar Lal College of Fine Arts, Shimla. She has written,presented and published more than a dozen research papers atregional, national and International levelconferences, journals and magazines. She is a writer,actor,director,a yoga teacher and a social worker.She has written and published a book titled-*The Dialectal Influences on The Spoken English in The Districts of Himachal Pradesh,* was released in 2012.She has been the member of District Development Cell of The Art of Living Organisation , has organized several courses for drug de-addiction and youth empowerment for the last ten years in . She has to her credit ,in addition to writing and directing several plays ,her memorable acting experiences in Nirmal Verma's play '*Dhoop ka EK Tukda'* at the Sharad Utsav , The Gaiety Theatre , Shimla in 20112 and in Mahesh Dattani's play *'30 Days in September'* in 2016 .

Suneeta Peres da Costa was born in Sydney, Australia, to parents of Goan origin. She writes poetry, fiction, non-fiction and drama. Both her books of fiction *Homework* (Bloomsbury, 1999) and *Saudade* (Giramondo, 2018; Transit Books USA & Canada, 2019) concern the Goan diaspora within colonial and postcolonial contexts. *Saudade* was shortlisted for the Australian Prime Minister's Literary Awards 2019 for Fiction. Peres da Costa's literary honours include a Fulbright Scholarship, the Australia Council for the Arts BR Whiting Residency, Rome, and, recently, an Asialink Arts Creative Exchange to the Australian and New Zealand Studies Centre at Himachal Pradesh University, India.

Vinod Kumar Chopra is a Lecturer in English at GGSSS Nadaun (Hamirpur), Himachal Pradesh. He did his Ph.D. from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla in 2002 on "Community, Communalism and Gender: A Study of Short Stories on Partition" and published a book *Partition Stories; Mapping Community, Communalism and Gender*, (2009). He has translated into English a monograph on Inderpal, a freedom fighter from Himachal Pradesh, *Saga of a Revolutionary Hero; Pt. Inderpal a freedom fighter*(ISBN 978-93-80396-06-4) He has published ten research papers in national and international literary journals. He has also presented seven research papers on literature and education in national and international seminars. He frequently writes on the issues of gender, social violence, moral values, and environment and regularly contributes to the leading National Newspapers both in Hindi and English. He is working on folk narratives of Himachal Pradesh. He is a permanent member of Indian Association for the Study of Australia (IASA) and The English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI).

Virginia Jealous is a freelance travel writer and poet, from Denmark, Western Australia. She contributes regularly to publications including *Lonely Planet* and the *Weekend Australian*. Her poetry appears in journals and online and she has performed at art festivals in Australia and India. A selection of her poems, *Things turned upside down,* was released by Picaro Press in 2011. She has been actively engaged in international development at conflict locations and refugee advocacy work in countries like Australia, Combodia, Figi, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, working with Oxfam, Australian Red Cross and Worldwide Fund for Nature, etc. She was an Asialink Resident at the Centre for Australian and New Zealand Studies, Himachal Pradesh University from September to November 2012.

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