M. A. ENGLISH LITERATURE - SEMESTER-III			
Core	**AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE**		
Code: CENC32	**Hrs / Week: 5**	**Hrs / Semester: 75**	**Credits: 4**

UNIT - I - POETRY

Andrew Barton Paterson	:	Waltzing Matilda
Shaw Neilson	:	Surely God was a Lover
Alec Derwent Hope	:	Australia
James McCauley	:	From the True Discovery of Australia
Oodgeroo Noonuccal	:	We are Going
Chris Wallace Crabble	:	Melbourne

Suggested Reading

John Kinsella, *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Poetry*.

UNIT - II - PROSE

Henry Lawson	:	A Neglected History
John Farrow	:	Father Damien at Work
Alec Derwent Hope	:	Standards in Australian Literature

Suggested Reading

A.Grove Day, *Modern Australian Prose, 1901–75: A Guide to Information Sources.*

UNIT - III - SHORT- STORIES

Barbara Baynton	:	A Dreamer
Hal Porter	:	Francis Silver
Margo Lanagon	:	Singing My Sister Down

Suggested Reading

Michael Wilding (Editor), *The Oxford Book of Australian Short Stories*.

UNIT - IV - DRAMA

Robert Merritt	:	The Cake Man
Andrew Bovell	:	The Secret River

Suggested Reading

Leslie Rees, *A History of Australian Drama*.

UNIT - V - FICTION

Patrick White	:	The Vivisector
Thomas Michael Keneally	:	Schindler's Ark

Suggested Reading

Laurie Clancy, *A Reader's Guide to Australian Fiction*.

References:

Dhawan, R.K. *Australian Literature Today*. New Delhi, 1993.

Commonwealth Fiction. Classical Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1988.

Narasimhaiah, C.D. *An Anthology of Commonwealth Poetry*. Macmillan India Ltd., Delhi, 1990.

Ramaswamy, S. *Commentaries on Commonwealth Fiction*. Prestige, Delhi, 1994.

Walsh, William. *Commonwealth Literature*. Macmillan Press Limited, London, 1979.

Australian literature is a large body of writing that can include early versions and English translations of Aboriginal song sequences or folktales, the memoirs, journals and ballads of early European explorers and settlers. It also includes the more formal works of literature that followed as writing and publishing established its sway on the island continent. Like the literature of any other nation it captures in many ways the growth and development of Australia into the country that we know today. It can be said that much of what we can include under the category of Australian literature from the early phases of its development was not what would be traditionally considered literature. For example, the oral songs and stories of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia were passed on orally from generation to generation without being written. Even when they were recorded in English versions it was done more with an anthropological intention than a literary one. The idea was to learn more about the culture and values of the Aboriginal peoples from a scientific point of view than to study the aesthetic aspects of these creations. Similarly, the records, memoirs, diaries and journals that are today included under the study of literature were not always meant for this purpose. They were often the private or official records of explorers, administrators and settlers. However, these works are important sources that reveal how the land, circumstances and people of Australia evolved in the thoughts and imagination of the people who lived there or visited it. They show how Australian literature came to be written and the early influences on this body of writing.

The ballads of the convicts and the bush songs belong more to a period when Australian literature began to be an institution in itself. Periodicals like the Bulletin, which started publication in 1880, were part of this trend. The ballads and bush songs, which had earlier been mostly part of the folk tradition, now became of the literary tradition. Writers began to consciously cultivate and develop the forms, themes and figures of the oral ballads and bush songs. 'Banjo' Patterson belongs to this school of writing. 'Waltzing Matilda' a ballad about a swagman - a travelling farm worker in the Australian outback - has become to many Australians of European descent, a kind of unofficial national anthem. This is in part because it captures the spirit of surviving in a harsh landscape, the pioneering spirit as well as a bold attitude to life and the authorities.

Literature in Australia developed and began to take on many other forms such as the popular short story, the literary version of the fireside yam. Henry Laws and Barbara Bayntou were prominent short story writers who contributed greatly to the growth and development of this genre during this formative stage. Their writing captured features of

the growth of the Australian cultural myths of the Bush and its people. The hardships and spirit of the European settlers and bush people during the pioneering days finds expression in their work. At this early stage of development it was but natural that the writers who were mainly from along the British settlers would-bring to their writing the values and forms of the British traditions of literature.

In this sense, early Australian literature was constantly looking over its shoulder at England. This soon developed into a source of tension as some writers felt that the best direction for Australian literature was to follow and maintain British traditions of great literature. Others felt that as Australia was so different from England that it should cut the umbilical cord from the in other country and develop an identity of its own as a nation and this should be reflected in Australian literature. Australian history and literature do reveal the many tensions that have gone into the making of the Australian nation. These are: the tension between the old country of England, the metropolitan colonial centre and the new country of Australia on the antipodean margins of the British Empire; he tension between the settlers and the indigenous Aborigines; the tension between early waves of settlers and more recent immigrants; the tension between the old language, images and literary forms of British literature and the idiom, images and literary forms taking root in the new environment of Australia. All these tensions shaped the themes and forms of Australian literature.

As in much of the rest of the English speaking world, in Australia the first half of the twentieth century saw the genre of poetry being more popular and the second half saw the novel rising to prominence. A.D. Hope and Judith Wrigbt are the canonical figures of Australian poetry during its heyday. Patrick White, Australia's Nobel Prize laureate, is probably the best know11 and most taught of Australia's novelists. Their writing began to move away from both a purely derivative imitation of European forms as well as a focus on the people and mores of the Rush. Modem Australia, of the cities began to figure more distinctly in their writing. As the face of the Australian nation began to change, its literature began to reflect that change. Writers like Kath Walker, Mudrooroo, Kevin Gilbert and Sally Morgan have brought the poetry, drama and stories of the Aboriginal peoples to the forefront. There has also been a trend towards autobiographies, biographies and life-stories gaining more and more popularity. The multicultural is^^^ that is being promoted at a political level is being reflected in the diverse voices being heard in the realm of Australian literature. Today there are more women, Aborigine

Perhaps more so than in other countries, the literature of Australia characteristically express collective values. Even when the literature deals with the experiences of an individual, those experiences are very likely to be estimated in terms of the ordinary, the typical, the representative. It aspires on the whole to represent integration rather than disintegration. It does not favour the heroicism of individual action unless this shows dogged perseverance in the face of inevitable defeat. Although it may express a strong ironic disapproval of collective mindlessness, the object of criticism is the mindlessness rather than the conformity.

This general proposition holds true for both Indigenous Australians and those descended from later European arrivals, though the perception of what constitutes the community is quite radically different in these two cases. The white Australian community is united in part by its sense of having derived from foreign cultures, primarily that of England, and in part by its awareness of itself as a settler society with a continuing celebration of pioneer values and a deep attachment to the land. For Aboriginal peoples in their traditional cultures, story, song, and legend served to define allegiances and relationships both to others and to the land that nurtured them. For modern Aboriginal people, written literature has been a way of both claiming a voice and articulating a sense of cohesion as a people faced with real threats to the continuance of their culture.

Aboriginal narrative: the oral tradition

When first encountered by Europeans, Australian Aboriginal peoples did not have written languages (individual words were collected from first contact, but languages as systems were not written down until well into the 20th century). Their songs, chants, legends, and stories, however, constituted rich oral literature, and, since the Aboriginal peoples had no common language, these creations were enormously diverse. Long unavailable to or misunderstood by non-Aboriginal people, their oral traditions appear (from researches undertaken in the last half of the 20th century) to be of considerable subtlety and complexity.

T he oral literature of Aboriginal peoples has an essentially ceremonial function. It supports the fundamental Aboriginal beliefs that what is given cannot be changed and that the past exists in an eternal present, and it serves to relate the individual and the landscape to the continuing spiritual influence of the Dreaming (or Dreamtime)—widely known as the Alcheringa (or Altjeringa), the term used by the Aboriginal peoples of central

Australia—a mythological past in which the existing natural environment was shaped and humanized by ancestral beings. While the recitation of the song cycles and narratives is to some extent prescribed, it also can incorporate new experience and thus remain applicable—both part of the past (called up by the Ancestors) and part of the present.

Aboriginal oral tradition may be public (open to all members of a community and often a kind of entertainment) or sacred (closed to all but initiated members of one or the other sex). Narratives of the public sort range from stories told by women to young children (mostly elementary versions of creation stories—also appropriate for tourists and amateur anthropologists) to the recitation of song cycles in large gatherings (known as corroborees). Even the most uncomplicated narratives of the Dreaming introduce basic concepts about the land and about what it is that distinguishes right behaviour from wrong. When children are old enough to prepare for their initiation ceremonies, the stories become more elaborate and complex. Among the sacred songs and stories are those that are men's business and those that are women's business; each is forbidden to the eyes and ears of the other sex and to the uninitiated.

The chief subject of Aboriginal narratives is the land. As Aboriginal people travel from place to place, they (either informally or ceremonially) name each place, telling of its creation and of its relation to the journeys of the Ancestors. This practice serves at least three significant purposes: it reinforces their knowledge of local geography—that is, the food routes, location of water holes, places of safety, places of danger, the region's terrain, and so on—and it also serves a social function (sometimes bringing large clans together) and a religious or ritual function.

Many of the stories have to do with the journeys of the Ancestors and the "creation sites," places at which they created different clans and animals. Other stories concern contests between Ancestor figures for power and knowledge. A sequence of stories or songs—a story track or song line—identifies the precise route taken by an Ancestor figure. Knowledge and recitation of the journey of each totemic figure are the responsibility of that figure's totemic clan. (Members of an immediate biological family belong to different totems, or Dreamings. Totem membership can be determined in various ways, from association with a locale to an acknowledgment of spiritual kinship.) Because an Ancestor's journey is often traced over vast stretches of land, only a segment of the entire song cycle or story is known to a particular group. These are exchanged at meeting points, and, though the songs may be sung in a different language, an Ancestor's

story contains musical elements that make it clearly identifiable to all members of that totem, from whatever part of the country. Song lines and story tracks can be traced over the entire country. In this way oral literature sustains the sense of continuity between the clans as well as between the present and the time of creation.

Important stories that deal with the activities of perhaps just one or two of the ancestral figures and belong to adjacent areas and adjacent clans may constitute a song cycle. Some of these stories do not allow for variation and constitute a formal literature with precise structures and particular language. For example, repetition is an important structural device. Verb forms and tenses indicate the unchanging yet ongoing relationship between the ancestral past and the present. The persistent theme of transformation, a theme characteristic of many oral literatures, is for the people a way of access to their mythic past, to the eternal present of the Dreaming.

The Djanggawul song cycle recounts in 188 songs the journey of three ancestral beings, a Brother and Two Sisters, in the Millingimbi region. Those Ancestors created all that territory. Water holes become sacred because there they created the people of a particular totem or there an important aspect of the law was established. Places acquire a name; they come into being. Much of the cycle is about fertility and increase and about the relations between men and women. For example, men steal from the Sisters the sacred objects and the power that goes with them, and, while that legend might appear to concede the dominance of men in tribal practice (according to custom), it also acknowledges women as the original source of power and knowledge.

Above all, the oral literature of Aboriginal peoples is involved with performance. It is not simply a verbal performance. Traditional song is very often associated with dance, and storytelling with gesture and mime. Or stories may be accompanied by diagrams drawn in the sand and then brushed away again. Each song, each narrative, is in effect acted out. Storytellers will customarily announce who they are, where they come from, and what their relation to the story is, as though they are its agent. They may provide a frame for their story. They use the common devices of oral literature such as repetition and enumeration and formulaic expression. But they always take care with their songs and stories; they are as careful with imagery and symbolism, with the figures of speech, as they are with other aspects of ceremony.

The intention of the song man or storyteller is not to assert a sense of individuality but to identify the continuing validity of the song or the story. There may be direct address to the listener (or, in more recent times, the reader), but this is a device of inclusion. It is also a stratagem to ensure understanding, providing the opportunity for explanation and elaboration whenever that is desirable.

Increasingly, traditional Aboriginal peoples have permitted their songs and stories to be collected and recorded for the time when the young people, who they feel show little interest in their traditional literature at present, return to the old ways of custom. The non-Aboriginal person's knowledge of this traditional literature relies almost entirely on printed translation. What non-Aboriginal people are permitted to read is therefore at least twice removed from its proper context—once by its metamorphosis from oral to written and again by its translation. Even with the most sympathetic mind and the most comprehensive set of footnotes, the non-Aboriginal person has little means of assessing the relation of custom to individual performance. Further, there remains the residual perception of the nature of traditional Aboriginal literature formed on a number of early, well-intentioned collections of myths and legends, such as Catherine Langloh Parker's *Australian Legendary Tales* (1896) or Alan Marshall's *People of the Dreamtime* (1952), where the stories are reshaped to meet European notions of narrative design and structure.

Anthropologists Catherine H. and Ronald M. Berndt were the first to publish traditional narratives and songs in full in the original language (though linguists have still not agreed on how best to represent Aboriginal speech), then with a translation and a commentary. One good example of their work is *Three Faces of Love: Traditional Aboriginal Song-Poetry* (1976). This approach enables at least an initial appreciation of the subtlety and the artistry of the oral tradition.

Not all Aboriginal song and story is in Indigenous dialect. In the 1970s and '80s, as Aboriginal people began to write in formal English, some began to express themselves in what might be called Aboriginal English, an English that is different from standard English. It is formed in short, simple sentences, and it makes considerable use of repetition with variation. It also conveys a certain dignity—and a rich sense of humour. Some versions of this can be found in the different narratives included in Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987) and, more sensitive still as a transcription, in Paddy Roe's *Gularabulu: Stories from the West Kimberley* (1983). In the last decades of the 20th century, the poet and

storyteller Maureen Watson helped to maintain the oral tradition by reading on radio and television and by performing at schools.

The century after settlement

Almost as soon as settlement of New South Wales began, in 1788, reports of the "new" country were sent back to England. The public was interested not in the routine of convict life but in the details of strange new flora and fauna. In the colony itself there was little time for any other than practical considerations. Early publications were dominated by reports of new lands and rivers, journeys of exploration, summaries of what had so far been discovered in the "new" continent.

Yet there were some who attempted to interpret their experience as best they could. There were early expressions of local pride by those born in the colony, such as the poets Charles Tompson and William Wentworth in *Australasia* (1823), but those who were serving a tour of duty in the Antipodes, like the unfortunately named Barron Field, were more inclined to see their experiences in terms of disbelief, sometimes comic disbelief. Field's *First Fruits of Australian Poetry* (1819) was the first volume of poetry published in Australia. Those who were likely to spend a much longer term in New South Wales, as the colony was then known, expressed a profound nostalgia for "home." The sense of exile was keenly felt by the anonymous composers of convict songs and bush ballads alike.

The prose writers exhibited the inquiring mind of the 18th century; a scientific interest in the novelties of the new world and their perception of man as a social being show that, while the Romantic movement was under way in Europe, early Australia was essentially fostered by the Enlightenment. Watkin Tench's *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* (1789) and its sequel, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson* (1793), were immediately popular in Europe. Matthew Flinders's *A Voyage to Terra Australis* (1814) is another example of this engaging literature of discovery.

Yet touches of the Romantics arrived speedily enough. By mid-century Charles Harpur, the child of ex-convicts, was writing rugged, well-sustained poems that were responsive to the landscape in the manner of William Wordsworth. In other poems he imitated the idealism of Percy Byshe Shelley. Harpur also had made a careful study of Emersonian ideas. But his poetry and prose were not easily available beyond their

occasional appearance in the colonial press, and only in modern times has a proper estimation of his work been undertaken. A collection of his poems, *Poems by Charles Harpur*, was published in 1883.

Adam Lindsay Gordon was a much more popular poet. “The Sick Stockrider” from his *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes* (1870) was a general favourite, much admired and much recited. It conveyed a sense of comradeship, mapped a world by a bushman’s kind of detail, and exhibited a stoic sentimentalism that was exactly to colonial taste. Henry Kendall, a poet of forests and mountain streams, specialized in more mournful effects. As his is a poetry of sound and description rather than of action (as clearly evinced in his volume *Leaves from Australian Forests* [1869]), it is not always clear that he was wrestling with some broadly transcendentalist notions.

The first Australian novel, Henry Savery’s *Quintus Servinton*, was published in 1831. It is strongly autobiographical, and its convict theme amounts to special pleading. But it does not emphasize the exotic possibilities of its Australian scenes. James Tucker’s *Ralph Rashleigh; or, The Life of an Exile* (written in 1844; published in an edited version in 1929 and in its original text in 1952), on the other hand, makes use of all the sensational opportunities at hand. It begins as a picaresque account of low-life London and proceeds through the whole gamut of convict life, escape, bushrangers, and life among Aboriginal peoples. One of its most telling moments is Ralph’s panic at being lost in the bush, a theme that compelled many colonial writers and painters.

The first widely known novel of Australia was *Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859) by Henry Kingsley, brother of Charles Kingsley. When the action at last moves from Devon to Australia, the story transposes into heroic romance, and it too manages to incorporate the sensational possibilities of the colonial experience: bushrangers and bushfires, floods and hostile Aboriginal peoples, the tragic outcome of being lost in the bush, cattle branding and horse galloping, and a fortune earned. Catherine Helen Spence’s *Clara Morison* (1854) details with a nice sense of irony the social preoccupations of Adelaide in the mid-19th century, but it was not a well-known novel.

Marcus Clarke’s *His Natural Life* (1874; the antecedent phrase *For the Term of* was inserted without authority after his death) is the first novel regarded as an Australian classic. It is a powerful account of the convict experience, drawing heavily on

documentary sources. Within the rigours and perversions of the convict system, another social system forms itself and establishes its own code. But beyond the horrors and the brutality, there is a compensating moral theme, that of goodness recognized. Clarke uses his Australian material to approach universal values. Both Clarke and Rolf Boldrewood (pseudonym of Thomas Alexander Browne) initially published their fiction in serial installments in colonial magazines such as the *Australian Journal* and *The Sydney Mail*. Boldrewood's *Robbery Under Arms* (1888) was immensely popular, and it too achieved classic status. Of particular interest is the Australian vernacular in which the narrator, Dick Marston, presents his confession of his part in gang activity. Boldrewood also articulates the sentimental, stoic resignation that colonial Australians seemed to favour. Other novelists who had established themselves by the late 1800s were Rosa Praed—her *Policy and Passion* (1881) is an interesting account of the personal life of a Queensland politician—and the prolific Ada Cambridge.

Not to be forgotten in any account of the first hundred years are the published journals of the explorers. Not only were their discoveries of widespread interest, but many of them—including Charles Sturt, Edward John Eyre, and Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell—were accomplished writers. Eyre's account of his struggle around the Great Australian Bight (a wide embayment of the Indian Ocean) inspired the Australian novelist Patrick White in writing *Voss* (1957), although White modeled that novel in part on the experiences of Ludwig Leichhardt, explorer and naturalist who in the 1840s led a dangerous expedition through interior Australia that resulted in the discovery of many sites suitable for settlement.

Nationalism and expansion

The centenary year 1888 provided the occasion for review and reassessment, and almost inevitably that activity encouraged the growing nationalist sentiment already in evidence in such publications as the weekly *Bulletin* (founded 1880). The last 20 years of the 19th century saw a marked growth of nationalism and the movement toward federation of the separate states. The *Bulletin*, with its rallying cry of "Australia for the Australians," was ardently nationalistic. It urged its contributors to "write Australian" and to celebrate above all the virtues of the Australian worker, especially the bush worker. It endorsed the egalitarian myth of mateship rather than the independence of the little man, the battler, who struggles on his own against the odds. It espoused a cheerful, somewhat larrikin (Australian word meaning, among other things, "rowdy," or

"irresponsible") brashness, and in this it revealed its underlying urban orientation. Other papers and magazines of the period actively published Australian writing, but the *Bulletin* attracted the utopian idealists and the sentimental realists who dominated Australian writing at the end of the century. It advocated a spare, laconic style; it preferred a humorous attitude to life's hardships; and it favoured themes of national pride, the values of rural life, and sympathy for the struggles of small-scale farmers. Among its many contributors, A.B. ("Banjo") Paterson was acclaimed for composing "Waltzing Matilda" and for his bush ballads, and Henry Lawson published his greatest short stories there. (Among the collections of Lawson's work are *While the Billy Boils* [1896] and *Children of the Bush* [1902]).

Curiously, at the very time the image of young Australia was being so vigorously advanced, Paterson and Lawson and Steele Rudd (pseudonym of Arthur Hoey Davis) showed a pronounced tendency to nostalgia, to the distant in time or place. Joseph Furphy, resisting the call for succinctness, wrote a large complex novel, *Such Is Life* (1903), describing the rural world of the 1880s. It overflows with details of station life, the conversations of bullock drivers, nationalistic sentiments, and philosophical meditations about chance and determinism.

The reading of the Australian experience in terms of bush realism was open to challenge. Barbara Baynton's stories in *Bush Studies* (1902) subvert the persistent "matey" ethos, suggesting instead the darkly disturbing side of bush experience. Christopher Brennan, in such volumes as *Poems 1913* (1913), virtually ignored local preoccupations in his Symbolist poetry; he tapped instead the deep sources of spiritual restlessness, particularly through the use of myth and archetype. Some popular writers, such as C.J. Dennis in his verses about the Sentimental Bloke, relocated many of the bush attitudes to the inner city.

By the early decades of the 20th century, the era of bushranging, convictism, and exploration was far enough in the past to be regarded as historical colour. It also was fully expected that the Aboriginal peoples would also pass away—Daisy Bates, who lived for many years among Aboriginal people, used as the title of her book about her experiences the standard phrase *The Passing of the Aborigine* (1938). Aboriginal people had become the subject of anthropological interest in the work of Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer and Francis James Gillen in Central Australia, and Aboriginal legends had been collected and rewritten by K. Langloh Parker, although there was still very little interest

in Aboriginal people as people. Such interest as existed was—in the manner of the times—proprietary, as in Mrs. Aeneas Gunn's *The Little Black Princess* (1905) for young readers and in her autobiographical *We of the Never-Never* (1908), about her experiences on a station in the Northern Territory, the last region of Australia to attract European expansion. It still regards itself as the quintessential Outback.

The first great phase of writing for children also occurred in the Federation era (Australia's version of the Edwardian period, extending from 1901, when the Australian provinces formed a federation, to just beyond the end of World War I), a time of widespread wealth and security and, for the middle class, of social consolidation. The books for children reflect this atmosphere; they also reflect another reality, the easy acceptance of both Australian and British Empire loyalties. Classic works were written by Ethel Turner, Ethel Pedley, Amy and Louise Mack, May Gibbs, and Mary Grant Bruce (a little later), and Norman Lindsay's wonderful *The Magic Pudding* (1918) became standard fare for generations of Australian children.

The character of the times is perhaps best represented in the work of such diverse writers as Mary Gilmore, Walter Murdoch, and Miles Franklin. The life span of each of them stretched from colonial times into the modern era; in both their lives and their writing, they represented continuity. Each expressed a kind of independence from time: Gilmore by the long reach of her memory, apparent in such volumes as *Old Days, Old Ways: A Book of Recollections* (1934); Murdoch by the gentle whimsy and conversational ease of his essays, as in *Speaking Personally* (1930); and Franklin by her absorption in the realm of Australian pastoral in such novels as *Up the Country* (1928), though she is mostly remembered by her early pseudoautobiographical *My Brilliant Career* (1901). John Shaw Neilson, in the sheer shimmering beauty of his lyric poetry, achieves another order of timelessness, that of the moment of true perception, at once unworldly and firmly located in the natural world.

E.J. Banfield stepped aside from the world for reasons of health and wrote from his island on the Great Barrier Reef a series of books beginning with *Confessions of a Beachcomber* (1908) that reflected, often wryly, on natural history and the advantages of the contemplative life. Jack McLaren in *My Crowded Solitude* (1926) was another who encountered timelessness for a time. And C.E.W. Bean found the same slow rhythms of experience out on the great Western plains (*On the Wool Track* [1910]) and down the Darling River (*The Dreadnought of the Darling* [1911]). Like Banfield and Murdoch, he

identified a genial world and men whose essential character he admired, and, when he entered the world of torrid events as Australia's official war historian, his thesis was that the courage and resourcefulness of the Australian soldier, the digger, was in fact derived from the bushman—that these were but two manifestations of the national type. The same perception is present in Keith Hancock's *Australia* (1930), a reading of Australian history in terms of character.

The most impressive novelist of the period was Henry Handel Richardson (pseudonym of Ethel Florence Lindesay Robertson). Her *Maurice Guest* (1908), set in Leipzig, Germany, is an antiromantic novel about ordinariness caught up with genius, provincialism among the exotic, the tragedy of an insufficiently great passion. Her three-volume masterpiece, *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* (1917–29), traces the fluctuating fortunes of the immigrants who established the new urban Australia in the late 19th century. The last volume, *Ultima Thule*, graphically describes conditions in the goldfields and brings its character studies of the temperamentally opposite spouses Richard and Mary to a profoundly moving climax. Katharine Susannah Prichard's realism in *Working Bullocks* (1926) and in *Coonardoo* (1929), her sympathetic portrait of an Aboriginal woman, was of a more romantic nature. For others, such as Kylie Tennant and Eleanor Dark, realism served social and historical ends.

Modernism arrived with the poetry of Kenneth Slessor (as evidenced in such of his volumes as *Earth-Visitors* [1926] and *Five Bells* [1939]) and R.D. FitzGerald (*Forty Years' Poems* [1965] and *Product: Later Verses by Robert D. FitzGerald* [1977]). Slessor was committed to the importance of the image; FitzGerald was of a more philosophical bent and developed complex arguments in his poems. During the 1930s both became preoccupied with history and the concept of time.

The Depression years directed attention back to the comparable experiences of the early 1890s and confirmed the defining status of that period in Australian cultural mythology, the apotheosis of the acclaimed national virtues—mateship, humorous stoicism, populist pragmatism, and irony. It was also a time of international awakening, and it was a time of discovery, as the many books about travel, especially in the Australian Outback, testify. Among the discoveries of that period was a romantic notion of the spirit of place and the importance, for writers, of what could still be discerned of Aboriginal culture: this discovery gave rise to the Jindyworobak movement, which had as its goal the freeing of Australian art from "alien" influences. By apt coincidence, Xavier

Herbert's *Capricornia* (1938) was published at this time. Herbert's sprawling comic anarchy, his maverick vision, and the sense of remoteness from regulated society all derive from his Northern Territory milieu. But *Capricornia* also displays all the themes important to the Jindyworobak movement: concern for the Aboriginal, discovery of the Outback, social protest, and the true spirit of Australia. Before long, however, world events overwhelmed the movement completely.

Literature from 1940 to 1970

A new and very talented generation of writers and artists began to emerge at the outset of World War II. Literary magazines—including *Southerly* and *Meanjin*, both concerned with promoting Australian writing (and both still extant)—established themselves, and the interest of the international reading public in Australian writing grew. Although factual and descriptive writing remained prominent, Australian writers became increasingly speculative and searching. The "Ern Malley" hoax (1944), in which the poets James McAuley and Harold Stewart, writing as a deceased mechanic-salesman-poet, parodied what they saw as the meaninglessness of experimental verse, was an indication of the demand for new standards. Similarly Patrick White, a Nobel Prize winner (1973) and the most important and influential of the modern Australian novelists, was drawn to Australian themes and the Australian landscape, but he was profoundly dismissive of the dun-coloured journalism, as he thought it, of Australian fiction.

White's imaginative reach, ambitious themes, and elaborate imagery showed him surpassing nationalistic limitations. His major novels, *The Tree of Man* (1955), *Voss* (1957), and *Riders in the Chariot* (1961), had an epic scope. His short stories and plays and his later novels explored more completely the ambiguity of character and the troubling question of belief. White not only demonstrated the richness of the Australian experience for imaginative writing ("your country is of great subtlety") but drew the attention of the world to it.

Martin Boyd had won the first Gold Medal from the Australian Literature Society as early as 1928, but his career belonged mainly to the postwar period. His particular interest was in tracing the influence of the past upon the present, most often through novels of family histories. These novels—particularly *Lucinda Brayford* (1946) and the Langton quartet, beginning with *The Cardboard Crown* (1952)—were chronicles too of the decline of the genteel and aristocratic tradition. Christina Stead, who also had begun

writing before the war, did not win recognition until the 1960s, with the reissue of *The Man Who Loved Children* (1940). Her novels explored the relation between personality and environment and particularly the theme of exploitation. A younger writer, Randolph Stow, had an early success with *To the Islands* (1958), a novel that was poetic in texture and structure and that intertwined aspects of European and Aboriginal culture and belief.

The practice of descriptive verse continued in the postwar period, but the new generation of poets also sought a new symbolic reading of Australia. They turned increasingly to the meditative lyric. In such poems as "The Death of the Bird" and "Moschus Moschiferus,"A.D. Hope developed a reputation for witty, satiric, and allusive verse delivered in the clear middle style of John Dryden. Rather richer and more emotionally charged were the lyrics of Judith Wright (*Collected Poems 1942–1970* [1971]); sometimes she attempted abstruse concepts, lodged in images of the natural world. Douglas Stewart (*Collected Poems 1936–1967* [1967]) was another who drew his inspiration directly from the natural world, perceiving in it fragments of the moral design of the universe.

James McAuley, always a meditative poet, achieved both grace and humanity in the moving clarity of his later verse (for example, in *Music Late at Night* [1976]). And David Campbell (*Collected Poems* [1989]) combined an intelligent love for poetry with a passion for the land, the language of the traditional lyric with the speech rhythms of the Australian vernacular. His poetry too was mainly a kind of meditative lyric. Rosemary Dobson (*Collected Poems* [1991]) was another of this generation of fine poets. Although Vivian Smith (*New Selected Poems* [1995]) does not quite fit with this group, he continued the practice of meditative lyric and so may be mentioned here. Gwen Harwood developed a thoughtful kind of poetry, varied at times by clever, satiric verses, as in her *Collected Poems* (1991).

Plays had been written in Australia well back into the colonial period, but the drama was not distinguished and was of only local interest. Among the first notable plays were two radio plays by Douglas Stewart, *Ned Kelly* (published 1943) and *The Fire on the Snow* (performed 1941), both of which showed the symbolic possibilities in historic figures. In 1955 Ray Lawler won local and international acclaim for *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, a play naturalistic in character and idiom and universal in theme yet peculiarly Australian in its attitudes. Its success began something of a revival in Australian

drama; it was followed by Alan Seymour's *The One Day of the Year* (1961) and Patrick White's *Four Plays* (published 1965).

In nonfictional prose there were numerous histories and biographies in this period. In the early 1960s occurred one of those curious convergences that mark literary history. A number of writers began publishing works of an autobiographical kind in which the emphasis lay elsewhere than on the self. Judith Wright's *The Generations of Men* (1959) is a family history, just as Mary Durack's *Kings in Grass Castles* (1959) is the story of her ancestors as well as a social history. Martin Boyd's *Day of My Delight* (1965) defines his family in its historical and moral context, while Hal Porter's *The Watcher on the Cast-Iron Balcony* (1963) is a résumé of post-Edwardian Australia as seen in a country town (an audacious but convincing variant on the bush orientation of traditional writing) and is patterned as a biography of his mother.

At about the same time began another productive phase of writing for children, and by the end of the 1960s both Patricia Wrightson and Ivan Southall had won major awards for their work. Wrightson's novels of the 1960s and '70s were particularly interesting in their use of Aboriginal figures and motifs, as in *Behind the Wind* (1981). In 1986 she was awarded the international Hans Christian Andersen Award for lifetime achievement in children's literature.

Literature from 1970 to 2000

Hal Porter had already begun to establish himself as one of the more interesting short-story writers. His manner was arch, his perception ironic, his taste somewhat melodramatic. But his eye for detail was exact and his powers of recollection extraordinary. All these characteristics can be observed in the volumes *The Cats of Venice* (1965) and *Fredo Fuss Love Life* (1974). His insistence that he wrote only of what was fact, apart from impressing the reader that the world is a very strange place, put him completely at odds with the following generation of short-story writers as, for example, Frank Moorhouse, Michael Wilding, and Peter Carey.

These writers, provocative and scandalous in the manner of the 1970s, broke free from all restraints and explored the many possibilities of fantasy—sexual, science fiction, gothic. Allowing for the liberalism of their values, their stories in fact display an almost moral preoccupation with social and political attitudes. They are each highly alert

to the ironic possibilities of personal encounters. In the 1980s Carey extended his range and began writing novels, still exploiting fantasy and, as much postmodernist fiction does, the interpolation of stories within stories. He won the Booker Prize in 1988 with *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988).

Thomas Keneally commenced his prolific output in the late 1960s and attracted widespread notice with *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1972). Nearly all his novels explore the intersection of history and the individual life and contemplate just what kind of effect the insignificant individual can have on events of some moment. When *Schindler's Ark* (1982), which is centrally about just this situation, won the Booker Prize in 1982, it caused something of a sensation for being as much a work of fact as of fiction. Keneally was a gifted storyteller, and his fiction appealed to both the serious and the popular audience. Several of his novels were made into films or plays.

Thea Astley was another highly successful novelist, droll and amusing, yet she wrote about serious issues. She developed a love-hate relation to many of her characters and subjects, but underlying her narrative is a warm humanity and a delight in accurate imagery and surprising turns of phrase. In *Beachmasters* (1985), one of her most accomplished novels, she re-creates the cultural tensions in a South Pacific island with aspirations to independence from joint English and French control. Randolph Stow had similarly written a sensitive and sympathetic novel of intercultural relations in the Trobriand Islands in *Visitants* (1979). Astley's later novels—*Drylands: A Book for the World's Last Reader* (1999), for example—were increasingly concerned with the dominant, two-pronged problem in late 20th-century Australia: not only how to effect reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and European Australians but also how to reconcile white Australians to the dark side of their own past.

With *An Imaginary Life* (1978), David Malouf, already a promising poet, emerged as a major novelist. Nominally a story about Ovid in exile, the novel is really about the transforming power of the imagination. Malouf's writing is spare, delicate, meticulous. Like many writers of the time, he thought carefully about language and the signs by which meaning is conveyed. He also reflected on the way in which place might influence perception; this interest lies behind his use of Queensland as a setting—as, for example, in *Remembering Babylon* (1993). C.J. Koch developed a similar interest in regional writing, using the exotic possibilities of Asia to provide a mythic reading of political events in *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1978) and *Highways to a War* (1995) and the shadowy

otherness of Tasmania in *The Doubleman* (1985) and *Out of Ireland* (1999). Likewise, Shirley Hazzard wrote with great seriousness of purpose in her modern tragedy *The Transit of Venus* (1980), an ironic love story devised to contemplate how strangely things come about. Like so much of Australian fiction, it looks for patterns of meaning that might indicate some kind of proportion in destiny.

The 1980s also witnessed the emergence of a number of accomplished women writers—Janette Turner Hospital, Kate Grenville, Helen Garner, Glenda Adams, Barbara Hanrahan, and Elizabeth Jolley—and the first three of these continued to be prominent voices in the 1990s. In all her work Grenville treads a precarious line between darkness and superb comedy, from the extraordinary *Lilian's Story* (1985) and its sequel, *Dark Places* (1994), to her clearly understated novel *The Idea of Perfection* (1999). Garner's work includes *The Children's Bach* (1984) and *True Stories: Selected Non-Fiction* (1996), which draws upon fact as well as fiction. Hospital's *Collected Stories 1970–1995* appeared in 1995. Jolley's enigmatic fiction includes *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* (1983) and *The Well* (1986). Among male writers, Brian Castro, Robert Drewe, David Foster, and Tim Winton similarly emerged as significant writers. Of these Winton and Foster are particularly notable for their volumes *Cloudstreet* (1991) and *The Glade Within the Grove* (1996), respectively.

The two leading poets of the 1980s were Les Murray, allusive and humane, concerned to find what evidence he could in the secular world of spiritual realities and to demonstrate the importance of poetry in ordinary life (a representative volume of his work is *Dog Fox Field* [1990]), and Bruce Dawe, who evinced the Australian voice in his contemporary, journalistic poetry appearing in, for example, *Sometimes Gladness* (1978). Robert Gray continued the tradition of spare, almost Imagistic lyric verse in such volumes of his as *Piano* (1988) and *Certain Things* (1993). Robert Adamson and John Tranter wrote more experimental verse, as is evinced, respectively, in *The Clean Dark* (1989) and *The Floor of Heaven* (1992).

David Williamson developed a kind of journalistic drama. He had a good ear for Australian idiom and a good eye for Australian social and cultural attitudes, including prejudice. His plays were topical, particularly in terms of current political interests, yet they also tapped much that was enduring and deep-seated in the collective identity. Two of his critically acclaimed plays are *Travelling North* (1980) and *Dead White Males* (1995). Other playwrights who came into prominence were Jack

Hibberd, Alex Buzo, Peter Kenna, Louis Nowra, Steve J. Spears, and Michael Gow. Nowra's *Così* (1992) was successfully adapted for film.

In nonfictional prose, the autobiographical mode continued. Patrick White's *Flaws in the Glass* (1981) was of particular interest. Malouf and Koch both wrote a volume of essays, and these too were interesting for the light they shed upon the writers as well as being fine examples of the essay form. Travel writing continued to be published; one of the most interesting examples was Robyn Davidson's *Tracks* (1982), an account of her trek across Australia with her camels. It is a shaped narrative, tracing her increasing awareness of the meaning and experience of the desert and leading toward self-discovery. Like the imaginative writers, she looked for a pattern of significance in her experience. A.B. Facey, recounting his life experience in *A Fortunate Life* (1981), accepted what life had offered, not with bitterness but with gratitude. Robert Dessaix in *Night Letters: A Journey Through Switzerland and Italy* (1996) wrote a series of highly cultivated reflections on the poignancy of life, art, and, ultimately, death. Drusilla Modjeska similarly interwove history and personal story, as in *Stravinsky's Lunch* (1999).

In each of these modes of writing, Aboriginal people also began to make their presence known. Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) published her first volume of poetry, *We Are Going*, in 1964. Mudrooroo Narogin (Colin Johnson, whose Aboriginal identity, however, was questioned) published his first novel, *Wild Cat Falling*, in 1965. Jack Davis wrote several acclaimed plays. Sally Morgan's autobiography, *My Place* (1987), is a moving account of her discovery of her identity and family history. It is also social and cultural history. And Kim Scott, with his novel *Benang* (1999), became the first Aboriginal writer to win the prestigious Miles Franklin Award (which he shared with Astley). By the example of these and other Aboriginal writers, Aboriginal people have asserted their claim to the imaginative territory of Australia—a claim especially significant in the last decade of the 20th century as Australians attempted to effect a process of mutual understanding and reconciliation.

Writing in Australia evolved through a number of phases. It began with mapping the difference and distinctiveness of a new society establishing itself in the antipodes and at a large imaginative distance from the rest of the world. Then it concentrated on finding and articulating its own cultural voice. This writing was characterized by unusual colloquialisms and figures of speech, ironic understatement, and laconic rhythms; it concentrated on representing—even asserting—a

nationalist sentiment. Beyond that phase, Australian writing became more sophisticated, discovering the universal in its own local symbolism. Until the mid-20th century, Australians had written as though their work was that of a more or less homogeneous society. In the closing decades of the 20th century, however, the country's literature began the discovery of differences within itself: regional, cultural, and ethnic.

Literature in the 21st century

Many of the Australian writers who distinguished themselves in the last decades of the 20th century continued to make their mark in the new century. Named a "living treasure" by the National Trust of Australia in 1997, Colleen McCullough, author of *The Thorn Birds* (1977) and the *Masters of Rome* series of historical novels (1990–2007), remained one of the country's most prolific and best-selling novelists.

Similarly productive and protean was Peter Carey, whose *My Life As a Fake* (2003) drew its inspiration from McAuley and Stewart's 1944 poetry hoax, whereas his *Theft: A Love Story* (2006) lampooned the international art market with a story of art fraud. Carey's other 21st-century efforts included *Parrot and Olivier in America* (2009), focusing on a character modeled on 19th-century French social observer Alexis de Tocqueville, and *Amnesia* (2015), which employs cybercrime as the lens through which to view the Battle of Brisbane (1942), a clash between U.S. soldiers and Australian military personnel and civilians during World War II.

Among Thomas Keneally's publications in the new millennium were *American Scoundrel* (2002), a biography of the infamous American politician and Civil War general Daniel Sickles; *The Daughters of Mars* (2012), a novel about volunteer nurses during World War I; and *Shame and the Captives* (2013), a fictionalized account of prison breakouts by Japanese prisoners of war in New South Wales during World War II. Tim Winton added the highly regarded novels *Dirt Music* (2001) and *Breath* (2009) to his oeuvre.

Novelist, historian, and film director Richard Flanagan won the 2002 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for best book for his novel *Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (2001), the story of a convict living in 19th-century Tasmania. Flanagan's engaging mystery *The Unknown Terrorist* (2006) offers a cynical view of the

world in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks, and his *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) was much praised for its brutally stark depiction of the life of a prisoner of war during World War II. Fear of terrorism in the post-September 11 world is central in Janette Turner Hospital's political thrillers *Due Preparations for the Plague* (2003) and *Orpheus Lost* (2007). *The Secret River* (2005), another tale of the life of a British convict in Australia, earned Kate Grenville the 2006 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for best book. Other Australians who published novels of note in the first decades of the 21st century were Geraldine Brooks (winner of the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *March*), Sonya Hartnett, Roger McDonald, Alexis Wright, Steven Carroll, Steve Toltz, Christos Tsiolkas, Anna Funder, Patricia Mackintosh, and Sofie Laguna.

The art of the short story was also alive and well in Australian literature in the 21st century and received notable contributions with the publication of acclaimed collections from Turner Hospital (*North of Nowhere, South of Loss* [2003]), Winton (*The Turning* [2004)], featuring 17 overlapping stories), and David Malouf (*Every Move You Make* [(2006]). In the 2000s and 2010s the contributions of Australia's most-revered contemporary poet, Les Murray, included *Learning Human, Selected Poems* (2001), *The Biplane Houses* (2005), *Taller When Prone* (2010), and *Waiting for the Past* (2015).

UNIT -1: POETRY

Waltzing Matilda

- Andrew Barton Paterson

Banjo Paterson

Banjo Paterson, original name Andrew Barton Paterson, (born February 17, 1864, Narrambla, New South Wales, Australia—died February 5, 1941, Sydney), Australian poet and journalist noted for his composition of the internationally famous song "Waltzing

Matilda." He achieved great popular success in Australia with *The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses* (1895), which sold more than 100,000 copies before his death, and *Rio Grande's Last Race and Other Verses* (1902), which also went through many editions.

Educated as a lawyer, Paterson practiced in Sydney until 1900 and then became a journalist, covering the South African (Boer) War and traveling on assignment to China and the Philippines. He became editor of the *Sydney Evening News* in 1904 but left this post two years later to edit the Sydney *Town and Country Journal*. He later took up ranching; but when World War I broke out, he traveled to Europe for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and later served with the armed forces in France and Egypt. After the war, he spent the rest of his life as a journalist. In 1905 Paterson published a collection of popular Australian songs, *The Old Bush Songs: Composed and Sung in the Bushranging,* and he also published *Digging and Overlanding Days,* another success. The famous "Waltzing Matilda" appeared in 1917 as part of a collection of verses entitled *Saltbush Bill, J.P., and Other Verses.* He also wrote a volume of verse for children (*The Animals Noah Forgot,* 1933) and some short stories.

TEXT:

Waltzing Matilda

Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong,
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,
And he sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?
And he sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?

Along came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong,
Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee,
And he sang as he stowed that jumbuck in his tucker bag,
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.
Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,

Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?
And he sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?

Up rode the squatter, mounted on his thoroughbred,
Down came the troopers, one, two, three,
Whose is that jumbuck you've got in your tucker bag?
You'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?
And he sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?

Up jumped the swagman, leapt into the billabong,
You'll never catch me alive, said he,
And his ghost may be heard as you pass by the billabong,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me.

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?
And he sang as he watched and waited 'til his billy boiled,
Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me?

Type of Work

"Waltzing Matilda" is a ballad centering on a swagman, an itinerant laborer who walked from one place to the next looking for temporary employment. He carried a swag (rolled-up blanket or pack) containing his belongings--hence, the term *swagman*. The laborer in the poem is a sheep shearer.

A ballad is a poem, often set to music, that tells a story centering on a theme popular with the common people of a particular culture or place.

Composition and Publication

Andrew Barton (Banjo) Patterson wrote "Waltzing Matilda" in 1895 at Dagworth Homestead, sixty-two miles northwest of the town of Winton in Queensland, Australia. The homestead was the site of a sheep farm and a shearing operation. .....Christina MacPherson (1864-1936) set the ballad to music in the same year, basing the melody loosely on a Scottish song, "Thou Bonnie Wood of Craigielea." James Barr (1770-1836) wrote the music for that song, and Robert Tannahill (1774-1810) wrote the words. MacPherson had heard the Scottish song played by a brass band in Warrnambool in Victoria, Australia.

.....Over the years, "Waltzing Matilda" became an unofficial Australian national anthem. In Stanley Kramer's 1957 film *On the Beach*, "Waltzing Matilda" served as part of the background music. It was used as the theme in other film productions and was played at the end of the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney.

Title Meaning

.....*Waltzing* refers to the swagman's travels. In other words, he waltzes about seeking work. The second word, *Matilda*, is another name for a swag or pack that he carries around. It contains a blanket and other belongings.

Themes

Free-Spiritedness

.....The swagman is a free spirit. He travels from place to place to earn his livelihood rather than keeping regular hours in the workaday world. His independence represents the autarky on which Australians pride themselves.

Defiance of Authority

.....The swagman answers only to himself, not to government authority. When policemen appear and threaten to arrest him for stealing a sheep from the squatter (landowner with grazing sheep), the swagman drowns himself in a water hole rather than submit to arrest and punishment. His suicide represents the ultimate act of defiance against officialdom. Suicide is of course a conscious act of self-destruction and, therefore, contrary to the moral law. But in a work of fiction, writers often color it with heroism. It is the swagman's seeming heroism that captured the popular imagination of Australians,

who made the ballad their unofficial national anthem. (The actual national anthem is "Advance Australia Fair.")

Style

.Patterson wrote the poem plainly and simply with a cadence that made it easy to set to music and sing. The first five words of the poem (*Oh! there once was a*) resemble the opening words of countless other narratives from folklore, legends, and fairy tales: *Once upon a time, there was*. Such words cue readers and listeners that a good story is about to unfold. Patterson ignored the fuss and bother of allusions and hidden messages but seasoned the poem with Australian argot that lends authenticity to the poem.

Waltzing Matilda Lyrics Meaning Waltzing Matilda Explained

1st Verse
A very hunger worker (swagman) is resting under a shady eucalyptus tree (coolibah) by the banks of a watering-hole (billabong). He has lit a fire and is making himself some tea in a tin can (billy) that he is using as a kettle. While he is waiting for his tea to boil, he is singing a phrase that asks, " who will keep me company—who will be my friend?"
2nd Verse
While there, he notices a sheep (jumbuck) wandering down to the watering-hole for a drink. The swagman is starving, so he catches the sheep, kills it, eats what he can, and stows the rest in his backpack (tucker bag).
3rd Verse
Unfortunately for the swagman, the wealthy landowner (squatter) comes to the water-hole. He is mounted on his expensive horse (thoroughbred) and accompanied by three policemen (troopers). They catch the swagman red-handed with the remains of the sheep in his backpack and try to arrest him for killing the sheep.

4th Verse
Preferring death over imprisonment for his crime, the swagman jumps into a water-hole and commits suicide. Ever since that day, his ghost still haunts the water-hole and can be heard singing. "Who'll come a-waltzing, Matilda, with me".

Waltzing Matilda uses many uniquely Australian words referred to as Strine. They are explained below.

Jolly – means happy (Not in common usage today).
Photo: Swagman with matilda, tucker bag and billy
Swagman – a hobo, an itinerant worker, who travelled from place to place in search of work. A swagman was usually extremely poor and carried all his belongings wrapped up in a blanket slung over his shoulder called a swag.
Billabong – a waterhole or pond. It is an aboriginal word meaning little or no water.
Coolibah Tree – a eucalyptus tree that usually grows near water. Derived from the aboriginal word *gulabaa*.
Billy – a tin can with a wire handle used to boil water.
Jumbuck – a sheep. It is derived from the two words **jum**ping **buck**.
Waltz – means to travel from place to place. It originated from the German phrase "Auf der Walz" (roughly translated as "on the road").
Matilda –to carry one's belongings in a blanket slung over his shoulder.
Waltzing Matilda – see the detailed explanation below.
Tucker Bag – a bag for storing food (tucker). It was usually an old sugar or flour sack.
Squatter – a wealthy landowner, a rancher.
Thoroughbred – An expensive pedigreed horse. The Mercedes Benz equivalent of its day.
Trooper – a policeman, a mounted militia-man.

'Waltzing the Matilda' means to walk from place to place searching for work with all your belongings slung across your back. It originated from German immigrants who started settling in Australia around 1838.

Waltzing is from the German term *'auf der walz'* , which means travelling while learning a trade. Young German apprentices workers in those days travelled from place to place, working under a master craftsman earning a living as they went, and sleeping wherever they could. So the German word 'walz' became 'waltz' in Australia. The waltz was a fashionable dance at the time, and Australians were familiar with it.

Matilda has German origins, too and means Mighty Battle Maiden. It was a name given to females who accompanied soldiers during the Thirty Year Wars in Europe. The expression then evolved to mean "to be kept warm at night" and later to mean the great army coats or blankets that soldiers wrapped themselves with. These were rolled into a *swag* and carried behind their shoulders while marching.

History of Waltzing Matilda: Waltzing Matilda is Based on a True Story

Waltzing Matilda was written in 1895 by Banjo Paterson while visiting Dagworth Station in Outback Queensland. Banjo Paterson and his fiancée, Sarah Riley, visited the Dagworth Station at the invitation of Sarah's school friend Christina Macpherson. Christina's brother, Bob, managed this vast property.

While riding in a coach to Dagworth, they saw a swagman walking along the dusty road. Bob Macpherson turned to Banjo and said: "that's what they call Waltzing the Matilda". During his stay at Dagworth, Bob Macpherson and Banjo frequently went for long rides around the station. One day they stopped at a billabong, the Combo Waterhole, where they found the remains of a recently slaughtered sheep. At this time, thousands of unemployed swagmen roamed the outback searching for work. Obviously, one of these men had killed the sheep.

Bob Macpherson also told Banjo about the Sheep Shearers' Strike of September 1894, which was a major revolt by the workers who sheared sheep. They were demanding better wages from the wealthy graziers known as squatters, who owned these vast properties. This unrest also spilt over to Dagworth, where a group of 16 shearers set fire to the Dagworth shearing shed, killing over a hundred and forty lambs.

Macpherson and three policemen had given chase to one of them, a man named Samuel Hoffmeister, who was said to be responsible for starting the fire. They didn't catch Hoffmeister, but he was found dead a day later at the Four Mile Billabong near Kynun with a gunshot wound, which appeared to be a case of suicide. In a radio interview in 1936, Banjo Paterson said, "*The shearers staged a strike by way of expressing themselves, and Macpherson's woolshed was burnt down, and a man was picked up dead*". There was also a story doing the rounds at that time about a police posse on the lookout for Harry Wood, a man accused of beating an Aboriginal boy to death. They didn't find Harry. But they did come across a hapless swagman camped by a billabong (possibly the Como billabong) who took fright at the sight of the approaching police and jumped into the billabong and drowned.

While at the station, Banjo frequently heard Christina play a tune on her zither (sometimes called an autoharp). Banjo liked the " *whimsicality and dreaminess*" of the tune and thought it would be nice to set some words to it.

Banjo, a lawyer by trade and a journalist by profession, was also an accomplished poet. So, naturally, he would have stored away a wealth of knowledge, stories, and other tidbits about life in the outback and the people who lived there. When the opportunity came, he quickly pieced together a "case" - a story to produce a light-hearted ditty as part of an evening's entertainment. So it appears that Banjo linked up all these events to create the storyline and the lyrics for the song. Christina played the tune on her zither and wrote the musical score.

In the same radio interview in 1936, Banjo goes on to say, " *Miss Macpherson used to play a little Scottish tune on a zither, and I put words to it and called it 'Waltzing Matilda'.*"

On a visit to Winton town, Banjo and Christina polished the song up using a piano in the parlour of the North Gregory Hotel in Winton. Soon after, it was sung for the first time by Herbert Ramsay, who lived at Oondooroo Station close by and was one of the best tenors in the district. Herbert sang the song either at Sarah's brother's house or the Post Office Hotel in Winton.

The song spread rapidly throughout the district by word of mouth and was an instant hit. The Governor of Queensland, Lord Charles Lamington, visited Winton On 25 September 1900, and Herbert Ramsey sang the song at a banquet held in the governor's honour at the North Gregory Hotel.

How Waltzing Matilda Became Australia's Favourite Song

Evolution into Today's Iconic Song

The story of Waltzing Matilda didn't end with Banjo Paterson and Christina Macpherson writing the song and gaining popularity as a bush ballad in the Australian outback. In 1900 Paterson sold the lyrics to what he considered just a minor little ditty, bundled together with several other works, to Angus and Robertson publishers for the princely sum of "five quid" (about A$670). We can only guess that he probably valued the song for about $20.

According to records held by the State Library of New South Wales, James Inglis & Co bought a bundle of lyrics from Angus & Robertson in 1902. In this bundle were the lyrics for Waltzing Matilda. James Inglis & Co was an importer of tea and sold over 680,000 kilos (1.5 million lbs) of tea a year under the "Billy Tea" trademark. They were in search of a catchy tune to promote their tea. Waltzing Matilda, they thought, with a some improvement, would be just perfect.

In 1903, Marie Cowan, the wife of the chief accountant working at James Inglis & Co and a gifted musician, was entrusted with improving the original lyrics. Fortunately, Marie had heard the original musical tune composed by Christina McPherson. So she set about recomposing the song by changing some of the lyrics to fit the melody better. The sheet music and lyrics were then printed and wrapped around containers of Billy Tea and as a promotional gimmick. It wasn't long before the song gained widespread popularity. This version of the song, known as the Marie Cowan version, is the one we hear today.

- **Comparison of Banjo Paterson's and Maria Cowen's Versions**

Waltzing Matilda travelled with Australian troopers to the Boer War and later to the First World War. It was sung boisterously by Australian soldiers and picked up by troops of other nationalities such as the British and Americans. Before long, it was known throughout the world even though, in most instances, those singing it had no idea where the song originated. For over a century now, it has been a favourite with Australian troops whenever they travel overseas.

Waltzing Matilda is one of those rare songs that hasn't aged. It has been with us for over a century and is still popular today. It is frequently used in major public events. Some say that more Australians know the words to this song than possibly even their national anthem.

Surely God was a Lover

- John Shaw Neilson

John Shaw Neilson (1872–1942)

John Shaw Neilson (1872-1942), poet, was born on 22 February 1872 at Penola, South Australia, eldest son of Scottish-born John Neilson (1844-1922), bushworker and selector, and his wife Margaret, née McKinnon. Known as Jock, he attended the local school for less than two years and as a small child worked as a farm-labourer for his father. In 1881 John Neilson senior and his half-brother Dave Shaw joined the South Australian farmers making the long trek by wagon over the border to take up selections under the Victorian Land Act (1869), and were each allotted 320 acres (130 ha) north of Lake Minimay.

In the first year on their selection, the Neilsons cleared six acres (2.4 ha) and ploughed, sowed and harvested by hand, but after deducting the money owed to the storekeeper found they had made £7 from the crop. Impoverished and bankrupt, they were forced to seek station work to exist, and only devoted their spare time to the selection where the family lived in a crude mud-plastered house for eight years. Neilson senior asked for extensions in which to pay the annual rent year after year, until in 1888 the storekeeper foreclosed. By June 1889 they had shifted to Dow Well, a few miles west of Nhill. Although he did his share of clearing and working the land, Shaw Neilson found time to wander the swamps and woodlands as a keen observer of Nature, gathering eggs and listening to birdsongs, foraging for mushrooms, and tracking wild bees, and for some months went to school in 1885-86, leaving when he turned 14.

Neilson and his father generally worked as farm-hands, timber-cutters, or road-workers for the shire council, but were also staunch unionists when shearing. Both belonged to the local literary society, and both won prizes for verse in the Australian Natives' Association competitions in 1893. The father was a published bush poet, who appears to have started writing verse when he was about 30, and contributed to local newspapers and Adelaide *Punch*. He won another prize for verse in 1897, but achieved his widest popularity in outback shearing sheds with a song, 'Waiting for the Rain'. Although he obviously lacked 'the outstanding poetical genius of his son', he was a writer of some achievement in the face of a lifelong bitter struggle for existence and little schooling; his verse was issued in book form, *The Men of the Fifties*, in 1938.

Frank Shann, editor of the *Nhill Mail*, printed verse by Shaw Neilson for some years. Most was conventional and undistinguished. The family moved into Nhill in mid-1893, still deep

in poverty and existing on municipal contracts and farm work, but by May 1895 they were on the road again travelling north to take up a scrub-covered Mallee selection near Lake Tyrrell, which had to be rolled and burned and grubbed before ploughing and sowing. Battling drought and bushfire to survive, there was little time or energy for writing poetry. One of Shaw's few poems appeared in the Sydney *Bulletin* in December 1896 and nothing more until the end of 1901.

The Neilsons continued share-farming combined with scrub-clearing for wages and contract work, but moved to a house at Kaneira to be closer to the shire work for a while, before shifting once more to an area totalling 2400 acres (971 ha), about 26 miles (42 km) north of Sea Lake, in the parish of Eureka. Despite the general drought, the Eureka district had heavy rains in 1902 which enabled the Neilsons to harvest some hay and provide agistment for horses. While their finances improved, personal grief struck hard: Neilson's sister Maggie, who had been ill for some years, died in 1903, followed by another sister Jessie in 1907. He himself was in very poor health, and did little writing for nearly four years, but contributed to the *Bulletin* several times between 1901 and 1906, with some lighter verse and limericks appearing in Randolph Bedford's *Clarion* a little later. About then his sight began to fail, and for the rest of his life he was unable to read and write legibly and depended on the assistance of family members or fellow workmen.

John Shaw Neilson is often called 'the green singer', because of his fondness for that colour, and sometimes 'the roadmender' because most of his adult life was spent making roads, quarrying stone, or on bush work, and always in poverty. [Dame] Mary Gilmore spoke of her first meeting with him: 'and when I saw his work-swollen hands, with the finger-nails worn to the quick by the abrading stone, I felt a stone in my heart'. Yet he was so much more than an unschooled navvy; he was, as Percival Serle describes him, 'a slender man of medium height with a face that suggested his kindliness, refinement and innate beauty of character'.

He returned to Melbourne in ill health in spite of patient care and died, unmarried, of heart disease on 12 May 1942. Neilson was buried in the Footscray cemetery where Sir John Latham, a fervent admirer, addressed the mourners, and fellow poet Bernard O'Dowd made an oration. Vance Palmer recorded that Shaw Neilson 'in his coffin … looked like a small wax image of some saint of the Middle Ages', but the poet's death passed with little notice, partly because poetic fashions had changed, but mainly because of the intensity of the war. After his death several collections of his poetry were made, including *Unpublished Poems of Shaw Neilson* (1947), *Witnesses of Spring* (1970),

and *The Poems of Shaw Neilson* (1965, revised and enlarged 1973). His partial autobiography was published in 1978, and his earliest printed verse, *Green Days and Cherries* in 1981. A number of Neilson's poems have been set to music by composers from 1925 to the present, including W. G. Whittaker, Frank Francis, Alfred Hill, and especially Margaret Sutherland. 'Shaw Neilson', Devaney so accurately said, was 'the poor working-man who has left us a legacy of endless wealth'.

TEXT

***Surely God was a Lover* by John Shaw Neilson**

Surely God was a lover when He bade the day begin
Soft as a woman's eyelid -- white as a woman's skin.

Surely God was a lover, with a lover's faults and fears,
When He made the sea as bitter as a wilful woman's tears.

Surely God was a lover, with the madness love will bring:
He wrought while His love was singing, and put her soul in the Spring.

Surely God was a lover, by a woman's wile controlled,
When He made the Summer a woman thirsty and unconsoled.
Surely God was a lover when He made the trees so fair;
In every leaf is a glory caught from a woman's hair.

Surely God was a lover -- see, in the flowers He grows,
His love's eyes in the violet -- her sweetness in the rose.

Editor's notes:
He = in a religious context, and capitalized, a reference to God or Jesus

His = in a religious context, and capitalized, a reference to God or Jesus

wile = craftiness, cunning, trickery used to ensnare or manipulate someone, especially to beguile, entice, or seduce someone (commonly used in the plural sense, such as in the phrase "womanly wiles")

In this poem, Shaw Neilson, a less known colonial poet acknowledges the greatness of God as a lover of all objects of nature He created. Nature in Neilson is not something to escape to, rather it is the other way. It gives him great joy. According to the poet, the day begins as softly as the opening of the eyelid of a woman. The day is as white as the woman's skin-very charming. The comparison between Nature and woman continues when he says that like 'a wilful woman's tears', the sea was made bitter. Spring and summer are magnificent creations of God and He has put the soul of His love in the spring season. Neilson's vision of Summer is yet another example of God's grandeur. In this way, He was a lover with the madness love would bring.
Faults, fears, tears, and cheers are but parts of life envisaged by the Creator. In every creation, good or bad, there is God's plan. God's love is evident in the 'fair' trees and blossoming flowers. The poem has been written in couplets. The refrain 'Surely god was a Lover' is but a glorification of God's love and grace. Symmetrical word order, alliteration and similes are a few examples of Neilson's poetic practice in this poem.

Critical Appreciation

The poem in which this occurs most strikingly announces itself in the title: 'Surely God was a Lover'. It is an unabashedly sensual celebration of the presence of God in Nature, and the images it employs are plainly sensual ones. The feeling towards female sexuality is ambiguous, as it often is in Neilson's poetry, but the power of that sensuality is undeniable: Summer is 'a woman thirsty and unconsoled' and there is reference to 'the madness love will bring'. Love is often associated in Neilson's poetry with conditions of duress, compulsion, or derangement. Summer and winter are dreaded conditions and seasons for the poet, and reconciled as here only by spring, in which most ofhis happiest poems are set. If winter is foreboding and menacing, summer, as here, annihilates meaning altogether.

This sense of the mingling of the sensual and the spiritual moves us towards the final radically disturbing element in his work, one of which Cliff Hanna has given some account, and this is the note of metaphysical anguish. The poems of reconciliation such as 'The Gentle Water Bird' and 'The Crane Is My Neighbour' are wonderful but comparatively rare. In a minor poem such as 'The Hen in the Bushes', for example, 'Love' is apostrophised, as it often is, but is seen uncharacteristically in terms of unequivocal hostility. The situation - one that is too banal finally to carry the poem- is that the hen sits on her nest to hatch her chickens out oflove, but love is referred to in a series of predatory

and destructive images; it is 'the Old Tyrant', it destroys peasant lads (the tone here almost resembles that of Housman), it will 'most gladly I Burn women away', it conjures up 'Cities of sighs', which might well be an epigraph for Neilson's poetry. At the end of the poem, the reason for this hostility towards Love is explained: Soon will the thin mother With her brood walk; Keen is the crow - and keen, Keen is the hawk. Love, in other words, conjures lives into existence only to have them destroyed by the predatory forces at work in Nature.

Australia

- Alec Derwent Hope

Alec Derwent Hope, (born July 21, 1907, Cooma, New South Wales, Australia—died July 13, 2000, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory), Australian poet who is best known for his elegies and satires.

Hope was born on July 21, 1907, in Cooma, New South Wales, Australia. He spent most of his childhood in rural areas in New South Wales and Tasmania. He received his B.A. from Sydney University in 1928 and then went on to Oxford University for two years. He returned to Australia, working as a psychologist with the New South Wales Department of Labour and Industry. In 1937 he accepted a position as lecturer at Sydney Teachers' College, and then in 1945 at the University of Melbourne. In 1951 he was appointed the first Professor of English at Canberra University College, and held the position until his retirement in 1968. In his mid-thirties his poetry was starting to appear in periodicals, but it was not until 1955 that he published his first collection of poems, The Wandering Islands. After his retirement from teaching, he was appointed Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University. He was awarded the Robert Frost Award for Poetry in 1976, the Levinson Prize for Poetry in 1968, and the Myer Award for Australian Literature in 1967. He was awarded an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1972. He died on July 13, 2000 in Canberra, A.C.T, Australia.

Hope is recognized as one of the most influential and celebrated Australian poets of the twentieth century. The subjects of his verse are varied in scope, stylistically though, his poetry can be regarded as conservative. He is considered a major writer of erotic verse. Hope is also viewed as a satirical poet, as many of his works poke fun at technology,

conformity, and the absurdity of modern life. His other poems explore such topics as creativity, nature, music, and the wonders of science. Hope's incorporation of myth and legend is viewed as a defining characteristic of his poems. In other works, Hope discusses the role of the artist in contemporary society and asserts his theory of poetic expression.

Hope's poetry rejects much of the modernist and postmodernist poetic forms, particularly the free verse poem, and utilizes traditional structure, i.e. the iambic quatrain as well as classical mythology and legend. His poetic theory as reflected in his verse seems to be neoclassical, outdated, and too conservative — more in line with eighteenth-century poetry than twentieth century verse. Critics have also noted the lack of any identifiable Australian material in his work and perceive him as an outsider within the tradition of Australian literature. His satirical verse has been a recurring topic of critical attention, and his nonconformist and biting viewpoint has attracted mixed reactions. Moreover, he has been derided for the self-pity, strident tone, and condescension in some of his verse. Despite the anachronistic nature of Hope's poetic oeuvre, his biting satire, the clarity of his language, and sophistication of his poetic vision is praiseworthy and he contributed much to traditional prosody in contemporary poetry.

TEXT

A Nation of trees, drab green and desolate grey
In the field uniform of modern wars,
Darkens her hills, those endless, outstretched paws
Of Sphinx demolished or stone lion worn away.

They call her a young country, but they lie:
She is the last of lands, the emptiest,
A woman beyond her change of life, a breast
Still tender but within the womb is dry.

Without songs, architecture, history:
The emotions and superstitions of younger lands,
Her rivers of water drown among inland sands,
The river of her immense stupidity

Floods her monotonous tribes from Cairns to Perth.

In them at last the ultimate men arrive
Whose boast is not: “we live” but “we survive”,
A type who will inhabit the dying earth.

And her five cities, like five teeming sores,
Each drains her: a vast parasite robber-state
Where second hand Europeans pollulate
Timidly on the edge of alien shores.

Yet there are some like me turn gladly home
From the lush jungle of modern thought, to find
The Arabian desert of the human mind,
Hoping, if still from the deserts the prophets come,

Such savage and scarlet as no green hills dare
Springs in that waste, some spirit which escapes
The learned doubt, the chatter of cultured apes
Which is called civilization over there.

Background:

Australia is a country filled with migrated people. Most of them are dependent on government. Even though they are migrated, they have some strict government rules and regulations. The author wants to identify themselves who really they are.

Australia is a poem by A.D.Hope. His major subjects are English and Philosophy. His collection of poem is ‘Wandering Island’ (1955). The first five stanzas deal with how the Australia is.

He says that Australia is a mechanical and monotonous land. In this poem, he says that his country is intentionally traumatized. The poem gives a kind of negative perception regarding Australian culture. The poem reflects the lack of individualism and spiritual poverty. It is the continent with an ambiguous state.

The first stanza conveys that the trees in Australia are dull and it stood in a desolate place. Generally, the term NATURE is a charming thing but in this continent it looks like a

desolated one. Nobody cares about it. Many people give importance to their outer appearance. They do not care about inner beauty. Appearances can be deceptive. The author compares this to a ‘Sphinx’.

The people in Australia are heterogenous in their tradition.The author called them as Young but it ironically conveys their immaturity. He points out the vulnerability of land and the theme of rebellion. By reading this poem, the readers come to know that he is against his country. He says that there is no proper sense with respect to their culture. He adds that they are not creative and independent.

From the famous spot Cairns to Perth there is only flow of stupidity. He says that the people are stupid and foolish. The people in this continent are not living , they are surviving. He calls five teeming stores which denote Melbourne, Sidney, Perth, Canberra, Adelaide. The people in these places have not had their own identity. They are like parasites which dependent on others.

The author calls that their mind as ‘of Australian dumb like’ . He says that their mind is dumb like people who lives in the Arabian desert. He is waiting for his prophecy to come true. They themselves call as civilized people but there is no civilization.

Critical Appreciation:

The poem, "Australia", written in ABBA rhyme scheme, which adds a gentle, easy-going flow to the poem describes Australia as being a nation that is bleak and almost colorless, as everything seems dull and monotonous. It is a country that fades into the background, as the field uniform is meant to allow people to blend into the scenery. The poet likens the country to being like a "Sphinx", a creature of great wisdom, but whose realm of intelligence and power has now been "worn away".

The next stanza carries with it a great deal of negative residual images. He believes that Australia is a country that is old. Australia may be considered young by the world's standards, yet it is the most empty. Its superficial image may be one comparable to a woman still fresh and alert, however, inside there is nothing, only emptiness: a disparaging view of Australia as having only external beauty but no inner one.

Australia, according to the poet, is a country that has neither historical background nor culture to speak off. Yet, he believes that it has the capabilities to do so, however, the ideas are drowned among "inland sands". This can be seen as he blames the detractors for the slow erosion of Australia, where it has become a country that is no longer as intelligent as it was before.

Australia is next portrayed as a country that is nothing at all, where there are "monotonous tribes from Cairns to Perth" and the five main cities, compared to "five teeming sores." The people who come to live in Australia boast not of "live[ing]" but rather boast of merely "surviv[ing]." The author is trying to put forth a point here that people who move here are rather unwelcome, and that they are "second hand Europeans" that give birth rapidly on these "alien shores" and these newcomers are like giant leeches that take in all that is good in his country.

His direct reference to patriotism comes in the last two stanzas, where he feels that there are some like him who turn gladly home to withdraw from the "lush jungle of modern thought" to seek the "Arabian desert of the human mind." This means that the author enjoys retreating from the expansive world rather to stay in a desert. The last two lines of the poem are most memorable where he envisions Australia as being the civilization and the rest of the world just being cultured apes which they merely call civilization without it really being so.

Analysis

Critique of Australian Society in A.D.Hope's "Australia"

In the poem, "Australia" A.D Hope questions the idea that Australia is civilized. In the first five stanzas the poet talks about Australia. He describes how it is both a new and old country, geologically old but politically new and how it is both a European colony and an independent but a parasitical country. The next two stanzas talk about the wilderness of Australia.

The poet likens the country to a 'sphinx'. The sphinx was a figure from Egyptian myths which possessed the body of lion and head of a man. This comparison could be directly related to the author's vision of Australia.

The poet suggests that Australia's realm of intelligence and power have now been "worn away" which suggests that Australia used to be better than it is now . He believes that Australia is a country that is old. People may call Australia "A young country, but they lie". Australia to him is the "last of lands, the emptiest. A woman beyond her change of life, a breast still tender but within the womb is dry". Australia may be considered as young by the world's standards, but it is empty within. It has only external beauty but no inner beauty.

Australia to him is devoid of culture which is "without songs, architecture, and history". He sees Australia as being a country that has neither historical background nor culture to speak of. He believes that it has the capabilities to do so, however, the ideas are drowned among "island sands".

Australia is portrayed as a country that is nothing at all, where there are "monotonous tribes from Cairns to Perth" The five main cities are compared to " five teeming sores ". The people who come to live in Australia do not boast of living but rather merely surviving.

He believes that people who move here are rather unwelcome, and they are "second-hand Europeans" that grow rapidly on these "alien shores". He sees these people as people who "drain" Australia" . For him it is a" vast parasite robber state" which has lost its original vitality.

The last two stanzas refer to the modern civilization of Australia. For Hope the civilization of Australia is nothing but the false imitation of cultured apes which is mistaken as modern civilization.

From The true Discovery of Australia

- James McAuley

James Phillip McAuley, (1917–1976)

James Phillip McAuley (1917-1976), poet, was born on 12 October 1917 at Lakemba, Sydney, third child of native-born parents Patrick Phillip McAuley, grazier, and his wife Mary Maud, née Judge. From Homebush Public School, James proceeded to Fort Street

Boys' High School, where he became school captain; a contemporary was (Sir) John Kerr, later godfather to one of McAuley's children. Winning an exhibition to the University of Sydney (B.A. Hons, 1938; M.A., 1940; Dip.Ed., 1942), McAuley graduated with first-class honours in English. During his undergraduate years he was influenced by the philosophy of Professor John Anderson, and attracted to communism and anarchism. His first poem, 'Homage to T. S. Eliot', appeared in 1935 in *Hermes,* the university magazine he was to edit. Music was another recreation. 'Jimmy the Jazz Pianist' (in Donald Horne's fond phrase) was a fabled figure on campus, and McAuley also served as organist and choirmaster at Holy Trinity Church, Dulwich Hill. Later, he wrote hymns, besides playing a modern reproduction of the virginal.

While tutoring (1938) at a property near Bungendore, McAuley gathered his early poems under the title 'Prelude, Suite and Chorale, a *livre composé*'. His M.A. thesis, 'Symbolism: An Essay In Poetics', manifested his abiding interest in twentieth-century German and French poetry. Appointed junior housemaster at Sydney Church of England Grammar School (Shore) in 1940, he resigned when questioned about his principled refusal to volunteer for war service, took a teacher's scholarship and was appointed in 1942 to Newcastle Boys' Junior High School. Throughout his career he remained deeply concerned with standards in secondary education and became president (1971) of the Australian Association of Teachers of English.

At the district registrar's office, Newcastle, on 20 June 1942 McAuley married Norma Elizabeth Abernethy, a 22-year-old schoolteacher. In October he was appointed research consultant to a wartime advisory committee in the Prime Minister's Department, before being mobilized in the Militia on 7 January 1943. He transferred to the Australian Imperial Force that month. Following a stint in army education, Sergeant McAuley was commissioned in January 1944 and worked in Melbourne with A. A. Conlon's Directorate of Research (and Civil Affairs).

On idle afternoons in the Victoria Barracks in 1944, McAuley and Harold Stewart concocted the 'Ern Malley' hoax. Intending to castigate 'the decay of meaning and craftsmanship' in much contemporary verse, they targeted the Adelaide journal *Angry Penguins,* edited by Max Harris. Using a comically eclectic array of sources, together with a fictitious biography for the hapless Ern, the hoaxers sent 'his' *The Darkening Ecliptic* to Harris, who eagerly published it. This successful and serious prank has been loosely blamed for setting back literary modernism and encouraging philistinism in Australia.

Exaggerated claims were advanced for the Malley poems, but, once the hoax was exposed in a Sydney newspaper, McAuley had little to say of them.

In December 1943 he made the first of many visits to New Guinea, which became a second 'spirit country', as well as an inspiration for his thinking about post-colonial polities. From August 1945 McAuley was an instructor at the Land Headquarters School of Civil Affairs (later Australian School of Pacific Administration), first in Canberra and then in Sydney. Transferring to the Reserve of Officers in March 1946, he remained at the school as a lecturer until 1959. One of his tasks was to train officers for service in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. Inspired by the mission of Marie Thérèse Noblet, McAuley adopted in 1952 the Catholic faith from which his father had lapsed.

His first volume of verse, *Under Aldebaran,* was published by Melbourne University Press in 1946. In the early 1950s he discovered the Austrian poet Georg Trakl, whose work he later translated. McAuley's poetic reputation was consolidated with *A Vision of Ceremony* (Sydney, 1956). The role as public intellectual, which he increasingly sought, found expression in *The End of Modernity* (Sydney, 1959). Anti-modernist in precept and tone, these essays argued for the spiritual dimension of the greatest art. He developed that position, while trenchantly stating his liberal-conservative political beliefs, through the journal *Quadrant,* of which he became founding editor in 1956. In 1967 it was revealed that, through its association with the Congress for Cultural Freedom, *Quadrant* received funds from the Central Intelligence Agency. McAuley claimed, without refutation, that no consequent pressure had ever been placed on him as editor. Nevertheless, *Quadrant* continued to be demonized by its left-wing competitors, *Meanjin* and *Overland*, though all shared contributors, a constant struggle for funds and an inclusive, liberal practice in the selection of material.

From the mid-1950s McAuley's energies were directed to ideological differences within the Australian Labor Party. Support for the anti-communist policies of the industrial groups brought him into sympathetic contact with B. A. Santamaria and the Catholic Social Studies Movement. It also placed him in conflict with the Catholic hierarchy of Sydney, notably Cardinal (Sir) Norman Gilroy and Bishop James Carroll. Eventually McAuley supported the formation of the Democratic Labor Party.

In 1960 McAuley seemed to have retreated from politics, when he accepted a readership in poetry at the University of Tasmania. Next year he succeeded to the chair of English, which he held until his death, despite soundings from mainland universities. Teaching and administrative responsibilities (he was at various times chairman of the professorial board

and acting vice-chancellor) did not impede his role as controversialist, nor his literary output. A monograph on Christopher Brennan's poetry appeared in 1963. When, 'suddenly, unbidden, the theme [returned]', McAuley recovered his poetic drive and completed a verse epic on the Portuguese explorer, *Captain Quiros* (Sydney, 1964). Always an inspiring teacher, he instilled in students love and respect for the craft of poetry. His modestly titled *A Primer of English Versification* (Sydney, 1966) remains an exemplary, traditional introduction to this subject. It was in the fecund decade of the 1960s that he also wrote most of his hymns, many set to music by Richard Connolly. While in Europe and the United States of America in 1967, he began the sequence of poems on Sydney youth called 'On the Western Line'. In the same year he helped to form Peace With Freedom, a body of right-wing intellectuals determined to counter 'propaganda against the allied commitment in the Vietnam War'. Earlier that year he had spent a month in South East Asia, meeting Australian servicemen in Vietnam and experiencing a misplaced confidence in America's capacity 'to knock out the major forces' of its enemy.

McAuley's next volume of verse, *Surprises of the Sun* (Sydney, 1969), made as much impact as any before, being received with puzzlement and acclaim. Containing numerous autobiographical poems, it seemed to mark a shift from austere classicism towards a Romantic sensibility. In fact, few Australian poets had been more wholehearted in believing in the healing powers of nature. 'At Rushy Lagoon' the poet—characteristically at the edge of the scene—discerns 'a world of sense and use'. McAuley rejoiced in natural plenitude, as in the poem, 'In the Huon Valley', which the governor of Tasmania was to read at his funeral. This was McAuley when most like Keats, of whom he was less suspicious than of other Romantic poets, such as the radical Shelley. Distinctively, he pressed for meanings that could be made explicit and sought declarative statements:

Life is full of returns;
It isn't true that one never
Profits, never learns.

A wistful hope, in this conclusion, temporarily mastered anguish, but for McAuley dread was always at hand. Like Keats, he savoured:

joys that lie
Closest to despair.

The latter was ever ready to announce itself, whether as terror of spiritual emptiness or political disorder at home and abroad. Teaching Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, McAuley spoke with especial relish the words 'Let order die!' The fascination of that terrible sentiment

recalled the anarchic side of his nature, the youthful self which he summoned and faced down. He maintained that, without order, or belief in the structure of faith that can sustain it, there was nothingness. 'The Exile' represented the poet as a 'man repudiated, cancelled', whose life is 'without contexts, or hope' and for whom emptiness is intensified by spiritual dread.

In 1969 McAuley was elected a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. After a visit to New Delhi in January 1970 for a seminar on Australian and Indian literature, he was found to have bowel cancer. Once recovered and able to quip 'better a semi-colon than a full stop', he intensified his literary and public efforts. Significantly, the poems which he wrote in 1970-76 were collected as *Time Given* (Canberra, 1976). In 1972 his achievement in the humanities was recognized by the Britannica Award of $10,000 and a gold medal. A volume of essays, *The Grammar of the Real*, and a critical anthology, *A Map of Australian Verse*, were published in 1975, the year he was appointed A.M. *Music Late at Night* (London, 1976), which contained his Trakl translations, was inspired, in part, by a visit to that poet's familiar Austrian cities of Innsbruck and Salzburg.

Early in 1976 McAuley was diagnosed as having liver cancer. Courageously and meticulously, he prepared for death. A man in whom gracefulness always consorted with rage, and whose opinion of himself was more scarifying than that of his enemies, McAuley was a bold and bitter jester. More droll than the Ern Malley hoax was his projection of Poets' Anonymous, wherein bad poets would be encouraged to discuss their affliction and be paid by the government not to write. McAuley—who often took an angry man's comfort in last things—began his testament, 'Explicit', playfully:

Fully tested I've been found
Fit to join the underground.

While he praised the discursive poetry of Dryden as 'well-bred and easy, energetic, terse', McAuley was committed to a hard-won lyric impulse. Things of the world delighted him: landscapes, political connexions, wine. Spiritual promises he affirmed passionately, but did not trust. The prescriptive McAuley who declared that Christ cannot walk in a poem, Not in our century was given the lie in his resplendent poem, 'Jesus'. McAuley had the hazardous gift of turning metaphors into edicts, behind which practice lay his desperate wish that these might yet be vehicles of truth.

Survived by his wife, daughter and four sons, McAuley died on 15 October 1976 at Lenah Valley, Hobart, and was buried in Cornelian Bay cemetery. Lean, sandy haired, with grey-green eyes and a deeply lined face, he was energetic and patrician in gesture, melodious

and measured in speech. His portrait, painted in 1963 by Jack Carington Smith, is held by the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; another, by Nora Heysen, belongs to the University of Tasmania. Dame Leonie Kramer, a long-time friend, edited his *Collected Poems* (Sydney, 1994). The University of Tasmania established the James McAuley lecture in 1979 and named three prizes in English in his honour.

TEXT:

***From* The True Discovery of Australia**

William Janszoon may have been the first
To leave a blue print on our shore, but he
Disqualified himself by being Dutch
From celebrations in our history

Dampier, that cool observant pirate,
Could fill an epic, and deserve the fuss;
But he, it seems, preferred the Hodmadods
And said that they were gentleman to us.

Others, too, line up for epic treatment,
Discoveries of river mouths and harbours;
But they must take their turn, as mortals do,
Who wait in beauty salons or the barber's.

The one who now receive attention is,
Beyond all doubt, out true Discoverer,
Though verse has hitherto ignored his claim:
The glorious and forgotten Gulliver,

Who found his Lilliput where you will find
Lilliput still, and more so than before;
Close to lake Torrens by his reckoning,
Though it has sink expanded more and more,

Till now the population maps display

An acne rash, disfiguring the whole rind
Of white Australia, as she hugely squats
Above her pint-pot, fly blown and resigned.

And where as Gulliver has been neglected,
Hushed up almost, as of bad repute,
I here propose that we should change
Of Yorke Peninsula to Gulliver's Boot

(For the benefit of readers overseas,
Not the Scepter rising to a height
On pious Queensland, but the curious leg
That paddles in the south just near the Bight).

Critical Appreciation:

The poem "From the True Discovery of Australia" was composed by the Australian poet, James Phillip McAuley. This poem was published in the collection 'Under Aldebaran' in 1946 and was dedicated to the greatest poet of Australia, A. D. Hope. This poem was composed from a postcolonial perspective of the ignored people and also portrays the cultural tradition of a nation. The poem also carries a satirical overtone that indicates how written history is neither objective nor neutral.

James addresses the poem to A. D. Hope. He begins the poem by saying that William Janszoon, a Dutch person might have been the first one to arrive on the shores of Australia. As a Dutch navigator and the colonial governor who served the East India Company, had voyaged and discovered Australia by setting his foots on the shores of the country. The poet indicates he has made his footprint on the shores. Because he is a Dutchman, he is ignored and erased from the pages of colonial history and is not celebrated in the annals of Australian history.

Next, the poet considers Dampier, the major industrial port in Australia as a place filled with fuss. But William preferred to call the Hodmadods, the Australian working men and referred to them as gentlemen to the colonizers. He critisises that others are also waiting in the wings to invade the country. They are the colonizers or the discoverers of the

harbours who are waiting to take their turns. He indicates that they are waiting like men in beauty salons or the barber's shop.

The poet then refers to a person who receives attention as a true discoverer of the country, Australia. He says that without any doubt it is Gulliver who has ignored the claim of discovering a country. He satirically indicates the nation as Lilliput and the people as Lilliputians. He states that the people considered the colonizers as great and are surrendering themselves their modern ideologies. At first they thought they were near Lake Torrens and now the colony has expanded far and wide. He blames that the whole population is disfiguring the white Australia as they give way to another culture. At the present state the nation has overwhelmed with modernization and people are resigned to their fate. He then proposes to change the name of Yorke Peninsula as Gulliver's Boot sarcastically. He concludes the poem by saying that the poem is composed not to express the glory of the land but to explore the discoverers or to expose the true colours of the colonizers.

We Are Australia Going

- Oodgeroo Noonuccal

Noonuccal, Oodgeroo (1920–1993)

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) (1920–1993), black rights activist, poet, environmentalist, and educator, was born Kathleen Jean Mary Ruska on 3 November 1920 at Bulimba, Brisbane, second youngest of seven children of Edward (Ted) Ruska, labourer, and his wife Lucy, née McCullough. Ted was a Noonuccal descendant, and Lucy was born in central Queensland, the daughter of an inland Aboriginal woman and a Scottish migrant. Lucy, at ten years of age, was removed and placed in an institution in Brisbane, and at fourteen years of age, without the skills to read or write, was consigned to work as a housemaid in rural Queensland.

Ruska's childhood home was One Mile on North Stradbroke Island or Minjerribah—as it was known by the island's traditional owners, the Noonuccal. The settlement, on the outskirts of Dunwich, was the setting for Kath's earliest memories of hunting wild parrots, fishing, boating, and sharing in the community dugong catch. In 1934, at thirteen, she completed her formal education at Dunwich State School. The family, like many enduring the Depression, could not afford the nurses' training her older sister had received. She

left home for Brisbane to work as a domestic for board and lodging, and less pay than white domestics received, but armed with the ability to read and a talent for writing.

In World War II, after her brothers Edward and Eric were captured by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore in February 1942, Ruska enlisted in the Australian Women's Army Service on 28 July. After initial training as a signaller, she undertook administrative duties and was promoted to lance corporal in April 1943. In June she transferred to the district accounts office where she remained until being discharged on 19 January 1944. She enjoyed team competition, founding a women's cricko (later vigoro) team, the Brisbane All-Blacks; she would later twice represent Queensland at cricko. On 8 May 1943 at the Methodist Church, West End, she had married Bruce Walker, a childhood friend and a descendant of Aboriginal clans from Queensland's Logan and Albert rivers region; he was an electric welder. Their union did not last and as a single parent she struggled to provide and care for her son, Denis. A course in stenography led to an office job but, needed at home, she returned to the flexible hours of taking in ironing and cleaning for professional households. She worked for the medical practitioners (Sir) Raphael and Phyllis (Lady) Cilento, whose worldly outlook, spirited family, and book-lined rooms encouraged her own artistic sensibilities. In 1953 she had a second son, Vivian; his father was Raphael Cilento junior (Cochrane 1994, 23).

In the 1940s the Communist Party of Australia—the only political party without a White Australia policy, and which opposed racial discrimination—had attracted Walker. Through the party she gained skills in writing speeches, public speaking, committee planning, and political strategy, which 'stood me in good stead through life,' but she left because 'they wanted to write my speeches' (Mitchell 1987, 197). Writing prose and poetry, she joined the Brisbane Realist Writers Group. James Devaney encouraged the reluctant writer and sent a selection of her poems to Dame Mary Gilmore. Ninety-four at the time of their meeting, Gilmore said, as Walker later recalled: 'These belong to the world. Never forget you're the tool that wrote them down only' (Mitchell 1987, 198).

At Jacaranda Press in Brisbane, Walker's poems found an advocate in submissions reader Judith Wright, who recommended publication. In 1964 *We Are Going* became the first poetry publication by an Aboriginal Australian. Despite the success of that book and *The Dawn Is At Hand,* which followed two years later, her work was dismissed by many critics as protest poetry. She would nevertheless win the Jessie Litchfield award for literature (1967), a Fellowship of Australian Writers award, and the Dame Mary Gilmore medal.

Sales of her poetry were claimed to rank second to Australia's best-selling poet, C. J. Dennis.

Two years before her first book, in 1962, Walker had been elected Queensland State secretary of the Federal Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement, while also a member of the Queensland Aboriginal Advancement League executive. She rose to the call for Aboriginal leadership and, in the early 1960s, travelled around Australia with FCAATSI delegates, among them Faith Bandler, (Sir) Douglas Nicholls, and Joe McGinness. Campaigning for equal citizenship rights, she met with cabinet ministers, led with Bandler a delegation to Prime Minister (Sir) Robert Menzies, and wrote and delivered speeches. The struggle culminated in the landmark 1967 referendum to empower the Federal government to legislate on Aboriginal affairs. This victory was particularly momentous in her home State, where the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations lived under the all-encompassing authority of 'The Queensland Acts.'

Walker stood for the Australian Labor Party in the Liberal stronghold of Greenslopes in the 1969 State election, but lost. Her hard-fought campaign for Aboriginal land rights, despite personal assurances of action by a succession of politicians, was slow to gain political support. London's 1969 World Council of Churches consultation on racism was the first of many international invitations, which over the years would take her to Fiji, Malaysia, Nigeria, the Soviet Union, and the United States of America. *My People* (1970), a collection combining her two previous books, would be her last poetry for a decade and a half.

Aged fifty, in 1971, suffering ill health and facing challenges for power from younger Aboriginal leaders, Walker returned to Minjerribah. Near One Mile, she assembled a gunyah—a traditional shelter—on negotiated leasehold land, the beginnings of a learning facility, and named it Moongalba (the sitting-down place). Her teaching of Aboriginal culture on country inspired thousands of school children—whom she saw as the bright future—as well as teachers and other visitors who made the barge trip across Moreton Bay. She published two children's books, *Stradbroke Dreamtime* (1972) and *Father Sky and Mother Earth* (1981). In 1983 she stood as a candidate for the Australian Democrats in the State election, without success.

During a tour of China—as part of an Australia-China Council cultural delegation—in 1984 Walker's enthusiasm to write poetry revived, resulting in the simultaneous publication in Australia and China of *Kath Walker in China* (1988). She received prestigious awards, including honorary doctorates from Macquarie University (1988), Griffith University

(1989), Monash University (1991), and Queensland University of Technology (1992). In 1977 she appeared in a film biography, *Shadow Sister*; her performance won the 1977 Black Film Makers' award in San Francisco. She also advised on and acted in Bruce Beresford's 1986 film *The Fringe Dwellers*. A veteran environmental campaigner, she spoke against uranium mining and opposed sand mining on Minjerribah. In 1987, in protest at the bicentennial celebration of Australia Day, she famously returned the MBE to which she had been appointed in 1970.

With her son Vivian in 1988 she wrote the script for *The Rainbow Serpent Theatre*, produced at World Expo '88, Brisbane; they wrote under their newly chosen Noonuccal names Oodgeroo (paperbark tree) and Kabul (carpet snake). These last few years together ended in 1991 with Kabul's AIDS-related death at thirty-eight. Heartsick but resolute, Oodgeroo served as a judge of the David Unaipon award for Indigenous writers, as adviser on a national Aboriginal studies curriculum for teachers, and as patron of Queensland's first Writers Centre. She died of cancer on 16 September 1993 at the Repatriation General Hospital, Greenslopes, Brisbane. At her funeral on Minjerribah hundreds came to farewell the nation's much loved poet and activist, who was buried at Moongalba beside Kabul.

In 2006 Queensland University of Technology renamed its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support Unit the Oodgeroo Unit. Direct, charismatic, quick-witted, and dignified, Oodgeroo taught the spirituality of her ancestors, responsibility for the earth, and the connection of all people. Her poetry and stories continue to inspire. She chose 'a long road and a lonely road, but oh, the goal is sure' (Walker 1970, 54).

We Are Australia Going

TEXT

They came in to the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent
All that remained of their tribe.
They came here to the place of their old bora ground
Where now the many white men hurry about like ants.
Notice of the estate agent reads: 'Rubbish May Be Tipped Here'.
Now it half covers the traces of the old bora ring.
'We are as strangers here now, but the white tribe are the strangers.
We belong here, we are of the old ways.
We are the corroboree and the bora ground,

We are the old ceremonies, the laws of the elders.
We are the wonder tales of Dream Time, the tribal legends told.
We are the past, the hunts and the laughing games, the wandering camp fires.

We are the lightening bolt over Gaphembah Hill
Quick and terrible,
And the Thunderer after him, that loud fellow.
We are the quiet daybreak paling the dark lagoon.
We are the shadow-ghosts creeping back as the camp fires burn low.
We are nature and the past, all the old ways
Gone now and scattered.
The scrubs are gone, the hunting and the laughter.
The eagle is gone, the emu and the kangaroo are gone from this place.
The bora ring is gone.
The corroboree is gone.
And we are going.'

Background Information

We Are Going is a poem written by Aboriginal Australian poet, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, and was published in her anthology collection of the same name on 1964. Her anthology marked the first time an Aboriginal Australian had their poetry collection published.
The poem explores the impact of the British Empire and the long-lasting effects of colonialism on the native Aboriginal community. Noonuccal addresses the impact it had on her upbringing as well as forming her cultural identity. She goes on to describe the ways in which the Aboriginal community is being eradicated and replaced by white and western traditions.

Ultimately, the poem is a criticism of colonialism and its destructive effects. It compares the mass slaughter of the native Australians to similar acts of genocide throughout the years. Noonuccal urges the people to recognize the issues that Aboriginal Australians continue to face, and help them to preserve their culture.

Summary

The poem begins by introducing the Aboriginal Australian group as they enter the scene *"partially nude...quiet and withdrawn"* unlike the *"white men who hurry around like*

ants over an anthill." The poem goes on to stress the fact that, as a group, they are slowly being wiped out as *"They were the only ones left from their tribe."* Their once "*sacred*" land has since been taken as well as their *"traditional gatherings and dances."* Not only have they physically lost their land, but they also continue to be disrespected by white people, as their homeland is now treated as a dumping site, *"trash can be dumped here."*

The Speaker sadly states that despite the fact that they are *"supposed to be here",* nowadays *"it seems like we're the ones who don't belong here."* There is a call to their past and their traditions of telling *"wondrous stories"* and their *"hunts and games filled with laughter".* However, as time goes, these traditions fade until *"The gatherings and dances are gone"* and the Speaker sadly states, "*we are leaving too."*

Themes

Colonialism

Written by an Aboriginal Australian poet, "We Are Going" examines the consequences of British colonialism in Australia. The poem describes what has been lost through British conquest, and what will be lost in the future if Aboriginal people aren't respected and valued. Ultimately, the poem offers a powerful critique of colonialism. It suggests that colonialism is a form of cultural genocide, robbing Aboriginal Australians of their lives and identities, and destroying the beauty and balance of the natural world.

The opening of the poem places it in the aftermath of British conquest in Australia, and strongly implies that many Aboriginal Australians have already lost their lives as a result of this conquest. The speaker describes "[a] semi-naked band," or small group of people, coming into a "little town," and says that they are "[a]ll that remained of their tribe." This description makes clear that this tribe—implied to be a tribe of Aboriginal Australians—was once much larger; now, though, as a result of colonialism, only a small number are left.

This small group of Aboriginal Australians, who are described as "subdued and silent," are then contrasted with the "many white men" who now "hurry about" the town "like ants." In other words, where before the white colonizers were the minority, they have made themselves the majority—implicitly through conquest of the native people.

The poem also reveals that colonialism destroys whole ways of life and what is most sacred to these Aboriginal Australians. For example, "bora ground" is sacred land where

ceremonies were traditionally held. However, the poem describes how the "old bora ground" has been taken over by white colonizers, who have even set up a sign indicating that "Rubbish May Be Tipped Here." In other words, the sacred land of the Aboriginal Australians is now used by the colonizers as a dump.

Later the speaker remarks that "all the old ways" are "[g]one now and scattered," suggesting that all the traditional ways of life of the Aboriginal Australians have been lost as a result of colonialism. The ending of the poem reinforces this sense of lost culture, when the speaker says that "[t]he bora ring is gone" and "[t]he corroboree is gone." A bora ring is a sacred ceremonial site in Aboriginal culture, and a corroboree is a traditional gathering or ceremony. In dispossessing people of their land and their traditions, the speaker implies that British colonialism has destroyed these sacred aspects of Aboriginal life.

Finally, the poem suggests that colonialism has also destroyed the land and natural world itself. The speaker mourns the loss of the "eagle, the emu, and the kangaroo" who are now "gone from this place." In other words, British colonialism has resulted not only in the loss of the native people and their culture, but also in the loss of the animals that once inhabited the land. Implicitly, what was balanced and integral in this natural setting has been destroyed.

Ultimately, the poem suggests that Aboriginal Austraia, their ways of life, and all that is beautiful in the land they inhabit will be lost forever if something doesn't change. The beginning of the poem shows a small group of Aboriginal people still remaining. But the title, "We Are Going," which repeats in the poem's last line, suggests that these last Aboriginal people will soon disappear from the land as well. The diminishing line lengths of the poem also convey a sense of a way of life that is eroded and disappearing forever. And once it is gone, the poem strongly implies, it can't come back.

Aboriginal Australian Identity and Experience

"We Are Going" explores the destructiveness of British colonialism and the erasure of the Aboriginal Australian people. At the same time, the poem offers a powerful *counter* to this erasure. While the poem begins with a description of Aboriginal Australians that could be from a white, colonial point of view, it goes on to speak from an Aboriginal perspective, celebrating Aboriginal identity and culture even as it mourns the erosion of this culture. In the face of colonialism, then, the poem asserts the beauty and resilience of Aboriginal Australians, and it implies the importance of centering and valuing Aboriginal experiences and perspectives.

The speaker starts by describing a group of Aboriginal people as they would be seen from a white, colonial perspective. The description of these people as a "semi-naked band" echoes colonial language, which often emphasized native people's physical appearances and attire as "evidence" of their sub-human status.

Additionally, all that is said at this point about these people's experience is that they are "subdued and silent." This implies that they have undergone extreme suffering, yet the poem doesn't, at this point, offer their point of view. The opening of the poem, then, implicitly conveys the ways in which Aboriginal Australians—and many native peoples around the world—are seen and represented: as dehumanized and fundamentally voiceless.

Yet the poem goes on to subvert this opening by giving voice to the people who are, at the start of the poem, "silent." The speaker shifts to the collective first person: "We." This can be read as the voice of the group of Aboriginal Australians described at the poem's beginning. The poem goes on to sustain this point of view for the remainder of the poem. In its structure, then, the poem centers and prioritizes the perspective of people, who, it implies, have too often been dismissed, ignored, and silenced.

Speaking from this "we," the poem speaks to the beauty and complexity of Aboriginal Australian identity and culture. In the list that sustains much of the poem, the speaker describes this identity in detailed, varied ways. The list emphasizes the connection of identity to both tradition and the land, in such lines as "We are the old ceremonies, the laws of the elders," "We are the lightning bolt over Gaphembah Hill," and "We are the quiet daybreak paling the lagoon."

The variety and complexity of this list—the speaker asserts that "We are" such varied things as "the hunts and the laughing games," "shadow-ghosts creeping back as the camp fires die low," and "nature and the past"—emphasize the unique beauty and complexity of this culture.

Importantly, then, while the speaker describes the *erosion* of Aboriginal Australian culture—"all the old ways," the speaker says, are "[g]one now and scattered"— the poem also powerfully asserts the *presence* of this culture. The vivid specificity of the speaker's descriptions allows the reader to visualize the aspects of Aboriginal Australian experience that the poem describes. Additionally, the repetition of "we are" creates a sense that despite the violence and erasure they have experienced, the Aboriginal people speaking within the poem are present and resilient.

By giving voice to the people who are, at the start of the poem, described as "subdued and silent," the poem implicitly shows the urgency and importance of understanding and valuing Aboriginal Australian perspectives. In doing so, it refuses to accept the colonial framework that erases these perspectives, instead showing a "we" who are dispossessed and "going"—but not gone.

Analysis

We Are Going is a poem written by Aboriginal Australian poet, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, and was published in her anthology collection of the same name on 1964. Her anthology marked the first time an Aboriginal Australian had their poetry collection published.

The poem explores the impact of the British Empire and the long-lasting effects of colonialism on the native Aboriginal community. Noonuccal addresses the impact it had on her upbringing as well as forming her cultural identity. She goes on to describe the ways in which the Aboriginal community is being eradicated and replaced by white and western traditions.

Ultimately, the poem is a criticism of colonialism and its destructive effects. It compares the mass slaughter of the native Australians to similar acts of genocide throughout the years. Noonuccal urges the people to recognize the issues that Aboriginal Australians continue to face, and help them to preserve their culture.

Melbourne

- Chris Wallace-Crabbe

Chris Wallace-Crabbe – Biography

Chris Wallace-Crabbe was born in 1934. His father was a journalist and his mother a pianist, and he describes his family tradition as 'military-bohemian Scots'. After leaving school he worked as cadet metallurgist at the Royal Mint, Melbourne, then, at diverse jobs, including six months in the RAAF, before attending the University of Melbourne. Graduating in English and philosophy, he became Lockie Fellow in Australian Literature and Creative Writing, Melbourne University, from1961 to 1963; Over the next decades he became Reader in English, and then held a Personal Chair from 1988. He was Harkness Fellow at Yale University, 1965-67, Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard, 1987-8, and

Visiting Professor at the University of Venice, 1973 and 2005. He has given many readings of his poetry around the world.

Wallace-Crabbe is an important figure in Australian poetry, as a poet, a critic and as an advocate for poetry. Since his first book, The Music of Division, appeared in 1959, he has published more than twenty two volumes. In the eighties he began to publish with OUP, with *The Amorous Cannibal*. Wallace-Crabbe's poetry ranges from the syllogistic poems of his earlier career to the more public and political poems of his later career. Frequently set in Melbourne, the poems explore the dissolution of modern life and an ongoing search for joy that he believes all humans experience. The critic Ron Sharp says of Wallace-Crabbe's *Telling a Hawk from a Handsaw*: 'This sometimes comic, sometimes irreverent streak in Wallace-Crabbe is one of the great spurs to his imagination, and it extends to his unending delight in the antic accidents and felicities of the language itself." Overall his work offers a wry urbanity, 'playing with shifts of register, from the pungent demotic to sometimes noble speech', as Michael Sharkey observes, as well as a finely tuned sense of 'the absurdity of politics, deluded leaders and idealists, and the saving grace of comedy".

Chris Wallace-Crabbe chairs Australian Poetry Limited in The Wheeler Centre, Melbourne, Victoria. Since his retirement he has been Professor Emeritus in The Australian Centre, University of Melbourne. He has written a novel, published literary criticism, essays and artists' books in collaboration with the painter Bruno Levi, and edited many anthologies of essays and poetry.

In 2011, Chris Wallace-Crabbe was made a Member of the Order of Australia for service to the arts as as a leading poet, critic and educator, and as an ambassador and advocate for the humanities both nationally and internationally, and through support for emerging writers.

TEXT

Melbourne

Melbourne Not on the ocean, on a muted bay
Where the broad rays drift slowly over mud.
And flathead loll on sand, a city bloats
Between the plains of water and of loam
If surf beats, it is faint and far away;
If slogans blow around, we stay at home.

And, like the bay. Our blood flows easily.
Not warm, not cold (in all things moderate),
Following our familiar tides. Elsewhere
Victims are bleeding, sun is beating down
On patriot, guerrilla, refugee.
We see the newsreels when we dine in town

Ideas are grown in other gardens while
This climate soil throws up its harvest of
Imported and deciduous platitudes.
None of them flowering boldly or for long:
And we, the gardeners, securely smile
Humming a bar or two of rusty song.

Old tunes are good enough if sing we must;
Old images: re-vamped ad nauseam.
Will sate the burgher's eye and keep him quiet
As the great wheels run on. And should he seek
Variety, there's wind, there's heat, there's frost
To feed his conversation all the week.

Highway be highway, the remorseless cars
Strangle the city, put it out of pain,
Its limbs still kicking feebly on the hllls.
Nobody cares. The artists sad at dawn
For brisker ports, or rot in public bars.
Though much has died here, nothing has been born

The Social Context

I will try to place the poem against the historical background to the founding of the city of Melbourne so as to suggest the social and cultural elements that colour it. 1851, Victoria gamed its separate identity as a colony within Australia with its capital named Melbourne after Queen Victoria's first Prime Minster. Its origins however were treated with some reservations. A poem written by Rudyard Kipling a couple of generations after

the founding of the city has Melbourne offers this description of herself: 'Greeting ! Nor fear nor favour won us place / Gut between greed of gold and dread of drought/ Loud-voiced and reckless as the tide-race. That whips our harbour-mouth.

'The origins of the city of Melbourne' got between greed of gold and dread of drought' are presented unattractively but accurately in the above lines. The 'hungry forties' (the 1840's) were a period of starvation and unemployment in Britain that drove people to seek their fortunes elsewhere, frequently in the new territories of Australia such as Victoria. 185I-the year when it acquired a separate political identity-was also the year when gold was discovered m Victoria. With the onset of the gold rush, people flocked to Victoria and prosperity ensued. There is a story that only two policemen were left in the city of Melbourne as the rest had left to go prospecting for gold. So-between the twin compulsions of need and greed – the city of Melbourne developed.

After World War-11, Melbourne took on another kind of significance. It became an important centre of thought in terms of political and cultural history. Melbourne then--during the 1950's-had an exciting and complicated intellectual life. The presence of the university helped the formation of a group of writers concerned not only with poetry but with publishing and with the formation of an intellectual tradition.

The relationship between the city and its people is complex. The people are of the city and carry it within themselves, as part of their host being, wherever they go and however hard they try to escape it. At the same time the city feeds or preys upon its people. Ultimately the city and its people are indistinguishable. The only hope they have of redemption and a new life is ironically the T-jet-a fight aircraft that symbolises death-recalling the Vietnam war. The social and cultural context shared by the city of Melbourne and its people is-against this complicated heritage-fraught and sometimes unhappy. Its people may be of the city even when they are not in it but this intense bonding itself may prove destructive.

Melbourne – Summary and Analysis

Chris Wallace Crabbe is an Australian poet whose famous city poem "Melbourne" is a part of his collection *Selected Poems: 1956-1994.* The dichotomy between past and present intermingles with the city and its people as a product of their actions. People make cities

and city shapes people. Thus, the interdependent relationship they share becomes a focal point for Crabbe in the poem to ponder over. A city is an entity that lives and witnesses multiple lives every day. It has its own trajectory with ups and downs and so the poet longs for the past to criticise the present like Samuel Johnson's "London" which exhibits the magnificent city as a turning heap of industrial waste.

The poem is composed in a first-person plural format to enable the speaker (assumed to be the poet himself) to express his oneness with his people and the city of Melbourne. Divided into five stanzas with six lines each, the poem does not follow any fixed rhyme scheme.

The poem begins with a clear disclaimer about **the geographical location** of Melbourne which is in a state of **in-betweenness**. It is built on a quiet bay where the sun rays engage in a two-and-fro on the muddy shore in a slow rhythm (**imagery**). The flathead, which is a fish, is lying on the sand, presumably lifeless. Melbourne is situated between water and land soil. The **alliteration** "faint and far" for the ocean waves depicts the distance the city shares with water and is thus undisturbed by it. As the city maintains its safe distance from any troubles by the water, people to secure themselves from political turmoil by staying indoors and refusing any participation. This indifference on the part of the city's population, however, might attract a vague response from the readers who can be confused about the speaker's position and take on such ignorance. Does he support it or condemn it?

Melbourne the city and Australia as the nation relies on imports to sustain livelihood. They borrow not only material properties but intellectual property as well as referred to in the **personification** "Ideas are grown in other gardens." A **mocking tone** is observed where the speaker laments the dependency on his city. He believes the Australians to have been losing their trust and confidence in themselves. The **metaphor** "gardeners" for the people suggests the rural mindset they dwell on and the **alliteration** "securely smile" confirms their affirmation of old ideologies.

Time is never constant and so changes are inevitable as time moves ahead. The speaker claims that old songs and images can only ignite interest if they are reworked. Melbourne is lacking freshness and newness. It is only operating on what it has rather than putting a thrust on what it can have. A burgher can satisfy his monotonous life in the variety the

city offers through different weather conditions rather than anything more substantial. The **anaphora** “Old tunes…Old images…” and “there’s wind, there’s heat, there’s frost” attempts to emphasize the presence of things whose significance is debatable.

Modernisation builds its way to the city leading to the construction of highways one after the other, killing the natural beauty. The “remorseless cars” (**personification**) contribute to pollution and road accidents causing loss of life. The speaker laments the lack of attention civilisation pays to the adversity they are welcoming. The artists, who have the power to ruminate over the subject and pass their wisdom to the world **ironically**, pass their time in vain. Death ensures a new birth but the city, despite losing so much, witnesses no new growth and has come to a standstill. Hence, through this poem, the poet wishes to reignite the spark in his fellow Australians to grow and prosper.

UNIT-II: PROSE

A Neglected History

- Henry Lawson

Henry Lawson (1867–1922)

Henry Lawson, in full **Henry Archibald Lawson**, (born June 17, 1867, near Grenfell, New South Wales, Australia—died September 2, 1922, Abbotsford, New South Wales), Australian writer of short stories and balladlike verse noted for his realistic portrayals of bush life.

He was the son of a former Norwegian sailor and an active feminist. Hampered by deafness from the time he was nine and by the poverty and unhappiness in his family, he left school at age 14 to help his father as a builder. About 1884 he moved to Sydney, where the *Bulletin* published his first stories and verses (1887–88). During those years he worked for several newspapers but also spent much time wandering. Out of these experiences came material for his vivid realistic writing, which, by its often pessimistic blend of pathos and irony, captured some of the spirit of Australian working life. His later years were increasingly unhappy, and the quality of his writing deteriorated.

Lawson's principal works are collections of poems or stories and include *In the Days When the World Was Wide and Other Verses* (1896), *While the Billy Boils* (1896), *On the Track and over the Sliprails* (1900), *Joe Wilson and His Mates* (1901), *Children of the Bush* (1902), and *Triangles of Life and Other Stories* (1913).

***A Neglected History* by Henry Lawson**

We must admit that the Centennial celebrations in Sydney were not wholly useless. The glorious occasion called forth from every daily, weekly and monthly periodical, every advertising medium, twopenny calendar, and centennial keepsake, a more or less complete history of Australian progress during the past 100 years. The youngsters in our schools, and Australians generally, had thus for the first time the salient facts regarding the history of Australia thrust before them.

If this is Australia, and not a mere outlying suburb of England: if we really are the nucleus of a nation and not a mere handful of expatriated people dependent on an English Colonial Secretary for guidance and tuition, it behoves us to educate our children to a knowledge of the country they call their own.

It is a matter of public shame that while we have now commemorated our hundredth anniversary, not one in every ten children attending Public schools throughout the colonies is acquainted with a single historical fact about Australia.

The children are taught more of the meanest state in Europe than of the country they are born and bred in, despite the singularity of its characteristics, the interest of its history, the rapidity of its advance, and the stupendous promise of its future.

They can conjure with the name of Captain Cook; they are aware that he sailed into Botany Bay, and they have some indistinct theories regarding him, but of the men who in the past fought for the freedom of our constitution as it is, they scarcely know the names.

It is of course desirable that they should be familiar with the features of European history, but that they should at the same time be so grossly unacquainted with their native land is an obvious anomaly.

Select almost any Australian schoolboy from one of the higher classes and you will find that he can glibly recite the names of the English sovereigns from the Conqueror to Victoria, with the dates of their ascension. He can then give you their relationship to each

other, and the principal events and noteworthy persons of each reign, with a rapidity that runs clear away from elocution and transmutes the English language into a kind of lightning gibberish. If you ask for geographical information he can quote, without drawing breath, the rivers, mountains and towns in Europe, and can then run through the counties and towns of England, repeating such names as Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, etc., with a great relish. But if you ask him what town in Australia was formerly called Bendigo, or where Port Phillip settlement was, he becomes bashfully silent, and if you follow this by inquiries as to the Black War in Tasmania, or ask him the causes which led to the Fight of Vinegar Hill, he will come to the conclusion that you are "greening" him, and will leave with an injured air.

Of the gradual separation of one colony from another, of the differences still existing in their constitutions, and of the men and influences which have made them what they are he knows nothing. His knowledge of the natural history and geographical features of Australasia he picks up chiefly from the talk of his associates, and the information he casually encounters in the newspapers.

It is quite time that our children were taught a little more about their country, for shame's sake. Are they always to be "Colonials" and not "Australians"?

It may be urged that the early history of Australia is for the most part better left unknown; but for that reason are all the bright spots, the clean pages, the good deeds, and the noble names, to be left unremembered too?

There is apparently quite another reason why Australian history may not claim a place in the school's curriculum. It is considered necessary that a loyal spirit should be instilled into the minds of the rising generation: an attachment to a mother land which they have never seen: a "home" which should remain always dearer to them than the place of their birth and childhood. This object might be considerably retarded if the children learned how the mother land cradled and nursed the nation they belonged to, and the measure of gratitude and respect they owe her for her tender guardianship: if they knew how the present Australian aristocracy (so loyal and sceptre loving) arose, and whence they came; how the Old New South Wales convict slaveholders and tyrants tried to drag Victoria into the sewer while she made efforts for liberty; how the same worthies tried to divert a convict stream into the northern settlement (now Queensland) that they might reap the benefit of convict labour; if the noble efforts of Lang resulted in the freedom of the

mother colony, and lastly how Australian honour and interests were sold right and left for mammon.

If all these things, and much more that might and would become apparent, were taught, Australian school children might develop a spirit totally at variance with the wishes of Australian Groveldom.

They might form a low admiration for the thirty digger patriots, who on that eventful December morning in 1854 died in the Eureka Stockade to gain a juster government for their country and to baulk the first “try on” of what was no less than convict government in a free colony. They might also learn to love the blue flag with the white cross, that bonny “Flag of the Southern Cross”, which only rose once, but rose to mark the brightest spot in Australian history, and to give a severe check to that high-handed government which is only now gaining ground again.

They might acquire a preference for some national and patriotic song of their own homes and their own appointed rulers, rather than to stand in a row and squeal, in obedience to custom and command, “God Save our Gracious Queen”.

In their present state of blissful compulsory ignorance they cannot perceive the foolishness of singing praises of the graciousness of their condescending magnate, a ruler at the further end of the world who, knowing as little of them and their lives and aspirations as they know of her, is nevertheless their sovereign and potentate, and who is sometimes benevolent enough to send them a brief cable message judiciously filtered through her own appointed underling and deputy.

When the school children of Australia are told more truths about their own country, and fewer lies about the virtues of Royalty, the day will be near when we can place our own national flag in one of the proudest places among the ensigns of the world.

Father Damion at Work

- **John Farrow**

John Farrow

John Farrow , in full **John Villiers Farrow**, (born February 10, 1904, Sydney, Australia—died January 27, 1963, Los Angeles, California, U.S.), Australian-born director and writer whose diverse film credits included film noirs, westerns, and historical adventures.

Early life and work

Farrow traveled the world as a sailor before becoming a Hollywood screenwriter in the late 1920s. He helped pen the scripts for such films as *Ladies of the Mob* (1928), *The Wolf Song* (1929), and *Tarzan Escapes* (1936; uncredited). It was on the latter movie that Farrow met Maureen O'Sullivan, whom he wed in 1936. The following year Farrow began his directorial career at Warner Brothers with three B-films: *West of Shanghai*, starring Boris Karloff as a Chinese warlord; *She Loved a Fireman*, with Ann Sheridan; and *Men in Exile*. In 1938 he helmed *The Invisible Menace* (again starring Karloff) and two Sheridan vehicles—*Little Miss Thoroughbred* and *Broadway Musketeers*—along with the Kay Francis tearjerker *My Bill*.

After *Women in the Wind* (1939), in which Francis portrayed an airplane pilot competing in a transcontinental race, Farrow moved to RKO. He remained busy in 1939, directing five B-films: *Full Confession*, an *Informer* (1935) knockoff with Victor McLaglen; *The Saint Strikes Back*, the first in the series to star George Sanders; *Five Came Back*, a jungle-survival melodrama with Lucille Ball, Chester Morris, and John Carradine; *Reno* with Richard Dix; and *Sorority House*, an Anne Shirley drama written by Dalton Trumbo.

Films of the 1940s

Farrow opened the 1940s with two films: *Married and in Love* was a clever tale about infidelity, but *A Bill of Divorcement* was a so-so remake of the 1932 movie by George Cukor, with Maureen O'Hara and Adolphe Menjou in the roles played by Katharine Hepburn and John Barrymore, respectively. Farrow had his biggest hit at Paramount with the patriotic *Wake Island* (1942), starring Brian Donlevy, Robert Preston, and William Bendix. It received an Academy Award nomination for best picture and earned Farrow his only nomination for best director. Other films set during World War II included *Commandos Strike at Dawn* (1942) with Paul Muni; *China* (1943), a thriller about war profiteers (Alan Ladd and Bendix) who battle Japanese invaders while helping a teacher (Loretta Young) and her students; and *The Hitler Gang* (1944), a biopic of the Nazi leader. *You Came Along* (1945) featured Robert Cummings as a war hero who goes on a bond-selling tour.

Farrow then made a pair of period action films: *Two Years Before the Mast* (1946) cast Ladd as the son of a shipping magnate who is forced to work on one of his father's vessels, and *California* (1947) starred Ray Milland as an unlikely wagon master, with Barbara Stanwyck at his side. In *Easy Come, Easy Go*, Barry Fitzgerald portrayed a racetrack frequenter who does not want his daughter (Diana Lynn) to marry a sailor (Sonny Tufts), and William Holden was an airplane pilot in the melodrama *Blaze of Noon* (both 1947). In 1947 Farrow also reteamed with Ladd on the crime drama *Calcutta*. The following year he directed the classic film noir *The Big Clock*, an adaptation of Kenneth Fearing's novel that starred Milland as an editor who is desperately trying to outwit his scheming boss (Charles Laughton). Ladd later starred in *Beyond Glory* (1948), portraying an army captain on trial at West Point.

In 1948 Farrow helmed an effectively eerie adaptation of the novel *Night Has a Thousand Eyes* by George Hopley (pseudonym of Cornell Woolrich), with Edward G. Robinson as a clairvoyant who meets a tragic end. *Alias Nick Beal* (1949) was one of Farrow's best films; Milland was cast against type as the devil, who tries to corrupt an honest politician (Thomas Mitchell). The subject matter was likely of special interest to Farrow, who had converted to Roman Catholicism; he later wrote a biography of Sir Thomas More (1954). Farrow closed out the decade with the comedy *Red, Hot and Blue* (1949), starring Betty Hutton as an aspiring actress and Victor Mature as a gangster.

Films of the 1950s

In 1950 Farrow directed *Copper Canyon*, a western featuring Milland and Hedy Lamarr, and *Where Danger Lives*, in which Robert Mitchum played a doctor led astray by a mentally unstable woman (Faith Domergue). Mitchum also appeared in *His Kind of Woman* (1951), with Jane Russell; Farrow played the overplotted story half for laughs, producing an enjoyable parody of Mitchum's hit film noir *Out of the Past* (1947). *Submarine Command* (1951) had Holden trying to adjust to peacetime life in the military, and *Ride, Vaquero!* (1953) was an offbeat western starring Ava Gardner. Other films from 1953 were *Plunder of the Sun*, an adventure featuring Glenn Ford as an insurance adjuster unwittingly involved in antiquities smuggling, and *Botany Bay*, in which Ladd portrayed a medical student who is wrongly convicted of robbery and sent to Australia on a convict ship. In 1953 Farrow also directed *Hondo*, which was shot in 3-D and adapted from a Louis L'Amour novel. It featured John Wayne as a cavalry scout trying to save a widow (Geraldine Page) and her son from the Apache. *A Bullet Is*

Waiting (1954) was a western with Rory Calhoun and Jean Simmons, and *The Sea Chase* (1955) featured the peculiar teaming of John Wayne and Lana Turner and asked audiences to accept Wayne as a German ship captain.

Farrow took time off from directing to coscript the adventure-comedy *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956), for which he won his only Oscar. He then remade *Five Came Back* as *Back from Eternity* (1956), with Anita Ekberg as the romantic interest. *The Unholy Wife* (1957) was a rather uninspired noir in which blonde bombshell Diana Dors was cast as a bored wife who tries to kill her husband (Rod Steiger) in order to be with a rodeo rider (Tom Tryon). *John Paul Jones* (1959), with Robert Stack as the naval hero, was Farrow's last film before retiring.

Father Damion at Work

Father Damien was born Joseph de Veuster in Tremeloo, Belgium, on Jan. 3, 1840, of pious and sturdy Flemish peasant stock. In 1860 he joined his brother in the Contemplative Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary. After he experienced a vision of St. Francis Xavier, he was convinced that he had a missionary vocation. Without special preparation he substituted for his brother in a missionary party sailing for Hawaii in 1863. After arrival there he was ordained a priest and was then known as Father Damien.

After regular work in a parish, where he proved to be a true priest-workman, the great challenge of Father Damien's life came. He heard about the island of Molokai with its leprosarium, where incurable lepers were sent. He decided that these people "in darkness" needed a resident priest and volunteered for this service. "I am bent on devoting my life to the lepers," he said.

With his creative imagination the apostle brought new breath of hope to these people without hope. His down-to-earth Christian humanism led him to attempt the remaking of man's life even in the despair of Molokai, and he worked with the lepers to build houses, schools, and meeting places. At the same time he studied new ways of treating lepers. He also offered a context of celebration; he encouraged festivity to provide hope in the experience of decay and frustration. One of Father Damien's key words was participation. He had only intermittent coworkers from outside, and instead he recruited and trained coworkers from outside, and instead he recruited and trained coworkers from the lepers.

The "prayer leaders" were the members of his team ministry, and his "model parish" eventually grew to become a sign of hope.

Father Damien received the highest Hawaiian decoration for his pioneering work with lepers, and his work received great publicity. He also earned a number of enemies because of his stubbornness and lack of organizational ability. In spite of many obstacles he persisted in his work even after 1878, when he was sure that he himself had leprosy. In one of his last letters he wrote, "My face and my hands are already decomposing, but the good Lord is calling me to keep Easter with Himself." He died on April 15, 1889. Above his grave on Molokai his friends set a black marble cross with the inscription, "Damien de Veuster, Died a Martyr of Charity." His body was reburied in Louvain, Belgium in 1936.

Birth

Damien was born Jozef ("Jef") de Veuster, the seventh child of the corn merchant Frans de Veuster and his wife, Cato Wouters, in the village of Tremelo, in Flemish Brabant (Belgium). As a youth, he (and his siblings) were weaned on tales of the marvelous exploits of Christian saints and martyrs—an evidently formative experience, as four of the couple's eight children eventually went on to take up membership in holy orders. Young Jef was a somewhat anomalous individual: On one hand, he was a stocky, thickset youth, easily able to perform physically demanding tasks when helping his father on the farm; on the other, he was also intensely calm and contemplative, receiving the nicknames "Silent Joseph" and "the Little Shepherd" from neighbors and family members. Both of these propensities would serve him well in his future endeavors.

Following the example of his older siblings, he attended college at Braine-le-Comte, then entered the novitiate of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Leuven, taking the name of Damianus (Damiaan in Dutch) in his first vows (probably after Saint Damian). He took this name in conscious imitation of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, ancient "physician-saints," who "went among the sick and were martyred for Christ."

Several years later, the monastery received a moving entreaty from the Hawaiian episcopate, urging the order to send a delegation of monks to aid in their charitable and missionary activities. His brother was originally selected for this role and arrangements were made, but, at the last moment, he was struck by a crippling bout of typhoid fever (which made travel impossible). Given the unfortunate circumstances, Damien

offered to travel in his brother's stead, a proposal that was eventually acceded to his ecclesiastical superiors.

Mission to Hawaii

On March 19, 1864, Damien landed at Honolulu Harbor as a missionary. There, Damien was ordained to the priesthood on May 24, 1864, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace, a church established by his religious order. Though somewhat under qualified (as he had only four years of religious instruction), Father Damien was immediately thrust into a public role—missionizing to the natives of the island, delivering sermons in (still rudimentary) Hawaiian, and performing other ecclesiastical duties. Though his superiors sometimes questioned his impetuosity, the young priest was undeniably zealous in the performance of his duties, which he undertook for several parishes spread throughout the archipelago.[8] After years of tireless work, he remarked in July of 1872 that "now I have enough chapels, rectories, animals, and fields. I'm going to be able to apply myself to taking care of the sick and studying this year. At least, if Providence doesn't send me elsewhere." As Jourdain notes, this was an uncannily prescient statement, as it was within the year that Damien's true calling was revealed to him.

While Damien's missionary involvement brought him in contact with many of the Hawaiian people, he remained relatively unaware of the health crisis that was currently threatening the kingdom.

Health Crisis

Native Hawaiians became afflicted by diseases inadvertently introduced to the Hawaiian Islands by foreign traders and sailors. Thousands died of influenza, syphilis, and other ailments which had never before affected Hawaiians. This included the plight of leprosy (today called Hansen's disease). Fearful of its spread, King Kamehameha V segregated the lepers of the kingdom and moved them to a settlement colony on the north side of the island of Molokai. The Royal Board of Health provided them with supplies and food but did not yet have the resources to offer proper health care.

In all good faith the government and the Board of Health believed they had solved the problem in every respect by shipping the patients off to Molokai with daily rations, a pair of pants or a cotton dress, a two-room building that was supposed to be a hospital under the direction of an administrator and some assistants. Actually, however, it was a

barbarous method of isolation and a frank admission that the disease was considered incurable…. Molokai quickly got the reputation of being a graveyard, a place of anarchy, a Sodom calling down a rain of fire and brimstone. There was no doctor, no nurse, no priest, no justice of the peace, no resident police, no work, no comfort—and no hope.

Colony of Death

In 1873, confronted with the need to minister to the assembled lepers on Molokai, Msgr. Louis Maigret, the vicar apostolic, was in a difficult position. While acknowledging the spiritual needs of the afflicted, he realized that this assignment could potentially be a death sentence. As a compromise, he suggested that the various priests under his authority could alternate, each spending two weeks ministering to the ailing of the *leprosarium*. Damien volunteered to be the first.[12]

Following his arrival at Kalaupapa, Molokai on May 10, 1873, Damien wrote to his superior

> …to say that there was urgent work to do. Having landed with nothing, he needed "a case of wine, books for pious reading and study, some shirts, trousers, shoes, a bell, some rosaries, some catechisms, altar bread big and small, a sack of flour, a lockable chest with a key." Not knowing when or whether he was to be replaced, he asked who would be "the priest privileged to gather the harvest of the Lord," and he put himself forward: "You know my disposition. I want to sacrifice myself for the poor lepers."

Given the willingness of his subordinate (plus the undesirability of the posting), Msgr. Louis Maigret agreed to Damien's request and formally assigned him to the leper community on Molokai. (Though this posting earned the accolades of virtually all native Hawaiians, the Health Board, some of whom were Protestant missionaries, took affront at the fact that they had not been consulted when this posting was created. In retaliation, they publicly declared that Damien was to be treated as a leper and kept secluded on Molokai, hoping that this would lead the priest to flee. Surprisingly enough, it had the opposite effect. The young priest accepted the conditions of his banishment and remained on Molokai to the end of his days.)

Father Damien's time at the leper colony was evenly divided between religious and secular duties. More specifically, while he traveled throughout the wilds of the island in search of potential converts, administered sacraments to the bedridden and preached to

the assembled invalids on Sundays, he also realized that, as a priest, his efforts to simply succor these needy individuals sometimes had to take priority. In this, his brawny frame and history as a farm laborer were tremendously helpful, as he spent much of his time helping the islanders build themselves homes and churches, as well as constructing coffins and digging graves for the departed. (He also took it upon himself to bear water to the homes of the bed-ridden, even after plumbing had been installed on the island.)[16] Further, after receiving instruction from William Williamson (a settler who had become afflicted with the disease), the vigorous young priest was given instruction in bandaging wounds, draining sores, and applying ointments, acting as "doctor as well as priest."

In his ministrations to the lepers, Damien attempted to treat them as brothers and sisters in faith, even when it meant having to mask or otherwise deny his understandable revulsion at the depredations of the disease. As Farrow describes, this attitude began from his first day on the island, when he accepted a gift of fruit from a local sufferer "without showing any emotion other than gratefulness, for from the beginning he was resolved to show the lepers that he experienced no fear or repulsion of them and their affliction." This became part of his general approach to dealing with the lepers, and, throughout his tenure on the island, he made "no pains to avoid contact with an infected person, he deliberately ate from the same dishes when sharing their humble meals, and often his pipe was lent to a leper." This policy of tolerance and inclusion also extended into his ministerial work, as he "chose to address his congregation not as 'my brothers,' but as 'we lepers.'" Furthering this general humanizing impulse, Damien also used other tactics to improve the quality of life for his constituents. He organized regular horse races (as this was an exciting, competitive activity that even the relatively ill could still take part in), taught songs from the Catholic hymnody (with those singing accompanied by individuals playing instruments, many of which were either constructed by Damien himself or donated by well-wishers), and encouraged them to plant gardens and sell the produce (as a means of earning much-needed income).

Though he was not alone on the island, being aided (on occasion) by a procession of assistants, deacons, and fellow missionaries, it is not an overstatement to give the zealous Belgian priest the bulk of the credit for his humanization of what had been a Dante-esque realm of pain and torment.

Order of Kalakaua

n honor of his work among the lepers, King David Kalakaua bestowed on Damien the honor Knight Commander of the Royal Order of Kalakaua. When Princess Lydia Liliuokalani visited the settlement to present the medal, she was reported as having been too distraught and heartbroken to read her speech.[22] The princess shared her experience with the world and publicly acclaimed Damien's efforts. Consequently, the priest's reputation spread across the United States and Europe, leading American Protestants and the Church of England to raise large sums of money for the mission and to send food, medicine, clothing, and supplies.

Illness and Death

In December 1884, as indicated in his diaries, Damien went about his evening ritual of soaking his feet in boiling water. When he removed them, he saw to his dismay that they were covered in blisters, despite the fact that he had not felt the heat. Reeling from this discovery, he consulted a renowned specialist, Dr. Arning, who confirmed that he had contracted leprosy.[24] Despite this distressing development, Damien continued to work vigorously to build as many homes as he could, though he also made plans for the continuation of programs he created after he was gone.

In response to this situation, four strangers came to Molokai to help the ailing missionary: Louis Lambert Conrardy, a Belgian priest; Mother Marianne Cope, Superior of the Franciscan Sisters of Syracuse; Joseph Dutton, an American Civil War soldier and member of the Third Order of Saint Francis; and, James Sinnett, a nurse from Chicago.[25] Each of these individuals aided the ailing priest to the best of their abilities: Conrardy took up pastoral duties, Cope organized a working hospital, Dutton attended to the construction and maintenance of the community's buildings, and Sinnett nursed Damien through the last phases of the disease.

Father Damien died on April 15, 1889, "like a child going to sleep." He was 49 years old. After two days of public mourning, he was buried in the graveyard behind the small chapel that he had helped to build in his first year on the island.

Criticisms

Upon his death, a global discussion arose as to the mysteries of Damien's life and his work on the island of Molokai. Much criticism came from the American Congregational and Presbyterian churches, who feared the influence of Catholicism (especially if Hawaii

became a part of the United States). They derided Damien as a "false shepherd" who was driven by personal ambition and ego. The most famous treatise published against Damien was by a Honolulu Presbyterian, Reverend C.M. Hyde, in a letter dated August 2, 1889, to a fellow pastor, Reverend H. B. Gage. Reverend Hyde wrote:

> In answer to your inquiries about Father Damien, I can only reply that we who knew the man are surprised at the extravagant newspaper laudations, as if he was a most saintly philanthropist. The simple truth is, he was a coarse, dirty man, head-strong and bigoted. He was not sent to Molokai, but went there without orders; did not stay at the leper settlement (before he became one himself), but circulated freely over the whole island (less than half the island is devoted to the lepers), and he came often to Honolulu. He had no hand in the reforms and improvements inaugurated, which were the work of our Board of Health, as occasion required and means were provided. He was not a pure man in his relations with women, and the leprosy of which he died should be attributed to his vices and carelessness. Others have done much for the lepers, our own ministers, the government physicians, and so forth, but never with the Catholic idea of meriting eternal life.

Having read the letter, Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson, also a Presbyterian, drafted an acidic rebuttal, defending Damien and deriding Reverend Hyde for creating gossip to support his blatant anti-Catholic agenda. On October 26, 1889, Stevenson wrote:

> When we have failed, and another has succeeded; when we have stood by, and another has stepped in; when we sit and grow bulky in our charming mansions, and a plain, uncouth peasant steps into the battle, under the eyes of God, and succours the afflicted, and consoles the dying, and is himself afflicted in his turn, and dies upon the field of honour—the battle cannot be retrieved as your unhappy irritation has suggested. It is a lost battle, and lost for ever.

In addition to calling Reverend Hyde a "crank," Stevenson answered the charge that Damien was "not sent to Molokai but went there without orders" by arguing that:

Is this a misreading? Or do you really mean the words for blame? I have heard Christ, in the pulpits of our Church, held up for imitation on the ground that His sacrifice was voluntary. Does Dr. Hyde think otherwise?

In the process of examining Damien's fitness for beatification and canonization, the Roman Curia pored over a great deal of documentation of published and unpublished criticisms against the missionary's life and work. Diaries and interviews were scoured and debated. In the end, it was found that what Stevenson called "heroism" was indeed genuine.

Posthumous Honours

In 1936, the Belgian government asked for the return of his body, in order to publicly commemorate his life and works:

> [Upon arrival in Belgium,] the casket was placed before the platform on which stood Cardinal Van Roey, Primate of Beligium, members of the episcopate, and the King with his cabinet. A thrill passed through the crowd as they saw His Majesty King Leopold III step from his place and salute the son of a Tremeloo peasant…. Then, a hearse, drawn by six white horses, carried his body to the Cathedral where a solemn pontifical Mass was celebrated with magnificent ceremonies in the presence of the highest civil and religious personages of the land…. The remains of the humble missionary were again laid to rest in a crypt of St. Joseph's Chapel, a national shrine dedicated to Father Damien's patron, and directed by the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts.

In addition to this commemoration, many secular associations have also chosen to honor the Beligian priest. For instance, a bronze statue of Father Damien honors the priest at the United States Capitol, with a full-size replica in front of the Hawaii State Legislature. Further, in 2005, Damien was given the title of *De Grootste Belg (The Greatest Belgian)* after a national poll conducted by the Flemish public broadcasting service, *Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroep* (VRT).

Canonization Process

On June 4, 1995, Pope John Paul II beatified Blessed Damien and gave him his official spiritual title. On December 20, 1999, Jorge Medina Estévez, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, confirmed the November 1999 decision of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to place Blessed Damien on the liturgical calendar (feast day celebrated on May 10) with the rank of optional memorial. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu is currently awaiting findings by

the Vatican as to the authenticity of several miracles attributed to Damien. Upon confirmation that those miracles are genuine, Blessed Damien could then be canonized and receive the title of Saint Damien of Molokaʻi.

In Blessed Damien's role as patron of those with HIV and AIDS, the world's only Roman Catholic memorial chapel to those who have died of this disease, at the Église Saint-Pierre-Apôtre in Montreal, is consecrated to him.

Standards in Australian Literature

- Alec Derwent Hope

Alec Derwent Hope - Biography

A.D. Hope, in full **Alec Derwent Hope**, (born July 21, 1907, Cooma, New South Wales, Australia—died July 13, 2000, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory), Australian poet who is best known for his elegies and satires.

Hope, who began publishing poems when he was 14 years old, was educated in Australia and at the University of Oxford. He taught at various Australian universities, including Sydney Teachers' College and Melbourne University, until his retirement in 1972. Though traditional in form, his poetry is thoroughly modern, two outstanding examples being "Conquistador" (1947) and "The Return from the Freudian Isles" (1944). Both poems are typical in their satirical approach and striking clarity of diction. Hope also wrote religious and metaphysical poems, as well as erotic verse, which often attracted controversy, as did his attacks on the cultural establishment, which he considered pretentious and empty. His first book of poems, *The Wandering Islands*, appeared in 1955 and was followed by several volumes of new poems and of collected poems. He also wrote essays and criticism, including *A Midsummer Eve's Dream* (1970), *The Cave and the Spring* (1965), and *Native Companions* (1974). He was made a member of the Order of the British Empire in 1972 and a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1981.

Poet and Critic

Although he was published as a poet while still young, *The Wandering Islands* (1955) was his first collection and all that remained of his early work after most of his manuscripts were destroyed in a fire. Its publication was delayed by concern about the effects of

Hope's highly-erotic and savagely-satirical verse on the Australian public. His frequent allusions to sexuality in his work caused Douglas Stewart to dub him "Phallic Alec" in a letter to Norman Lindsay. His influences were Pope and the Augustan poets, Auden, and Yeats. He was a polymath, very largely self-taught, and with a talent for offending his countrymen. He wrote a book of "answers" to other poems, including one in response to the poem "To His Coy Mistress" by Andrew Marvell.

The reviews he wrote in the 1940s and '50s were feared "for their acidity and intelligence. If his reviews hurt some writers – Patrick White included – they also sharply raised the standard of literary discussion in Australia."[6] However, Hope relaxed in later years. As poet Kevin Hart writes, "The man I knew, from 1973 to 2000, was invariably gracious and benevolent".

Hope wrote in a letter to the poet and academic Catherine Cole: "Now I feel I've reached the pinnacle of achievement when you equate me with one of Yeats's 'wild, wicked old men'. I'm probably remarkably wicked but not very wild, I fear too much ingrained Presbyterian caution".[7] Cole suggests that Hope represented the three attributes that Vladimir Nabokov believed essential in a writer, "storyteller, teacher, enchanter".

Hope's editor and fellow critic was David Brooks who was responsible for posthumously publishing the Selected Poetry and Prose of AD Hope in January, 2000.

Standards in Australian Literature

The publication of this work, following closely on Professor Leonie Kramer's *Oxford History of Australian Literature* with its two supplementary anthologies, marks not only a new development in the standing enjoyed by Australian writing in the world but also a radical change in the point of view from which literature written in the English language must henceforth be treated. This change of attitude, which was inevitable and has been slowly imposing itself over the present century, is still not well understood and has scarcely yet been accepted. It arises from the fact that English is now a literary language in some forty countries all over the world. In some it is the main or the only literary vehicle for writers. In others such as India, Canada, Malaysia and South Africa it competes with one or more other languages. In still others, like Nigeria, it is a secondary language but provides the only outlet for educated writers since the many native tongues do not provide an adequate reading public. In all these countries the English language serves and is embedded in very different social and cultural backgrounds which are unfamiliar to speakers and writers from other areas. Major writers in all these areas are known to

readers throughout the English-speaking world and now constitute the current body of English literature proper. The editors of the last couple of volumes of the famous *Oxford History of English Literature* were forced to recognise this fact, just as they had had to recognise, in earlier volumes devoted to the 17th and 18th centuries, that the major writers of Scotland, Ireland and Wales were an integral part of 'English' literature. The older view that all branches of the process outside the British Isles formed minor, and probably inferior, offshoots to the main stem must now be given up, and in view of the fact that the literature of the United States now takes at least equal status with that emanating from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, it is arguable that the term 'English Literature' ought to be replaced by 'Literature in English'. It would at least avoid confusion in describing its field and would bypass implications of dependence or inferiority. It would help to underline the fact that the writing produced in Great Britain from this age onwards enjoys no special prestige but is simply one among many branches of a subject defined merely by the language in which it is written – as Latin literature ceased in time to have any geographical meaning.

This change in attitude, and the facts which make the change necessary, only reflect a similar change imposed by estimates of the position of the different forms of the language in the various countries in which it is spoken. Writers tend to stick more closely to what used to be called Standard English than do the speakers of various regional dialects of the language, but it is steadily losing its claim to be a yardstick against which the other forms of English can be assessed on a scale of correctness. Its position now is simply that of one dialect among many – a class dialect in some areas and a literary dialect in a more general sense. But even as a literary dialect it is increasingly coloured by regional differences of idiom and vocabulary.

In the past, strong advocates of a 'national literature' for countries like the United States, Canada or Australia thought of a development away from the parent language to where a completely separate language, and by implication the literature of a quite distinctive society, became inevitable. Their model was possibly the development of the Romance languages and societies from their Latin origins. In this they seem to have been mistaken. The spread of education has tended to modify and slow down the more colloquial features of regional speech, and 'standard English' retains a literary and social prestige even though in a country like Australia there is much less prejudice against a 'broad' Australian accent among persons with other claims to eminence, when they speak on radio or television. It is no longer regarded as a compliment, even in England, for someone

to be told that he doesn't talk like an Australian, any more than it would be in Australia for an Englishman to be told that he talks 'like a ruddy Pom'.

As the writing of a country increases in volume over the years, it needs more and more reference for the ordinary reader to find his way about in it. As each age recedes into the past, there is an ever-growing need for background information on institutions, beliefs, historical and biographical details which are no longer common knowledge. This has been in part provided by useful works such as the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, and comparable works covering the same areas in the United States. But now there is need to provide such a cover on a world-wide scale.

This the authors of the *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* have set out to do for their own country. Their venture, as described in their own words, has been to aim at a work primarily providing 'entries on authors and literary works'. They decided to scrap an earlier intention not to include living authors or their books – which was wise of them, since ignoring the great expansion in Australian writing since the 1950s would have given the work an oddly unbalanced and out-dated look. Living authors who have established reputations are well represented in the work as it stands.

Their second main aim has been to provide 'literary, historical and other cultural contexts' within which Australian authors and their work can be placed. 'Our notion of literary contexts,' they go on, 'has been broad enough to permit entries on literary journals, series, awards, societies and movements; on libraries, publishers and cultural organisations; on aspects of closely associated fields (e.g. cinema, broadcasting, the theatre, Australian English); on overseas writers who either visited Australia (e.g. Trollope, Stevenson) or exercised significant influence in Australian cultural history (e.g. Dickens, Shakespeare); and on other topics. By historical and other cultural contexts is meant those aspects of Australian life and history about which readers unfamiliar with Australia might need basic information (e.g. the Australian States or the Heidelberg School of painting – places, people; events, idioms and so on). Some of these have produced an extensive creative literature of their own (e.g. the phenomenon of bushranging) and most are at least alluded to somewhere in Australian writing.'

All this seems extremely sensible and has on the whole been carried out with judgment, discretion and economy. The Australian devotion to horse-racing is notorious, but, as the authors point out, 'the entry on the Turf deliberately provides only very basic information

about the development of horse-racing ... and emphasises instead the kinds of connections between the Turf and Australian literature.' This is literally true of that article, though when one turns to it, one is led to wonder, since horse-racing is a subject that nearly everyone is familiar with, whether it needed three columns of close print to enlighten a reader on its influence on Australian writers, and a further entry on Phar Lap, 'Australia's most famous race-horse'. This is ungrateful of me, I know, since I am quoted for some contemptuous lines on the Sport of Kings, blackguards and our local 'Yahoos who live in slavery to the horse'. But such examples are rare. The article on bushranging which runs to over five columns justifies itself both because the subject has more to do with Australian writing and at a better level than fiction on racing subjects, and because readers are much more likely to need information on a topic which has now passed into history and is, in any case, largely peculiar to Australia.

Some might be tempted to smile at the idea of a volume comparable in size to the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* on which it is modelled, when Australian writing has only been in existence for less than two hundred years, was thin on the ground for the first hundred, and still contains few writers of the first quality, with even those mostly unknown outside Australia until recently. Compare this with its model, covering up to more than a thousand years and an enormous body of writers, among them some of the greatest geniuses in European literature. Add to this that a companion to English writing has to include reference and information relative to those sources in the whole of the European tradition which have influenced English writers, whereas Australian writers have not, on the whole, been much influenced by any tradition but that of England itself, with some reference to that of the United States. On this view, the present volume might well look like an example of what was common enough in the nationalistic movements in Australia in the past: a brash assumption that any literature is comparable to, and to be matched against, any other literature – understandable of course, but clearly a symptom of an adolescent point of view, the young pipsqueak feeling his oats and challenging dad.

I think the laughers might feel justified in laughing but that they would be wrong, because of the changes in the world situation of English literature in general, and of the English language as its medium in the world of today. The academic – that is to say, the informed critical and scholarly – study of English literature is only about as old as the actual existence of Australian writing. It is still, in comparison with other disciplines, a relatively young study. We are discovering already that it was based on assumptions about the

future which have since been shown to be false or misleading. Countries like Australia, Canada and the United States are not, as we once supposed, moving away from English on the pattern of France, Italy and Spain moving away from the original Latin. That was largely the result of isolation resulting from the collapse of the old Roman Empire. The immense increase in communications of every sort in the modern world seems to have arrested a partition we thought inevitable and were in some cases prepared to welcome. But social disparities between the countries that speak English continue to grow, and there is more and more need for companions to the literature of each in order to interpret it to the others. The need is increased because the long isolation of Australian writing has at last begun to break down. This follows on the long neglect of it within Australia itself.

When I was first appointed in 1945 to an English department in an Australian university, the only literature in English studied there or in any of the others was that of Great Britain, with an occasional glance at what was going on in the United States. Protests that I, and others, made on behalf of Australian writing were politely ignored or grudgingly met by the inclusion of a novel or two by an Australian writer in a modern English syllabus. When five years later I introduced the first full year's course in the subject at the University College where I held the chair of English, it was refused recognition by the University of Melbourne which controlled our degrees. After we became independent, however, the resistance, indeed the hostility, of the universities quickly collapsed. Now all of them and all other tertiary institutions teach the subject. But the years of neglect made it very difficult at first. Reliable texts were hard to get, libraries even harder to build up, and the usual indispensable aids to study at university level – trained teachers, bibliographical and historical studies, biographical and critical studies of literary movements and individual authors – were almost entirely wanting. A quarter of a century later much of this deficiency is being made up, and the appearance of the *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* is a landmark in that development. For the first time Australian students and general readers of their country's writing have an accurate and full work of reference on almost every aspect of the subject on which they may need information or further referral. This is the second point on which the size of the work is to be defended.

But there are other grounds as well. Since the last great war, Australian literature has become a subject of study in universities all over the world, either in separate courses or as a component of what are rather ineptly called 'Courses in Commonwealth Literature'. If these studies are to develop and spread, their present students and teachers, who are often hampered by lack of books and background material, must surely find the *Oxford*

Companion invaluable. Its appearance as a pioneer work, indeed, should encourage other countries in the English-speaking world to follow its example, so that in time the necessary bond between individual writers who are known throughout the world and the writers whose reputation is largely confined to local regions will bring the establishment of a unified and coherent form of the whole body of what I have called 'Literature in English'. This may sound like something of a messianic dream, but I believe that it is bound to come, and that it will perhaps resolve the problem of the spread of a rather pallid and monotonous internationalism against the maintenance of a healthy and vigorous provincialism in each of the regions where writers in English have their roots.

In case I should sound too enthusiastic, someone may well ask whether, in my opinion, Australian literature has really 'come of age' in the sense of being completely independent and self-reliant. My answer would be not quite, but nearly so. Its first writers were English, Scots or Irish transferred to alien shores and naturally looking to Great Britain for their audience. In this they were followed by the first generation of writers born in the colony and absorbed with the problem of adapting the mediums of English verse and prose to a scene and a rough society which it fitted rather awkwardly. As a result, the writers of the 19th century give the impression of aiming *at* the country, explaining it for the benefit of an audience in another hemisphere and on the other side of the world. This provincial and rather parochial tone persisted into the Twenties and Thirties of the present century – to be replaced by a new generation of writers who felt no obligation to be consciously Australian and who wrote *from* rather than *at* the country, which they simply took for granted.

It remains provincial, however, in two very important senses. The first of these lies in its failure to generate any theory of literature or criticism which has its origin in the country and is purely Australian in character. It has been content to take its lead in these matters from abroad, and has been inundated by successive waves of theory or innovations of style and practice imported from Europe or America. The sole exception, the so-called Jindy-worobak movement of the Thirties, was so excessive that it failed to take on. It urged Australians to cut all their ties with the white man's culture and to develop a new art and literature based on that of the aborigines, the folk who had lived longest in contact with the soil. Despite its muddled thinking and its impossible demands on artists, it was a healthy reaction against overseas domination of our ideas. Nothing of native origin has so far risen to take its place.

In passing, one may note the somewhat ironical fact that, while the entry on the Jindy-worobak movement itself is both full and accurate, the same cannot be said of that part of the long article on the aborigines which deals with the complex question of European attitudes to the native peoples of the country and their treatment in Australian literature. There is some confusion in the depiction of the aborigines – they are either idealised as the 'noble savage', or sentimentalised in later fiction, or they are the 'ignoble and brutish savage', or indeed the comic savage. These categories are too sharply defined. The different attitudes were often combined in various ways and certainly co-existed throughout the whole period of Australian writing.

The second consideration that still limits any claim that it has at last emerged to a fully independent and autonomous status as a world literature can be seen when one studies the longer-established colonial literatures such as those of the United States and the various states of Spanish America. The emergence of one or more writers of genius who have exercised a profound influence on the literary climate of the mother country itself is something that has not happened in Australia. There is nothing comparable to the influence of Walt Whitman, Henry James or T.S. Eliot, say, on contemporary English practice and critical attitudes, or of Ruben Dario and Luis Borges on the practice of their craft in Spain. Nor is anything of the sort yet in sight.

I have perhaps wandered rather far from the book I have ostensibly set out to review, but consideration of its importance to the present situation, and of its probable impact on future attitudes and practices in the world in general, do not seem to be irrelevant to an estimate of a very workmanlike and quite unpretentious work of reference. It seems to me likely to have effects far beyond the aims of its compilers.

Letters

Vol. 8 No. 18 · 23 October 1986

SIR: A few years ago I wrote an essay in which I attributed to Professor A.D. Hope (amongst others) the misconception that the mainly South Australian poets of the Jindyworobak movement wanted to assimilate Australian culture, and especially Australian poetry, to Aboriginal culture. I would not expect Professor Hope to have heard of my piece ('Survival of the Jindyworobaks', *Kunapipi*, 1984). However, in reconsidering the subject recently, I decided that I had done Professor Hope an injustice: it seemed that

in his hostile review of books by Rex Ingamells and Ian Mudie published over forty years ago in *Southerly*, and certainly in his comments on the piece when he collected it in *Native Companions* (Sydney, 1974), he had grasped the central point of the Jindyworobak idea, even if he disagreed with it. I was therefore surprised to find Professor Hope repeating what I originally took to be a misconception in his recent review of the *Oxford Companion to Australian Literature* (*LRB*, 4 September): 'The so-called Jindyworobak movement of the Thirties was so extreme that it failed to take on. It urged Australians to cut all ties with the white man's culture and to develop a new art and literature based on that of the Aborigines.'

The Jindyworobak movement was based on the simple idea that there was a disjunction between the culture which Europeans brought to Australia and the environment in which they found themselves. Far from being a new or 'extreme' idea, it was apparent to Barron Field, who claimed the honour of being the first Australian poet. In his *Geographical Memoirs of New South Wales* (1825), he wrote: 'All the dearest allegories of human life are bound up in the infant and slender green of spring, the dark redundancies of summer, and the sere and yellow leaf of autumn. These are as essential to the poet as emblems as they are to the painter as picturesque objects; and the common consent and immemorial custom of poetry have made the change of seasons, and its effect upon vegetation, a part, as it were, of our very nature. I can therefore hold no fellowship with Australian foliage, but will cleave to the British oak through all the bareness of winter.' In other words, since the seasons in Australia did not exhibit the changes of vegetation, and so on, which provide the allegories in which European poetry is steeped, it made Australian poetry, for Field at least, impossible.

The Jindyworobaks differed from Field (on this matter) only in their belief that in order to write truly Australian poetry, it was necessary to bridge the gulf between the culture they inherited from Europe, and the environment. That is why they adopted the Aboriginal word *jindyworobak*, which according to them meant 'to join'. They used it to denote a joining, not of white and Aboriginal culture in Australia, but of the cleft between culture and environment in the civilisation which Europeans had brought to the country. The Aborigines came into the Jindyworobak theory only secondarily for, as Rex Ingamells saw it, theirs was a culture in harmony with the environment. They exemplified the possibility of achieving the connection suggested by the word *jindyworobak*, but the Jindyworobak idea did not entail the belief that white Australians could make the connection by copying

the Aboriginals. The Jindyworobak poets knew they were *writing* in the *English language* for a start. The point is, rather, that the Aboriginals had a culture which embodied an ultimate respect for the land, or the environment.

This touches the nub of the argument, which is really between those who believe the Australian environment can be subdued by European culture and those who hold that Australia is the place where man's faith in his ability to control nature runs out, like the rivers flowing off the western slopes of the Great Dividing range, which deceived early explorers into the belief that they would find water at the centre of the country. Forty years ago, when he reviewed the Jindyworobak writings, Professor Hope seemed to belong to the first category, for he urged the Jindyworobaks to pay attention to evidences of the Europeanisation of Australia – the windmills, railway trains, sheep stations, vineyards, and towns like Broken Hill and Canberra. He could point to even more evidence now, if he is still of the same mind, yet maps of Australia still mark a huge area of the western centre of 'no significant use', presumably the region Les Murray described in his recent poem 'Louvres' as

the three quarters of our continent
set aside for mystic poetry.

Surely Professor Hope does not think Australians should ignore this, and pretend that their country consists only of the coastal strip in which the majority of them live. Some of the events surrounding the mysterious Azaria Chamberlain case, particularly as it is depicted in John Bryson's new book *Evil Angels*, suggest that Australians wherever they live are still influenced by an environment they do not fully understand.

The Jindyworobaks, and particularly Rex Ingamells, were sometimes inclined to state their case badly (as Professor Hope mentions in *Native Companions*) or to overstate it. They also wrote a lot of bad poetry and their excessive use of aboriginal words in some, but by no means all, of their poems, were easily ridiculed. Yet the fact that the most vociferous of them were poets of modest attainments should not be a reason for rejecting their diagnosis of Australian culture. It is also slightly misleading for Professor Hope to confine the whole movement to the Thirties. The Jindyworobak idea was first enunciated in the Thirties, but Rex Ingamells was active as a poet and publicist until his death in a car accident in 1955, and a Jindyworobak anthology was published every year from 1938 to

1953. Moreover, poets with roots in the Jindyworobak movement, or affiliations with it, like William Hart-Smith and Roland Robinson, are still publishing and still admired.

The Jindyworobak movement is treated seriously in Judith Wright's *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry* (1965); and in her paper 'Some Problems of Being an Australian Poet', collected in *Because I was invited* (1975), she stated what is essentially the Jindyworobak idea in different words: 'Somehow our landscape threatened our identity … it offered nothing to get a grip on with the instruments provided by English language and literature.' Her poetry, as well as her discursive writings, suggest that she shared the basic Jindyworobak view of culture and environment in Australia. Since Judith Wright acknowledged the significance of the Jindyworobak movement, Les Murray has several times claimed affiliations with it, even as recently as his interview with Carol Oles, published in *American Poetry Review*, (March/April, 1986). One of the many remarkable qualities of Murray's poetry is that it is evidently working out a philosophy about Australia and the rest of the world which is founded on the same idea of culture and environment which inspired the Jindyworobaks, but Murray has thought more deeply about it than its original proponents. His recent prose book *The Australian Year* is a splendid elaboration of the Jindyworobak idea.

It would not have been worth going on at this length about a subject remote from many of your readers were it not for the fact that at the end of a long review, full of percipient observations about Australian literature, Professor Hope uses what he suggests was the collapse of the Jindyworobak movement as a clinching argument to prove that the literature remains provincial because of its 'failure to generate any theory of literature or criticism which has its origin in the country and is purely Australian in character'. He reinforces this argument by suggesting that Australia has yet to produce a writer who could exercise 'a profound influence on the literary climate of the mother country'. But the essential Jindyworobak idea was not extreme, and was not forgotten. It persisted through the writing of Judith Wright, not to mention a number of other poets from her generation down to some of the youngest now writing, and it is flourishing in the work of Les Murray, who may well be the Australian writer bound to make an impact on the literary climate of the 'mother country', not that it matters.

UNIT – III: SHORT-STORY

A Dreamer

- **Barbara Baynton**

Barbara Baynton (1857-1929)– An Introduction

Born as Barbara Lawrence, an Australian novelist and short story writer.

Baynton was a novelist and short story writer whose works examine the alienation and isolation experienced by women in the Australian outback during the late nineteenth century. Contradicting the romantic ideals of independence and mateship popularized in Australian fiction of the 1890s, her works provide realistic depictions of the hardships of bush life while presenting a grim, subjective vision of a malevolent landscape and the sinister figures who populate it.

Biographical Information

Baynton was the daughter of John, a carpenter, and Elizabeth (Ewart) Lawrence, Irish immigrants to Australia. Her early childhood was spent in the Scone district of New South Wales before the family moved to Murrurundi in the 1860s. Baynton later became a governess in the Quirindi district and in 1880 married Alexander Frater, with whom she had three children. After Frater eloped with another woman, Baynton moved to Sydney and took a position selling bibles door-to-door. In 1890 she married Thomas Baynton, a wealthy physician nearly thirty years her senior. Dr. Baynton was an avid reader, and Baynton began writing fiction and poetry during their marriage. Her first story, "The Chosen Vessel," also known as "The Tramp," was published in 1896 in the *Bulletin,* the leading Australian literary periodical of the era. In 1902 six of her short stories were published together as *Bush Studies.* Following Dr. Baynton's death in 1904, Baynton spent much of her time in England and published little fiction. She remarried in 1921, and was divorced three years later. Baynton died in Melbourne in 1929.

Major Works

Baynton's literary reputation rests primarily on *Bush Studies,* her collection of short stories examining the hardships of bush life in Australia. In such works as "The Chosen

Vessel," "A Dreamer," and "Squeaker's Mate" Baynton focused on the difficulties faced by women in the outback, and her stories are perceived as contradicting what A. A. Phillips has called the "robust nationalism" prevalent in Australian fiction of the 1890s. Each of Baynton's stories centers on the isolation and terror that often dominated women's lives in rural districts. In "The Chosen Vessel," for example, a bush wife is raped and murdered by a traveling swagman while her husband is away, and in "Squeaker's Mate," a paralyzed farm woman is confined to a shed when her husband brings home his new "mate," a pregnant barmaid. Baynton's only novel, *Human Toll* continues in the grim mood of *Bush Studies* and shares its portrayal of the bush landscape as hostile and barren while presenting the bleak tale of an orphan in the outback. According to Shirley Walker, *Human Toll* is both "an exciting and disturbing text; exciting for its range of response to bush experience, for the passion of its presentation, and for the outrage of its tone."

Critical Reception

Baynton's works created a sensation among Australian readers but generated little interest abroad until English critic Edward Garnett championed the publication of *Bush Studies* in 1902. Called "stark" and "savage," her works have been chiefly valued for their unrelenting realism and uncommon vision of women's status in rural Australian life in the late nineteenth century.

It is Baynton's creek, however, which is represented as perhaps the most harrowing and dangerous site for women. In "A Dreamer", the young female protagonist attempts to cross the creek to visit her dying mother. A storm is fierce, and halfway through the water the girl "clutched a floating branch, and was swept down with it. Vainly she fought for either bank. She opened her lips to call" (Baynton,1902/2012, p. 8). Here, the creek denies female navigation. She fights to reach either bank, and is no longer insistent on reaching her mother: only safety. The protagonist is terrified and drowning, and the creek seems to actively prevent her seeking help, as demonstrated by the line, "a wave of muddy water choked her cry" (p. 8). Though water drowns her voice, the reader understands that even if the woman had managed to cry out, her effort would be fruitless and heard by no one. The creek denies the body function of screaming—of speaking at all—by filling her mouth with muddy water. The creek silences the woman's voice: an action symbolic of the lack of autonomous female experiences within the gothic creek space of Baynton's stories.

The “rushing” (Baynton, 1902/2012, p. 6) creek in “A Dreamer” is especially harrowing, then, because the creek is known to the female protagonist. Just as a woman knows her own body, the protagonist has grown up with the landscape. By daylight, she knows the creek, the “Bendy Tree”, and the tree that looks like “Sisters” (p. 4). During a storm and at night, however, the creek is unknowable and dangerous to the protagonist. The creek—a metaphor for the female body—is a familiar space that the protagonist is unable to rely on. However, just as the creek harbours danger but is not itself dangerous in Baynton’s stories “Squeaker's Mate” and "The Chosen Vessel,” the creek also has the potential to provide an alternative narrative for the female protagonist in “A Dreamer.” The harrowing creek, quick to drown the protagonist, just as quickly converts to comforting and assisting her across the waters: Then a sweet dream-voice whispered “Little woman!” Soft strong arms carried her on. Weakness aroused the melting idea that all had been a mistake, and she had been fighting with friends. The wind even crooned a lullaby. (Baynton, 1902/2012, p. 9) Baynton’s creek “threatens to take and then gives life” (Dale, 2011, p. 373). The female character struggles to move through the antagonistic creek, but is then helped to cross by the creek itself. Such contradictions demonstrate that the creek is not a fixed space in Australian gothic fiction. The creek can be transformed from a space harbouring danger, a hostile border unable to be crossed, to a space that is able to be navigated and survived. This notion manifests in contemporary Australian gothic fiction. While the creek is a frightening space for women in Baynton’s colonial Australian gothic text, characters within contemporary texts such as Gillian Mears’ Foal’s Bread and Jessie Cole’s Deeper Water find the creek to be a site of refuge, autonomy, and empowerment for their “abject” body experiences.

Until the advent of feminist criticism in the 1980s, Baynton remained a largely forgotten figure, dismissed as a typical female writer who did not know how to control her emotions and who was unable to put her “natural talent” to good use. As late as 1983 Lucy Frost could talk of “her unusually low level of critical awareness” (65) and claim that she “relies … on instinct … In order to write well she needs to write honestly out of intuitive understanding. … As art it makes for failure” (65). For a long time reading the implicit in Baynton’s stories consisted in identifying the autobiographical elements and attempting to piece together her true life. She notoriously claimed, even to her own children, to be the daughter not of an Irish carpenter but of a Bengal Lancer and in later life tried to conceal the hardship of her childhood and early married life. The stories were read as “true” accounts of what it was like for a poor woman to live in the bush at the end of the

nineteenth century. This paper argues that far from being a natural writer whose “talent does not extend to symbolism” (Frost 64), Baynton is a sophisticated writer who uses obliqueness simply because this was the only form of criticism open to a woman writer in Australia at this time. The apparent inability of readers to engage with the implicit in her stories stems from an unwillingness to accept her vision of life in the bush.

In order to understand Baynton's technique and why earlier readers consistently failed to interpret it correctly, it is important to replace her stories in the context of the literary world in which she was working for, as Brown and Yule state, when it comes to reading the implicit: “Discourse is interpreted in the light of past experience of similar discourse by analogy with previous similar texts” (65). In 1901, the year of federation and the height of Australian nationalistic fervour, A.G. Stephens wrote:

[W]hat country can offer to writers better material than Australia? We are not yet snug in cities and hamlets, moulded by routine, regimented to a pattern. Every man who roams the Australian wilderness is a potential knight of Romance; every man who grapples with the Australian desert for a livelihood might sing a Homeric chant of history, or listen, baffled and beaten, to an Aeschylean dirge of defeat. The marvels of the adventurous are our daily common-places. The drama of the conflict between Man and Destiny is played here in a scenic setting whose novelty is full of vital suggestion for the literary artist. (Ackland, 77)

Women are conspicuously absent in this description of Australian life as they are in the work of Henry Lawson whose stories have come to be seen as the ‘perfect’ example of nationalistic writing. In the titles of his stories women, if they exist at all, are seen as appendages of men: “The Drover’s Wife,” “The Selector’s Daughter.” They are defined at best by their physical characteristics: “That Pretty Girl in the Army,” but more often than not are specifically excluded: “No Place for a Woman” or reduced to silence: “She Wouldn’t Speak.” In the texts themselves the narrators are either anonymous or male and male mateship is valued above marriage. In Lawson's most well-known stories the bush is a destructive force against which man must wage a constant battle. The landscape, perhaps predictably, is depicted in feminine terms either as a cruel mother who threatens to destroy her son or as a dangerous virgin who leads man into deadly temptation. Men survive by rallying together and are always ready to help a “mate” in distress. Women are left at home and are shown to be contented with their role as homemaker: “All days are much the same to her … But this bushwoman is used to the loneliness of it … She is glad

when her husband returns, but she does not gush or make a fuss about it. She gets him something good to eat, and tidies up the children" (Lawson 6). Baynton's stories challenge this vision of life in the bush in a number of ways: the majority of her protagonists are female; the real danger comes not from the bush but from the men who inhabit it.

From the very beginning, Baynton's stories were subject to a form of male censorship since Stephens heavily edited them in an attempt to render the implicit conventional and thereby make the stories conform to his vision of Australian life. Few manuscripts have survived but the changes made to two stories have been well documented. In 1984 Elizabeth Webby published an article comparing the published version of "Squeaker's Mate" with a typescript/manuscript held in the Mitchell Library. She noted that in the published version the structure has been tightened and some ambiguity removed by replacing many of the pronouns by nouns. More importantly, the ending has been changed and, since endings play such a crucial role in the understanding of a short story, this has important repercussions on the whole text:

The new, more conventionally moralistic ending demanded a more actively brutal Squeaker and a more passive, suffering Mary. So traditional male/female characteristics were superimposed on Baynton's original characters, characters designed to question such sexual stereotypes. As well, the main emphasis was shifted from its ostensible object Squeaker's mate, to her attacker and defender; instead of a study of a reversal of sex, we have a tale of true or false mateship. (459)

Despite these changes the text's conformity to the traditional Australian story of mateship which the *Bulletin* readers had come to expect remains superficial. The title itself is an ironic parody of Lawson's story titles. The woman is defined by her relationship to the man but the roles are reversed. The man has become the effeminate "Squeaker," the woman the masculine "mate." As in Lawson's stories the male character's words are reported in passages of direct speech and the reader has access to his thoughts while the woman's words are reported only indirectly: "… waiting for her to be up and about again. That would be soon, she told her complaining mate" (16). However, and this is an important difference with Lawson's stories, in Baynton's work the text deliberately draws attention to what is not said. For example when Squeaker leaves her without food and drink for two days: "Of them [the sheep] and the dog only she spoke when he returned" (16), or again: "No word of complaint passed her lips" (18). By the end of the story the woman has stopped speaking altogether and the reader is deliberately denied all access

to her thoughts and feelings: “What the sick woman thought was not definite for she kept silent always” (20). The main character is thus marginalised both in the title and in the story itself. The story is constructed around her absence and it is precisely what is not said which draws attention to the hardships of the woman's life.

A similar technique is used in “Billy Skywonkie.” The protagonist, who remains unnamed throughout the story, is not even mentioned until the fourth paragraph where she is described as “the listening woman passenger” (46). She is thus from the start designated as external to the action. Although there is a lot of dialogue in direct speech in the story, the protagonist’s own words are always reported indirectly. The reader is never allowed direct access to her thoughts but must infer what is going on in her mind from expressions like “in nervous fear” (47) or “with the fascination of horror” (53). Despite the awfulness of the male characters, the decentering of the protagonist makes it possible for readers unwilling to accept Baynton’s views on life in the bush to accept the explicitly stated opinions of the male characters and to dismiss the woman as an unwelcome outsider.

The most significant changes to the original stories, and those about which Baynton apparently felt most strongly since she removed them from the text of *Bush Studies*, concern the story now known as “The Chosen Vessel.” This story, as many critics have remarked, is a version of “The Drover's Wife” in which the “gallows-faced swagman” (Lawson 6) does not leave. Lawson's text states repeatedly that the wife is “used to” the loneliness of her life, suggesting even that it is easier for her than for him: “They are used to being apart, or at least she is” (4). Baynton's character, on the other hand, dislikes being alone and the story shows the extreme vulnerability of women, not at the hands of Nature, but at the hands of men.

Baynton originally submitted the story under the title “When the Curlew Cried” but Stephens changed this to “The Tramp.” Once again his editorial changes deflect the reader’s attention away from the female character. By implicitly making the man rather than the woman the central figure, the rape and murder are reduced to one ‘episode’ in the tramp’s life. Kay Schaffer underlines (156) that this attempt to remove the woman from the story is also to be found in the work of the critic A. A. Phillips. For many years he was the only person to have written on Baynton and his article contains the preposterous sentence that her major theme is “the image of a lonely bush hut besieged by a terrifying figure who is also a terrified figure” (150). As Schaffer rightly points out, it is difficult to

understand how any reader can possibly consider that the man who is contemplating rape and murder is a “terrified figure.”

As was then the convention, both the rape and murder are implicit:

She knew that he was offering terms if she ceased to struggle and cry for help, though louder and louder did she cry for it, but it was only when the man’s hand gripped her throat that the cry of “Murder” came from her lips. And when she ceased, the startled curlews took up the awful sound, and flew wailing “Murder! Murder!” over the horseman’s head (85).

Stephen’s deliberate suppression of two passages, however, means the reader can infer a very different meaning to events than that intended by Baynton. The *Bulletin* version omits the scene in which Peter Henessey explains how he mistakenly thought the figure of the woman shouting for help was a vision of the Virgin Mary. The only possible reading in this version is that the horseman was riding too fast and simply did not hear her calls: “She called to him in Christ’s Name, in her babe’s name … But the distance grew greater and greater between them” (85). Baynton’s original version leads to a very different interpretation:

‘Mary! Mother of Christ!’ He repeated the invocation half unconsciously, when suddenly to him, out of the stillness, came Christ’s Name – called loudly in despairing accents … Gliding across a ghostly patch of pipe-clay, he saw a white-robed figure with a babe clasped to her bosom. … The moonlight on the gleaming clay was a ‘heavenly light’ to him, and he knew the white figure not for flesh and blood, but for the Virgin and Child of his mother’s prayers. Then, good Catholic that once more he was, he put spurs to his horse’s sides and galloped madly away (86-7).

By clarifying what is going on in the horseman’s mind, Baynton is implying that patriarchal society as a whole is guilty. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the woman does not exist as a person in her own right in the eyes of any of the male characters. Her husband denies her sexual identity: “Needn’t flatter yerself … nobody ‘ud want ter run away with yew” (82); the swagman sees her as a sexual object, Peter Henessey as a religious one. Taken individually there is nothing original in these visions of woman but their accumulation is surprising and ought to lead the reader to consider what place is left for a woman as a person.

Stephen's second omission is a paragraph near the beginning of the story where the reader is told: “She was not afraid of horsemen, but swagmen” (81). This sentence is perhaps one of the best examples of the way the implicit works in Baynton's stories. The presupposition, at the time widely accepted, is that horsemen and swagmen *are* different. Explicitly asserting the contrary would have been immediately challenged and Baynton never takes this risk. Only with the story's denouement does the reader become aware that the presupposition is false, that both horsemen *and* swagmen are to be feared.

The other technique frequently used by Baynton is that of metaphor and metonymy. According to Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni: “le trope n'est qu'un cas particulier du fonctionnement de l'implicite. … Tout trope est une déviance et se caractérise par un mécanisme de substitution – mais substitution de quoi à quoi, et déviance de quoi par rapport à quoi” (94;109). Readers of *Bush Studies* have all too often identified only the substitution, not the deviance.

In her detailed analysis of “The Chosen Vessel” Kay Schaffer examines the significance of the last paragraph of the story in which the swagman tries to wash the sheep’s blood from his dog’s mouth and throat. She is particularly interested in the last sentence “But the dog also was guilty” (88). Most readers have seen this as a simple, almost superfluous statement, whose only aim is to underline the parallel between man and dog: the man killed a woman, the dog a sheep. Schaffer on the other hand sees here a reference to the first paragraph: “but the woman’s husband was angry and called her – the noun was cur” (Baynton 81). She analyses the metonymic association of woman and dog and argues that the woman’s dog-like loyalty to a husband who abuses her is open to criticism since as a human being she is capable of making decisions for herself. According to Schaffer's reading: “Her massive acceptance of the situation makes her an accomplice in her fate” (165).

Most readers do identify the woman’s metaphoric association with the cow as a symbol of the maternal instinct but Schaffer again goes one step further and argues that since the woman is afraid of the cow she is consequently afraid of the maternal in herself but in participating, albeit reluctantly, in control of the cow, her husband’s property, she also participates in maintaining patriarchal society and therefore: “Although never made explicit in the text, by metonymic links and metaphoric referents, the woman

paradoxically is what she fears. She embodies 'the maternal' in the symbolic order. She belongs to the same economy which brings about her murder" (165).

The baby is rescued by a boundary rider, but this does not mean that motherhood emerges as a positive force in the story. Baynton's title "The Chosen Vessel" implies that the abstract concept of the maternal can exist only at the cost of the woman by denying the mother the right to exist as a person: The Virgin Mary exists only to provide God with his Son, a wife is there to ensure the transmission of power and property from father to son. At the end of Baynton's story even this reverenced position is denied women: "Once more the face of the Madonna and Child looked down on [Peter] … 'My Lord and my God!' was the exaltation 'And hast Thou chosen me?' Ultimately Schaffer argues:

If one reads through the contradictions, woman is not guilty at all – she is wholly absent. She takes no part in the actions of the story except to represent male desire as either Virgin or whore … She has been named, captured, controlled, appropriated, violated, raped and murdered, *and then* reverenced through the signifying practices of the text. And these contradictory practices through which the 'woman' is dispersed in the text are possible by her very absence from the symbolic order except by reference to her phallic repossession by Man. (168)

In a similar way Baynton's use of sheep as a metonym for women and passive suffering is often remarked upon but is seen as little more than a cliché. This view is justified by referring to "Squeaker's Mate" where the woman is powerless to stop Squeaker selling her sheep, many of which she considers as pets, to the butcher and to "Billy Skywonkie" which ends with an apparently stereotypical image prefiguring the "meaningless sacrifice" (Krimmer and Lawson xxii) of the woman in "The Chosen Vessel": "She noticed that the sheep lay passive, with its head back till its neck curved in a bow, and that the glitter of the knife was reflected in its eye" (Baynton 60). Hergenhan does go slightly further by arguing that this is also an example of Baynton's denial of the redemptive power of the sacrificial animal (216) but when the collection as a whole is considered, and the different references are read in parallel, the metonym turns out to be far more ambiguous.

In "Scrammy 'And" the knife is clearly not a dangerous instrument: "The only weapon that the old fellow had was the *useless* butcher's knife" (41, my italics). Even more significantly in this story the reflection of the moonlight in the sheep's eyes is sufficient to temporarily

discourage Scrammy: “The way those thousand eyes reflected the rising moon was disconcerting. The whole of the night seemed pregnant with eyes” (38). Far from being “innocent” creatures the sheep are associated with convicts: “The moonlight’s undulating white scales across their shorn backs brought out the fresh tar brand 8, setting him thinking of the links of that convict gang chain long ago” (42). Nor are sheep seen to be entirely passive: “She was wiser now, though sheep are slow to learn” (44).

In this respect the symbolism of the ewe and the poddy lamb is particularly interesting. The old man claims that this is the third lamb that he has had to poddy. He accuses the ewe of not being “nat’ral” (34), and having a “blarsted imperdence” (30). The narrator, on the other hand, describes her as “the unashamed silent mother” (30). What is being challenged is not her motherhood but her apparent lack of maternal instinct. Once the shepherd is dead, the ewe is capable of teaching her lamb to drink suggesting that it is in fact the man who prevents the maternal from developing. This would seem to be confirmed by the repeated remark that men insist on cows and calves being penned separately. Thus apparently hackneyed images are in fact used in a deviant way so as to undermine traditional bush values.

In much the same way, Baynton’s clichés also deviate from expected usage. For example in “Scrammy 'And” the old shepherd sums up his view of women as: “They can’t never do anythin’ right, an’ orlways, continerally they gets a man inter trouble (30).” By inverting the roles of men and women in the expression “getting into trouble” the text suggests that values in the Bush are radically different to elsewhere. Something which is confirmed in “Billy Skywonkie” where the narrator reflects: “She felt she had lost her mental balance. Little matters became distorted and the greater shrivelled” (55).

Similarly the apparently stereotypical descriptions of the landscape in fact undermine the *Bulletin* vision of Australia. In “Billy Skywonkie” the countryside is described as “barren shelterless plains” (47). Were the description to stop here it could be interpreted as a typical male image of the land as dangerous female but the text continues; the land is barren because of “the tireless greedy sun” (47). In the traditional dichotomy man/woman; active/passive the sun is always masculine and like the sun the men in *Bush Studies* are shown to be greedy. Although never explicitly stated, this seems to suggest that it is not the land itself which is hostile but the activities of men which make it so. Schaffer sees a confirmation of this (152) in the fact that it is the Konk’s nose which for

the protagonist “blotted the landscape and dwarfed all perspective” (Baynton 50). In Baynton’s work women are associated with the land because both are victims of men.

The least understood story in the collection is undoubtedly “Bush Church”: Krimmer and Lawson talk of its “grim meaninglessness” (xxii) and Phillips complains that it is “almost without plot” (155). It is perhaps not surprising that this story should be the most complex in its use of language. Of all the stories in the collection “Bush Church” is the one which contains the most direct speech, written in an unfamiliar colloquial Australian English. These passages deliberately flout what Grice describes as the maxims of relevance and manner – they seem neither to advance the plot nor to add to the reader's understanding of the characters.

Most readers are thrown by this failure to respect conversational maxims and the co-operative principal. Consequently they pay insufficient attention to individual sentences. Moreover, the sentences are structured in such a way as to make it difficult for the reader to question their ‘truth’ or even to locate their subversive nature. As Jean Jacques Weber points out, the natural tendency is to challenge what the sentence asserts rather than what it presupposes (164). This is clearly illustrated by the opening sentence: “The hospitality of the bush never extends to the loan of a good horse to an inexperienced rider” (61). Readers may object that they know of occasions when a good horse was loaned to an inexperienced rider but few realise that the assertion in fact negates the presupposition. Baynton is not talking here about the loan of a horse but is challenging one of the fundamental myths of life in the bush – that there is such a thing as bush hospitality.

Once again a comparison with Lawson is illuminating. Lawson's anonymous narrator says of the Drover's wife: “She seems contented with her lot” (6). In “Bush Church” this becomes: “But for all this Liz thought she was fairly happy” (70). Although semantically their meaning is similar, pragmatically they could not be more different. It is not the anonymous narrator but Liz who is uncertain of her feelings and feels it necessary to qualify “happy” by “fairly.” More importantly the presupposition, “but for all this,” deliberately leaves unsaid the extreme poverty and the beatings to which Liz is subject.

Susan Sheridan, talking of Baynton’s novel *Human Toll,* says: “the assumption that it is autobiographical deflects attention from the novel’s textuality as if the assertion that it was all ‘true’ and that writing was a necessary catharsis could account for its strangely wrought prose and obscure dynamics of desire” (67). The same is true of her short stories.

By persisting in reading her as a "realist" writer many readers fail to notice her sophisticated use of language. Perhaps because none of the stories has a narrator to guide the reader in their interpretation or because the reader has little or no direct access to the protagonist's thoughts, or because of the flouting of conversational maxims and the co-operative principal, sentences are taken at face value and all too often little attempt is made to decode the irony or to question what on the surface appears to be statements of fact. Hergenhan queries the success of a strategy of such extreme obliqueness: "It is difficult to understand why Baynton did not make it clearer as the ellipsis is carried so far that the clues have eluded most readers" (217), but it should be remembered that, given the circumstances in which she was trying to publish, direct criticism was never an option for Baynton. What is essential in decoding Baynton's work is to accept that it is not about women but about the absence of women who are shown to be victims both of men in the bush and of language.

Francis Silver

- Hal Porter.

Hal Porter – An Biographical Introduction

Harold Edward Porter (1911-1984), writer, was born on 16 February 1911 at Albert Park, Melbourne, eldest of six children of Victorian-born parents Harold Owen Porter, railway employee, and his wife Ida Violet, née Ruff. In his early years Hal lived at 36 Bellair Street, Kensington, a house that afforded the title for his most famous work (and first volume of an autobiographical trilogy), *The Watcher on the Cast-Iron Balcony* (1963). After he spent a term at Kensington State School, his father's work took the family to Bairnsdale, which he described as 'a shire town, a Gippsland town . . . the scene of my petty comedy for the next ten years'.

In 1921 Porter became the youngest student at Bairnsdale High School and his first published story appeared in the school magazine the next year. Failing to complete his Leaving certificate, he was briefly a cadet reporter on the *Bairnsdale Advertiser*. In October 1927 he took a position as junior teacher at Williamstown North State School. Apart from a few interludes at Bairnsdale (one occasioned by the death of his loved mother on 21 March 1929) he taught there until resigning in 1937, after the publication of his first story in the *Bulletin*. Living in Collins Street, Melbourne, and sampling the city's bohemian pleasures, he then worked briefly as an assistant window-dresser, one of his numerous unlikely occupations.

In 1938, unemployed, Porter returned to Bairnsdale to live with his father. There, in 1939, he met Olivia Clarissa Parnham, 'the Ardath girl' in the advertisement for that brand of cigarette. After a week's hectic acquaintance they married on 23 June 1939 at the Church of St John the Baptist, Bairnsdale. Although they never lived together, and divorced in 1944, Olivia cared for her husband during a long convalescence after he was run over by a motor car on 1 September 1939 while crossing Victoria Parade, Melbourne. His injuries left him with a limp and recurrent pain, and prevented him from enlisting for service in World War II.

In 1940 Porter worked briefly at Balook State School before securing a resident mastership at Queen's College, Adelaide, teaching senior English and French. Now employed at a private school, he resented not having attended one. Not for the last time he pretended to have appropriate tertiary qualifications. As he would remark, 'I am composed of other people'. An affair with a male student, an indiscretion that went unpunished, is fictionalised in the story 'The Dream'. In 1942, in a limited edition of 250 copies, he published *Short Stories*. Moving to Prince Alfred College in the next year, he played Creon in *Medea* for the Adelaide University Theatre Guild and had stories published in *Angry Penguins* and *Coast to Coast*.

Restlessness brought Porter to teach at the Hutchins School in Hobart in 1946. Within the year he was dismissed, following a letter to the press protesting at the headmaster's cancellation of the King's birthday holiday. He stayed on in Hobart, as a private tutor, producing plays and helping to found the Hobart Theatre Guild with his friends and supporters Ann and Roger Jennings. His Tasmanian sojourn influenced two of the finest works of his baroque style and melodramatic art: a historical novel, *The Tilted Cross* (1961) and a play, *The Tower* (1963). In the former he described Van Diemen's Land, with recent disenchantment, as 'an ugly trinket suspended at the world's discredited rump'.

In 1947 Porter lasted a single term at Knox Grammar School, Sydney. He met Beatrice Davis from Angus and Robertson Ltd, which was to publish most of his works, including his first volume of verse, *The Hexagon* (1956). After teaching at Ballarat College, he was persuaded by a drinking mate to take on the improbable task of running the George Hotel at St Kilda. For a few months, he did. In 1949 he applied successfully to join the Army Education Unit in occupied Japan. From that stint came the novel *A Handful of Pennies* (1958). A return visit in 1967 soured his earlier sanguine view of the country and

issued in a non-fiction work, *The Actors* (1968), and another short story collection, *Mr Butterfry and Other Tales of New Japan* (1970).

Back in Australia, Porter taught at Essendon Grammar School, cooked on a sheep station in the Goulburn Valley and, late in 1953, accepted a post as city librarian at Bairnsdale. In 1958 he took up a similar position at Shepparton. These appointments allowed him time to write, as did grants from the Commonwealth Literary Fund in 1956 and 1960. Travelling to England in 1960, he found a London publisher in Faber & Faber, met such luminaries as T. S. Eliot (about whom he was privately caustic) and was tempted by a career as a dramatist. Three of his four plays had London productions in the 1960s, but without acclaim.

From 1961 Porter supported himself as a full-time writer, gaining further CLF fellowships in 1965, 1968, 1972 and 1974, and sharing the Britannica-Australia literary award in 1967. His working rhythm, especially in the 1970s, involved disciplined retreats to the farm owned by his sister and her husband at Glen Avon, near Garvoc in the Western District. These periods were punctuated by binges in Melbourne.

Porter's third volume of autobiography, *The Extra*, appeared in 1975, provoking critical outrage over his depictions of Katharine Prichard (who 'reeks of . . . untended armpit') and Kenneth Slessor among others. *The Extra* ventilated many of Porter's prejudices — against Jews, 'foreigners' and Aborigines. The counterpart of Porter's grace, charm and cultivation was an intense snobbery that, for instance, saw him elevate his father's occupation from engine-driver to engineer. His facility at winning friends was matched by ceaseless demands on their patience.

Towards the end of his career, Porter produced *Bairnsdale* (1977), illustrated with his own elegant line drawings, and a final volume of stories, *The Clairvoyant Goat and Other Stories* (1981). An anthology of his work appeared in 1980, edited by Mary Lord, who became his biographer. Her book, *Hal Porter: Man of Many Parts* (1993), was even-handed in judging an old friend and sensational in revealing Porter's paedophilia, in particular his sexual relations with one of her sons. In 1981 Porter moved to Ballarat, where he lived at Weeroona, the only house that he ever owned. He also fell in love with a married man thirty years his junior.

In 1982 Porter was appointed AM. On 24 July 1983, in a shocking reprise of his 1939 accident, he was again hit by a motor car. He remained in a coma for fourteen months

before his death in a private hospital at Thornbury, Melbourne, on 29 September 1984. He was buried in Ballarat cemetery with Anglican rites.

Tall, fair haired, vain, loquacious, courtly, bibulous, disposed to dress as a dandy and to address most male acquaintances as ‘dear boy’ (the last words on his tombstone), Porter was one of the most variously talented of Australian creative artists. He was an actor, a sketcher, a distinguished poet, a playwright, an occasional novelist, one of the finest of all Australia’s authors of short stories and a pioneer of the first flowering of autobiographical writing in this country. His much-praised manner was at once outward-looking—precise in its evocation and remembrance of social details—and hermetic, in the creation of self-contained imaginative worlds in which he transformed, with a cruel art, so much of what he had known and watched. A portrait study of Porter by Sir William Dargie is held by the La Trobe Library, Melbourne.

Francis Silver

‘Francis Silver’ is a story of illusion and reality, written by the Australian short story writer, Hal Porter. The narrator, the eldest son of a family of seven, had theprivilege of sharing his mother’s memories of her youth. His mother Mrs. Henry was a vivacious person. She sang all the time especially on the ironing day which was always Tuesday. Between her ironing songs, she used to narrate about Francis Silver. As a young woman, she lived in Melbourne, where she was courted by many young men. Two young men were favoured the most, one from the country whom she married, and another from the suburb whose name was Francis Silver. She had an album of Postcards received from Francis. She showed her son the Postcards on Sundays and narrated stories about Francis Silver. From her accounts, the narrator formed an image of Francis silver. Francis Silver was very handsome, with a straight nose, black moustache with curled up ends, clearly cut lips, white teeth, small ears, definite eyebrows, black wavy hair and an olive skin. He smoked Turkish cigarettes, did not drink, wore a gold ring with a ruby in it, and loved the theatre. Her husband knew of her interest in Francis silver and made a joke of it. Only once, when they had a quarrel, she cried out, “I wish I’d married Francis Silver” and her husband was shocked. But they made up later. She died at the age of forty-seven when the narrator was eighteen. Before she died she asked her son to take the album of Postcards to Francis Silver. She also told him about a pink envelope containing a lock of her hair which she had been about to give Francis Silver She askedher son to destroy it and a not to tell his father

about it. The narrator set about to fulfil his mother’s death bed wish. He found Francis Silver in a picture-framing shop,a totally different man. When the narrator handed him the album of Postcards, he could not even remember to whom he had sent them. The narrator was disillusioned and was happy that his mother was not alive to hear this. He burnt her lock of hair and could not bear to watch it. The story conveys that each phase of a person’s life is prone to vanish. What one lives at present is truth. And so living in the past and spoiling the present life is no good.

Critical Summary

It is difficult to avoid questions of autobiography in Hal Porter's short fiction. Many of his stories are told in the first-person voice and can be traced to incidents in his life experience, whether they are set in his native state of Victoria, Australia, or in places where he has lived or visited, including Rome, London, Athens, Tokyo, or Venice. In a typically mischievous comment Porter remarked in 1969 on his "lack of imagination," comparing his "reportage" to the activities of a "shoplifter" from his past. Nevertheless, he admitted to the techniques of an "illusionist," especially regarding written conversation in fiction: "The reader has to be tricked with a selection of words which *look* like what is supposed to be heard."

Porter's story "Francis Silver" was published in 1962 in the second of his volumes of short stories, *A Bachelor's Children.* Autobiographical accuracy is indicated by the many reported details of Porter's early life. A meticulous collector of the bric-abrac of furniture, songs, architecture, photographs, and idioms in his fiction, Porter felt that "an anachronism mars all." Important though such details are in his short fiction, however, they are not the heart of it.

"Francis Silver" is the story of a middle-aged man—the first-person narrator—whose mother died at the age of 41, when he was only 18 years old. The oldest of seven children, he is the one destined to carry on the memory of his mother and his mother's memories. Indeed, the story turns on the nature of memory, its fragility and its notorious unreliability. The emotional impact conveyed to the reader is of a young man who identifies deeply with his mother but for whom the father is a shadowy, insubstantial figure. The loss of the mother is a crisis for the young man, though it provokes no emotional deathbed scenes in the story. Rather, the story's focus is on a son's capacity to recall his mother's memories and to place them in his own life experience.

Who then is Francis Silver? He is the principal myth figure of the memories of the narrator's mother. Throughout childhood he is the invisible other in his mother's domestic life—the lover whom she left to marry the boy's placid father:

In marrying the country wooer, my father, and darning [his] socks, mother left the suburb for a country town set smack-flat on the wind-combed plans of Gippsland. She also left behind Francis Silver, whom she never saw again, at least not physically. He lived on, remarkably visible, in a special display-case of her memories.

In a separate album, among all the postcards of the prewar period of his mother's young womanhood, those of Francis Silver have "a sacred quality." To the eldest son Silver comes to represent all that his father is not. A picture framer with his own business, he is presented to the son as "artistic and sensitive":

He smoked Turkish cigarettes, did not drink, was popular with other sensitive young men, wore a gold ring with a ruby in it, was very proud of his small feet, and loved the theatre.

Francis Silver thus becomes a talisman of the boy's links with his mother. Silver's image emerges from the boy's hallowed world of domesticity that the mother has animated with her vivacious presence, making even the rituals of ironing the sheets a sacred event. Before she dies, the mother entrusts her son with the task of returning the album of postcards to their sender and of personally burning a lock of her hair in an envelope with Francis Silver's name on it.

Faithful to his mother's wishes, the son has carried out these tasks. What gives a special force to the concluding part of the tightly constructed story, with its artfully contrived flashbacks, is the scope its author leaves for both ironic reflection and feeling. The irony is evoked by the boy's firsthand observation of the myth figure from his childhood when he visits him at his shop. The real Francis Silver is short and fat, and he lisps. Moreover, he has totally forgotten the boy's mother. How can this person be his alternative father? The boy-man's confusion is patent: "Scraps of the past were blowing about my brain like the litter at the end of a perfect picnic." Disillusion is inevitable but is not dwelt upon, for the middle-aged narrator is able to give an ironic perspective to the boy's confrontation between myth and physical reality. Moreover, the rites of initiation have a further twist. The boy prepares to tell a saving lie to his father, for whom Francis Silver has been a necessary imaginative counterpart throughout his married life—the invisible, imagined

rival. In the recognition that inventive lying is necessary, the narrator reconfirms that he is his mother's son.

In this perfectly proportioned story of a rite of passage, the conclusion returns us to the young man's moment of pain. Porter once remarked that he first thought of his conclusions and then wrote toward them. The concluding sentence in the story captures the narrator's momentary perception of the burning of his mother's envelope, with a lock of her hair, to Francis Silver: "It writhed and writhed in an agony I could not bear to watch." He has fulfilled her dying wish. Is he now his own man or forever hers?

Singing My Sister Down

- Margo Lanagan

Margo Lanagan – Biographical Introduction

Margo Lanagan(1960-) is an highly acclaimed Australian author whose career – her earlier work for children and Young Adults, was published only in Australia – seems to be divided into two distinct parts. Under her own name, and writing as Melanie Carter, Mandy McBride, Gilly Lockwood and Belinda Hayes, Lanagan early published a wide range of fiction in the 1990s, including *Wildgame* (**1991**), a Science Fantasy tale in which a live animal manifests through a video screen; *The Tankermen* (**1992**), set partly Underground in Sydney, New South Wales; and *Walking Through Albert* (**1998**), which is a ghost fantasy.

After 2000 or so, though maintaining a primary interest in fantasy (she is a significant twenty-first-century contributor to the field), Lanagan very considerably increased the intensity and maturity of her work, publishing a large number of memorable stories, assembled as *White Time* (coll **2000**), *Black Juice* (coll **2004**; exp **2006**), *Red Spikes* (coll **2006**) and *Cracklescape* (coll **2012**). The publication in the UK and USA of many of these stories immensely, and rather suddenly, broadened her reputation as an author of unremittingly focused tales whose protagonists – usually adolescents in extremis – do not necessarily flourish from their immersion in the very being of the world. In this sense, Lanagan is a hard writer, but one who amply rewards strict attention. An

overall sense in internally undated stories that Disaster and/or Holocaust is imminent (or has already been inflicted) gives much of her work an sf tonality: one example is the implied Ruined Earth setting of "Singing My Sister Down" (in *Black Juice*, coll **2004**), whose portrayal of public execution by tar-pit as a family occasion has something of the haunting quality of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" (26 June 1948 *The New Yorker*); the tale later became the title story of *Singing My Sister Down and Other Stories* (coll **2017**), which assembles early and later work.

Lanagan's most ambitious novel to date, *Tender Morsels* (**2008**), which shared a World Fantasy Award in 2009, is a dark Young Adult fantasy, as is *Sea Hearts* (in *X6: A Novellanthology*, anth **2009**, ed Keith Stevenson, as "Sea-Hearts"; exp **2012**; vt *The Brides of Rollrock Island* **2012**), a complex nest of narratives circling around Scottish selkie legends.

Singing My Sister Down

“Singing My Sister Down” is a horror short story by Australian author Margo Lanagan. Find it in Lanagan’s collection *Black Juice*, published by Allen and Unwin. *Black Juice* was published in 2004**,** but “Singing My Sister Down” has proven especially resonant with readers, anthologised numerous times since. “Singing My Sister Down” is now a modern Australian short story classic.

The story is narrated from the point of view of a brother, who is charged with the task of playing music at his sister’s murder. We don’t know how much time has elapsed between the event and his retelling of it. He could be recounting the story many years into the future, or it might have just happened. He appears to be retelling the story as a way of understanding it. This is generally the case for storyteller narrators. All through the ‘ceremony’ he knew something was off, but was powerless to stop any of it.

“Singing My Sister Down” is the story of a community rather than of an individual. The moral s of this community: Their traditions include abject cruelty. The Shortcoming of each of its inhabitants: They cannot see a way out of this ritual. This is what they know. They don’t think to question it.

Desire

This is where “Singing My Sister Down” stands out over many other types of horror stories, some of which I don’t find scary at all. There is no Desire to rescue this girl from the tar pit. (Not from the characters within the setting, that is.)

This defies our expectation of narrative in general. The vast majority of stories with a similar setting would take a different path. The twentieth century taught us to expect men rushing in to save a girl from sinking into quicksand.

But here, that hero trope is subverted. NO ONE is coming to rescue this girl. As reader, I feel this really frustrating glass wall between myself and the setting. There’s no way I can dive into the book and do something. Please, won’t somebody *do* something?

The desire of the family is to see Ikky accept her punishment of slow and sadistic death, and to make this murder (coded by the characters as fair and just punishment) follow the community’s customs around death, because they only get one chance to say goodbye.

The Opposition that exists in “Singing My Sister Down” is not so much between the characters themselves. Technically, there is an opposition between Ikky and the rest of her community, because presumably she’d rather not be killed in this fashion. She has spent the recent days ‘sulking’ — understatement of the story.

Yet Ikky is grimly accepting of her punishment, indoctrinated by a culture which says this is the way things go. There is some mild opposition between Ikky and the aunt, who cannot face the tar-pit ceremony, but because the aunt remains off the page, this is a soft oppositional web.

There has been a big Battle which took place off the page — the axe fight in which Ikky killed someone. Off-the-page opponents can be scary too.

Regarding the hints about how Ikky got here: She was a newlywed. She killed someone with an axe. I extrapolate that she killed her new husband with an axe. Based on statistics around women who murder men, there was very likely a self-defence element at the base of Ikky’s crime.

In the 20 per cent of murders committed by women, over two-thirds were women killing men who had been abusing them. This is a *horrifically* soft Opposition in this story, given

the life-and-death situation. This in itself is a subversion. We expect people (and characters) to fight tooth and nail to save their own lives.

I've watched enough true crime shows to know that people usually do fight to the death, and will injure themselves severely in the hope of saving their own lives. Survival instinct kicks in. Another thing I've learned from a true crime show: Prisoners on death row don't eat their last meals. Prison guards ask what they'd like and do an excellent job of preparing the meals. They know the prisoners won't touch it, then they'll eat it themselves. This was mentioned in a documentary about a serial killer — presumed psychopathic. This guy stood out from all the other (probably psychopathic) prisoners facing imminent execution in America because he indeed ate his last meal, and seemed to enjoy it. Evidence of his lack of humanity. (I figure this is why baddies so often eat apples and sandwiches after committing horrific crimes in stories. Normal people couldn't eat a thing at a time like that. In fact we'd do the opposite of eat — we'd throw up.)

Ikky in "Singing My Sister Down" eats her last meal of crab meat as she sinks into the tar pit. I don't believe this is realistic, but it is horrific. And mimesis is over-rated — I believe there is a symbolic reason for the crab meat, and also for her eating it.

But in "Singing My Sister Down", is there any symbolic significance regarding the crab meat? I personally find crabs creepy. They're like the huntsman spiders of the sea. They have too many legs. They walk sideways. Their eyes are entirely black and stick up on stalks. There is nothing cute about a crab. Worst of all are the pinchers. Even a cooked crab gives me the willies.

Actually there is one thing worse than crabs on the beach. And that's live crabs dropped alive into boiling water. I have no empathy for a crab walking along the beach, but as soon as a chef throws a crustacean into water, suddenly I'm horrified.

Time and again, throughout history, the same pattern happens: Studies eventually show that animals apart from humans feel far more than we thought they did. Same with crabs.

There is no plan to rescue Ikky. The Plan is to carry out the tar-pit sinking in customary fashion. The bulk of the detail in "Singing My Sister Down" is around the rituals, and a blow-by-blow description of the sinking.

The narrator might easily be describing a wedding, which also involves music and flower wreaths. Indeed, there has recently been a wedding.

'Well, this party's going to be almost as good, 'cause it's got children. And look what else!' And she reached for the next ice-basket.

This juxtaposition evokes unease in the reader. Births, deaths, marriages… all completely different things… all involve similar ritual.

Big Struggle

We know what the climax is going to be, which is why it's so horrible. It's one thing to be almost 'cuddled' warmly by the tar. It's another thing to suffocate in the damn stuff.

It is nightfall before this happens. Because the story is narrated by the brother onlooker, his memory of the exact moment is clouded. '… and **they tell me** I made an awful noise…' The setting seems to come alive — setting becomes a character in its own right with the flowers 'nodding in the lamplight'. The setting itself has already been established as the main opposition (the cultural milieu rather than, say, weather elements a la a disaster story). So an 'aliveness' is entirely appropriate at this point.

ANAGNORISIS

If we were expecting an ending with a sense of hope, this story lets us down. No one steps in to save this young woman. The narrator says finally that he 'will never understand'. He experiences no Anagnorisis, at least not the kind we hope he will have — that this was a terrible thing that happened. What if he did realise that? What if he realised the injustice of it? It's not in his best interests to think too hard about this ritual, otherwise he might spend the rest of his life berating himself for failing to step in and save Ikky.

By dashing our expectations, the reader may instead experience the revelation — that when communities come together, humans are capable of the most heinous acts. But we know that already, perhaps.

There is nothing in this story that hasn't happened somewhere at some point in human history. The details may be different, but during **the European witch craze**, women (and

across Europe, plenty of men) were burned alive with the consent of entire communities. We have far more recent examples, most notably from WW2, but into the present.

DEATH

Characters in stories die frequently. Sometimes it's no more than a plot feature. In other stories, death becomes thematically significant. This is one of those stories.

The sinking itself takes place over a day, thereabouts. Symbolically, stories which take place over 24 hours tend to be a compressed insight into a single human lifespan. This is how Ikky can eat. We all eat to stay alive, all the while knowing we're still going to die.

More on that, then. At the beginning of this story, Ikky, her family and her entire community knows she is going to die. Slowly. Horrifyingly slowly. But isn't that the case for all of us? We all know that we ourselves are going to die. Not today, probably, but someday. *Life itself* is a horrifyingly slow death.

We don't know this as children. Even after learning everybody dies, children have difficulty with the concept that they themselves will one day be dead. We can't imagine not existing. We have equal difficulty imagining not being born. If you have kids, they've probably asked you: "Where was I when I wasn't born?"

Then we hit the teen years, or perhaps the 20s, and the concept of death really sinks in. (Heh.) Heidegger called this part of human development Being-toward-death: The 'moment' (more likely an extended period) in which we come to understand that we ourselves will die — that from the point of conception we've all begun the journey towards death.

Marketing reasons aside, this aspect, even more than the age of the characters, is perhaps what makes "Singing My Sister Down" a genuinely young adult story.

New Situation

Since the narrator has learned nothing, this tradition of tar-pit murders will continue inside the setting.

But I believe this narrator is wilfully avoiding his Anagnorisis — that he could've done something to stop it.

Wilful ignorance is another fascinating aspect of being human, and “Singing My Sister Down” could be used as a deep-dive into that.

Instead, let’s go nitty-gritty.
Within each story, Margo Lanagan has created a world we can recognise – the world of human nature and human flaws, not a physical world. It is lyrical and full of rich language and imagery that makes each read compelling, something that I didn’t want to set aside. It is another book that can be devoured or savoured, and I tried to do both, wanting to know how each story ended, yet not wanting to finish it too quickly.

UNIT-IV: PLAYS

The Cake Man

- **Robert Merritt**

Robert Merritt: Introduction

Robert Merritt was well known to the Halifax community both as the teacher of playwriting in the Theatre Department at Dalhousie University, and as the film critic for CBC’s Information Morning. In this latter role, he provoked strong audience reactions with his attacks on Hollywood mediocrity and his promotion of daring, independent work. He is still remembered for the acuteness of his dissection of pretentious filmmaking and the directness of his statements. Describing the classic Warren Beatty/Dustin Hoffman debacle Ishtar, for instance, Robert said that it was a pity that the film wasn’t named Tishtar, because then “if you spelled it backwards, it would almost write its own review.”

At Dalhousie, he inspired a generation of playwriting students to challenge the conventions of mainstream theatre and to find their own individual voices. He was consistently successful in finding the best qualities in his students’ work and in helping them develop it. His generosity with his students was legendary, and he built lasting friendships with many of them. Most of all, he taught the importance of craft and vision, and launched a large number of today’s working playwrights.

Robert died in 1999, five years after he had taken early retirement from the university in order to pursue his own passions of painting and gardening. He took great pleasure in both these pursuits, and in his collection of prewar electric trains. But the theatre was

always on his mind, and he never stopped encouraging his former students and his colleagues to make their work better and braver both on and off the stage.

The Cake Man

The Cake Man is about the mission experience for Indigenous Australians, and the indignity, injustice and often outright exploitation that came from being "protected" by white Australians with little knowledge and less interest in the traditional culture their arrival had near-fatally disrupted.

The play is in three parts. The first section of the first act is a short, symbolic re-enactment of colonial settlement, with an Aboriginal Man, Woman and Child being invaded by a Priest (carrying a bible), a Civilian (carrying a bag of trinkets) and a Soldier (carrying a gun). It introduces the theme of cake that runs throughout the action – the cake that rewards and degrades in equal measure – and the setting for the rest of the story: a rural mission.

The second part of the act is a direct-address monologue by a man who at first glance seems to be the central character. Sweet William is "[an] Australian Aborigine … made in England", and in a long, inebriated speech he holds forth on life, wife and days spent knocking on doors "mak[ing] enquiry, to discover if possible what is it I have that you now want".

As he talks, Sweet William drinks, and the question of whether alcohol has unmanned him, or being unmanned has led him to alcohol, hovers over the remainder of the play like a dark cloud.

Acts 2 and 3 show life on the Mission. Ruby, Sweet William's wife, and Pumpkinhead, his young son, live in a fibro shack with the barest of amenities. In a cot is Ruby's new baby, suffering eye sores that have to be regularly washed if they aren't to gum shut her lids. Ruby is powerful figure. George Ogilvie, who directed the premiere of the play, commented:

> *In rehearsal I had to stress the fact that the role of Sweet William should not be softened with sympathy; because the naturalism of the play is very important. The man's hopelessness is apparent, particularly in the scenes with his wife, who grew … to become the central focus… The play [deals] with Ruby's problems of a drunken husband and an errant son, and Pumpkinhead's revelation at the end: that his father has finally made a decision. In a sense the father becomes a sacrifice. Pumpkinhead is to be the man who will last the distance.*

Ogilvie is right about The Cake Man's style, which is a beautifully nuanced realism. The dialogue exchanges between the family – the love and loss freighting Sweet William and Ruby's relationship, the anger and need in Sweet William and Pumpkinhead's – are a masterly evocation of mood and locale. The grinding poverty and emotional paralysis of the mission are perfectly rendered, a capturing not so much of the outward detail, as the inner truth, of racial subjugation.

The play breathes with the quality of lived experience, reflecting the fact that Merritt himself grew up on the Erambie Mission at Cowra , and that Pumpkinhead, all elbows and outrage, is a lot like the boy he once was.

Half-Jesus, half-Aboriginal

But there is another dimension to the play, poetic and subtle. It draws its intensity from two sources: Christian imagery and Dreamtime stories. In the minds of Merritt's characters these blend into strange hybrid symbols – and into the tale of the Cake Man, half-Jesus, half-Aboriginal spirit.

Here's Ruby, in the middle of the play, recounting the story to Pumpkinhead, at his request, for the umpteenth time:

> *Ruby: Long time ago, when Dreamtime's ending, Jesus, he sent the Cake Man over to the sea to find the Kuri children. And he come…*
>
> *Pumpkinhead: With the cake. With the cake Jesus put to carry in his heart. Plenty!*
>
> *Ruby: He come, with the cake, the cake that was love from Jesus, and he's lookin' round then for good children to love and give cake to…*
>
> *Pumpkinhead: Only the bad men stuck a stick in Cake Man's eyes!*
>
> *Ruby: That's the truth, the bad men, the wicked men done that …*
>
> *Pumpkinhead: And then the Cake Man lose his way, and can't see because his eyes is blind, and he can't see the Kuri boys, only the gubba kids he see ever since them bad men done that! Cake Man's a blind man …*
>
> *Ruby: Yes, and all the time since then, the Cake Man been walkin' around the bush lookin' for something' he's forgot about what it was …*
>
> *Pumpkinhead: But he still got all the cakes, and we gotta find him and tell him!*

Ruby: He still got all the cakes, that's right, but he don't know any more about who Jesus told him to give 'em to …

Pumpkinhead: He forgot! He don't even know he is the Cake Man! His eyes gone blind, and he forgot even who is s'posed to give the cakes to, and he forgot about havin' to do it. He don' know who he is… gotta tell him!

Ruby: Pumpkinhead, who's tellin this story? [Pause] Well then, what we got to do, we got to wait for him, got to keep lookin', till we see him there, and then we tell him about the cakes that Jesus sent to Kuri children, make him know himself, remember he is the Cake Man …

Pumpkinhead: Got to stick him in the heart with a spear! Story says that… a spear!

Ruby: Yes, story says that, but I don' know about that part.

Pumpkinhead: Yeah! That's the best part, Mum! [Relishing the idea] When the Kuri boy finds the Cake Man, then he got stick a spear the Cake Man's heart, right in his heart, and then the Cake Man remembers, and he knows who he is, that he's the Cake Man Jesus sent one time…

Ruby: Well, that's the story … my Daddy told me … yes, it is.

Symbols of integration, separation, belonging and escape recur again and again in Merritt's play, like soft, sombre echoes. Sweet William returns from a half-hearted exercise looking for work, to fall asleep, drunk, in the one chair in the house.

Ruby forgives him, but can he forgive himself? Pumpkinhead won't even look at his father. His fury at the squalid conditions in which they are compelled to live, and Sweet William's inability to do anything about them, irradiates the action.

Pumpkinhead has been stealing coal, and this prompts some interaction with the white characters in the play, who are referred to by generic titles: Mission Manager; Inspector; and Civilian. It is from the last that Pumpkinhead has been pilfering fuel to keep warm through the long, bitter, winter nights.

Catching the boy in the act one day, but unable to lay a hand on him, Civilian is incensed, and the darkest moments in the play are the racist diatribes that come of his mouth about the "blasted lot of delinquent black baby-bushrangers". Despite the sickening content, the writing is never bombastic. It has the ring of truth about it.

Sweet William's search for reality

When the Inspector and Mission Manager bring Civilian to the family's shack, however, the story takes an unexpected turn. Civilian sees Ruby's baby in her cot, and runs away in shock. Next day, when Pumpkinhead goes to return the coal he stole – under Ruby's stern instructions, now she knows where it really comes from – he finds "a large deep box filled with goodies".

Civilian appears, and boy and man lug the box back to the Mission, out of which comes a big cake. To Pumpkinhead, Civilian is now the Cake Man, and the stage is suddenly filled with Indigenous children embracing him and screaming in delight.

It is a stunning reversal and the effect is to complicate the drama without lessening the force of its political message. It is as if the play has expanded, and we are suddenly in a world of larger meaning. Ruby, Sweet William and Pumpkinhead acquire a biblical aura: the Original Family. Civilian – though not interestingly the Inspector or Mission Manager – becomes capable of regret and remorse. And if his giving cannot replace what was taken in the first place, it takes the drama to a new spiritual level nevertheless.

Sweet William decides to leave for Sydney. The son can now look at the father with respect, and though Ruby and her husband know that ultimately what awaits him is more degradation (he's unfairly arrested the moment he arrives), the decision is all. Pumpkinhead sees that positive action is possible.

The Currency Press publication of The Cake Man is a most useful document, containing as it does a memoir by Mervyn Rutherford, a policeman at the Erambie Aboriginal Mission, and a history of the town of Cowra. It also contains a quote from Nugget Coombs who, under the government of Gough Whitlam, was to help dismantle the Mission system. Coombs writes of going out into the Western Australian desert with a group of Aboriginal elders.

> *As the day progressed there was an obvious increase in statur … in these men. We went out that night and sat is a circle in the sand with two or three fires between us and sang the songs of the cycle … I sat amongst them, putting my hand on the hand of the man next to me, trying by moving with him to feel the complex rhythm of the song. The night was dark, there was no moon, the only light being from the stars and the fires. For me, this was one of the most moving, aesthetic and emotional experiences of my life. In the circle I realised that these people, whom I*

had presumed to think of as derelicts, had dignity and authority backed by tradition which ran back through time infinitely beyond that which our own could claim.

Or, as Sweet William puts it in the Epilogue to The Cake Man: "Two realities. [Pause]. And I've lost one. [Pause]. But I want it back … I need it back. [Pause]. Not yours … mine."

Indigenous Identity through Hybridity and Humor:
A Postcolonial Reading of Robert Merritt's *The Cake Man*

Introducation

Compared with any other stage in their history, today Australians are more concerned with their own past. This preoccupation with the past has occurred in two paradoxical dimensions: first the honouring of the country's history, and second an increasingly sense of guilt and blame over their ancestors' treatment of Black Australians. Reactions to the latter have also occurred in two paradoxical ways. Some identify and also commiserate with this feeling of guilty responsibility, while others contend that Aborigines should become more tolerant and forgiving of past injustices. The latter adopted stance has piqued many oppressed native minority groups in Australia, among which Aboriginal writers stand out. These writers, who believe they ought not to shy away from probing the past, have heeded Kevin Gilbert who says "Yet, cut off a man's leg, kill his mother, rape his land, psychologically attack and keep him in a powerless position each day – does it not live on in the mind of the victim? Does it not continue to scar and affect the thinking? Deny it, but it still exists." (Shoemaker 128) Therefore, Aboriginal Austra lian Literature is now extremely preoccupied with the theme of past injustice and also with an emphasis upon the concept of a revered, self-sufficient, Aboriginal history.

In this contemporary movement, a prominent playwright stands out whose work has become the classics of the genre: Robert Merritt with The Cake Man. In this play, Merritt depicts the Aboriginal past, colonialism and its aftermaths on the lives of his characters in contemporary Australia. To investigate the resisting nature of this play, the intended research aims at applying Postcolonial method of reading on Merritt's play in order to investigate its politics of postcoloniality. Therefore, the central research problem is to investigate what antivolonial strategies the playwright adopts to communicate the silenced voice of his fellow aboriginal race. To answer it, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha's ideas can contribute to a better understanding of the play. Also, it is explored to what extent the playwright deviates from Aboriginal conventions to read an equilibrium for black/white binary. It is remarkable that the historical air of Merritt's play "is established by its locale and action far more than by its dialogue and represents a strong indictment

of the New South Wales Aboriginal reserves (popularly called missions) as they were thirty years ago." (Shoemaker 132). While in many of Aboriginal writers' drama, subalterns are made to speak in their native language and Aboriginal music and traditions are revived, Merritt's drama lacks revival of such traditions and strikingly in some scenes the subalterns are either dumbfounded or dead. Such a choice of language seems to be contributing to the techniques he uses in his play. To investigate such issues, this research adopts European and Aboriginal postcolonial key terms like "colonial negotiations," "hybridity," "figurative emasculation," and "humor."

The Colonial Negotiation

Like other genres in Black Australian literature, Aboriginal plays explore such features of Aboriginality as endurance, pride, protest, poetry, sorrow, anger and humour in their dramatized stories. Aboriginality is indispensible with postcolonial struggles. It is the legacy of traditional Black Australian culture. It indicates movement towards the future while preserving the pride and poise of the past. It is counter-cultural in European terms: a response to the oppression of White Australian society. This may result in an Aboriginal self-image which has the latent power of being highly recalcitrant and against the law. Robert Merritt talked about this alternative way of searching for identity in the following sentences:

> It suits society's purpose to give government mandates to build filthy institutions that keep Aborigines in prison. If you want an identity today … if you're sick you'll get a band-aid, and you're an Aborigine – and everyone knows about ya. And if you're a drunk, or if you're a crook, you'll get a two-bob lawyer that's been out of law school for five years. You've got an identity. If you want to be a normal person there's no incentive in life whatsoever for ya … To break the law now – it's a substitute initiation. (Qtd. in Shoemaker 232)

Therefore, Aboriginality is both an inheritance from Black Australian past and a direct, sometimes vehement response to the Black Australian present. Such anti-colonial stance is easily visible in the structure of Merritt's The Cake Man. Temporally, the play depicts both the past and the present and its stress on Black Australian history is a vital constituent of the conception of Aboriginality. In the first scene of the play, readers are confronted with the process of colonization inflicted on an Aboriginal family, consisting of a man, a woman, and their son. In the stage direction, Merritt depicts how serenity governs in their surrounding: "Earth, water, sky: nature at ease." The three Aboriginal

characters hunt, play, and laugh and finally "All three embrace. They sit contentedly together, requiring no more" (5). But, by the entrance of colonial agents, this serenity is shattered. "Staring in alarm" (5), the Aboriginal family sees a priest, a soldier, and a civilian approaching them. This confrontation is something that is elaborated all through the first act. Such a situation is what makes Homi Bhabha's ideas different from Edward Said's. Bhabha contends that Said's analysis of the colonial encounter is unidirectional: it only sees colonial authority as taking place from the colonizer to the colonized. Said's contention also puts forward that the iden tities of colonizer and colonized are fixed and unchanging. Bhabha believes that colonial discourse is in fact conflictual, ambivalent, and full of contradictions. The Contradictory psychic relationships between the colonizer and colonized – moving, for Bhabha, between fear and desire for the Other – precludes any fixed, unchanging identities for the colonizer and the colonized. The connection between the two is one of negotiation and transaction, and not a unidirectional will to power as Said suggests (Nayar 27). In The Cake Man, this propensity for negotiation is easily noticeable in the first encounter between the priest and the Aboriginal family:

> PRIST: Greetings! And God's blessing. I bring you good news! Here it is my child, [offering the Bible] for you and little family. And this also I bring to you [wagging the cross] and to your people. The gift of love. The promise of salvation. Yours. (6)

In response, the Aboriginal man shields his family and does not answer. This resistance makes the priest and his associates change their discourse to find a way to attain their goal, as indicated in the stage direction: [They regard the ABORIGINES thoughtfully. The ABORIGINES regard them fearfully.]. While the colonial agents are angry with the ignorance of the man, once again the negotiation between the two happens:

> CIVILIAN: Here, I'll reach them with my pretties. [He steps forward, reaching in his bag to bring forth bright beads, ribbons, and so on. He offers them in a coaxing way to the MAN, WOMAN, and BOY. They step back from his pretties.] (7)

The civilian acts as a second person after the priest who tries to further the colonial mission through negotiations. Like the priest, the civilian makes an attempt to attract the Aboriginal family through "his pretties." By offering things "in a coaxing way," he proves himself to be against unidirectional strategies. But, again due to the resistance of the colonized, the colonial negotiation fails. As their last option, the colonial agents are compelled to have recourse to force, a fact that makes the priest express his regret:

> PRIEST: Alas! I have failed.
>
> CIVILIAN: Don't blame yourself, now.

SOLDIER: Aren't the two of us here, Father, both witnesses to your patience?

PRIEST: Bless you, bless you both. (7)

What is obvious in these lines is the religious justification of the colonial agents. We can easily notice how the priest uses religious discourse when the negotiation fails and how has to use it in his recourse to unidirectional strategy. The religious discourse in the play has always been an indispensible target in Aboriginal postcolonial literature. Anticolonial writers like Merritt believe that Christianity did not bring them the peace it claimed. Moreover, as Wheeler points out, they argue that "The imposition of a foreign religious system on Indigenous people is meant to destabilize their cultural bonds and shake the trust in their identity and culture" (131). This idea was best encapsulated in a poem by Oodgeroo Noonuccal, the national Aboriginal poet, entitled The Dispossessed:

Peace was yours, Australian man, with tribal laws you made,
Till white colonials stole your peace with rape and murder raid;

They brought you Bibles and disease, the liquor and the gun:
With Christian culture such as these the white command was won.
A dying race you linger on, degraded and oppressed,
Outcasts in your own native land, you are the dispossessed. (Noonuccal 95)

Noonuccal's poem is an explicit expression of the hardships endured by the Aborigines. As Noonuccal points out, they include territorial, religious, and cultural. Such hardships are also reflected in the play. The "murder" mentioned in Oodgeroo's poem befalls finally on the Aboriginal man in The Cake Man, when as the colonizer's final solution "The SOLDIER shoots the MAN dead." Then, when the soldier tries to take the Aboriginal man's family by force, the colonial negotiation once again becomes the first priority:

SOLDIER: Leave it to me, Father. [He starts a purposeful move.]

PRIEST: No, let me try again. [Wheedling] Come? Will you not come now out of darkness into the light? No? (9)

Priest's assertion, "let me try again," and the stage direction, "Wheedling" again indicate the priority of negotiation in the play. This is supported by the fact that whenever a force (or unidirectional strategy) is to be applied by the soldier, its permission should be given by the priest as the symbol of negotiation, like this extract when the soldier says "Leave it to me, Father." The colonial negotiation becomes more manifest, when after believing that the woman and the boy don't understand him, the priest expresses his inner dialogue:

PRIEST: [Shaking his head, smiling sadly] Oh, you poor savage devils, you don't understand, do you? (9)

The priest's inner dialogue shows that his "wheedling" is not out of compassion; rather it is solely for the sake of negotiation. At last, after many arguments of force and negotiations among the three colonial agents, the Aboriginal family consents to go with them. This happens when the woman takes the Bible offered by the priest:

PRIEST: There, take it and keep it always. Keep it, and from it learn wisdom, and faith, and love. [Together with the SOLDIER, he starts to shepherd the WOMAN and the BOY off the stage.] Come... don't be frightened. Put your trust in us. we're going to make you our own. (11)

The colonizing statement "we're going to make you our own" does not, however, become true of the Aboriginal man, who is left on the stage. After that they exit, "the Man opens his eyes and gets groggily on his feet", symbolically signifying his anticolonial mission, as well as the endurance of the Aboriginal entity and culture.

Sweat William as a Typical Aborigine

All through the play, the surviving Aboriginal man, who in the second act is called Sweat William, shows signs of resistance to the colonial hegemony. The fact that he stood upon his feet after being shot to death can indicate his presence as a symbol of resistance. William shows his resistance in many ways: the songs she chooses for reciting, the way he regards colonial agents, and the way he talks about colonial missionaries and religion. William's initial presence after being shot is accompanied by singing a song. In the second act, before he enters the house, William sings an Aboriginal song off stage:

SWEET WILLIAM: Ohhhh, Ned Kelley was born in a ramshackle hut,
He battled since he was a kid.
He grew up with bad men and duffers and thieves,
And learned all the things that they did. (24)

What he sings about is an Australian legendary figure, or, according to Bea Brear in Green Left Weekly, what some regard as Australia's equivalent of Robin Hood. By singing this song, Sweet William shows himself in favor of his past heritage and culture, and uses this favor as a reaction to the dominant ideologies of his society. In postcolonial studies it is believed that colonial cultures and nations must resist the effect of European humanism "if they are to foster an independence of mind that can lead to the revival of

old, or the creation of new, local cultures" (Hawley and Nelson 238). Similarly, William's postcolonial stance is in fact an attempt to revive his true identity, an identity which has been deterred by Christian hegemony in the play.

In other scenes, there are other instances of the revival of Aboriginal cultures by William. His allusion to the bushrangers and Jimmy Governor, Australian anticolonial people, reminds the audience of the Aboriginal identity. These allusions, however, torments William since he believes that they are narrated to point out his inaction:

> WILLIAM: Pumpkinhead... he don't want no stories about the Kuri bushrangers. not 'cause he likes me tellin' him stories, Rube. No, that boy he makes me tell about when the Kuris were brave, and he's only meanin' to make me know about myself.
> RUBY: What?
> WILLIAM: You know what, Rube... about me, I ain't never stuck up no white man, and I ain't done not one thing in my whole life is brave. All my life, all I ever done was to be a jacky-boy. (34)

William's concern with his son, Pumpkinhead, may signify the playwright's concern with future generations of Australian children. William is afraid that since he is a bad model for his son, and since he himself is not a true follower of Aboriginal heroes, it may negatively affect his son, or future Aboriginal generations. All through the play, William's revival of Aboriginal culture and regret for inaction is concomitant with a rejection of colonial hegemony. While confiding the audience at the end of the first act, Sweet William decries against the Christian hegemony in his society, which is utterly foreign to him:

> Rube, my missus, she's always thankin' Christ for everythin'… anythin'… nothin'. Her an' that fuckin' book. [With a laugh] She heard me say that, I'd be in strife. Christian she is, my old lady, a mission Chrishyun, the worst kind. (12)

The woman he calls Rube is in fact his wife who in the second act has found a name, since, as stage direction satirically puts it, she is "now civilized" (18). As Sweet William's foil, Rube has become a Christian subject and like the priest plays the role of a missionary. This ideological conflict between the wife and husband is a prominent feature throughout the play. As its postcolonial politics, The Cake Man is deliberately anti-missionary and, thus, against forced conversion. To Merritt's understanding, the Church has bolstered the efforts of government to remove all the authority of Aboriginal men: together the two have, in figurative terms, emasculated them (Shoemaker 135). This is highly evident in

the opening of the second act where their son, Pumpkinhead, is reluctant to regard Sweet William as his father:

> PUMPKINHEAD: Um. Pub shut down. Sweet William comin' home.
> RUBY: Don' call your father that, I tol' you!
> PUMPKINHEAD: Your husban' be home soon then.
> RUBY: [angrily] You call your father your father. [More angrily as he ignores her] You hear me, you cheeky little bugger. (20)

This extract shows how the image of father has been destroyed as a result of colonial emasculation of Aborigines in Australian society. In a society where the economic pillar of family, father, is marginalized and becomes poor, he loses his paternal stance in the eyes of his family. This colonial policy is felt by Sweet William when he laments:

> But, Rube, there ain't nothin' now I know to do. Just hopeless, and no price I can pay because there ain't no price I've got to give that anyone wants. I've got nothing they want!

William's comment is a vitally historical one. It is Ruby in the role of the wife and mother that literally holds the family together – not her husband. Her greater strength of purpose is as a result of her religious devotion; Christianity is a crucial support or consolation. But, according to Merritt, this analysis is wrong, for he believes that the Bible commands her to be passive – to receive God's lot obediently – and this ensures that she will never forsake the mission system. Merritt feels very powerfully that Christianity has been:

> the most destructive force that has ever hit the Aboriginal people. And, to be quite truthful – I mean it's sad to say this –… I think that if religion has enabled them to survive for 200 years they probably would have been better off … being killed, wiped out, annihilated … You can't even say it's Christian charity; it's a sick interpretation of a sad political philosophy. (qtd. in Shoemaker 135)

As the play shows, Merritt's criticism of religious colonization is dramatized in Sweet William's life. On the other hand, the play the problems of a family whose father resists colonial hegemony and whose mother embraces. Considering the extravagantly religious obedience of Ruby and William's idea of going to Sydney as a salvation, Shoemaker calls The Cake Man a play built upon often "bitter illusions" (Goetzfridt 282). While Ruby's religious commitment does give her the power to keep her family together in spite of the despondence and near-alcoholism of her husband, it also commands her to receive the

will of God without question. This manifests itself in the play when Sweet William actively challenges Ruby's passivity:

> WILLIAM: Huh. You prayin' again, Rube? RUBY: Now don't you go talking like that, Sweet William. That's why we never have no luck all the time. Do you good, to read this book, that's where I get my strength from in every day, truly is.
> WILLIAM: Couldn' do me no more good than a smoke would right now, Rube. Or a little drink. RUBY: Don't want you talkin' like that in the presence of this here good book, Sweet William! (28) Since Sweet William proves to be more obstinate, Ruby becomes active in defending what has made her passive. In fact, these two figures become symbols of anti- and pro-colonialism in the play:
> WILLIAM: Rube, I'm sick of hearin' you tell the kids damn stories that ain't never comin' true. All about Jesus loves us, and how one day we're gonna find the Cake Man... RUBY: Jesus is true. Cake Man is true. Shut up.
> WILLIAM: Ah, Rube... ain't no Jesus, ain't no man who... They just stories. RUBY: Shut your wicked mouth, Sweet William! (33)

These dialogues demonstrate the extent of Ruby's subservience to a religion which is at the service of a colonial power. Ruby has become so affected by colonialism and so biased that she has lost her power of reasoning. Commenting on this aspect of Ruby, John Newfong's states that "she is only strong because she believes more devoutly in her own fantasy. So whether you call that strength or an illusion of strength, I don't know. Sweet William at least believes in his own potential. And Ruby, because of her Christian beliefs, undermines his beliefs in himself because she doesn't dare believe in herself" (qtd. in Shoemaker 242). Newfong's analysis can best be shown in the play when William cannot get a strong confirmation of Ruby in going to Sydney:

> BUBY: Sweet William, you have to think about what you want. got to decide, and you don't ask no woman of yours what you gonna do, but you can tell me what you gonna do and I'll know that's right and you gotta do it and I know you will do.
> WILLIAM: You really think that, Rube? You do?
> RUBY: I tell you so.
> WILLIAM: Ah, Rube, you tell me so. [Wryly] But you don't tell me what you know, about how you feel, I never heard you tell the truth about me yet.
> RUBY: Yes you just did.
> WILLIAM: I just heard you tell what a good woman you are, Rube. pretendin' I'm not no good. [Pause.] RUBY: You sayin' I told a lie, Sweet William?

WILLIAM: Just a white lie. But I know Rube. (33)

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The dilemma between the couple runs through the play. In spite of all these, Sweet William also lives his life in a fantasy world. As his attempt to break with his marginalized situation, he manages to assure himself and, importantly, his son Pumpkinhead, that his chief decisive action of moving to Sydney will be the salvation of the family:

> Rube, I'll just go down to that Sydney, I'm gonna be lucky and get a job and find somewhere that's gonna be ours, and soon buy a big red house like Pumpkinhead wants and clothes and a 'lectric iron for you, 'lectric light, too, and plenty of tucker for the kids that we could buy out of my good job I'll get. I can work, Rube, you know I can. Job, that's all it needs. (32-33)

This vision is a significant one: not only is it uttered in Western, materialistic terms (which shows the degree of Sweet William's hybridity) but Merritt makes it clear that the character has no opportunity to fulfill his dream. As a result of no mistake of his own,

William is arrested because he is standing near a pub door when the police come to suppress a brawl. According to Brian Syron, who has directed and acted in a number of productions of The Cake Man, what is important is not the arrest of the father but the instilling of hope and pride in the son. In his view, the key is Sweet William's decision to try and break out of the institutionalised degradation of the mission system: "The sons of the father will be perceptive even if the father is not" (qtd. in Shoemaker 259).

Pumpkinhead is to be the expectation and the tool of change for the future. Newfong adds that Sweet William's success was not just a secondhand one, but principally consisted in his action to break with what he terms the "black matriarchy", which embedded by colonialism had resulted in his helplessness. As he puts it:

> When one society is dominated by another society and the dominating matrix of society is male-dominated, the men of the dominated society will be emasculated. And it's almost a subconscious thing, you see. You notice that in The Cake Man the mission superintendent and Inspector … defer to Ruby – this is to further undermine William's standing, simply by not addressing themselves to him. And this is what is always done. (qtd. in Shoemaker 260)

While it is true for him to maintain the way in which sexism can strengthen racism, his suggestion that the only actual Black Australian spokespeople are males is challenged by the accomplishments of several Aboriginal women. It is questionable that the actual causes of the fragile self-image of Aboriginal men like Sweet William are that he has been deterred as a father from providing for his wife and children by unemployment, the institutional prejudice of Aboriginal reserve managers and the bias of White Australians.

Hybridity and Cultural Negotiation

As expounded in the second chapter, Bhabha in his The Location of Culture emphasizes that cultures are hybrid, simply referring to "the mixedness, or even 'impurity' of cultures – so long as we don't imagine that any culture is really pure" (Huddart 6). This term refers to an original mixedness within every form of identity. Concerning cultural identities, "hybridity refers to the fact that cultures are not discreet phenomena; instead, they are always in contact with one another, and this contact leads to cultural mixed-ness" (Huddart 7). Considering this aspect of his culture, Sweet William expresses his regret for the loss of his true identity in his soliloquy at the end of the first act when his family and the colonizers exit:

MAN: Uh, who you? [Grinning craftily] hey, listen, you wanna buy a boomerang? [He pulls one from under his coat and holds it up for audience inspection] Good one, this is. [Turning it over, reading the back of it] Made in Japan [with a grin] by our trading allies. [Tossing the boomerang off the stage] (12)

The fact that a traditional tool of Aborigines, boomerang, is made in Japan indicate the state of hybridity in the play. The use of the word "grin" in the stage direction and William's act of "Tossing the boomerang off the stage" are signs of his dissatisfaction with hybridity. In the process, Sweet William's criticism of the hybridity of cultures leads to a criticism of the hybridity befallen on him himself:

MAN: See'n I'm a Kuri. The Australian Aborigine, that's who I am and what I am. made in England. (12) And more directly:

MAN: The Australian Aborigine–that's me–stands in danger of losing his identity. (13)

While Bhabha regards hybridity as a positive way for resistance, William initially sees it negatively and tries to revive his original culture. But, in a hybrid culture, endeavors to revive an original identity are doomed to failure (Runions 94). Having this principle in mind, Merritt makes Sweet William believe that his original culture will not be back: "Me boomerang won't come back" (16). Even in the last scene when like the first act he addresses the audience directly, Sweet William restates this notion in a more direct way:

SWEET WILLIAM: No? Ah, well it don't matter. Please don't give it another thought. Forget all that shit they say about giving me back my culture. That's shit. It isn't what I'm really after, not really. (58)

As William's later dialogue indicates, Aboriginal authors like Merritt are not after a thorough revival of an original culture. Since cultures have been hybrid and it is difficult to disentangle them, this mission will be impossible. In fact, by highlighting some aspects of their Aboriginality, these authors look for an opportunity to call for "justice and land rights, challenge racist stereotypes, dismantle exclusionary models of national identity, and correct biased historical narratives of progress and peaceful settlement" (Webby 29). Surprisingly, this opportunity is provided by hybridity. According to Runions, "Bhabha envisions hybridity as a step toward freedom, using the very disavowal that hold discrimination in place and that does not allow for the full play of cultural difference.

Hybridity can be used to reread and reorder dominant discourses, allowing for subaltern voices suppressed in the stifling of difference" (95).

In Merritt's The Cake Man, hybridity in Ruby's neighborhood allows his son to enter a dialogue with his white playmates, whom he calls "gubba". In his interaction with "gubba kids", Pumpkinhead realizes that the myth of the Cake Man is something fabricated:

> PUMPKINHEAD: Arr, ain't no Cake Man, Mum.
>
> RUBY: There is so too! [Pretending to be cross] Now you stop that, little Pumpkinhead, there is so.
>
> PUMPKINHEAD: No, there ain't.
>
> RUBY: [firmly] Ain't no birriks, is what there ain't. You sayin' believe in silly ghosts but no Cake Man?
>
> PUMPKINHEAD: Gubba kids said there ain't. They tol' me and Collie and Noelie and Collie's Sissy. (2

The information Pumpkinhead gets through the hybrid society enrages Ruby, the colonial agent at home, and this proves how hybridity is advantageous for the colonized people and how is disadvantageous for the colonizer. Surprisingly, Pumpkinhead's information comes from the children of white people who have implemented such ideologies in Australia. This information, which is finally revealed to be fictitious, has changed into a myth throughout the play. Since power-knowledge in Australian society has buttressed the white's beliefs, Pumpkinhead takes gubba kids' expressions for granted:

> RUBY: Gubba kids! How they know, them kids?
>
> PUMPKINHEAD: No Father Christmas, they know that. They knows, 'cos they's gubba. That Ralphie knows.
>
> RUBY: I ask you how? Gubba kid just a kid, same as you are and Collie and Noelie.
>
> PUMPKINHEAD: Ralphie knows. He said you buy toys from the shop and when mothers got no money ain't no Santa gonna come to no Kuri kids.
>
> RUBY: Oh!
>
> PUMPKINHEAD: An' I seen the money name tickets on all the toys too, I have, and me and Rubby ain' got no toys, so that's why no Father Christmas. only got birriks I can see. (23)

In this extract, hybridity results in a disclosure of a truth hidden by colonial discourse. In fact, the dialogue shows another fictitious story among Aboriginal people. Pumpkinhead points to the fact that Santa never comes for poor children in his neighborhood, a point supported by Ralphie who has revealed to Pumpkinhead "the money name tickets on all the toys" (23). This disclosure occurs as a result of the colonizer and the colonized coming together. In other words, all these revelations, according to Bhabha, owe to the "third space" which appears as a result of hybridity (Huddart 85).

Another figure who contributes to the "third space" in the play is Uncle Foley. Uncle Foley never appears onstage and he is mostly remembered by Sweet William. He is a character who acts as a source of Aboriginal inspiration for William:

> MAN: Well, Uncle Foley can tell you them Dreamtime stories. Oh, gahd, jeezus, he knows how everythin' started off once. (14)

All through the play, the dreamtime is abundantly mentioned by William. In fact, this mentioning is an anticolonial strategy applied by William. The Dreamtime is the idealized or fictionalized conceptions of Australian mythology (Knudsen 5). This theme is frequently referred by Aboriginal authors in Australian literature since its conceptions act as a resistance to colonial discourses. In a scene, Ruby, who has become a colonial agent, shows how Dreamtime is neglected in favor of Christianity:

> RUBY: Long time ago, when Dreamtimes ending, Jesus, he sent the Cake Man over the sea to find the Kuri children. And he come... (21)

As a person affected by colonial subjugation, Ruby regards Dreamtime as a finished culture. In addition, like colonial discourse, Ruby replaces Dreamtime with Christian stories. Thus, since Ruby and Uncle Foley are representatives of these two conflicting discourses, Ruby shows her detestation of Uncle Foley and asks her son to avoid him. This may better indicate Ruby's stance as a colonial agent:

> RUBY: Uncle Foley! That liar ol' man! [Softening] Oh, now don' you listen to no gubba kids or no silly old men. [Reassuring] Your Ruby tellin' you there sure is a Cake Man. Jus' gotta find the feller. (23)

In this dialogue, like colonial negotiations, Ruby tries to make use of negotiation as a strategy to calm her son and to gain his favor. This claim is supported by the use of the words "Softening", "Reassuring", and "Your Ruby" in the play. In another attempt to stand against Aboriginal discourse, Ruby again states her hatred of Uncle Foley between the lines when talking with Sweet William:

WILLIAM: I been all over the bloody mission, haven' I, tryin' to get a draw, an' I'm plain buggered.

RUBY: You're a sad man, Sweet William. [She gets up and takes the Bible to the bedroom.]

WILLIAM: Humph. I say I am. [He gets up and starts to wander about the room.] I don' know, Rube, buggered if I do. Man's been all around, everywhere. nothin' bloody doin'.

RUBY: [off] You try your Uncle Foley? (28)

The attitude of Ruby as a colonial agent towards Uncle Foley is an instance of a process called "Otherization". "Otherization" is a loosely reductive process that attributes an imagined superior identity to the Self and an imagined inferior identity to the Other. According to Kumaravadivelu, "There is general tendency among individuals and communities to portray themselves as having an identity that is desirable and developed while presenting the identity of people who are racially, ethnically, or linguistically different as undesirable and deficient" (16). In an attempt to react to this process, some of Aboriginal writers asked for an equitable unification of blacks with whites. This attitude is expressed in the most direct way by Oodgeroo Noonuccal, the Aboriginal national poet:

We want hope, not racialism,
Brotherhood, not ostracism
.....
Make us equals, not dependants.
We need help, not exploitation,
..... Homes,
not settlements and missions.
We need love, not overlordship,
Grip of hand, not whip-hand wardship. (Craven 1)

In Merritt's The Cake Man, this policy is also applied. When it is revealed that the thief of the civilian's coals was Pumpkinhead and when the civilian sees the Aboriginal family's household, he sympathizes with the family and returns with a big cake to compensate for his charge. In other words, Merritt's play urges white people to see how Aborigines live their lives and sympathize with them.

Humor as an Aboriginal Postcolonial Strategy

A survey of the Aboriginal plays written so far shows that nearly all of them depict scenes of privation, gloom, poverty, discrimination and even death, but none of them is unre lievedly serious in tone. Humour mitigates the seriousness of these plays and at the same time increases their impact; it releases them from any threat of being repressive in tone (Goetzfridt 282). Commenting on this matter, Jack Davis states that black drama usually demonstrates a wide variety of emotions:

> Don't just show them [the audience] the comic side of life right through … show them sadness, pathos, gladness, happiness, sorrow, and all the in-between … all those emotions. (qtd. in Shoemaker 234)

As a confirmation of Davis's remarks, Stanner, the Australian anthropologist, argues on the subject of humour in both of its the general and particular facets. Obviously there are circumstances and occasions which both White and Black Australians find funny:

> the hammer on the thumb, the slip on banana peel, the sudden loss of dignity – all these 'reversals', the basis of a universal class of humour, evoke much the same responses among the Aborigines as among Europeans. (Stanner 270)

But, as Stanner states, there is an additional class of humor which appears to be particular to Aboriginal people. Though it is challenging to delineate in precisely, Black Australians have specified some of its features:

> The humour of western culture, because western culture is competitive, is itself competitive … You'll find that amongst traditional Aboriginal people … 'put down' humour is not seen as all that funny. [They have] the humour that is often one of endearment, often one of familiarity … it equates people with other people, people with animals and what have you … you'll find that even in urban situations Aboriginal people can recognise somebody way down the street by the way they walk. Because they know people's walks and mannerisms. And those things are more noticed by, and more remembered by, Aborigines than they are by white people. (qtd. in Shoemaker 234)

The humor found in Black Australian drama originates from the conducts and particular abilities of Aborigines, particularly those of mime and impersonation. Jack Davis has given a brilliant instance of these capacities in the marginal situation, and has revealed how they can appear in Black Australian drama:

> You see, we've always been acting. Aboriginal people are the greatest actors in the world … We've acted up before magistrates, we've acted up before the police, we've acted up before social workers; we've always done our own mime … Like

> the man who burns his feet and he doesn't even know his feet are alight. He's standing on the fire and he says [imitating voice] 'By Crikey, I can smell somethin' burnin' there! You fellas burn an old bag there somewhere? Or you burnin' kangaroo skin?' [New voice] 'Uncle! You're standing in the fire. Get out of the fire there!' He never wore boots for forty years and he's got callouses on his feet that thick, and he was standing in the fire. His feet were burning and he didn't even know it! And laughed – you know that, [claps]… that went around the camp for a week. Well, little incidents like that, you know, that carry on all the time – it's not very hard to put 'em down on paper. I'm sure the Aboriginal playwrights have seen that. (qtd. in Riemenschneider and Davis 152) The same point is also emphasized by Robert Merritt when asked about the humor in his play The Cake Man: "Well, there's humour in the people … no one's looked at it before … it's beautiful" (Shoemaker 235).

While the idiosyncratic Aboriginal predisposition to humor is evident in present-day black theatre, its origins are in the tribal/traditional scope. Stanner pointed out this issue among the traditional and semi-traditional Aborigines with whom he subsisted and worked for many years. He recounts the response of an old man, one of the last existing members of his tribe, to his question, "In a few years you will all be dead; there will be no blackfellows left; but you laugh about it. Why do you laugh? I see nothing amusing":

> He would not be drawn for some time. Finally he said, 'Bye-and-bye, altogether blackfellow dead. Plenty white man sit-down this country. White man walkabout longa bush. Him losim himself longa bush. Altogether white man try findim. Altogether white man losim himself longa bush. No blackfeller. Can't findim. Whitefeller dead. Blackfeller dead.' And he smiled sardonically. (Stanner 269)

Moreover, Stanner highlights the endurance of comical stories coming from everyday experiences among Aboriginal people. Among remarkable cases, he and Charlie, an Aboriginal friend, shot a barramundi lying around in a pond – which someone else had already caught:

> We had touched the depths. To shoot a caught fish tied up to the bank by a string. Jarawak saw that the tale spread. The blacks never forgot it. To this day, half a lifetime later, they still laugh. When I go fishing with them, someone is sure to say in an innocent tone, 'You got plenty bullet?' (Stanner 271)

The humour Stanner refers to still is at work and is given expression in Black Australian drama, including The Cake Man. Like other Aboriginal plays, The Cake Man is a play with topical issues of Aboriginality. It advances various socio-political questions which draw upon Aboriginal male/female interactions, activism, and the Black Australian self-image. Many facets of Aboriginality are raised in Merritt's play: dejection, family intimacy, the hazard of alcohol and the preservation of pride – or at least the potential to be proud. The possibility for a constantly cynical atmosphere is adroitly offset by the playwright by way of the use of humor. The humor of Robert Merritt is less impetuous and explicit than some of his fellow Australian playwrights, but it is derivative of similar sources: it is principally the humor of "sacrilege", of the bottle and of sexual suggestion (Goetzfridt 282). Sweet William frequently targets organised religion:

> What's that bit again? 'For y'travel over land and sea to make one convert … an' when ya finished with 'im, why, that feller's twice as fit for hell as you are y'self' (12-13).

The twofold implications existing in Merritt's humorous dialogue have usually been eagerly welcomes by Black and White Australians alike. As an instance, Sweet William's lamentation, "I been stewin' all my life. Ain't made me no better, Rube" is replied by his wife with a smile as "You al ways tasted good to me" (32) – a statement which illustrates the delicate and kind sense of humor in the play. Also in Merritt's play, the colloquial speech abounds in both adults and children's speeches. Merritt's gentle humour is very successful, as when Ruby reproaches his son for being credulous enough to believe in "birriks" (or indiscernible spirit devils). In reply, Pumpkinhead states:

> Me and Collie and Noelie seen 'em. Two of 'em, all dressed in black down the church and we were scairt and we run all the way to the mission and we told Uncle Foley and he said they was so! He said they holy birriks and he knows' cos he's wise! (23).

Aboriginality, as represented in Merritt's play, is tantamount to the detection of pleasure in the midst of much agony. As the playwright states, "I was on a suicidal trip of trying to find beauty where beauty is not expected to be found" (qtd. in Shoemaker 244). The playwright does succeed in his aim, for the Black Australian family relationship he depicts is both poignant and convincing. In brief, Merritt urges the European audience to try to see and appreciate the Aboriginality which The Cake Man exhibits (Shoemaker 245).

In Merritt's play, humor is at its zenith at the close of the play. While the audience expects to see what is to happen to Sweet William in Sydney, he is arrested because he is standing near a pub door where the police arrive to quell a brawl:

POLICEMAN: Right you, get your arse in that wagon.

WILLIAM: Who, me? Oh, no boss, I'm down from the bush.

POLICEMAN: Don't you bloody well answer me back! (57)

William is taken away as ridiculously and absurdly as possible, while the music "There's a Happy Land Somewhere" is heard. This music was once again played in the play when the priest was persuading Ruby to convert to Christianity. By playing it at the time of William's ludicrous arrest, the play highlights the injustice of white men towards black community.

Conclusuion

In the end, it should be noted that as a historical work, The Cake Man is full of pointed observations of black/white interracial context in Australia. The play evidently applies postcolonial strategies of negotiations, hybridity, and humor to communicate Aboriginal collective anguish. Yet, the play ignores some of Aboriginal dramatic conventions and moves towards European traditions to make the play accessible to both European and non-European spectators. The prominent feature of Merritt is that he is not interested in applying the Aboriginal linguistic convention to express an understanding of the Aboriginal past. For instance, in the first scene of the work which is explicitly historical the playwright resorts to caricature – in his symbolic typecasting of the colonial agents Priest, Soldier and Civilian and the colonized figures the Aboriginal Man, Woman, and Child – to caricature rath er awkwardly the joined powers of "God and Gun." In this scene, the Aboriginal characters are either speechless or dead and there is no Aboriginal speech of any kind. The music is also not native but is, as a substitute, a re-working of Western music such as "There's A Happy Land Somewhere." In fact, the opening scene is mostly white in speech, content, and plot. Merritt's strategy of devoting the main part of the work to two soliloquies of Sweet William is also one taken from the Western tradition. In his play, Merritt has deftly assumed the practices of Western theatrical conventions. This means that the playwright seems to be an integrationist who propagate a blance between black and white ideals. Such an integrationism is also proved by Sweet William's attempts to work in Sydney and his occasional confessions about the loss of true Aboriginal identity.

The Secret River

- Andrew Bovell

Andrew Bovell – Biographical Introduction

Andrew Bovell (born 23 November 1962) is an Australian writer for theatre, film and television.[Bovell was born on 23 November 1962 in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia and completed his secondary school education in Perth. He graduated from the University of Western Australia with a BA and followed that with a Diploma in Dramatic Arts at the Victorian College of Arts, in Melbourne.

His AWGIE award-winning play, *Speaking in Tongues*,[2](1996) has been seen throughout Australia as well as in Europe and the US and Bovell adapted it for the screen as *Lantana* (2001). Both the play and screenplay have been published by Currency Press along with *After Dinner* (1988), *Holy Day* (2001), *Scenes from a Separation* (written with Hannie Rayson) (1995) and *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?* (1998), written with Patricia Cornelius, Melissa Reeves, Christos Tsiolkas and Irene Vela. *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?* was adapted to film as *Blessed*.[*citation needed*]

When the Rain Stops Falling (2008)[3][4] won the 2008 Victorian Premier's Literary Award and the 2008 Queensland Premier's Literary Awards. In 2010, a production of *When the Rain Stops Falling* opened in New York. *The New York Times* reviewed the play describing it as "a fitfully moving but diagrammatic play about the long legacy of unnatural acts" and commenting that "the relationships eventually emerge with an emotional clarity that the play's elliptical structure works against".[5]

Plays

- *After Dinner*[6]
- *Holy Day*;[7] winner of the 2002 Victorian Premier's Literary Award and AWGIE – Stage Award.
- *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?*;[8] winner of the 1999 AWGIE Award – Best New Work & Best Stage Play, Victorian Green Room Award, and the Queensland Premier's Literary Award.
- *Speaking in Tongues*;[9] - first performed at the Griffin Theatre Company, Sydney[10] and winner of the 1997 AWGIE – Stage Award.
- *When the Rain Stops Falling*;[11] winner of the 2008 Queensland Premier's Literary Award and Victorian Premier's Literary Award, as well as the 2009 Victorian Green

Room Award, AWGIE – Stage Award, and Sydney Theatre Award – Best New Australian Work.

- *The Secret River*, adapted for the stage from the novel *The Secret River* by Kate Grenville; the play was presented by the Sydney Theatre Company in January 2013.[12][13]
- *Things I Know To Be True*

Films

Bovell's film credits include *Lantana* (2001) and *Blessed* (2009) as mentioned above. Bovell also co-wrote the screenplay for *Strictly Ballroom* (1992) with Baz Luhrmann and Craig Pearce and *Head On* (1998) with Mira Robertson and Ana Kokkinos. His other film credits include *Edge of Darkness* (2010) starring Mel Gibson, *The Book of Revelation* (2006) and *Iris* (2016).[14] He wrote the thriller film *A Most Wanted Man*, directed by Anton Corbijn, based on the novel *A Most Wanted Man* by John le Carré.[

The Secret River - **Summary**

Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* is a sweeping tale about the colonisation of Australia. *The Secret River* tells the story of William Thornhill, a poor waterman from London who is deported, along with this family, to New South Wales in 1806.

The novel opens on William's first night in the convict settlement in Sydney. As William sits outside the mud hut, an Aboriginal man comes out of the darkness. Scared for his family, William shouts at the man, “be off.” The man does not move. Instead, he angrily repeats William's words, “be off.” Hence, the battle for control of the land between the white settlers and the Aborigines becomes the central part of the story. The Whites and the Natives wish the other would go away. However, the white settlers are trapped by their status as convicts and cannot leave, and the Aborigines feel a spiritual connection to the land and will not leave it.

The novel then goes in a flashback to William's childhood in London. William was born into a very poor family and works as an apprentice to Mr. Middleton, a waterman on the Thames. Williams spends seven years rowing up and down the river, transporting people

from one side to the other. He feels very sad about his inferior social position. He works hard and gains the good will of Mr. Middleton.

William falls in love with Mr. Middleton's daughter, Sal. They get married. William continues to work as a waterman. As master of his own boat, which was a wedding present from Mr. Middleton, William feels that he can leave the poverty of his childhood behind. However, tragedy soon strikes. A month-long cold freezes river Thames. William cannot work, and the couple quickly run out of money. Mrs. Middleton falls ill, and Mr. Middleton spends all his money trying to cure her. Mr. Middleton then dies of a fever, and Mrs. Middleton dies soon after. William and Sal are left as orphans. The bailiffs confiscate the house on Swan Lane and the boats.

William works as a waterman again. He does not earn enough to support his family and is forced to steal. Without the stolen goods William's family would starve. William is caught trying to steal a load of Brazil wood and sentenced to death. Due to Sal's efforts, his sentence is changed to deportation to the convict settlement in New South Wales. A second child, Dick, is born on the voyage to Australia, joining older brother Willie.

Despite their initial shock at the run-down settlement, the Thornhill's adapt to life in the colony. William works as a waterman in the Sydney harbor and uses his old tricks to skim off rum from the barrels and barrels that pass through the harbor. Sal opens a little bar in one side of their hut, called The Pickled Herring. William receives his ticket of leave after twelve months in the colony. When his employer, Mr. King, hires a new clerk who pays close attention to the goods, William decides to quit before he gets caught stealing. He goes to work for Thomas Blackwood, an acquaintance from London, who owns a boat and plies the trade between Sydney and the settlements along the Hawkesbury river.

On his first voyage up the Hawkesbury, William falls in love with a piece of land that he names Thornhill's Point. He is determined to one day claim the land and build a stable and secure life for himself and his family. Also on this first voyage, William encounters Smasher Sullivan, a mean-mouthed settler who deals violently with any Aborigines who step foot on his land. Blackwood intensely dislikes Smasher and disagrees with his racial hatred of the Aborigines. Blackwood has learned to respect the Aborigines and advocates living in peaceful co-existence, based on his philosophy of give a little/take a little.

Blackwood decides to retire to his piece of land up the Hawkesbury, and William borrows money from Mr. King to buy his boat. William and his son Willie take up the trade and earn a good living for the family. With their situation improving, William tells Sal about his dream to claim Thornhill's Point. At first, Sal resists. She does not want to live in the wilderness, but only to earn enough money that they can someday return home in style. Eventually, she agrees to give William five years, and the family moves to Thornhill's Point.

William begins having problems with the Aborigines from the first day of arrival. A clan of Aborigines lives in the area, and they do not recognize William's ownership of the land. The Thornhill's and the Aborigines live in an uneasy peace until the Aborigines strip William's original patch of corn. William physically fights with the Aborigines at the corn patch, hurting several of the women and firing a shot at Long Jack. The Aborigines retaliate by torching the corn patch. Sal insists on leaving Thornhill's Point. She does not want her children in danger, and she knows that the Aborigines will not willingly relinquish their claim to the land. William is desperate. He cannot conceive of abandoning his dream.

In the middle of their argument about whether to stay on Thornhill's Point, William notices smoke from another settlement down the river. He takes the boat to help Saggity, whose land is being attacked by the Aborigines, while Sal packs their belongings. Saggity has been speared by the Aborigines, and William is forced to take him to Windsor, a township on the Hawkesbury. Saggity dies soon after they arrive, and his death becomes a war cry for the settlers. Led by Smasher Sullivan, they agree to put an end to the native problem once and for all. William is not a violent man, and he does have an understanding of the Aborigines' humanity. However, the only way that Sal will agree to stay on Thornhill's Point is if the Aborigines are dispersed. He agrees to take part in the attack.

The settlers sail up to the Aborigine camp near Thomas Blackwood's place. The slaughter is bloody and merciless, with children clubbed to death and their throats slit. Whisker Harry, the elder of the Aborigine clan, spears Smasher Sullivan. William, who has yet to fire his gun, turn and shoots Whisker Harry. The Aborigines disappear into the trees and no longer bother the settlers along the Hawkesbury.

William becomes a prosperous land owner and trader. He builds a grand stone house on Thornhill's Point, and the new settlers consider him a member of Australia's new gentry.

William acquires all the trappings of wealth, but his success does not come without a price. After the bloody dispersal of the Aborigines, his young son Dick leaves him to live with Thomas Blackwood. Dick cannot accept his father's participation in the slaughter, and he never speaks to William again. Long Jack is the only Aborigine left on the land. Permanently disabled by a gunshot wound, he sits on Thornhill's Point challenging William's ownership of the land. Grenville ends the novel with the image of William scanning the horizon for a glimpse of a shape of man, symbolizing the haunting spectre of the Aborigines that hangs over white Australia.

Grenville ends the novel with the image of William sitting on his veranda, scanning the horizon for the shape of a man. While William has carved out his kingdom, he is aware that there is another Australia beyond the tilled fields and fenced lands. The invisible presence of the Aborigines high on the cliff hangs over not just William but all of Australia, for generations to come.

The Secret River - **Themes**

Kate Grenville's *The Secret River* is a sweeping tale about the colonisation of Australia. *The Secret River* tells the story of William Thornhill, a poor waterman from London who is deported, along with this family, to New South Wales in 1806. the novel deals with many themes

Clash of Civilizations: The novel The Secret River explores the clash of civilizations that began when Captain Cook first stepped foot on Australia. Throughout the novel, Grenville contrasts British and Aboriginal understandings of several important social concepts like personal property, clothing, hunting and farming, family relationships, and relationship of the Aboriginals to the natural environment. The way in which each culture views the other leads to majority of conflicts in the novel. The British concepts of private property and settlement, backed up by the guns and might of the Empire, finally win the battle between the two civilizations.

Aboriginal Culture: Grenville presents Aboriginal culture as a lost paradise. Although the novel focuses on William's journey from the gutters of London to Australian, Grenville gives equal importance to the Aborigines and their way of life. She refuses the label of savage given to the Aborigines by the Settlers. Grenville writes about the richness of the

Aboriginal culture and their deep attachment to their land. Grenville suggests that the white settlers could have learned much from the wisdom of native peoples.

Alternative Path to Australian Development: Grenville sets up two paths to the development of Australia, through the characters of Smasher Sullivan and Thomas Blackwood. Smasher Sullivan represents the path of racial, social, and physical domination of the Aborigines in the colonization of Australia. Thomas Blackwood, on the other hand, represents the choice of peaceful co-existence of the Settlers with the Aborigines.

Social Hierarchy: The theme of social hierarchy runs throughout the novel. It begins with the humiliation William experiences as a waterman in London. He was humiliated by the travellers of his boat. Later, in Australia, William desires the thrill of having power over another person. For William their status as white men gives them the right to look down upon the Aborigines.

Self-Creation: The story of modern Australia is a story of self-creation. The convicts sent from England were given the chance to start their lives again in Australia. The Secret River tells the story of William Thornhill, one of those first convict to arrive in New South Wales. He slowly builds his life in Australia. The fact that Grenville opens the novel with William sitting in front of his hut in New South Wales and ends the novel with William sitting on the veranda of his grand house in Cobham Hall shows the importance of this theme.

The British Class System: The novel, The Secret River examines harsh realities of the British class system of the 18th and 19th centuries that condemned people like William to a life of crime. Grenville exposes the harsh realities people like William face in their lives. It was not a question of good or bad but of starvation or theft. Grenville sympathetic view that the convicts settled in Australia were not bad but prisoners of circumstances.

The harsh life of the Immigrant: Through the character of Sal, Grenville shows the harsh life of the settlers, especially women. She works hard and rarely complains. Sal has a difficult time settling in to their new life in Australia. She feels like a fish out of water. She misses the smells and sounds of London. While William adapts to the new life in a new land, Sal finds it harder to adjust because she did not suffer the same level of humiliation as William.

These are some of the themes and issues Kate Grenville explores in her novel, *The Secret River.*

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Character of William Thornhill

William Thornhill is the protagonist of the novel, The Secret River. He grows up among the poverty of the South End of London. After the premature deaths of his mother and father, William is forced to become the bread winner of the family. He works very hard and finally becomes an apprentice to the waterman, Mr. Middleton. He lives in the Middleton's house and spends his free time with Sal. She teaches him how to sign his name. William's job as a waterman is to ferry people and goods acreoss river Thames. William finishes his apprenticeship and marries Mr. Middleton's daughter, Sal. William continues to work as a waterman on the Thames and the family's fortune improves. However, a month long frost and the death of Sal's parents force William to steal again. He is caught trying to steal Brazil wood and sentenced to death by hanging. After several letters of appeal, his sentence is commuted to deportation to Australia.

After landing in Australia, William Thornhill sits outside the hut worried about his and his family's safety. While his wife and children sleep inside the hut, William worries about the life ahead of them. Separated by ten thousand miles of water, he wonders if death was preferable to this prison without walls.

For several months, William nurtures his dream of claiming a piece of land along Hawkesbury in silence. When he finally shares his secret with Sal, she dislikes it. Sal thinks that they need to save enough money and return to London. But, William decides to drop the issue for the time being, but he does not give up his dream.

Four years after his arrival, William becomes a free man. Soon after, Blackwood decides to sell his boat and retire. William and Sal both agree to buy the boat. But their motives are different. Sal sees the boat as a way of earning the money to return to London more quickly. For William, the boat represents the chance to finally claim Thornhil's Point as his own. Despite the hardships, Australia offers William the opportunity to shed his past and build a new life for him and his family. William works as a waterman for Mr. King. He also steals liquor and sells them making a lot of money. He finally settles down at Thornhill,

his dream place. Sal agrees to stay on the condition that they should go back to London after five years.

But an uneasy calm prevailed in Thornhill as the land they settled in belongs to the Aboriginals. Repeated misunderstanding crops up between the Natives and settlers. Still, Williams takes a soft approach towards the Natives, like another settler Blackwood. But settlers like Smasher Sullivan and Saggity Birtles insists on killing the Natives. Finally, violence is used against the Natives, mostly due to misunderstanding of facts. Walking through the corpses of the Natives, Thornhill finally becomes a rich and respectable man, but with a guilty heart.

Sarah (Sal) Thornhill

Daughter of Mr. Middleton and wife of William Thornhill. Sal falls in love with William when they are still children wandering the dirty streets of the South End. She marries William at the end of his apprenticeship and gives birth to her first child, Willie. Although she had a relatively stable childhood, Sal faces adversity with a sense of humour and resolve. When William is arrested and sentenced to death, Sal organizes his appeal and gets his sentence commuted to exile. Upon their arrival in Australia, Sal continues to support William and help him build a new life for their growing family. However, she finds the expanse and wildness of the land intimidating and longs for the familiar streets of London. Conflict arises between Sal and William as their ideas of the future diverge. William wants to settle in Australia, while Sal wants to earn enough money to return to London and live in comfort. Sal bears William six children: Willie, Dickie, Bub, Johnny, Mary, and Sarah.

Mr. Middleton

Sal's father. Mr. Middleton is a waterman who achieved a level of financial security for his family. In poverty-stricken Southwark, his house on Swan Lane represents the security that William craves. After his wife suffers the last of several miscarriages, Mr. Middleton realizes that he will not have a son to carry on his business. He offers William an apprenticeship and saves the family from starvation. When his wife falls ill during the fateful frost, Mr. Middleton spends all of his savings on doctors and medication. One day after trudging through the snow to search of yet another tincture for his wife, Mr. Middleton return home with a fever and dies a week later. All the money gone, William

and Sal are forced to sell all the furniture and the boats, and they lose the house on Swan Lane.

Sal's father, Mr. Middleton, comes to the family's rescue. Mr. Middleton is a waterman, as was his father and grandfather before him. He owns his own boats and supports his family in relative comfort. After his wife's last miscarriage, Mr. Middleton resigned himself to never having a son to carry on the family business. He offers William the chance to be his apprentice and learn the trade. After seven years as an apprentice, William would qualify as a freeman on the Thames. Mr. Middleton also finds sewing work for William's sisters, Mary and Lizzie. Mr. Middleton takes William to Waterman's Hall to get official approval of William's apprenticeship - a process called binding.
William works hard as Mr. Middleton's apprentice, but for the first time in his life he has a warm place to sleep and enough food in his belly. He lives in the Middleton's house and spends his free time with Sal, who painstakingly teaches him how to sign his name. William spends long days on the water, ferrying members of the gentry back and forth across the river. He comes to hate the way they haggle over the price when their purses are full of coins. He resents the way that they look through him and make him wait knee-deep in the icy water while they chat on the dock.

As the years pass, William and Sal's childhood affection grows into a deep love. They get married on the day William receives his freedom, and Mr. Middleton gives William one of his rowboats as a wedding present. William and Sal move into rooms of their own in the neighborhood, and William plies his trade on the Thames. Fed up with ferrying the gentry to and fro, William works as a lighterman, rowing loads of coal and timber along the river. When Sal bears him a son, William believes that he has managed to escape the starvation and poverty of his childhood. He feels a sense of pride and accomplishment that he is able to feed and house his family.

Subject to the vagaries of the weather and sudden illness, things soon take a turn for the worse for William and his family. The river freezes solid for a month, putting a halt to all shipping. Then Mrs. Middleton falls on the ice, and her health goes into a steep decline. The money that William and Sal put aside for a freeze soon runs out, and Mr. Middleton spends hand over fist on doctors and potions for Mrs. Middleton. On one of his regular treks to the apothecary, Mr. Middleton returns with a fever and dies soon after. Upon

hearing of her husband's death, Mrs. Middleton follows her husband to the grave. William and Sal are left destitute.

Mrs. Middleton: Sal's mother. Mrs. Middleton is a kind soul whose life is tempered by grief for the children she has lost. She dotes on her daughter Sal and keeps a warm and inviting home on Swan Lane. Her illness during the frost eats up all of the Middleton's savings. She dies soon after Mr. Middleton.

Thomas Blackwood: A former convict, Thomas Blackwood runs a thriving trade between the settlement in Sydney and the farmers along the Hawkesbury river. He hires William as second mate on his boat when William leaves Mr. King. Blackwood's advice to William on how to handle the Aborigines represents the struggle at the heart of the novel. Blackwood tells William, "A man got to pay a fair price for taking. Matter of give a little, take a little." Of all the characters in the novel, Blackwood has the greatest appreciation and knowledge of the Aborigines and their culture. He respects their claim to the land and learns to live in harmony with them. Blackwood speaks the local Aboriginal language and lives with an Aboriginal woman, with whom he has a child. Blackwood never emotionally recovers from the bloody dispersal of the Aborigines. He lets Dick Thornhill run his still and keep up the land.

On this first trip, William also gets a glimpse of the complex and often violent relationship between the Aborigines and the settlers. As the boat enters the mouth of the river, William notices the smoke from the Aborigine camp fires passing the message of their arrival to members of their clan up the river. William also meets Smasher Sullivan, a settler on the Hawkesbury who responds to the presence of the Aborigines with violence. Blackwood tries to steer his boat away from Smasher's homestead, but Sullivan rows out to meet him. Smasher triumphantly shows Blackwood a pair of hands cut off at the wrist, claiming that the Aborigines won't dare steal from him again. Blackwood responds with disgust, and he and William row the boat out of Smasher's reach. Blackwood looks through the telescope at Smasher's homestead. He hands the telescope to William, who sees a bloated black figure hanging from a tree.

Blackwood tells William that nothing in the world is free, and one must learn how to give a little when taking a little. His comments are intended as a criticism of Smasher's intolerant and violent attitude toward the Aborigines. Blackwood understands that the

land is populated, and that the white man must learn how live in tandem with the Aborigines. William does not fully understand what Blackwood means, but he remembers his words and tries to assimilate them into his own dealings with the Aborigines.

The Secret River

Introduction

The Secret River is a miniseries based on Kate Grenville's meticulously researched, Booker-nominated bestselling novel of the same title. *The Secret River* tells the deeply personal story of William and Sal Thornhill, early convict colonists in New South Wales. The Secret River dramatises the British colonisation of Australia in microcosm, with the dispossession of Indigenous Australians made comprehensible and ultimately heart-breaking as William Thornhill's claim over a piece of land he titles 'Thornhill's Point' on the beautiful and remote Hawkesbury River brings his family and neighbours into a fight for survival with the traditional custodians of the land they have settled on.

William Thornhill is driven by an oppressed, impoverished past and a desperate need to provide a safe home for his beloved family in a strange, foreboding land. The Secret River is an epic tragedy in which a good man is compelled by desperation, fear, ambition and love for his family to participate in a crime against humanity. It allows an audience, two hundred years later, to have a personal insight into the troubled heart of this nation's foundation story. There are two eighty minute episodes that tell the story of one of the ultimately tragic wars between colonists and the country's original inhabitants. The ongoing effects resulting from these early conflicts over land still resonate today, more than 200 years on from this story. Who owns the land and who has the right to use it, develop it and protect it?

Curriculum Guidelines

The novel from which this series is adapted has been set as a text for study in many schools throughout Australia, mostly at senior levels, as well as in tertiary institutions. It continues to be a popular novel for reading and discussion in book groups. The Secret River has been continuously in print since it was first released in 2005. It is available in numerous formats, including as an audio book and an eBook.

For senior secondary and tertiary students of Australian History and Literature, the series has a lot to offer, providing a picture of what society may have been like in the early days

of white settlement, and some of the bloody conflicts which arose between the settlers and the Aboriginal population on the Australian mainland. Experts estimate the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders at 700,000 at the time of first British settlement in 1788. It fell to its low of around 93,000 people in 1900, a decrease of almost 87%. Source: http://creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/people/ aboriginal-population-in-australia#ixzz3ZF1ONBlm. The combination of introduced diseases, loss of land and direct violence is believed to have reduced the Aboriginal population in this dramatic way. Many massacres are well documented.

The novel generated a lot of critical debate when it was first published about the rights and responsibilities of novelists working in the genre of historical fiction. In deciding to imaginatively re-create what life may have been like for the early settlers based on a range of records, some historians and critics questioned Grenville's approach. Some of the questions asked were, 'How can we ever know how people thought and behaved in the past, when the evidence is drawn mostly from official records and a few letters and personal accounts? Can we ever hope to understand the contextual complexities of another time, place and people?'

However, it is worth considering that when we read novels set in different cultures and at different times, we can often empathise with the characters, despite never having experienced their lives and the choices open to them. Were these early white settlers so different to us in their expectations and attitudes and behaviours that it is impossible for us to imagine how they thought and behaved?

In 2005 Kate Grenville said, I'm not a person who likes conflict or public debate, but I feel very passionately that this book is probably as close as we are going to get to what it was actually like. This is a story that absolutely needs to be told. We are ready for it, perhaps for the first time.

The details of the extent and nature of the racial conflicts between early white settlers and Aboriginal Australians are still strongly contested by historians. Others maintain that we in the 2000s can not accurately re-imagine the attitudes, behaviours and lives of people who first came to Australia, often as convicts, dirt poor, uneducated, untravelled and unaware of anything much outside the lives they led in Britain. They were the lowest members of a class bound society, reviled by all and with little opportunity to change their

status. Grenville has always said that The Secret River is a work of fiction inspired by real events and people. It is dedicated to 'the Aboriginal people of Australia, past, present and future'. Grenville said she wanted to base the novel at every point on whatever historical veracity I could find. She explains on her website that she did an enormous amount of research. This book isn't history, but it's solidly based on history. Most of the events in this book 'really happened' and much of the dialogue is what people really said or wrote.

*As Grenville does in her novel with direct speech, I have italicised her words in this guide when she is speaking about how she worked.

For students watching this miniseries as part of a study of early colonial life in Australia, they need to be able to imaginatively enter into 'another country' where people did things differently, a place that was not filled with buildings and services, roads and hospitals. They need to consider the isolation, the lack of any modern technologies such as electricity, telephones, radios, vehicles only powered by manpower, animals like snakes and kangaroos, totally new and alien to these people who were mostly from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

There will be, for some students of literature and media, an interest in evaluating the success of the adaptation of the novel to the small screen. What is gained, what is lost and to what degree will a miniseries such as this increase the public interest in Australian history? How might it show us a landscape and lives lived in the past? Can it recreate an authentic looking and sounding place in the early 1800s where settlers had to establish themselves?

Background

The novel from which this miniseries has been adapted was published to widespread acclaim. It was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and The Miles Franklin Award in 2006 and, amongst other awards, won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize, the NSW Premier's Literary Award and The Literary Fiction Book of the Year in 2006.

The Secret River has been widely set as a text for study in many schools since 2005. The Lieutenant, Kate Grenville's novel published in 2008, the second of her books exploring the contact between white settlers and Indigenous Australians, is currently set for study in the 2015 VCE English Context study 'Encountering Conflict'. The third of these 'colonial'

novels, Sarah Thornhill, was published in 2011 and is about the youngest daughter of Will and Sal Thornhill of *The Secret River*.

In several Australian states, *The Secret River* is a recommended text in Senior English studies. Part of the novel's continuing popularity may be because it is a really powerful love story as well as an historical novel whose concerns about land ownership and the ongoing results of colonisation remain relevant today. Grenville's evocations of the Grenville followed up The Secret River with a non-fiction book titled Searching for the Secret River in which she describes both the research she undertook into the history behind the book and her writing process. She chronicles how she changed from her original plan of writing a non-fiction book about her great-great-great-grandfather, Solomon Wiseman, to writing a fictional work. This is a fascinating companion piece to the novel, allowing us to see where Grenville has taken historical information from, and how she has used it to create a dramatic story.

The Secret River has also been adapted for the stage by Andrew Bovell and performed by the Sydney Theatre Company in 2013. Interestingly, Trevor Jamieson who plays Greybeard and Rory Potter who plays young Willie Thornhill in this miniseries played the roles of Greybeard and Dickie in the 2013 stage production.

The miniseries has been adapted for television by Jan Sardi and Mac Gudgeon. With a novel of the length and complexity of The Secret River it is not possible to completely cover everything that happens in the novel in a two part miniseries; for instance, the first section of the novel re-creates Sal and Will's life in London before they came to Australia. However, the television drama begins when the young Thornhill family has arrived at Sydney Cove, Will as a transported convict and Sal as a free settler with their two sons, the youngest born on the 12 month voyage out.

The secret river of the title is the Hawkesbury River, located to the west and north of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. It was first explored by white settlers in 1789 and named by Governor Arthur Phillip just a year after the First Fleet arrived in Botany Bay with its cargo of convicts.

The names and details on maps are increasingly contended by some people. Whose map and place names are being used and for what purpose? To what extent do maps imply

ownership? European style maps of the Hawkesbury convey some sense of the geography of the region, of the surrounding terrain and the distance of the settlements from Sydney. If you enter 'maps of the Hawkesbury River' into a search engine you will be presented with a number of different styles of maps, each with a specific purpose such as tourism, boating, fishing, terrain, walking tracks, main roads, oyster farms, points of natural beauty etc. Many of the place names in the region are of British origin such as 'Wiseman's Ferry', the name of Grenville's family member Solomon Wiseman who settled in the region in the 1800s. However, the national parks encircling this town have names that suggest the rich Indigenous heritage of the region – Dharug to the north and east, Yengo to the northwest, Cattai to the west, and Marramarra to the south.

It now takes approximately one hour to drive up the Pacific Highway from Sydney to the Hawkesbury River region, but in the early 1800s it would have been a much longer and more difficult journey, part of which involved navigating up or down the coast of NSW between the Hawkesbury River settlements and the main settlement of Sydney Cove.

The land adjacent to the Hawkesbury River was occupied for many thousands of years by the Darkinjung, Dharug, Eora, and Kuringgai Aboriginal peoples. They used the river as an important source of food and a place for trade.

The Aboriginal name for the river was published as Deerubbun in 1870. The two main Aboriginal tribes inhabiting the area were the Wannungine of the coastal area on the lower reaches (below Mangrove Creek) and the Darkinung people, whose lands were extensive on the lower Hawkesbury to Mangrove Creek, upper Hawkesbury, inland Hunter and lower Blue Mountains.

The Dharug tribe are the traditional custodians of the land on the south bank of the Hawkesbury River. The river, known to the Dharug as Deerubbun, and its nearby lagoons were a focal point for bands, clans or family groups to collect food such as fish, eels, shellfish and water birds. Yams and other plants growing on the fertile riverbanks were gathered depending on the season. The surrounding bushlands were places where the Dharug hunted and trapped animals. The area has a rich culture and heritage associated with it.

In 1789 two expeditions explored the Hawkesbury to the northwest of Sydney and the Nepean River to the southwest. The Hawkesbury River was named by Governor Phillip in June 1789, after Charles Jenkinson, 1st Earl of Liverpool, who at that time was titled Baron Hawkesbury. The Hawkesbury River was one of the major transportation routes for transporting food grown in the local area to Sydney during the 1800s. Boats would wait in the protection of Broken Bay and Pittwater, until favourable weather allowed them to make the ocean journey to Sydney Heads.

The Hawkesbury was crucial to the survival of the British colony in New South Wales. In the early 1800s, with the settlement at Sydney Cove struggling to feed an evergrowing number of convicts, soldiers and freehold landowners, the Hawkesbury became the colony's breadbasket and there was work for boatmen like Thomas Blackwood and Will Thornhill transporting produce and building materials to and from Sydney on barges.

But the clearing of land for agriculture came at a cost - and that cost was largely borne by the Dharug people, many of whom died at the hands of white settlers. Most of those who survived the British invasion were forcibly displaced. Free settlers and emancipated convicts took up the land and cleared and fenced it for agriculture.

Synopsis – Episode 1

In 1803 Will Thornhill - Thames waterman turned convict - begins his life sentence in the penal colony of New South Wales. Assigned to his wife Sal, he obtains a job working as an oarsman on Sydney Harbour. Sal establishes a rum stall, eking out a living selling what is the only true currency of the colony.

About six years later Will is pardoned. As 'emancipists', he and Sal can now ply their trade freely and work towards the return to London, which Sal in particular hankers for.

Opportunity comes knocking in the form of Thomas Blackwood, an ex-convict himself. Recognising Thornhill's skills as a boatman, he tempts him with the idea of using those skills to 'make his pile' running a transport boat on the Hawkesbury River up north of the settlement of Sydney. The idea captivates Thornhill.

Will accompanies Blackwood on his regular run up the Hawkesbury, where the wild beauty of the landscape enchants him. It's not just the freedom he feels but the sense

that this is a place where a man like him, so used to life on the bottom rung of the social ladder, could be master of his own fate. When he sees an untouched point of land jutting out into the river 'like a man's thumb', seemingly there for the taking, he knows what he wants for his future. He fears a return to London will only subject him once again to the 'convict stain' of his impoverished past. Convincing Sal that the wilderness of New South Wales holds more promise than London is not easy but Will persuades her to put her dream on hold and the family sails north to 'take up land' on the Hawkesbury River.
Isolated in her new home, Sal is only too aware of the dangers that confront them, especially amidst talk and newspaper reports of 'outrages and depredations' on settlers by the 'blacks'. She has agreed to give Will five years to make their pile, but immediately begins counting down the days in notches on a tree stump.

While the family sets about making their new life in true pioneering fashion, clearing, planting and building a small hut, it soon becomes apparent that owning this land, which Will has now named 'Thornhill's Point', is not as easy as he first thought. His attempts to cajole the local Aboriginals into moving on are awkward. There is a simmering hostility between Will and Gumang (Greybeard), the elder of the clan. It's clear they do not understand each other.

He can't quite understand Blackwood's 'give and take' philosophy of living side by side with the Aboriginals But, he is just as uncomfortable with the racist bitterness of other neighbours along the river, like the malevolent Smasher Sullivan. He nevertheless wishes they would go away, but the Aboriginals hover at the edge of the Thornhill's camp, and of Will's unsettled consciousness.

When Sal develops a life-threatening fever, the fragility of this small family in a vast wilderness is all the more apparent and Will prays desperately for her recovery. But as soon as she does recover, he redoubles his efforts to stay on 'his' land, make it prosperous, and to convince Sal that this, and not London, is their true home. Episode 1 concludes with Will leaving his family on a trading trip to Sydney, charging 12 year old Willie with protecting his mother and two younger siblings. Just beyond their camp is a vast and mysterious landscape, and the unknown intentions of both their black and white neighbours.

Exploring Characters

The Secret River is a character driven narrative. It is about a man and a woman and their love for each other and their desire for their children to have a better life. It is also about others whose character and decisions are different to those of the central protagonists. It is about people trying to improve their lot in life and about how their ambitions conflict with another group of people – the Aboriginals who have been living on the land for thousands of years before the arrival of the white man.

While Will Thornhill is not a first person narrator in the usual sense of that term, the story is, in most respects, Thornhill's. It is basically his and to some extent Sal's understanding of the world that we are given. One way in which characters reveal themselves is through speech – what they say and how they speak. For instance, when he is advising Will how best to secure a pardon, Thomas Blackwood says – for a quart he'll send a letter up the line vouching your good character and citing your service to church and community. Gammon what would discharge the devil himself. The voice and attitudes of many of the characters are revealed through the way they speak and can sometimes take a bit of working out. In the novel, people's speech is printed in italics. Other ways we understand and assess people is through their actions and how they relate to other people.

Because the Aboriginal characters in this series do not speak in a language that we can understand, it is more difficult to attribute individual characteristics to them as individuals. Long Bob, alone at the end of the series says, 'my place' to Will in a poignant echo of how the other Aboriginals mimicked Will's assertions of land ownership earlier. Several of the Aboriginal characters are central to the story in different ways – Thomas Blackwood's partner is an Indigenous woman, young Dickie Thornhill develops a friendship with Bunda, an Aboriginal boy and the group he is part of, Mrs Herring gets advice from some of the Aboriginal women when treating Sal's illness and Will's encounters with Gumang/Greybeard leave an audience in no doubt about his place in the Hawkesbury world. Generally these characters are presented as tolerant, dignified and able to laugh at situations that seem absurd.

Synopsis – Episode 2

While Will is away in Sydney, Sal and the children survive a scare with a snake, and encounter an Aboriginal family who set up camp on the other side of the point. This concerns Will on his return, but Sal assures him everything is OK,'They're just like us'. Soon Will's six-year-old son Dickie befriends a local Aboriginal boy.

When Will has two convicts assigned to him as labourers, any nagging doubts he may have had about his new life soon give way to feelings of superiority and belonging. For the first time in his life, there is someone under him. Sal doesn't mind being called 'Mrs Thornhill' either. For her it's a novelty, but for Will being called 'Mr Thornhill' represents much more – final proof that he is now a gentleman, and has risen above the 'convict stain'.

Now more Aboriginals begin to arrive and set up camp along the riverbank nearby. They seem to ignore the Thornhill family, but Will cannot ignore them. He marches into their camp and confronts the tribal leader Greybeard with his claim to own all the land on 'Thornhill's Point'. The Aboriginals do not understand what Will is saying.

Will sails up a remote branch of the river to seek the advice of the reclusive Thomas Blackwood. 'Give a little if you take a little,' says Blackwood. Will returns home to see scores more Aboriginals arriving on 'his' point of land, by canoe, and on foot. Something is going on. Will is overcome with fear of losing his hard-won property.

That night, the bush comes alive with the sound of chanting. It builds to a crescendo as Will and his family cower in their hut. Will creeps over to the camp to witness what he finds both the terrifying and enthralling spectacle of a corroboree. Yet in the morning, all is deathly quiet as many of the Aboriginals disperse. An uneasy peace settles over Thornhill's Point.

Two longboats full of redcoats (soldiers) ominously pass through Thornhill's Point on their way to a 'disturbance' upriver. Following the Governor's proclamation that farmers and settlers are entitled to defend their families, a warrant is issued against the 'native raiders'. Blackwood passes on to Will what he has heard – that the Aboriginals, fed up with the insensitivity of the settlers, are now determined to 'drive the snake out of the hole'.

Suddenly, Thornhill himself is under attack. A group of warriors raid his cornfield. His neighbours, the Webbs, are burned out. Smasher Sullivan and other hardliners urge swift retaliation. At a nearby Aboriginal camp, Will makes the gruesome discovery of a whole Aboriginal family poisoned by rat powder. But his compassion for the native victims is

soon overwhelmed by rage when a raiding party led by Greybeard sets his own cornfield alight.

Sal's only concern now is for the safety of her young children. She wants to get out while they still can; she is going to pack so they can leave. But Will refuses. He will not be defeated by this intimidation.

Their impasse is interrupted by the arrival of Smasher, pleading for Thornhill's help. Another neighbour, Sagitty, has been speared and they are in need of Thornhill's boat to row him upriver to the physician. On the way, Sagitty dies, and Smasher urges the group of terrified, angry locals, to exact revenge. But they can only do so if Thornhill is prepared to transport them in his boat. 'Get rid of the blacks, and she'll stay', urges one of his convict servants…

And thus Will Thornhill finds himself drawn along by a tide of brutal events. Under pressure from his friends and neighbours, he participates in the massacre of his Aboriginal neighbours. Afterwards, he cannot admit to Sal what he has done, and he never speaks of this atrocity again. Years later, even though he has achieved all he wanted, with a grand homestead on Thornhill's Point and untold wealth as a colonial gentleman, William Thronhill lives life in the dark shadows of unspoken guilt.

In particular he experiences a heart-rending distance from his youngest son, Dickie, who as a young man now refuses to come to the family home, but instead lives with the infirm Blackwood and a community of Aboriginals in a camp upriver, a life symbolic of what his father has rejected, but also of the future this new country might one day attain.

Theme 3

Conflict with the original inhabitants

• Considering the assumptions and backgrounds of the British colonists, in what ways was it likely that they would come into conflict with the original inhabitants, the Aboriginal groups living in the area?

• How did the fundamental differences in their attitudes towards land use and ownership lead to violent conflicts between settlers and Aboriginals? Outline how each group regarded land use and ownership.

• What was likely to be the outcome of any clashes that developed between the two groups? In what ways were the white people's available resources for subduing and getting rid of the Aboriginals able to offer them an advantage?
• What were some of the more dangerous substances and weapons introduced to the Aboriginal people by the white settlers and used against them by individuals like Smasher Sullivan?
• How did introduced diseases affect the local inhabitants?
• In what ways were natural resources freely available to each of the two groups?
• How were the populations of native animals affected by the arrival of different animals that also arrived on boats?
• In what way did the language barrier compound the problems between the British settlers and the Indigenous Australians?
• How did the children manage to work around this stumbling block to understanding and co-operation? • Given the fairly obvious presence of people living in Australia when the British arrived, how could the myth of 'Terra Nullius' have been maintained and enforced for so long – 200 years?
• Grenville and the filmmakers chose not to put into words or translate or subtitle what the Aboriginal people say during their contact and conflict with the white settlers. Why do you think this decision was made and was it a wise one?
• What are the assumptions about rights made explicit in the proclamation document printed here that the settlers see as giving them the right to take matters into their own hands?

Theme 4 – A sense of belonging – dispossession and land rights

It's theirs Will. Always has been. That's why they come and go. They been doin' it forever – Sal Thornhill

• In what ways is 'a sense of belonging' expressed by Will and Sal Thornhill?
• What are the main differences in each one's sense of what 'home' means?
• How is Will Thornhill in particular concerned to create a sense of belonging and even ownership in the Hawkesbury region? What are some of the factors in his past that make this desire for a place to call 'home' so poignant?
• Do any of the Thornhills seem to have much empathetic awareness of the Aboriginal people's sense of place and belonging, something often referred to today as 'country'?

• Which other characters in the story show some sense of the need to acknowledge the rights of the original inhabitants? • How does being dispossessed of your place and land disrupt and even destroy lives?
• Does Will and Sal's experience as 'migrants' in a new land have any parallels in our contemporary experience?
• What are some of the factors in our 20th and 21st century lives that allow us to be more mobile and inclined to move on from our place of birth or family home?
• How long did it take for white Australians to accept that the Indigenous Australians had rights over land that had been progressively taken from them by white settlers as their own?
• Is there evidence that this business of land use and ownership is not fully resolved in Australia today?

Making literature from history

Putting flesh on the bones of history – Kate Grenville

• How do we know about the past?
• What do we know about the past?
• What sort of records would have been available to Kate Grenville about this early period of the 19th century in Australia?
• How can an author imagine and represent the past, especially when official written records are sometimes incomplete and unverified?

Kate Grenville spent 5 years working on this novel and undertook an enormous amount of research to create as clear and accurate a picture as possible of the world of London and the colony of NSW in the late 18th and early part of the 19th century.

Kate Grenville writes about the challenges of uncovering and re-creating the past and finding the truths about the nature of the contact between the groups. She says: It was all very well to know about my ancestor's business dealings (great-great-great-grandfather Solomon Wiseman) but what had gone on exactly upon that hundred acres on the Hawkesbury? In those days (about 1810) the river was the very limit of settlement – the frontier. Perhaps he'd been granted the land, or perhaps he'd just selected it and worried about the paperwork later. He'd sailed up the river, he'd pushed the boat in among the mangroves, he'd struggled through them to dry land – and then what? How had the local Aboriginal people taken the entry of this man and his family onto their

traditional land? What had it been like, that very first day – what had happened when the Aboriginal people came out of the bush towards the Europeans? What had they done, and what did my ancestor do? Had it been friendly (as of course I hoped) or distrustful, even violent? My search was frustrating...there was no information that I could find about my relatives relationships with the Dharug people around him, not even a passing reference. This could mean that nothing happened...or that he found a way to co-exist with them. Or it could mean that things happened – but things that it was in no-one's interest to record. The Secret River is historical fiction; it is not non-fiction, biography or documentary as it offers an account of people's lives that is partly drawn from historical records but also where briefly mentioned events are re-imagined and characters and encounters created. Historical records are often used by writers and filmmakers to ensure as far as possible that the world being portrayed in the novel or on screen is believable, that it looks and sounds authentic and believable. Here are some examples:

- War stories are very often the subject of feature films. Think about Peter Weir's 1981 film Gallipoli, starring a young Mel Gibson or Breaker Morant, directed by Bruce Beresford in 1980 or The Water Diviner, Russell Crowe's 2015 contribution to this genre. It is said that it is through Weir's Gallipoli that many people have framed their view of the World War 1 Gallipoli campaign. What are some of the common factors shared by these films in the ways they present a dramatic story?
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• Shakespeare often used records of family feuds, past wars and battles and political stories to create his plays many years after the historical events. And today, these Shakespearian stories are being re-told in new contexts and times, e.g. Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Hamlet, King Lear. How do Shakespeare's plays still retain such contemporary relevance and interest?

• These films all tell stories from the past through characters and incidents based on historical events but dramatised for the purposes of telling a good story. Why is it that a drama based on an actual event can often be more popular than a documentary film about the same event? In a word, what is it about a story that is so appealing? Do we identify with heroes and their challenges, with people who overcome obstacles? Do we long to know more about many figures from the past who we suspect had similar dreams and aspirations to our own?

• Actor Natasha Wanganeen who plays a small role as Smasher's sex slave, 'black velvet', as he describes her, has said that while she found her part confronting, she did it 'to honour my ancestors'. In what ways do you think the actors playing the parts of the British settlers might have a sense of honouring their ancestors? To what extent were you able to empathise with Will and Sal Thornhill, or any of the other settlers in the story? What is the difference between empathising and understanding and endorsing?

• Many of the scenes were shot around Lake Tyers in Victoria for reasons the producer explains in the next part of this guide. Several of the scenes of the Thornhills establishing their claim to the land on Thornhill's Point are reminiscent of the paintings of early Australian artists like Frederick McCubbin of the Heidelberg school and of contemporary Australian artist William Robinson. How do the filmmakers manage to make the landscapes beautiful, mysterious, menacing and even secretive at the same time?

Unit-V: DRAMA

The Vivisector

- Patrick White

Patrick White

Patrick White, in full Patrick Victor Martindale White**,** (born May 28, 1912, London, England—died September 30, 1990, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia), Australian novelist and playwright who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973.

White was born in London while his parents were there on a visit, and he returned to England (after 12 years in Australia) for schooling. He then worked for a time at his father's sheep ranch in Australia before returning to study modern languages at King's College, Cambridge. By the time he served in the Royal Air Force during World War II, he had already published some early work, traveled extensively, and been involved with the theatre. After 1945 he returned to Australia, but he also lived intermittently in England and in the United States.

White's first novel, *Happy Valley* (1939), was set in New South Wales and showed the influence of D.H. Lawrence and Thomas Hardy. The material of White's later novels is distinctly Australian, but his treatment of it has a largeness of vision not limited to any one country or period. White saw Australia as a country in a highly volatile process of growth and self-definition, and his novels explore the possibilities of savagery to be found within such a context. His conception of Australia reflected in *The Tree of Man* (1955), *Voss* (1957), *Riders in the Chariot* (1961), *The Solid Mandala* (1966), and *The Twyborn Affair* (1979) is the product of an individual, critical, poetic imagination. His style is dense with myth, symbol, and allegory. His deepest concern is for man's sense of isolation and his search for meaning.

The Vivisector – Background

Clocking in at 567 pages, Patrick White's *The Vivisector* (1970) is no doubt a lengthy and complex novel. It tells the life story of an artist and painter named Hurtle Duffield. Duffield is born into an exceptionally poor Australian family. He is eventually adopted into a very wealthy family. The wealthy family is looking for someone to keep their deformed daughter Rhonda company.
Inspired by some very unique conditions around him, Duffield begins to get some artistic inspiration and begins to paint. As he begins to hone his artistic skills, he starts to become exceptionally famous. His painting start to become much more desirable, but Duffield doesn't like all the wealth and fame that has come from his paintings. Nevertheless, after a stroke partially paralyzes him, he begins a new painting called the Vivisector with the help of a man called Don Lethbridge. Interestingly, some have thought that this book is mostly autobiographical, but the world may never truly know if it is. It very likely could be autobiographical, but it could also be total fiction or fiction with some biographical information sprinkled throughout the book.

Richard Rayner of the Los Angeles Times loved the book. After giving the book an "A" rating, he wrote that *The Vivisector* is a "masterpiece" and that "Almost every sentence of *The Vivisector* has this scalpel-like quality, recasting the world's surface to show how Duffield will render it in paint." The book was also shortlisted for the "Lost Man Booker Prize" of 1970 (which was dubbed as such because it was awarded in 2010, nearly 40 years after the publication of the novels that were eligible for the award).

The Vivisector Summary

Hurtle Duffield is almost an artistic archetype; he is a tortured artist, and a suffering one, although never actually a struggling artist thanks in large part to the backing of a very wealthy family and their friends. Duffield was not born into such riches; born into a very poor Australian family, Duffield is given up for adoption, and adopted into the extremely wealthy Courtney family. The Courtneys feel that the majority of their riches are financial; their daughter, Rhoda, has not received a life of riches despite their love and attention. Born with a congenital spinal defect that renders her hunchbacked, she is lonely and confined to the house. Adopting Hurtle, her family feel, will provide Rhoda with a companion.

Hurtle shows an artistic talent at a very early age. He is inspired by everything, both the things that he can see, and the things that he sees in his mind's eye. His first inspiration is his adoptive mother, and his sister, but he is inspired by everyone whom he meets, and especially the women he falls in love with - both suitable, and unsuitable. His first love is a prostitute, his next, an heiress of considerable means. He takes lovers, has mistresses, inspires younger artists, and is fawned over by collectors all over the world. The funny thing about Hurtle, though, is that wealth and fame don't entertain him. He doesn't need much - just the people he loves and his art, so even when he begins to become famous, and his paintings desired, he does not change much. He likes living a self sufficient life because it means that he is not owned by anyone, and no benefactor can tell him what to do or how to live his life. He is autonomous, and that is just the way he likes it.

As he ages, he becomes even closer to Rhoda, and his life as a painter almost ends abruptly when he suffers a huge and debilitating stroke, but with the help of his protege Don Lethbridge, he is able to paint the masterpiece that he has conceived in great detail in his head. It is vast, bold and ambitious, and is an opus to God. He names the painting The Vivisector.

Hurtle Duffield Courtney

A prominent artist in Australia whose purchase by an affluent family commences the metaphorical conflict of commerce versus aesthetics which pervades throughout the text. The Courtney family only has one heir and not only is she an heiress, but she’s also disabled. With that in mind, the family throws their energies into making Hurtle the de fact male heir. He becomes a revolutionary artist which forms the foundation for the novel’s examinations of art and commerce, taste and vulgarity and gender conventions and expectations.

Harry and Alfreda Courtney

The patriarch and matriarch of the rich Courtney clan cloistered in the luxurious wealth of their mansion. They agree to “purchase” Hurtle from his biological mother who is also their washwoman. When Hurtle begins manifesting artistic talent it serves to sanction Alfreda’s deep-seated belief that she is gifted with the ability to recognize genius and talent. Harry, though seemingly a respectable man who merely wants to connect with his adopted son is not match for a relationship between mother and son which verges on the incestuous.

Kathy Volkov

The voluptuous and seductive girl next door. She expresses her own artistic temperament through the piano and also happens to be quite the match for Hurtle on the subject of manipulating others. She can rather accurately be termed the novel’s femme fatale.

Rhoda Courtney

The biological heiress cursed not only by being female, but being born a hunchbacked female. She is the good girl to Kathy’s bad girl: perceptive, delicate and completely abhorrent to her adopted brother. Although affectionate to a fault toward him, she is also acutely aware of his weaknesses and not afraid to make him confront them, though out of genuine love. She will spiral into a personal darkness while yet maintaining a strange, almost symbiotic relationship with Hurtle.

Hero Pavloussi

In another tale lacking Kathy, Hero might be the femme fatale, but in this case she is far too egocentric, narcissistic and blind to her own ambitions to become spiritually pure. Instead, the two trek down a path of co-dependent co-destruction

The Vivisector Themes

Theme of Art

The novel, 'The Vivisector' authored by Patrick White is about the life of a painter, Hurtle Duffield. The artistic career of Duffield started after the Second World War. He went on to be a highly prolific painter. Art was the sole passion of Duffield. Art is the only thing that makes him stick to some female associates. He ended up using the women to advance his art. Through the review of other works of White, it is evident that portraying

artists was his second nature. White convincingly portrays the life of Duffield as a painter, especially in his youth. When old, the paint is struck by a stroke and his sister comes to stay with him in his dilapidated house.

Theme of Male-female Relations

Duffield exploits women for his gratification and the progress of his passion for art. Duffield falls in love with a street woman. His love affair shows how the artist was far from social norms. Duffield returns to his home in Australia and it is there that he again takes up the name 'Duffield' which refers to his familial roots. At the time he worked as a cleaner. He meets a woman in the streets by the name Nance Lightfoot who contributes significantly to the dawn of Duffield's career as a professional painter. Nance Lightfoot washes away the poor reputation of Duffield as a colonial boy but not without resistance from the budding artist. Duffield also has an affair with Hero Pavlossi who is married to a Greek merchant. This lover is linked to a Greek sculpture that has a body that is charred to 'terra-cotta' and to an expression described to be that of a fatality. This image can be interpreted to mean that she has been offered as a sacrifice due to the presence of Greek Idolatry in the story. Pavlossi suffers from guilt since her husband expects her to be chaste.

The Vivisector Analysis

The Vivisector by Patrick White is based on the story of a painter, Hurtle Duffield. Born by poor parents, Hurtle is sold to the affluent family. Duffield disappoints adoptive parents by fleeing to the war fought in Europe during the First World War. He later returns to Australia after the fight and establishes himself as a professional painter. Driven by an artistic urge, Hurtle exploits his sequential women lovers for their forms. However, he fails to reciprocate his lovers' affection. Finally, in his old age, he finds a spiritual heir in a young pianist. Hurtle make use of his painting to nurture the artist in her. The final part of the book is full of religious symbolism and ambiguity. The heroism of Voss and Hurtle in final acts is a kind of redemption. Hurtle dies for his art and vision.

The book explores several issues surrounding Hurtle who is an artist. An arabesque of human relationships is interlaced around the dominant image of vivisection. This is evident in the nurturing of a spiritual child, life with a hunch-backed sister, love affairs, and pseudo-family ties. These relationships are characterized by and formed through the politics of class, spiritual affinity, sexuality, and art. In these relationships, to be an artist

is the Hurtle's ultimate and only justification for any letdown. The author makes a disturbing commentary on the artistic scene of Australia through Duffield. Duffield uses women to make subversive art which shows the bourgeois propensity of life in Australia. Ironically, he is used and dumped by another woman artist who is half his age.

The Vivisector Symbols, Allegory and Motifs

The wall

One of the first mediums Hurtle Duffield used to paint on was the walls of his room. The wall remains an important element for the narrator because it was the first time he discovered his creative capabilities. Because of this, the wall is used here as a metaphor to represent the beginning of the creative process.

Symbol for the inability to get adapted to the world

Most characters have some type of debilitating health problem which stops them from living life as they maybe would like to. These characters are made to stand out and to be different because of their health problems. What is interesting to note is that the sick characters are not at all affected by their health problems. Because of this, we can claim that those health problems are used as a symbol to represents that person's incapability to get adapted to the outside world.

The war

Towards the middle of the novel, the main character decides to leave behind his comfortable life and go fight in Europe in the World Wars. This decision is controversial because Hurtle could have decided he wanted to stay home and be safe. The war in this context is used as a symbol to represent the main character's desire for adventure and danger.

The ground

Another frequently mentioned elements mentioned here is the ground. No matter where Hurtle finds himself in the world, he always describes the scenery and the state of the ground beneath his feet. Apart from this being a common motif, the ground is also used here as a symbol that represents the connection a person has to his homeland.

Blood

In many instances, creators describe how they gave their blood to bring to life a piece of art worth seeing and remaining in history. The creative process is often described in brutal terms, including descriptions of physical harm. Thus, because of this, the blood is used here as a symbol to represent the sacrifices an artist must do in order to create something.

1. Is the novel an autobiographical one?

While many claim *The Vivisector* is an autobiographical novel, there are no original statements from the author to support this claim. There are certain elements in the novel such as some health problems and the description of the main character's last years of life which can be seen as being autobiographical but generally, the book is a work of fiction focusing on a character's artistic process and the discovery of one's talents.

2. How can be the novel be characterized?

The novel is, first of all, a fictional autobiography since it recalls in great detail the life of the main character in the novel. Secondly, the novel is a stream of consciousness novel, first defined and popularized by the writer Virginia Wolf. Because of this, the novel can sometimes appear to be chaotic, the narrator shifting rapidly from one subject to another similar to the way a person's thought process would take place.

3. **To whom was the novel dedicated?**

The writer dedicated his novel to one of the greatest Australian painters and visual artists, Sydney Nolan. When the novel was published, the painter was still alive and at the peak of his career. It is said that the painter was deeply influenced by modernist literature such as the one written by Patrick White but there is no evidence to suggest that the painter and the writer ever met or if they were close friends. Still, it appears that the two artists respected one another and through his novel, Patrick White brought an homage to the Australian painter.

Schindler's Ark

- Thomas Michael Keneally

Thomas Keneally

Thomas Keneally**,** (born October 7, 1935, Sydney, Australia), Australian writer best known for his historical novels. Keneally's characters are gripped by their historical and personal past, and decent individuals are portrayed at odds with systems of authority.

At age 17 Keneally entered a Roman Catholic seminary, but he left before ordination; the experience influenced his early fiction, including *The Place at Whitton* (1964) and *Three Cheers for the Paraclete* (1968). His reputation as a historical novelist was established with *Bring Larks and Heroes* (1967), about Australia's early years as an English penal colony. *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1972; film 1980) won Keneally international acclaim; it is based on the actual story of a half-caste Aboriginal who rebels against white racism by going on a murder spree. *The Great Shame* (1998), a work inspired by his own ancestry, details 80 years of Irish history from the perspective of Irish convicts sent to Australia in the 19th century.

Although Australia figures prominently in much of Keneally's work, his range was broad. His well-received *Gossip from the Forest* (1975) examines the World War I armistice through the eyes of a thoughtful, humane German negotiator. He was also praised for his treatment of the American Civil War in *Confederates* (1979). His later novels included *A Family Madness* (1985), *To Asmara* (1989), *Flying Hero Class* (1991), *Woman of the Inner Sea* (1992), *Jacko* (1993), *Homebush Boy* (1995), *Bettany's Book* (2000), *The Tyrant's Novel* (2003), *The Widow and Her Hero* (2007), *The Daughters of Mars* (2012), and *Crimes of the Father* (2017). *The Dickens Boy* (2020) is a fictionalized account of English novelist Charles Dickens's youngest son, who emigrated to Australia while a teenager.

Keneally's best-known work, *Schindler's Ark* (1982; also published as *Schindler's List*; film 1993), tells the true story of Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist who saved more than 1,300 Jews from the Nazis. Like many of Keneally's protagonists, Schindler is a rather ordinary man who acts in accord with his conscience despite the evil around him. Controversy surrounded the book's receipt of the Booker Prize for fiction in 1982; detractors argued that the work was mere historical reporting.

With his daughter Meg Keneally, he also wrote a historical crime series. The first installment, *The Soldier's Curse*, was published in 2016. Other books in *The Monsarrat Series*, as it was known, included *The Power Game* (2018) and *The Ink Stain* (2019).

Schindler's Ark / (also *Schindler's List*) (1982)-Summary

Schindler's Ark opens with a close-up of unidentified hands lighting a pair of Shabbat (Sabbath) candles, followed by the sound of a Hebrew prayer blessing the candles. This scene, one of only a handful of color scenes in the film, closes as the flames flicker out. The wisp of smoke from the dying flames fades into the next scene, now in black and white, and becomes a plume of smoke from a steam engine. A folding table is set up on a train platform, where a single Jewish family registers as Jews. The single table becomes many tables, and the single family becomes a large crowd. Close-up images of names being typed into lists provide a sense of the vast number of Jews arriving in Kraków.

Oskar Schindler appears in his Kraków hotel room. His face is not shown, and the focus is on his possessions. He puts on his expensive watch, cuff links, and Nazi Party pin, and takes a large wad of bills from his night table. Schindler then enters a nightclub. Once he is seated, a high-ranking Nazi official at a nearby table catches his attention. Attempting to ingratiate himself with the local Nazis in order to secure lucrative war contracts, Schindler sends drinks to the table. Before long, he is treating a large table of Nazis and their friends to expensive food and fine wine. Schindler has his picture taken with everyone important at the table, as well as with dancers at the club.

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Schindler next visits the Judenrat, the Jewish council charged with carrying out Nazi orders in Kraków. He walks directly to the front of a seemingly endless line of Jews, where he finds his accountant, Itzhak Stern. Schindler tells Stern that he needs investors, "Jews," to help him buy an enamelware factory. Since Jews, by law, cannot own businesses, Schindler tells Stern that he will pay the investors in product, not money. A profiteer, Schindler knows that he will maximize his profit if he does not have to pay the Jewish

investors in cash. He also wants Stern to run the business, but Stern initially refuses the offer, telling Schindler that the Jews will not be interested in investing.

Schindler, however, does not give up. Next, he visits a church where Jewish smugglers conduct business. All of the smugglers, except one named Poldek Pfefferberg, are scared off. Schindler tells Pfefferberg he will need lots of luxury items in the coming months, and Pfefferberg promises to procure them. The scene then changes to one of masses of Jews walking over a bridge. Their armbands stand out starkly. It is March 20, 1941—the deadline for Jews to enter the ghetto. A little Polish girl in the street shouts, "Good-bye, Jews," over and over again. While Schindler arrives at his new luxury apartment, recently vacated by the Nussbaum family, the Nussbaums themselves arrive in the ghetto with thousands of other uprooted families.
Schindler finally secures money from the Jewish investors, who agree to accept goods as payment, because, as Schindler points out, money will be worthless in the ghetto. Schindler sets up his factory with Stern's help and hires Jews, rather than Poles, because they are cheaper to employ. Workers at the factory will be deemed "essential"—a status that saves them from removal to death camps. Stern recognizes this fact immediately and fills the factory with many Jewish workers whom the Nazis would otherwise have deemed expendable.

At this point, Schindler is unaware that Stern is using his position in the factory to save people. His awareness grows, however, when Stern brings to see him a one-armed man who wants to thank Schindler for saving him by making him "essential." Schindler dismisses the gratitude and chastises Stern for bringing the man to see him. Shortly after the scolding, Schindler has to rescue Stern himself from a train bound for a death camp.

Meanwhile, construction on the Plaszów labor camp begins, and Amon Goeth appears. Goeth, a sadistic Nazi, is charged with building and running the camp. When Plaszów is completed, the Jews are evacuated from the Kraków ghetto and sent to the camp. From a hill high above the ghetto, Schindler and his girlfriend watch the destruction. He sees a little girl in a red coat—the only color in the otherwise black-and-white scene—walking through the carnage. Schindler's girlfriend tearfully begs him to go home, and Schindler is obviously moved by what he sees. Schindler convinces Goeth to allow him to build his own subcamp to house his factory workers.

Schindler begins to participate actively in saving Jews when Regina Perlman, a Jewish girl passing as a gentile, visits his office. She begs Schindler to hire her parents because she has heard that his factory is a haven. He refuses to help and sends her away. Later, he yells at Stern and tells him he is not in the business of saving people. But when Schindler finishes his tirade, he gives Stern his gold watch and tells him to bring the Perlmans over. With this decision, he begins to actively save Jews. Over time, Schindler gives Stern more and more of his own personal items to use for bribes to bring people to his factory.

Some time later, Goeth is charged with evacuating Plaszów and exhuming and burning the bodies of 10,000 Jews killed there and at the Kraków ghetto. Schindler realizes that his workers, Stern included, face certain death at the hands of the Nazis, so he decides to spend his fortune to save as many Jews as he can. With that, Schindler begins to make his list. He persuades Goeth to sell him his workers, as well as Goeth's maid, Helen Hirsch, to work in his factory in Czechoslovakia. The men and women are transported to Czechoslovakia on two separate trains, however, and the women are inadvertently diverted to Auschwitz, where Schindler is forced to buy them again. The men and women are reunited at the factory, where they remain until the war's end.

When the war ends, Schindler tells his workers they are now free but that he will be hunted as a war criminal and must flee at midnight. When he bids his Schindlerjuden good-bye, they give him a ring made from the gold tooth work of a factory worker, engraved with the Talmudic phrase, "Whoever saves one life saves the world entire." Schindler breaks down, crying that he could have sacrificed more, saved more lives. He and his wife then flee.

The next morning, a single Russian soldier enters the camp and tells the Jews they are free. As they walk toward a nearby town, the scene dissolves into full color and reveals a group of real Holocaust survivors walking across a field. They line up, many accompanied by the actors who play them, and place rocks on Schindler's grave. The last person at the grave is Liam Neeson (Oskar Schindler). He places a rose on the tombstone.

Characters

Oskar Schindler, war profiteer, womanizer, and Nazi Party member, becomes the unlikely hero and savior of about 1,100 Polish Jews during the Holocaust. He is essentially a con

artist and moderately successful businessman who recognizes the potential for profit in wartime. He buys a formerly Jewish-owned enamelware factory and uses bribery and ingratiation to procure military contracts to make war supplies. At the beginning of his quest to become rich, he is indifferent to the Jewish situation, which he sees as merely an unfortunate result of war. A playboy with a large ego, Schindler routinely cheats on his wife and joins the Nazi Party not for ideological reasons but because it will help him make more money. Although he purchases the factory after it has been confiscated from Jewish owners and is given an apartment appropriated from wealthy Jews, Schindler feels no remorse and does not consider the origins of his good fortune.

Schindler, initially concerned only with himself and the success of his moneymaking scheme, undergoes a change that prompts him to spend his fortune to save the lives of those he once exploited. His motive is never completely clear—and indeed, the real Schindler never revealed his motivations. However, the film does suggest that at least one of his incentives was obvious: Schindler simply could not sit by and watch people he knew be sent to death. His metamorphosis from a man of indifference to one of compassion takes place gradually over a number of scenes. His respect for his Jewish accountant, Itzhak Stern, probably has a great deal to do with his transformation, as does his witnessing of the Kraków ghetto evacuation, when he sees the little girl in the red coat. However, Schindler's motivations may also be less altruistic: it is possible that his own ego and narcissism led him to be a savior. He initially reacts angrily to the idea that his factory is a haven, but perhaps became enamored of the idea of being a hero. The needs of his ego may, in some capacity, have surpassed his material needs. The film does not propagate such a harsh stance, but Schindler's boorish behavior makes this speculation plausible. Nevertheless, whatever the results of an analysis of Schindler's motivations, the good effects of his choices are undeniable.

Itzhak Stern

Itzhak Stern, bright, proud, and determined, brings out the moral side of Schindler, and Stern's attitude toward Schindler reflects Schindler's change throughout the film. Stern recognizes immediately Schindler's callousness and greed. Early on, he expresses disdain for Schindler and controlled outrage at his original offer to have Stern run the factory and secure Jewish investors. He refuses to drink with Schindler, making clear he does not approve of Schindler's morals. But Stern's attitude softens as Schindler becomes an active participant in saving the Schindlerjuden, and he eventually sees the good in his employer.

He finally does have a drink with Schindler when the two say good-bye after they learn of the closing of the Plaszów labor camp and realize Stern will almost certainly be sent to his death. By accepting a drink, Stern demonstrates his respect for Schindler, and Schindler accepts the finality of Stern's probable fate.

Stern, like Schindler, is an opportunist, and he is the brains behind the rescue of the Schindlerjuden. Stern is the one who discovers a way to channel his essentially forced labor for Schindler into a way to help his fellow Jews. Schindler does no work, leaving Stern to run the factory, and Stern immediately begins to give factory jobs to Jews who otherwise would be deemed "nonessential" and would most likely be killed. He forges documents to make teachers and intellectuals appear to be experienced machinists and factory workers. Stern's motivation—to help his people—is abundantly clear. Ben Kingsley plays him as a proud man with a mission and a palpable desperation to help all those he can. These traits are absent from Schindler, the film's protagonist and hero, until late in the film. Although Schindler ultimately makes the rescue possible by using his connections and monetary resources, Stern plays just as large a role by driving Schindler gently from behind the scenes. Stern sets the wheels in motion, making the factory a haven for the Kraków Jews before Schindler even notices what is occurring.

Amon Goeth

Sadistic and ruthless, Amon Goeth represents the evil of the Nazi Party. Goeth finds a sanctioned outlet for his cruelty in the Nazi military and is representative of the mindless evil of the Third Reich and its "final solution." He views Jews as vermin, creatures unworthy of possessing basic human rights. He kills often and without hesitation or provocation. Unlike Schindler, Goeth never strays into goodness. However, the lack of change in his basic nature does not render him a one-dimensional character; Goeth is a complicated and conflicted man, as well. He lusts after his Jewish maid, Helen Hirsch, and actor Ralph Fiennes skillfully conveys both the strength and ambivalence of this passion. Goeth attempts to seduce Helen, and when she shows no reaction, he turns on her, blames her for trying to tempt him, calls her names, and beats her savagely. Later, when Schindler wants to buy Helen to put her on his list, Goeth refuses. He tells Schindler he will never let her go, that he wants to bring her back to Vienna and grow old with her. Schindler tells him it can never be, and Goeth, exhibiting his conflicting feelings, replies that he would never subject Helen to Auschwitz, but would shoot her in the head,

"mercifully," instead. Goeth's twisted idea of a merciful end for Helen epitomizes both his inner conflict and essential cruelty.

Themes

The Triumph of the Human Spirit

In the face of overwhelming evil, the Jews in *Schindler's Ark* exhibit an unbroken spirit and will to survive. Mrs. Nussbaum, trying to make the best of the situation just like all the other Jews forced into the ghetto, tells her husband their ghetto apartment could be worse. Schindler's factory workers believe they may be safe in his factory and continue to hope for survival. The event that perhaps best illustrates this triumph of spirit is the wedding in the Plaszów labor camp. Even though the Jews in Plaszów live in constant fear of death, including random shootings from a hilltop villa by camp overseer Amon Goeth, two people manage to fall in love. With possibly no future to look forward to, they marry in the hope that they will survive. A woman in the barracks apologizes to God for performing the ceremony when she is not a rabbi, but explains that desperate times call for desperate measures, and that the union of the couple is ultimately what counts. The groom crushes a light bulb—an improvised substitution for the traditional wineglass—with his foot at the conclusion of the ceremony. Not only does the couple wed, but they stay true to Jewish traditions, which symbolizes hope for the survival of the Jewish race.

The Difference One Individual Can Make

The more than six thousand descendants of the Schindlerjuden might never have been born had one man not chosen to take a stand against evil. The Third Reich sanctioned and encouraged violence against the Jews and sought the ultimate destruction of the Jewish race, and millions of citizens of the Third Reich either stood idly by or actively supported this persecution. In *Schindler's Ark,* as the Jews in Kraków are forced into the ghetto, a little girl on the street cries out, "Good-bye, Jews," over and over again. She represents the open hostility often shown the Jews by their countrymen. After all, the little girl did not contain this hatred naturally—she learned it. Through her, Spielberg sends the message that the evil of the "final solution" infected entire communities. Although some people tried to help their Jewish friends and neighbors, far more refused to help, fearing reprisal, and some even turned on their Jewish neighbors. Any one of these people could have made a difference in the lives of Jews, but almost none did. Oskar Schindler risked his life and stood alone against the overwhelming evil of the Nazi Party. The powerful idea that one man can save the life of another underlies the entire film.

The Dangerous Ease of Denial

The Jews in *Schindler's Ark*, even as they are forced into the ghetto and later into the labor camp, suffer from a denial of their true situation. This denial afflicted many European Jews who fell victim to the Holocaust. They leave their homes in the countryside and move to Kraków and later to the ghetto because the Nazis force them to. Once in the ghetto, however, they believe the bad times will pass. Their denial of their situation continues in the labor camp, even as killing surrounds them. A prime example of denial occurs in the scene when Mila Pfefferberg tells the other women in her barracks about the rumors she heard of the death camps like Auschwitz. She tells the women how Jews are being gassed to death en masse, their remains cremated. The women respond with an almost angry dismissal, saying something like that surely could not happen. However, the actors manage to convey the fact that deep down, the women suspect the truth. They have suffered enough horror already to know mass extermination is possible.

Motifs

Lists

Lists dominate the lives of the Kraków Jews in *Schindler's Ark*. Early in the film, close-ups of name upon name being typed into the list of Jews registering in Kraków demonstrate the vast number of Jews forced into the city. But this first list only scratches the surface of danger and destruction. The lists become increasingly ominous during sorting exercises to determine who is fit to work or who is "essential" and who is not. Those deemed "unessential" are placed on the list to be evacuated to extermination camps. Stern's name appears on a list sending him to Auschwitz. When Schindler saves him, an SS officer mentions that it doesn't matter which Jew gets on the train, and that keeping track of names just means more paperwork. This disregard for names and particularity symbolizes the extent to which the Nazis dehumanized Jews. Schindler's list is one that saves lives. The Nazis' lists represent evil and death, but Schindler's list represents pure good and life. In an ironic twist, the final list in the film is a list that Schindler's workers give to him—a list of their signatures vouching for Schindler as a good man, to help him if Allied soldiers catch him. The saved in turn become saviors.

Trains

Trains were an integral logistical component of the Holocaust. Jews were loaded into actual cattle cars of freight trains, which carried them to death camps. In *Schindler's Ark,* the first Jews arrive in Kraków by train and register as Jews on the platform. When

Stern is rescued from a crowded train bound for Auschwitz, thousands of other Jews are visible on the train, packed into the cars like sardines. In one scene, Schindler implores Goeth to spray water into the cars on a hot day to help the dehydrated Jews inside. Goeth tells him that to do so would give false hope—a clear implication that the trains deliver Jews to their deaths. When the Schindlerjuden are transported to Schindler's new factory in Czechoslovakia, the men travel in one train, the women in another. In this case, the trains signify hope and life, since they are taking their occupants to a safe haven. But the women's train becomes a death train when it is diverted to Auschwitz, where Schindler's intervention saves the women from extermination. The women board a train to safety, but as they depart, more trains arrive at the camp. The cycle of death seems never-ending.

Death

Death and fear of death govern the lives of the Jews in *Schindler's Ark.* Images of death pervade the film, usually in the form of executions, as people are shot in the head, often indiscriminately. This method of execution is used again and again. The one-armed man who thanks Schindler for employing him and making him "essential" is shot in the head by an SS officer as he shovels snow the next day. Blood flows from his head, staining the surrounding snow. In a later scene, Goeth orders the execution of a Jewish woman engineer who tells Goeth of a fatal construction error. Her blood, too, pours from her head and darkens the snow around her. The blood pouring from the victims' heads is both literally and metaphorically the lifeblood being bled out of the Jewish race. In yet another scene, Goeth attempts to execute a rabbi working at the Plaszów labor camp. The rabbi stays kneeling as Goeth again and again attempts to shoot him in the head. But the gun jams, and the rabbi is spared, symbolizing the tenuous protection the Schindlerjuden had and the fine line between life and death.

Symbols

The Girl in the Red Coat

The girl in the red coat is the most obvious symbol in *Schindler's Ark*, simply because her coat is the only color object, other than the Shabbat candles, presented in the main body of the film. To Schindler, she represents the innocence of the Jews being slaughtered. He sees her from high atop a hill and is riveted by her, almost to the exclusion of the surrounding violence. The moment Schindler catches sight of her marks the moment when he is forced to confront the horror of Jewish life during the Holocaust and his own

hand in that horror. The little girl also has a greater social significance. Her red coat suggests the “red flag” the Jews waved at the Allied powers during World War II as a cry for help. The little girl walks through the violence of the evacuation as if she can’t see it, ignoring the carnage around her. Her oblivion mirrors the inaction of the Allied powers in helping to save the Jews. Schindler later spots her in a pile of exhumed dead bodies, and her death symbolizes the death of innocence.

The Road Paved with Jewish Headstones

The road through the Plaszów labor camp, paved with headstones torn up from Jewish cemeteries, is a replica of the actual road that existed there. The road adds to the historical accuracy of the film but also symbolizes the destruction of the Jewish race. The removal of the headstones from the cemeteries represents the enormity of the Holocaust. Unsatisfied with simply wiping out existing Jews, Goeth, by planning the road, denies acknowledgement of many Jews’ final resting places. By removing the grave markers, Goeth in effect erases the existence of the dead. Moreover, Goeth forces the Jews in the camp to build the road, rubbing in their faces the fact that they, too, will soon be erased. The message is clear: the Nazis view the Jews as not worth even grave markers and want only to erase them from history.

Piles of Personal Items

In one of the most jarring scenes in the film, Jews are loaded onto cattle cars as a recorded voice tells them to leave their luggage on the platform, as it will follow on a separate train. The luggage, however, will not follow them. Instead, Nazis bring it to a back room, where they dump out and sort the contents. This room holds huge piles of personal belongings, including photographs, shoes, hairbrushes, and clothing, all separated for processing. At a table sits a group of Jewish jewelers, forced to sort and determine the value of the gold, silver, and jewels belonging to those on the train. These piles symbolize the millions of lives that were lost—not just the physical lives but the very essence of the victims, who are stripped of their identity. One thousand hairbrushes represent one thousand victims and one thousand lives.

Literary Devices

In the face of an evil like the Holocaust, making a true connection with the victims can be overwhelming. Separating the victims from the numbers in order to comprehend the scope and horror of the Holocaust is nearly impossible. Museums, books, and pictures

help to educate people, but more than six million Jews alone were slaughtered, which is a tremendously difficult reality to grasp emotionally and intellectually. The enormous number of victims and the many ways in which they were tortured and murdered are so vast that one could get lost in these statistical masses without ever really understanding the plight of individual victims. Only the victims themselves were truly able to feel the horror of the Holocaust. Steven Spielberg hoped to address this difficulty with *Schindler's Ark.* Since it is easier for people to make connections on a personal rather than an abstract level, Spielberg tried to replace the vast numbers with specific faces and names. He tried to ensure that viewers would make personal connections with the characters in the film and thus begin to digest the events on a smaller scale.

Spielberg, the director of the movie, manages to convey the horror the Schindlerjuden faced by making the viewers feel as if they are participating in the events, not just watching. Viewers meet characters and follow their plights closely, developing a connection to these individual victims who are themselves representative of all Holocaust victims. This connection is Spielberg's main goal in *Schindler's List.* He wants the viewer to identify with the characters, to feel their pain and fear. This individualization forces viewers to confront the horror on a personal level and to realize that every victim had a story, loved ones, a home, a business, and a life. To look at the Jews of the Holocaust simply as a group or race dehumanizes them a second time, removing their individuality and uniqueness. The Nazis dehumanized Jews in the camps by tattooing numbers on their arms in order to identify them by number rather than name, and Spielberg makes an effort to recognize individuals' names in his film.

Oskar Schindler himself embodies this idea of recognizing and caring for the individual. He is unable to stand by and watch his Jewish workers perish, for he makes a personal connection with them and does not want to see them killed. This relationship between Schindler and the Schindlerjuden parallels the connection the viewers make with the latter. In a sense, the viewer knows and cares about these people, wants them to survive, and feels triumphant when they do.

Spielberg personalizes the Nazis as well, however. The character of Amon Goeth allows an intimate glimpse into the mind of a Nazi officer corrupted by anti-Semitism. He shoots Jews from his balcony for target practice. He sees the Jewish people as a mass, not as individuals with thoughts and feelings. However, he is intoxicated by his Jewish maid,

Helen Hirsch, and struggles with his conflicting feelings of attraction to Helen and pure hatred of Jews. Unlike Schindler, Goeth denies his connection to an individual. He cannot overcome his hatred, just as the Nazi Party in general could not overcome its wholesale hatred of Jews.

Spielberg carries the idea of individualism through to the powerful final scene in the film. Here, in full color, the real surviving Schindlerjuden appear. Lined up as far as the eye can see—many with their actor counterparts in the film—they place rocks on Oskar Schindler's grave. Spielberg's decision to show the actors accompanying the actual survivors serves two purposes. First, the scene drives home the point that the characters in the film are real people rather than just invented figures. Viewers can feel a great sense of satisfaction in seeing the actual survivors who triumphed over evil. Second, Spielberg is sending a message to all those who doubt the reality of the Holocaust that human proof of the tragedy exists and that what happened can never be erased. Witnesses to the horror are still alive to tell their tales and to make sure we never forget.

The Impact of Black-and-White Film

In movies set in modern times, a director's choice to use black and white might seem trite and artistically showy. In *Schindler's List*, however, the black-and-white presentation effectively evokes the World War II era and deepens the impact of the story. Black and white also presents the filmmaker with the opportunity to use sparing color to highlight key scenes and signal shifts in time. For example, the opening full-color scene, one of only a handful of color scenes in the movie, fades into the next scene, in black and white. The shift plunges viewers into 1939, bringing them symbolically closer to the events and characters in the story. This artistic and psychological convention of bringing the audience back in time works well partly because it captures the way many people visualize World War II—through black-and-white images and film footage of the 1930s and 1940s. Although contemporary viewers are accustomed to full-color images and tend to consider such images to be more realistic than those in black and white, the black and white in *Schindler's Ark* conveys an alternate but no less realistic version of life. The movie presents an eclectic mix of styles, such as film noir, which is associated with the great detective stories of the 1940s. The style links the film to that time period and serves to deepen viewers' immersion in the historical setting.

The artistic advantage of black and white is that it heightens the impact of the film's violence and highlights the duality of good and evil. The lighting and contrast in the film noir style enhance the brutality of each violent scene. For instance, when the one-armed man is shot in the head in the snowy streets of Kraków, his seemingly black blood spreads through the pure white snow, and the stark contrast in colors emphasizes the split between life and death, good and evil. In some terrifying scenes, such as the evacuation of the Kraków ghetto, the lighting is kept dark, conveying a sense of panic and confusion. The white faces of the dead in the streets contrast starkly against the murky background. The same contrast marks the pile of burning bodies in the Plaszów work camp: the white skulls stand out in the pile of ashes. The women's faces in the shower scene at Auschwitz are bathed in white light as they stare up in terror at the showerheads. The contrast of light and dark also marks Schindler's face, which is often half in shadow, reflecting his selfish dark side. His face becomes more fully lighted as he makes the transformation from war profiteer to savior. *Schindler's List* might not have had the same visual and emotional impact had Spielberg made the film in color.

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