



Whispers of the Outback: Exploring the Australian Bush in Literature

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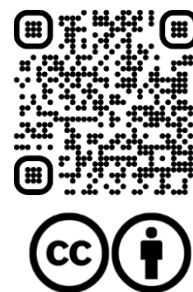
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Abstract— *The project provides an exploration of the 'Australian Bush' in literary work. The Australian bush, with its vast landscapes, unique flora and fauna, and distinctive cultural heritage, has played a pivotal role by demonstrating literary imagination and cultural identity. Figures, data, citations, and statements abound in this work, which is divided into four subtopics: ripping yarn, bush poetry, 20th-century Australian literature, and Aboriginal literature. In each part, it sheds light on the influence of the Australian bush on the writers, poets, and storytellers who highlight the relationship between humans and the bush in a metaphorical way.*

Keywords— *Bush Studies, Ripping Yarn, Bush Poetry, Aboriginal Literature.*



I. INTRODUCTION

The term "Bush" for forest comes from the Dutch word "Bosch" Later, the concept of "the bush" has become ideal in Australia and symbolizes Australian life, which refers to the wide range of landscape covered across thousands of kilometers with the exception of the cactus and tall grass, where there is barely any vegetation; it is also known as the "outback. Apart from that, 'the bush' is considered a significant part of Australian identity.

The Australian bush is a legendary and fascinating place that has served as the setting for several films and works of literature of all genres. It is a fascinating area for literary students, particularly from the late 19th century onward, during the period of national writing. The bush was formerly said to be a harsh but romantic environment that the locals both loved and feared. People living in the bush who were well adapted and happy with their lifestyle Then the legendary bushman myth was born, a myth that described the outward appearance and character of the typical Australian bushman, the bushman as the typical Australian, and dealt with mate ship (an Australian idiom that embodies loyalty and friendship), love and fear of the bush, and a strong pride in national identity. Women play hardly any role in this idealized world.

II. BUSH STUDIES

The Australian author Barbara Baynton published her 6 short stories under the title 'Bush Studies' in which she mentions about the bush life in the early colonial period as a dangerous and isolating for women, therefore it's directly challenged the stereotype thinking regarding gender, power and land which is very different from the one that male author wanted to illustrated her depiction is more realistic, not totally hostile rather than it's seems like gothic with depressing state. Her fiction provides a superbly ironic critique of Australian tradition which challenged the romanticism of Henry Lawson, who present women were strong, stoic, loyal women and often positioned as supporters or extensions of the male characters, such as the woman in 'The Drover's Wife', published ten years previously. In contrast, Baynton's women were often oppressed, violated, suffering, lonely, dismissed or struggling against a hostile social and natural environment. In "Billy Skywonkie" the countryside is described as "barren shelter less plains." So, it 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" (Baynton 47).

In the traditional dichotomy between men and women, the sun is always considered 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 that is hostile but the activities of men, which make gothic land, and it also represents Baynton's portrayed women, which are associated with the land because both are victims of men.

III. AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

Australian literature is a vast body of writing that includes early renditions and English translations of Aboriginal song cycles or folktales as well as the diaries, memoirs, and songs of early European explorers and settlers. It also covers the more formal literary works that emerged as writing and printing, which came to dominate the island's culture. So, there are four branches of Australian literature:

3.1 Ripping Yarn

Ripping Yarn, is the oldest literary convention and tells tales or stories of daring feats in new and unknown places. It's often talked about new bush heroes who survive natural disasters; hence, this type of idea is new for England but important to developing the new Australian identity as well as spreading the awareness back to Europe about what this new settlement in Australia really meant.

3.2 Bush Poetry

The second branch is bush poetry, ballads, and songs; it's a style of poetry and folk music that depicts the life, character, and scenery of the Australian bush. Bush ballad is a rhyming, narrative-based poem adapted for singing. Basically, it uses a straightforward rhyme structure to narrate a story, often one of action and adventure. It also uses humor to create a melancholic tone with many other themes, like bush ranging, which is about originally escaped convicts in the early years of the British settlement. Next, about Drover, typically it's about a person who, as an experienced stockman, moves livestock, usually sheep, cattle, and horses, over long distances, and other themes like life on the frontier, etc.

One of the famous poems, "Mulga Bill's Bicycle" by Banjo Paterson, is one of the prominent bush poetries. It is a funny poem about a man who believes he can ride anything from a bull to a bike. He has never ridden a bike and thinks that he is the best rider in the world. So, there are two main themes that depict the Australian bush. The first is the name of the poem "Mulga," which is found in the dry, arid parts of the Australian Outback. The term "Mulga Bill" probably refers to a man named Bill who came from an area where Mulga trees grew, and the second is the condition of Australian land, which is very

dry even though there is a drought that's made him buy a bicycle because he has a shortage of horse food since there is no plantation, which is why he shifted from horse to bicycle. There is another story, "A Campfire of Cowboy Billy," which also depicts bush culture, even though it turns out to be a great friendship relationship between Billy and his horse. This story shows the nature of a bushman through the journey of Billy in an imaginary landscape with a horse and doing campfires out in nature. Hence, Australian identity was captured through ballads and songs during this bush era.

Two famous poets or authors, Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson, who are also known as "Bush Bards" (who recite and compose epic or traditional poems), They fight over the merits of living in the Australian "Bush" through a poem series famous for the name of the "Bulletin Debate." So, this debate starts with Henry Lawson's poem "Up Country" which is a harsh portrayal of bush life, describing it as a place 'where the lean and haggard women live alone and work like men', establishing the critical voice of Lawson. Through the use of similes and hyperbole, Lawson creates a distasteful depiction of the bush's life experience. Therefore, Lawson recounts his trip to the barren and gloomy Australian bush and criticizes "City Bushmen" such as Banjo Paterson, who tended to romanticize bush life. Even "In Defense of the Bush," written as a reply to the Lawson poem, was countered by Paterson by claiming that Lawson's view of bush life was full of doom and gloom. He finished his poem with the line,

"For the bush will never suit you, and you'll never suit the bush." (Paterson, 1892).

3.3 20th-century Australian literature

The third branch of Australian literature, known as 20th-century Australian work, which focuses on mental illness and multiculturalism-like issues. Les Murray's 20th century writer work "An Absolutely Ordinary Rainbow," in which he used ripping yarn form to convey his message about human experiences, including emotions, relationships, and how the external environment affects thoughts, values, and beliefs, though all these aspects represent the experience of being human for all people, they are unique to and vary with each individual. He wrote:

"Only the smallest children and such as look out of Paradise come near him and sit at his feet, with dogs and dusty pigeons", (Murray, 1997).

In which they depict how strong men have a fear of showing their emotions in public, which may make them lose something, but, on the other side, ordinary people who are free to express their emotions, whether they are crying

or talking with animals, are basically doing what they want without any hesitation. So somehow, through this poem, he describes the problems of modern society and how people feel insecure and unconscious about their happiness.

3.4 Aboriginal Literature

The last branch of Australian literature is aboriginal literature, which became quite famous in this period for spreading the aboriginal story, which had previously been untold and forgotten by the white settlement, so they provided an expression of culture and basically an insight into the aboriginal struggle in dealing with issues such as separation from their family and loss of connection with their land through their removal by white settlers. Like the novel "My Place" by Sally Morgan, it is an autobiographical and aboriginal literature text that talks about Morgan's quest for knowledge of her family's past and the fact that she has grown up under false pretenses. Even so, white society pushes Sally into identifying herself with a colored racial identity. Even when, as an adult, she learns that she is Aboriginal, she has difficulty accepting her indigenous identity because she has no knowledge of tribal background:

"What did it [to be Aboriginal] mean for someone like me?" (Morgan 141).

However, two events provide Sally with the basis to develop an understanding of her identity. During their college years, when Sally and her younger sister drop the fact among their classmates that they are Aboriginal, they find that white society accepts their Aboriginality yet treats them differently. In this statement, we clearly prove how white society treats them:

"Many students reacted with an embarrassed silence It was like we'd [Sally and Jill had] said a forbidden word. Others muttered, 'Oh, I'm sorry' and when they realized what they we're saying, they just sort of faded away" (Morgan 139).

The second event occurs in the Pilbara region where Sally is warmly welcomed as a member by local tribes' people. Billy, an Aboriginal man, tells her and her family members,

"You come as often as you please. There's always a spot here, for you all" (Morgan 232).

Thus, Sally's indigenous identity is nourished though, at this point, her knowledge of her Aboriginal side is limited. Despite this lack of real understanding, she is considered Aboriginal by both races.

There is another example of 20th-century Australian literature telling us about the bush life of Australia. "The Tree of Man" by Patrick White It tells the story of Stan Parker inheriting some land in the Australian hills after the

death of his father. He moves there with his wife, Amy, and together they start a family. Eventually, the area becomes populated, and the town of Durilgai emerges. We then follow the Parkers through the years as they face all the challenges that life throws at them, including floods, bush fires, infidelity, depression, and death. Similarly, "The Thorn Birds," a 1977 novel by Australian author Colleen McCullough, First, he used the aboriginal narrative by mentioning the oral traditional tales, which directly refer to one of the famous narrative techniques of Australian literature, like the book title, which refers to the mythical "thorn bird" that searches for thorn trees from the day it is hatched. When it finds the perfect thorn tree, it impales itself on a thorn and sings the most beautiful song ever heard as it dies. According to myth, there is a legend about a bird that sings, just once in its life, more sweetly than any other creature on the face of the earth. From the moment it leaves the nest, it searches for a thorn tree and does not rest until it has found one. Then, singing among the savage branches, it impales itself upon the longest, sharpest spine. And, dying, it rises above its own agony to out-carol the lark and the nightingale. One superlative song, existence is the price.

But the whole world still listens, and God in His heaven smiles. The best is only bought at the cost of great pain, or so says the legend. This thorn bird symbolizes the character of Fiona or Meggie because they are also on a quest for happiness, but for this they have to suffer a lot, like Meggie, who loves Ralph but it turns out to be an unrequited love, even though she tries to move on but ends up with a miserable married life, and her son also died, which depicts that she suffered a lot because of religion, love, and society, even though Meggie also committed the same mistake that her mother does, Fiona, whose marriage life was also not good, or even she had a son out of wedlock. So all those sufferings and pain that not only women had but like Ralph also suffered in a similar way, he also abandoned his love for religion, which basically sought a cycle of agony and consequences of desire that each and every character faced only because of their quest for happiness, which is similar to the thorn bird quest who killed herself for singing the most beautiful song, which is the happiness of a bird, so this all incident gives us the message that the best things only come to you after suffering.

She shows the contradiction between New Zealand Bush and Australian Bush; basically, Australia presents itself as a non-profitable land, a dry place where people are selfish, greedy, ambitious, and have no value for emotion, but New Zealand is totally opposite of this; it's a nice, full of greenery, and peaceful place. The novel character moves from a prosperous place to the hard landscape of Australia

in Drogheda, a sheep station in the Australian Outback. Her novel setting conveys the growth of the Australian cultural myth of the bush and the survival of their aboriginal people.

IV. CONCLUSION

Whether it is 20th century Australian literature, the author has very beautifully portrayed the oral tradition through narrative technique while referring to the title "The Thorn Bird," which justifies the agony of character and the bush lifestyle, which show the suffering, isolation, and loneliness in dry land. Similar to Patrick's novel, which also tries to settle in Australia, during this time period they go through all-natural disasters like floods and droughts, but later they adopt their lifestyle according to bush culture. Sally Morgan's novel is a little bit different from Australians in that they are unaware of their aboriginality and are far from their culture and traditions, which are very important aspects to know about your own identity. She is successful in gaining knowledge about their past and belongingness.

So, whether it's about aboriginal identity, survival in the Australian bush, or oral tradition, all aspects are depicted in an implicit way. Australian novels show a sense of attachment with their roots, where they belong from, and even still, through their work, they spread awareness about the originality of their belongingness or significance of their culture, which somewhere people might forget due to colonizer rule, the world war, or a lot of other things, but still, somewhere, writers always come up with the hope that our tradition and values are not fully destroyed and we have still a chance through literature to realize our background history or know about natives

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