

Resurfacing Australia's Early History via Literature: How "Australia": History's Invisible Woman Was Created"

by

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This literary work narrates the story of an Indigenous Australian woman and, more particularly, guides the reader throughout her transformative journey, cumulatively leading up to her evanescence. This narrative echoes the early writings of the 18th and 19th century, when pioneering Australian writers shed light on the experience of living far from England, in the newly discovered Australia. Its significance, though, lies on the personification used as its main literary device, via which Australia is depicted as a female herself.

The intertextual connections of the extracts are meant to create a linear, progressive narrative in each stanza of the poem. In the first two stanzas, Australia lives as a solitary female in a remote area. However, her sense of peacefulness is a very intense one: living in seclusion offers Australia a feeling of calmness that derives from the absence of sound. The usage of figurative discourse in these lines is also prominent: the oxymoron used in "the sound of complete silence" and the metaphor used in "the winter breeze that cracks the air" showcase the interaction between Nature and Australia. In this stage, I attribute nature a human essence as if she is involved in a constant dialogue with Australia. To a further extent, those lines may indicate the co-dependence of one to the other: Australia is unable to exist outside her "quietness" the same way nature appears rather mundane without Australia's presence in it. The 'inherent' connection of the land with Australia herself, a diachronic relation, is also mentioned in Jessie Mitchell who underlines the "material, personal and historical attachment to country" (87)

Stanzas three and four comment on Australia's portrayal as an idyllic place that would be cherished by the white settlers. In those lines I opted for several Biblical allusions: Australia as "Adam's Paradise" and the "Garden of Eden". These references serve as a subtle commentary on some Western newcomers' view of Australia as a sacred place praised for its uniqueness. Those people believed her to be of an outwardly beauty which they celebrated. This specific view on Australia would later be one of the main components leading up to her colonization by the white settlers. Ruth Feingold emphatically argues for the "sense of violation at the weakening of [Australia's] longstanding ties" (69). Feingold's comment brings us back to the inseparable and self-definitive relation of Australia to its region and the Westerners' attempt to cut those affective ties.

The next three stanzas present the brutal perspective of the majority of the white Europeans: those people could initially see no prospects in the barren land without their own intervention: Indigenous Australia is depicted as a woman on the verge of infertility, imprisoned in a liminal space between life and death and physically abused. The marks she has on her body cause her fatal decay which is interpreted as a 'new opportunity' for recreation by the settlers. Although this particular view has its origins back in the colonization era, Ali Gumillya Baker and Gus Worby state its relevance up to recent times. They claim that "dispossession and extinguishment" are often used by "white settler societies" in the name of its "purity of motive" (21). It is evident, thus, that the extraction of the native Australian land back then, was perceived as a genuine attempt to revitalize the country, by bringing in it the Western values and practices.

In the last stanza of the poem, Australia vanishes. At the same time, however, not everyone perceives her disappearance negatively. From the colonizers' perspective, her moment of decay is an opportunity offered for a potential 'revival', via creating something entirely new. It is evident, thus, that the whites' intention was to construct a new nation from scratch, a

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revitalized version of Australia that would be re-created from its ashes. Consequently, my literary piece centers around the idea of an Aboriginal Australian woman towards her destruction, yet a kind of destruction that will only serve as the first step into creating something different from what Australia used to be, according to the Westerners' purpose.

Works Cited

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