



THE STOLEN IDENTITIES OF AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE: TRACED THROUGH SELECTED TRANSLATION POETRY COLLECTION “*POOVULAGAI KATRALUM KETALUM*” BY AALIYAL

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Abstract:

This paper aims to explore the cultural heritage of the Aboriginal people of Australia. The research also traces the questions like who are the Aboriginals? How they lived prior to British interventions? How this community is separated from their land? How the cultural genocide executed? How their generation has been stolen by the whites? In addition, how translation becomes important for the literature. The research uses the methodology of Exploratory and Qualitative methods. The data is collected through reading certain literary writings and mainly from the translation poetry called “*Poovulagai Katralum Ketalum*” by Aaliyal.

Key Words: Aboriginal, identity, separation, stolen

Introduction

“*Poovulagai Katralum Ketalum*” is a translated poetry collection by Aaliyal. The original poems were directly written in English by Aboriginal poets. The fact that the aboriginal poet’s native languages were oral not written one. Therefore, they have directly written in English. The translator says that merely the writings are in the form of written word but the soul behind the letters are very bright with blackness. In this context, the poetry collection brings many hidden histories of the aboriginal people. The text can be read as alternative history with many evidences.

In the past several decades ago the colonial process itself started with discovering lands by the Europeans. As a result, they started to colonize lands for various purpose. Europeans constructed themselves as superior, civilized. Whereas they constructed the colonies as Inferior and uncivilized. The indigenous Australians are the aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia, descended from groups that existed in Australia and surrounding islands prior to British colonization.

Hence, they thought it’s their responsibility to civilize the colonies this was the reason said by the colonial powers in the process of colonizing countries. But the actual reason behind this is very crucial they arrived to colonial nations only to exploit the resources of the colonies and strengthen the economic development of Europe. In this way they captured many lands. On the contrary, they discovered Australia by using the land as a “penal colony”. They used it as a prison. So, the whites who have committed any crimes have been expelled from Europe to Australia as punishment. This is how the colonial power stepped into Australia. Its generality was that the arrival of whites in the colonies brought many changes. Likewise, the arrival of white powers brought drastic changes



and challenges in the lives of the aboriginal people which was recorded in this poetry collection as alternative history.

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative research methodology. Poetry collections, articles, journals will be used to conduct the research.

Discussion

The history of Australian aboriginal people is hidden behind the landscape itself. If anyone wants to discover the history of the natives that should be traced through the landscape. Most compelling evidence is that the Australian aboriginal people lived their life with their land and nature. There is a title in this poetry collection called '*ketalum katralum*' (listening and learning). In this the writer explores the lives of the people and their understanding of the land. The lines as follows,

Have you heard?

The sound of the land

Have you heard?

when it is breathing

you can feel it.

The secrets of the land

It's in itself.

These lines illustrate their connection with land and only through the real feel they could be able to converse with the land and know more things about them. Those with an authoritative voice cannot listen or learn the land. people gathered foods from their surroundings. Example fishing and eating. There is a title called "remembering".

Women are narrating stories,

Talking and sharing,

Naming,

Teaching

Linguistics (remembering- 17)



These lines show, the culture of collecting foods from their environment and having it together by surrounded by the fire. During that not only they share their foods even they share their cultural heritages to their children. They sing songs which are in their mother languages. These are not just songs but also the medium that teach their children languages.

The association with environment and nature provides them sense of belonging, sense of home. The arrival of British collapses the lives of these people and lead to imbalance. In that many unwanted and nonrelated plants, animals, activities were introduced. It brought massive destruction in the indigenous people's lives. Many were died, most of them were pushed to the periphery, their identity was stolen, mixed race children were born. women are abused by the colonizers.

Stealing a group's identity in systematical way is very serious. The identity of the Australian aboriginal people identity was taken away in number of ways. This is a tactic and diplomatic process carried out by the colonizers. Here is a poem titled "blessed child". In this poem we could see, how a mixed-race child has taken away from their parents to an unknown land with the false hope providing a well-educated life. This particular poem looks at that the mixed-race children by birth itself lose their racial appearance. The children born to indigenous mother but has white skin and white hair were said to be accepted by the colonizers. They can be easily assimilated in the white community. These children were taken away from their parents and said to be given good education, good mannerism, civilized life style and so on. Actually, behind these promises there were some intentions that, in a course of time these children would forget the black skin faces of their origins and would study their history in an alien land which was written by the whites. This called systematical erasure of a race with the intentional motives. The forgetting of their own race mentioned in the poem as follows,

Soon you will forget the black faces behind the fences

You study the white history of victory on

Defeating the black barbaric race. (Blessed Child- 39)

There is another poetry with the same theme of alienated mixed-race children. The poem "Where do we belong?" raises the question of where do the children belong who has a feature of both black and white. It is very pathetic that these children were forced to leave their culture, language, family, race everything with the replacement of new identity. The psychological trauma of these children was shown through these lines.

Number of questions:

Italy? or Greek?

Maori of New Zealand? Or

Anywhere else?

Does it mean 'black' with the overwhelmed blackness or



Does it mean 'white' with the overwhelmed whiteness

Where do I belong?

In-between

No where to belong. (Where do we belong? -45)

The poem "Eight beds and eight locked trunks" exposes the living room of eight children brought to Europe. The poem mentions that, though there are many books, journals, newspapers in the colours of red, blue, orange, black and green and more. But none had influenced the children, they eat, sleep, talk but no sense of belong with the rights. No belief in anything and anyone. They live in the room as eight inanimate objects. The poems with stolen children and stolen identity were clearly mirrored the sufferings of the Australian aboriginal children.

In this poetry collection some poems are written without names and headings. Those symbolize the lost identities. Some of the life history of these aboriginal people are only exist through paintings. The reality of their lives, environment, landscape, culture and language all are erased in a very planned manner.

Conclusion

The arrival of British into Australia completely shaken the lives of the aboriginal people. Always there is a concern that, British travelled to east to civilize the nations. In the eyes of the British the aboriginal people were barbaric and uncivilized. They took it as their responsibility to civilize them. This is the said reason of their arrival in east part of the world. But actually, they exploited and taken all the resources of the natives in these lands. Later, in each place they became the center by driving away the aboriginal natives to the periphery. Thus, the research traced the white's arrival and black aboriginal people erasure and stolen identity of their children and the landscape.

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