

## Still Hoping for Reconciliation: Reading Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria* as a Critique of Reconciliation

Virender Pal

*University College, Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra, Haryana, India. Email: p2vicky@gmail.com*

---

### Abstract

Australian government started the policy of reconciliation in 1991. The Aborigines were very optimistic about the policy in the beginning. The optimism is evident in Alexis Wright's *Plains of Promise*, but in her second novel *Carpentaria*, she revises her point of view and she demonstrates the reconciliation has made no difference in the lives of the Aborigines. The novel demonstrates that racism is still strong in the small towns like Desperance, the town described in the novel. The novel also shows that the Aboriginal culture faces the most important threat in the era of reconciliation. In the novel, Wright makes it clear that the Aborigines are trying to reconcile with the oppressive white Australian policies, but the whites are still hesitant in giving human status to the Aborigines. The minds of the whites are still frozen in the assimilation era where the Aborigines were supposed to acquire the etiquettes of the whites. The Aborigines are still the worst sufferers of white racist policies. The novel makes it clear that reconciliation has become an oppressor centred policy rather than an oppressive centred one.

**Key Words:** Alexis Wright, reconciliation, racism, culture

### Introduction

Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria* (2007) is one of the most important novels to emerge from Indigenous Australia. The novel marks an important departure not only from the earlier Indigenous women's writing of Australia, but also from her own writing. Her first novel *Plains of Promise* (1997) is largely an exercise in creating "alterNative history" (Kuokkanen 698). That is, in *Plains of Promise*, she aims to present the history of Australia during the phases of "subjugation (approximately to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century), and segregation and protection" (up until the early 1950's to early 1970's)" (Mercer 192) from the Australian Aboriginal perspective. At the same time the novel exposes the reality of the policy of taking away the native children from the Indigenous families. However, while lambasting the earlier policies, the novel seems to be very optimistic about the policy of reconciliation<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, her second novel, *Carpentaria* not only marks an important shift in the subject matter, but also in the attitude of writer towards the policy of reconciliation. In *Carpentaria*, she revises her point-of-view about the policy of reconciliation and presents not only a critique of it, but also its impact on the Aboriginal community.

Alexis Wright seems to endorse reconciliation and this endeavour showcases her great hopes in the policy in *Plains of Promise* (1997). Towards the end of the novel through the story of Mary, she demonstrates how the lives of Aborigines have changed in the era of reconciliation. The era of reconciliation is contrasted with two other eras of suppression and assimilation (Wright, Grog 35). While these two are shown as diabolic and detrimental to the Aborigines, Wright seems to support reconciliation. When compared to the life of Ivy's mother and Ivy, life of Mary is more comfortable. She is able to decide what is good for her. She is also able to live an independent life with her daughter Jessie which was impossible in Australia of yester years.

The novel gives an overall impression that Alexis Wright is very hopeful about the future of Aborigines in modern Australia, but her second novel *Carpentaria* presents a starkly different picture. The novel shows that nothing has changed for the Aborigines; things have become rather grim. The novel shows that the hopes placed in reconciliation were false and the Aborigines were the losers in the whole exercise.

The first novel *Plains of Promise* was published in 1997 and optimism was still high at that time. At that time reconciliation was still a new idea and intellectual Aborigines like Alexis Wright were prepared to give a chance to the whites to forge new relationship. Moreover, the process of reconciliation was supposed to be completed in ten years. The Aborigines believed that something magical will happen and the miseries of Aboriginal people will be removed in the next ten years. So *Plains of Promise* shows the hopes sustained by Aborigines during that era, while *Carpentaria* which was published in 2007, when reconciliation was already fifteen years old and the Aborigines were still languishing in poverty, abysmal living conditions. Though hope is depicted in *Carpentaria*, the hope does not emanate from the government's policies. It comes from the Aboriginal spirituality and belief.

### Literature and Reconciliation

For Aboriginal communities all over the world "literature has been an important forum for testifying to past and present injustices and for setting the interpretive framework of such articulations" (Rymhs 108). Aboriginal literature has to play an important role in the process of reconciliation also. According to the noted Aboriginal writer Mudrooroo:

Indigenous literature in English is part of process of reconciliation, for Indigenous literature begins as a cry from the heart directed at the invaders of our land. It is a cry for justice and better deal, a cry for understanding and an asking to be understood. (Mudrooroo, *Milli Milli Wangka* 2)

It is important to note that most of the Australians still believe in the stereotypes perpetrated by the colonial discourses where the Aborigines were portrayed as "stone age" people. In modern times, the old stereotypes have been recast and the Aborigines are now considered as lazy, drunkard and dirty people who are habitually violent.

One of the important tasks of the policy of reconciliation is to shatter these stereotypes because only then the Aborigines can be accepted in the mainstream society. Wright's second novel, however, shows that ten years of reconciliation has not done any good to the Aborigines, because the policy of reconciliation was aimed at reconciling the Aborigines to the prevailing conditions rather than reconciling with the Aborigines. An important difference comes to the meaning of verb 'reconcile' depending on whether the verb is followed by 'with' or 'to':

To reconcile 'with' conveys the meaning of 'harmonising,' 'healing' or 'making Friendly after estrangement.' To reconcile 'to' is to 'make another resigned or contentedly submissive.' Thus, reconciliation 'to' implies a relationship of unequal power whereby a dominant agent can render another submissive, while reconciliation 'with' does not necessarily imply such a relationship. (Nicoll, Fiona 18)

The Australian case is a peculiar one because in the past the whites were extremely powerful who could kill Aborigines, abduct and rape their women and go scot free with it. The Aborigines were totally at the mercy of the whites. So the process of reconciliation has to start by waking up the whites like Bruiser, the rabid mayor of Desperance in *Carpentaria*, from the reverie where they were all powerful. The history of uneven power relations comes between the two races and makes reconciliation difficult. Wright makes clear that reconciliation is not possible till the mindset of people like Bruiser undergoes a change. It is also interesting to note that Bruiser is a very "popular mayor" who has been voted "citizen of the year" for ten straight years (*Carpentaria* 34). His popularity shows that his extremist views are shared by many of the residents. Stan Bruiser still remains firmly rooted in the past where the Aborigines were not considered human beings.

It is clear that Stan Bruiser is still living in "assimilation" era where the Aborigines were expected to live like the whites, but that is not all, he brings up the past while talking to the Aborigines and taunts Angel Day about the "times he chased her on horseback down to the creek until her bony legs gave up" (*Carpentaria* 41). He brags about "how he had chased every Aboriginal woman in town at various times, until he ran them into the ground then raped them. He had branded them all, like a bunch of cattle" (*Carpentaria* 41). It is clear that mindset like this can complicate the situation. Henry Reynolds describes an incident where a Torres Strait Islander bashed a white man. The white man was beaten because: the white man had tried to shoot the Islander in the Northern Territory twenty years before. He "kept laughing and joking about it and boasted that he had already shot eight black fellas" (Reynolds, Why 55).

White men like Bruiser keep on bragging about the past because they still think that the Aborigines are inferior to the whites.

Reconciliation is a process that cannot be completed in ten years. It is not a physical process; rather it is more of a psychological process where the minds of the whites have to be de-racialised. On the other hand, the Aborigines are to be assured that past will not repeat itself and they are safe and their rights secure in modern Australia. According to Audrey R. Chapman:

National reconciliation is a long term process with two major dimensions. First it requires the transformation of relationships among former antagonists. The goal is to enable them to achieve sufficient accommodation and trust to be able to live together peacefully and co-operate and collaborate with the one another. Second it involves the establishment of a new type of relationship between the citizens and the Government resting on political institutions based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and thus facilitating co-operation across boundaries leading to a shared commitment to common future. (143)

Alexis Wright draws the true picture of Aboriginal Australia to make the mainstream white people aware of the Aboriginal truth. She is cynical while describing the living conditions of the Aborigines in the town of Desperance. Her single statement sums it up: "A fish lives far better off than a dry old blackfella from Desperance" (*Carpentaria* 256). The people live in shabby homes which are made of dump material and remaining "dry" (*Carpentaria* 14) in rainy season in such homes is a challenge. In fact, Wright makes clear that so far reconciliation has been an empty slogan and the conditions of the Aborigines have worsened.

### Alexis Wright and Reconciliation

Through *Carpentaria*, Wright makes clear two things: Acid test of reconciliation does not lie in the cities like Canberra, Sydney or Melbourne. These cities have already become cosmopolitan centres because of the continuous influx of immigrants from different countries. In these cities, the people have no other choice except tolerating one another. Moreover, these cities are very near to centres of power and police can reach at any place within minutes. So racial relations on the surface are generally cordial or seem to be cordial.

The real test of reconciliation lies in small towns like Desperance, where the racial relations are still fragile and can break up at smallest provocation. In such breakups, Aborigines are the main sufferers. Wright shows how the lives of Aborigines and whites are intertwined in small towns. Because only a limited number of people reside in such small towns so playing possum with the presence of the other is almost impossible. While the bigger towns are so overcrowded that people can easily avoid the people they want to avoid.

The second thing that is clear from *Carpentaria* is that the Aborigines cannot wait for reconciliation to happen. In fact, as the novel seems to point out; reconciliation is not a solution of anything. Rather, Wright seems to suggest that going back to the Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal spirituality is the only solution, the novel shows if the Aborigines have to gain pride, the place they want in the white dominated society then asserting Aboriginality is the only solution.

From the very beginning, the Australian government did what it wanted and never paid attention to the desires of the Aborigines. So the reconciliation was an oppressor -centered policy and not an oppressed centered one. The significant differences in interests and approaches by the Aborigines on one hand and the Government on the other was evident in the 1997 initiative of the *Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation* when they organized the *Australian Reconciliation Convention*. The issues taken up by the Aborigines were more "foundational issues such as reconciliation in the community, human rights, the formulation of documents of reconciliation, and constitutional issues." The Council of the Aborigines recommended "treaty and apology, and recognition of prior Aboriginal custodianship in the preamble to the constitution" (Goosen 257), but John Howard, the then Prime Minister of Australia, remained adamant and continued to hold the belief that the diabolic and genocidal policy of taking away the indigenous children was "benign" (qtd. in Kaplan Myrth 73). The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation ceased to exist in 2001 and new independent non-profit body called *Reconciliation Australia* came into being.

### Racism and Reconciliation

Albert Memmi concluded that racism has its roots in interactions in which "one finds oneself in contact with an individual or group that is different and poorly understood" (23), but "racism only becomes racism "(32) when these differences are deployed "to denigrate the other" (37). Thus the "entire machinery of racism" is about "the legitimization and consolidation of power and privilege" (38). Racism does not allow the development of relationship between the Aborigines and the whites. The policy of reconciliation has failed to make any dent in the impregnable castle of racism. In such a society, reconciliation is a far- fetched idea because the Aborigines are still not accepted as human beings by the whites. On the other hand reconciliation means acceptance of each other:

Reconciliation may be defined as mutual acceptance by groups of each other. The essence of reconciliation is changed psychological orientation towards the other. Reconciliation means that victims and perpetrators, or members of hostile groups do not see the past as defining the future, as simply a continuation of the past. It means that they come to see the humanity of one another, accept each other, and see the possibility of a constructive relationship. (Staub 869)

*Carpentaria* shows that Australian society in the rural and semi urban areas is still a racist one and the era of reconciliation has not been able to abate that racism.

Wright shows that racism is part of the life of Aborigines of Desperance. Normal Phantom's youngest son becomes a victim of some young boys who are wearing "White hoods" (*Carpentaria* 343). White hoods are probably a reminder of extremist racist organization of Ku Klux Klan<sup>2</sup>. Kevin tries to escape but he "felt the knife gliding down his neck being pressed deeply into his flesh. There were several voices in the car, all talking to him at the same time. 'take this for Gordie,' fists flew at him from the front and from the back" (*Carpentaria* 344).

Even white historians like Henry Reynolds admit that "racism continues to be a powerful ever present force" (Reynolds, *Why* 248). Racism even persists in the metropolitan centres but in a covert way. A study was conducted on the first year university students. The groups of students expressed great concern about Government's spending on Aboriginal programmes and many of them believed that too much money was being spent on Aboriginal unproductively. They also objected to existing affirmative action policies for Aboriginal candidates in the university arguing that the policy was advantageous to the Aborigines and individual merit should be the only criteria for getting university education (Mellor 47).

Young Kevin is beaten so badly by these people without any reason or provocation. The law in Desperance is "eye for an eye. A black for a white" (*Carpentaria* 356). The novelist also makes it clear that the racism of the boys who have beaten Kevin is inherited from their parents. The parents of these boys are proud of their children: "the fathers of those louts who bashed Kevin were openly boasting to Uptown about putting a nigger down for Gordie" (*Carpentaria* 356). In fact, what Wright depicts in the novel is the extreme kind of racism where the Aborigines are blamed for everything that goes wrong in the town. Will Phantom is blamed for the fires in the town; three young boys are blamed for killing Gordie. All these Aborigines are made culprits without any proof.

The three young Aborigines: Tristram Fishman, Junior Fishman Luke and Aaron Ho Kum are subjected to inhuman torture which kills them. It is interesting to note that Tristram is only ten years old while his brother Luke is twelve and Aaron Ho Kum is aged eleven. Other murders also take place in *Carpentaria* but those were "black murders" (*Carpentaria* 313) and Gordie was a white man so his murder "was different and required the very best one could expect of civil action from the Australian Law" (*Carpentaria* 313).

Justice in this reconciliation era is still reserved for the whites. The Aborigines are still the citizens of other world where they can be incarcerated without any reason. The inhuman torture is described by Wright in a powerful manner. Here Wright's anger is visible:

Truthful noticed how abstract their blood looked as it dripped down from the clean walls and onto the lean concrete floor. A sickening image of cattle being slaughtered flashed across his mind, and the first thing he understood was he would have to clean up. (*Carpentaria* 333-334)

The boys after the torture look like as if they “had been put through mincing machine” (*Carpentaria* 334). The children die in the lockup. Interestingly, nobody bothers about the Aboriginal boys. The scene clearly shows that racism prevails in its worst form in the post- reconciliation Australia and even innocent children are not spared.

Wright is at her best when she exposes the racism of the Whites. Most of the time a direct comment from her is missing, but her description makes everything clear. For example, when the town people come to know that Mozzie Fishman's sons are being blamed for the murder of Gordie they start blaming the father: "What a shame the father don't stay around town and be a real father for a change" (*Carpentaria* 329), but when name of Aaron Ho Kum crops up, nobody wants to blame the parents (*Carpentaria* 330) because father of Aaron Ho Kum is a white man Lloydie Smith. Though Lloydie Smith had never acknowledged the fatherhood of Aaron Ho Kum, yet he could not be blamed because white man could do no wrong. Lloydie Smith was not even held responsible for siring Aaron Ho Kum, but for the whites "Miscegenation was the word, he said, for inter-breeding was treated as though good white sperm had been falsely procured by a lesser kind and produced a snake" (*Carpentaria* 331). Thus racism still bedevils the mind of people and the division between the whites and Aborigines is still strong which emphasizes that the process of reconciliation has failed in most of the places like Desperance.

Strong laws have been enacted against racism in almost every society, but these laws fail to do any justice in the remote areas where enforcement agencies are not very strong. So the racist people like Bruiser go scot free with whatever they do. Truthful is the only policemen in Desperance, but rather than finding the culprits he is busy in cultivating relationships with the powerful people of the town.

There are so many unsolved deaths and murders in the town, but they remain unsolved because the town people like Bruiser are not interested in calling extra police men because they find it more convenient to blame every murder on Will Phantom or the Aborigines. The attitude of whites remains the same in both *Plains of Promise* and *Carpentaria*. They are not worried about people being killed. While in *Plains of Promise* Eroll Jipp is worried about grant, in *Carpentaria* Bruiser is worried about the influence of an outsider. Bruiser is worried that the outsider police men may have other ideas and they may be racially tolerant who will not blame everything on the blacks. The only police man they have in Desperance is truthful who is either busy in gardening (*Carpentaria* 71) or winning the favours of Girlie. Truthful is a policeman who “knows” the people of the town and what they “want”(*Carpentaria* 324). Bruiser makes it clear that the outsider policemen if called to investigate may not pay attention to them:

They don't know us. Did they look like they knew us, or were even bothered to ask us what we think, and we live here all the time? No, they just went around wasting taxpayers' money, made a right monkey of themselves and whoosh! Where did they go? We looked around and found ourselves sitting here like we always have because? Because we belong here. (*Carpentaria* 324)

Clearly, only one point of view exists in the town and everybody has to go according to that, because the whites from the other parts of the country may not agree to this point-of-view so they are unwanted in Desperance. The point-of-view is the supremacy of the whites, they want to remain in the same state because by keeping the Aborigines in the pathetic state gives them a feeling of superiority.

### ***Carpentaria* and Practical Reconciliation**

In Australia the constructive relationship could not be forged between the two groups i.e. the Aborigines and the whites because the stress during the process was shifted from psychological aspect of acceptance of one another to the “practical reconciliation,” a term coined by John Howard:

Prime Minister Howard's practical reconciliation has three objectives firstly, to improve the living standards of Indigenous people, as a step to providing equal opportunity for all Australians, secondly to acknowledge Australia's inter-related histories, without direct blame or guilt for past wrongs, thirdly to achieve mutual agreement on the need to work together, acknowledging difference in a manner that does not present an obstacle to a shared future. The concept targets socio-economic issues such as housing, education, health and employment, through policy initiatives. According to the commonwealth Government these are “basic citizenship rights” and achieving them is a “litmus test of reconciliation.” (Summerfield 144)

*Carpentaria* shows that “litmus test” has failed. Wright in novel shows how the Aboriginal people in the town are living in abysmal conditions without properly constructed houses. The white people of the town believed that “the Aboriginal was really not part of the town at all” (Wright, *Carpentaria* 4). The Aborigines have become fringe dwellers who depend on rubbish dumps of the whites to construct dwellings for themselves and their families. Through the novel, Wright clearly tells that Howard's slogans of “practical reconciliation” are hollow.

One of the important parts of reconciliation is the acknowledgment of past mistakes, but Prime Minister Howard favoured only one particular version of history. Howard denied the history of dispossession and massacres throughout his term:

In facing the realities of the past, however, we must not join those who would portray Australia's history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism.

Such a portrayal is a gross distortion and deliberately neglects the overall story of great Australian achievement that there is in our history to be told, and such an approach will be repudiated by the overwhelming majority of Australians who are proud of what this country has achieved although inevitably acknowledging the blemishes in its past history.

Australians of these generations should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control.

However, we must acknowledge past wrongs, understand that they still cause a great deal of personal distress and resolve to improve areas of indigenous both now and into the future. (qtd. in Riggs and Augoustinos, *Psychic Life* 467)

Thus reconciliation policy faltered at the first step only because of adamant attitude of John Howard. In fact, some analysts like Stewart Motha have described reconciliation in Australia as a “Neo imperial gesture, that amounts in Australian context, to a process of re-inscribing a ‘post-colonial’ political community under one law that “subordinates indigenous laws and customs, once again, in the name of ‘civilisation’ and its new effigies, democracy and human rights” (77).

The stance adopted by Howard was negative, where he negated all the past wrong doings of the invaders. Howard's statement made it clear he believed that the massacres of the Aborigines unearthed by the Historians are not the truth, but the creations of people writing with the agenda of maligning the whites. In *Carpentaria*, Wright refutes the assertions of John Howard through her characters. The first reference to the massacres of the Aborigines comes through Uncle Micky, who

has collected “all kinds of cartridges used in the massacres of the local tribes” (*Carpentaria* 10-11). The other two major characters in the novel, Normal and Mozzie, are also troubled by the memories of the massacres of their ancestors.

Moreover, the statistics of health also does not show an encouraging picture of the reconciliation era. The data collected in 2003 shows the plight of Aborigines:

- Life expectancy for Indigenous woman is 19 years less than for non-Indigenous women, with a difference of 21 years for men;
- The rate of Indigenous infant mortality is 2.5 times that of the total population;
- Indigenous children are 32% less likely to complete year 12, the final year of secondary schooling in Australia than non-Indigenous children;
- Indigenous people are 15 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous people;
- The rate of unemployment for Indigenous people is 2.5% times greater than the national average. (qtd. in Summerfield 143)

This data becomes even more pathetic when it is discovered that Australia in 2003 was third on the list of nations having best Human Development Index behind Norway and Iceland (“HDI\*\* and GDP\*\*”). Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living for countries worldwide. It is a standard means of measuring well-being, especially child welfare. It is used to distinguish whether country is developed, a developing or an under developed country (“Human Development Index”). Despite the poor performance of Australia on the front of Aboriginal health, Australia was placed at number three in the list of best performing nations. This shows that all other Australians except the Aborigines are well taken care of in health and social needs. This also shows that Aborigines are left on their own because of the rampant racism that is an important part of white- Aboriginal relations in Australia.

*Carpentaria* was underway when all these data were being collected and published. Alexis Wright had a direct feel of all these conditions as an Aboriginal worker. She wrote *Carpentaria* because she was disillusioned with the process of reconciliation. Over the years, reconciliation had become an empty slogan, which held nothing in it for the Aborigines. Alexis Wright has refused to be misled by the phoney process of reconciliation. In her essay “Politics of Writing” she admits:

Sometimes I feel that forgiveness is almost unimaginable. There is no healing road of reconciliation for many thousands of Aboriginal people. How can there be? The Indigenous people of this country are still on the road of genocide at the hands of Australian governments. (qtd. in Sharrad 8)

### **Apology, Unconditioning and Reconciliation**

One thing that is important in the case of reconciliation is that reconciliation cannot be brought by the government alone rather the reconciliation has to be practised by people individually. Government can only frame policies and provide conditions which are conducive for reconciliation, but the major work has to be carried out by the individuals. In fact, Wright also shows that officially Desperance is also living in reconciliation era, but the reconciliation is not taking place. The whites



are still living in colonial hangover. This makes Kevin Rudd's apology a symbolic act where the head of the state is feeling sorry, but the general population is not.

Kevin Rudd may have apologized<sup>3</sup> to the Aborigines but all the people did not welcome the apology. The above statements show that many people are not convinced that they should feel sorry for anything. For example Moree Plains Shire voted down Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology; in a "resolution the shire said that they do not support it and there was not need to support it" (Anderson, Michael). So it is clear that in order to implement the intent of public statements and policies of reconciling with the Aborigines other process should be initiated. Such processes include changing negative attitudes towards indigenous people as well societal structure that maintains them. This change needs to take place at all levels, "at the individual level and at social level" (Dudgeon and Pickett 83).

In fact, many researches indicate that reconciliation is a never ending task. The process of reconciliation "must continually be reinitiated even as one believes it has been accomplished when liberation has been reached in one place oppression will show itself somewhere else ...Liberation is then a constant battle, and critique, democracy and participation are means to achieve it" (Montero 529).

The common Australian people were conditioned for a long time with the negatives images of the Aborigines. So it was almost an impossible task to uncondition them in only ten years. This "de-ideologization" (Montero 526) will take a long time to take place. Montero describes de-ideologization as a "process of constituting and reconstructing an entire consciousness capable of understanding of the world one lives in and its circumstances as a totality" (Montero 525). Alexis Wright shows that the main barrier to reconciliation remains the mindset of the people. *Carpentaria* shows that the people still believe that the Aborigines are dirty people:

So, there was no bringing out of Red Roses box of Australian chocolates to share but instead, there were gawking people wherever there were shabby cars full of black men filing into a town. *All we want to do*, the residents chimed to each other behind locked doors in a mighty big hurry, *is to guard the decency of clean-living people.* (*Carpentaria* 130)

This shows that the white people still carry the baggage of racist constructs about Aboriginal people. A psychological change must take place for the real reconciliation to take place.

## Conclusion

*Carpentaria* shows that reconciliation has failed miserably and Alexis Wright has lost her faith in the policies initiated by the government. In *Carpentaria*, Alexis Wright makes clear that the Aborigines have to become active to regain their rightful place in the modern Australia. The message in the novel is clear that the Ancestors will not help the Aborigines if they continue to remain passively indifferent to their condition and keep waiting for the miracles to occur. In *Carpentaria* also, the Ancestors help in destroying Desperance only when the Aborigines act to destroy the mine.

In *Carpentaria*, Alexis Wright seems to suggest through the marriage of Will Phantom and Hope that it is the time when the Aborigines forget about their tribal affiliations; rather it is the time for them to build a pan-Aboriginal movement. This pan-Aboriginal movement will bring forward strong leaders who will talk about the issues of the Aborigines rather than about their own tribes. This will strengthen the struggle of the Aborigines. The united Aborigines will be better placed to negotiate with the Australian government for their community.

**Notes:**

1. Reconciliation was a policy started by the government of Australia was initiated in 1991 to reconcile with the indigenous Australians.
2. Ku Klux Klan was an extremist organization in the United States of America which terrorized the other groups.
3. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologized to the Aborigines for taking away the Aboriginal children in the Parliament on 13 February 2008.

**Works cited:**

- “Account respecting beliefs of the Australian Aborigines.” *The Journal of American Folklore* 9.34 (July-Sept 1896): 199-203. Web. JSTOR. 10 May 2010.
- Anderson, Michael. “Australians no longer need to hide their racism.” <<http://www.treatyrepublic.net>>.13 Apr. 2012.
- Chapman, Audrey. 2009, " Approaches to Studying Reconciliation." *Assessing the Impact of Transitional Justice Challenges for Empirical Research*. Ed. Hugo Vander Merwe, Victoria Baxter and Audrey R. Chapman, Washington D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2009. Print.
- Dudgeon, Patricia and Harry Pickett. “Psychology and Reconciliation: Australian Perspectives.” *Australian Psychologist* 35. 2 (July 2011): 82-87.Web. <<http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com>>. 10 Jan. 2012.
- Ferrier, Carole. "Disappearing Memory and the Colonial Present in Recent Indigenous Women's Writing." *Jasal* Special issue (2008): 37-55. Web.<<http://www.nla.gov.au/openpublish.index.php/jasal/>>. 04 Jan. 2012.
- Goosen, Gideon. “Reconciliation: Emancipatory Theory Applied in Australia.” *Peace & Change* 29. 2 (April 2004): 250-265. Print.
- "HDI & GDP." Web. <<http://www.if.auf.org/>>. 10 Jan. 2012.
- "Human Development Index." Web. <<http://www.wikipedia.org>>.10 Jan.2012.
- Kaplan-Myrth, Nili. “ Sorry Mates: Reconciliation and Self Determination in Australian Aboriginal Health.” Web. *Human Rights Review* 6.4 (2005): 69-83.Web.<<http://www.springerlink.com>>. 13 Feb.2011.
- Kuokkanen, Rauna. “ “Survivance” in Sami and First Nations Boarding School Narratives: Reading Novels by Kerttu Vuolab and Shirley Sterling.” *The Indian American Quarterly* 27. 3&4 (Summer/Fall 2003): 697-726. Web. Project Muse. 13 Jun. 2012.
- Langton, Marcia. Trapped in the Aboriginal Reality show.” Web. *Griffith Review* 19 (Autumn 2008): 1-17. <<http://www.griffithreview.com>>. 04 Sept. 2011.
- Mellor David. "Contemporary Racism in Australia Experiences of Aborigines." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 29 (2003): 474-486. Web. <<http://www.psp.sagepub.com>>. 12 Jan.2010.
- Memmi, Albert. *Racism*. Trans. Steve Martinot. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. Print.
- Mercer, David. “Aboriginal Self Determination and Indigenous Land Title in post-Mabo Australia.” *Political Geography* 16. 3(1997): 189-212. Web. Elsevier. 10 Jun. 2011.
- Montero, Maritza. “The Political psychology of Liberation: From politics to Ethics and Back.” *Political Psychology* 28.5 (Oct. 2007): 517-533. Web. JSTOR. 04 Aug. 2011.
- Motha, Stewart, "Reconciliation as Domination". *Law and Politics of Reconciliation*. Ed.Scott Veitch. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. Print.
- Mudrooroo. *Milli Milli Wangka: Indigenous Literature of Australia*. Melbourne: Hyland House, 1997. Print.
- Nicoll, Fiona “ Reconciliation in and out of Perspective: White Knowing, Seeing, Curating and being at Home in and against Sovereignty.” *Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*. Ed. Alileen Moreton Robinson. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2004.Print.
- O’Brien.“Interview with Kerry O’Brien.” Web.<[http:// www.uws.edu.au](http://www.uws.edu.au)>. 04 Jan. 2010.
- Reynolds, Henry. *Why Weren't We Told?* Victoria: Penguin Books, 1999. Print.
- Riggs Damien W. & Martha Augoustinos." The Psychic life of Colonial Power Radicalized Subjectivities, Bodies and Methods." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 15 (2005): 461-477. Web.

- <<http://www.online.library.wiley.com/>>. 12 Jan.2012.
- Rymhs,Deena. "Appropriating Guilt: Reconciliation in an Aboriginal Canadian Context." *English Studies in Canada* 32.1 (March 2006): 105- 123. Web. Project Muse. 29 Sept. 2012.
- Sharrad, Paul. "Beyond Capricornia; Ambiguous Promise in Alexis Wright." *Australian Literary Studies* 24.1 (2009):52-65. Print.
- Short, Damien. "Reconciliation, Assimilation and the Indigenous Peoples of Australia." *International Political Review*. 24.4(2003): 491-513. Web. JSTOR. 10 Oct. 2010.
- Staub, Ervin. "Reconciliation after Genocide, Mass Killing or Intractable Conflict: Understanding the Roots of Violence, Psychological Recovery and Steps toward a General Theory." *Political Psychology*. 27. 6 (Dec 2006): 867-894. Web.<<http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/>>. 10 Dec. 2011.
- Subasic, Emina & Katherine J. Reynolds. "Beyond "Practical Reconciliation": Intergroup Inequality and the Meaning of Non-indigenous Identity." Web. *Political Psychology* 30.2 (2009): 243-267. <<http://www.online.library.wiley.com>>. 13Oct.2011.
- Summerfield, Tracey. "Australian Rules: The Rise of Rights and the demise of the Right." *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 18(2005): 141-158. Web. <<http://www.springerlink.com>>. 21Sept.2011.
- Wright, Alexis. *Carpentaria*. Artarmon NSW: Giramondo, 2007. Print.
- . *Grog War*. Broome Western Australia: Magabala Books, 1997. Print.
- . *Plains of Promise*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997. Print

*Virender Pal Teaches English at University College, Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra. He has done his Ph.D. on Australian Aboriginal literature. He is the author of several academic papers and has completed a UGC sponsored minor project on "Debunking Dalit Stereotypes: A Study of U.R. Ananthamurthy's Novels." His interests include Native literature and Indian literature. His ORCID ID is 0000-0003-3569-1289.*