

## MHRD-UGC ePG Pathshala - English

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**Module Number & Title:** Anglophone Canadian Novel; Margaret Laurence: *The Stone Angel*

(10)

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In this module we shall discuss:

- Biographical details of the author
- Plot of the novel
- Themes of the novel
- Significance of the title
- Central character of the novel
- Literary significance
- Awards and recognition

### **Biographical Details of the Author: Margaret Laurence (1926 – 1987)**

Jean Margaret Wemyss was born in 1926 in the prairie town of Neepawa, Manitoba. She lost her parents at a very young age and was raised by her maternal grandfather. Margaret began writing

professionally in 1943 when she got a summer job as a reporter for the town newspaper. In 1944, she enrolled herself in the English honours program at Winnipeg's United College. After graduating, she became a reporter for the *Winnipeg Citizen*. In 1947, she married Jack Laurence. In 1949, Margaret Laurence moved to Somalia with her husband and lived in Africa till 1957. She wrote a number of short stories on African subjects and maintained a great interest in African literature. In 1957, Margaret Laurence returned to Canada and settled in Vancouver. After separating from her husband in 1962, she moved with her two children to England. It was at Elm Cottage that Laurence completed four of her five Manawaka books, of them the first being *The Stone Angel* (1964). The great critical acclaim and commercial success of her novels as well as her consistent output of essays and articles solidly established Margaret Laurence as one of the most important and beloved literary figures in Canada. In 1971, she was named a Companion of the Order of Canada. She received the Governor General's Award twice, first for *A Jest of God* (1966) and again for *The Diviners* (1974). Her book of essays *Heart of a Stranger* was published in 1976 and her memoir *Dance on the Earth* was published posthumously in 1987. Laurence had also written *The Olden Days Coat* (1979), *Six Darn Cows* (1979) and *The Christmas Birthday Story* (1980) for children.

During the last decade of her life, Margaret Laurence was actively involved in speaking and writing about issues that concerned her such as nuclear disarmament, the environment, literacy and other social issues. She died on January 5, 1987 and was laid to rest in Riverside Cemetery in Neepawa, Manitoba.

### **Plot of the Novel**

*The Stone Angel*, published in 1964, is set in the fictitious town of Manawaka, Manitoba in the early 1960s.

In *The Stone Angel*, there are two interdependent plots. In terms of the present time, it is the story of an old woman in her 90s whose physical breakdown has made her dependent, and who realizes that her son and daughter-in-law are planning to send her to an old people's institution. Her pride rebels against such an identification with the helpless aged, and one day she escapes from her Vancouver house to spend a couple of days in an abandoned fish cannery. Inevitably, she is recaptured and taken to a hospital which shall be her last home. It is in the hospital that she realizes that all her life she has been a victim of her pride. She dies not long after this realization.

Within this primary plot which lasts only a few days set in the 1960s, goes another plot in which the old lady Hagar Shipley recollects her long life in a series of flashbacks. There is one crucial period of two years that, in contrast to the other vividly remembered periods, goes virtually undescribed. This is the two years when old Jason Currie, Hagar's father decided to spend his money on educating Hagar in an academy in Toronto. The effect of these two untold years is evident throughout the novel. In her long inner monologue, Hagar expresses herself in a way quite different from her Manawaka contemporaries and quite unlike Marvin, her son and Doris, his wife, the people to whom in old age her circle has slowly narrowed down. It was her educated mind within her gross and worn out body which acted the way Hagar behaved with the people surrounding her. So, the plot of *The Stone Angel*, keeps something hidden and open to conjecture. In this way it draws readers into the heart of the novel by alerting them to the possibility that Hagar may be telling the truth as she sees it, but it is not necessarily the whole truth. Readers need to recognize that her telling is based on her memories and that memories, like opinions, can be biased. The novel is, in fact, somewhat like an autobiography.

## Themes of the Novel

**Pride:** The most prevailing theme of *The Stone Angel* is that of pride. As John Moss states, “What gives Margaret Laurence’s vision the resonant dimensions of universal truth is the interlacing of the destructive and constructive effects of Hagar’s recalcitrant pride. Pride is a double-edged sword”. Indeed, Hagar’s great pride helps her to cope with the many difficulties she faces throughout her life. This pride, however, also separates and detaches her from others resulting in several strained relationships which she was unable to mend. Hagar’s pride repeatedly imprisoned her within the confines of thwarted affections and misdirected emotion. More specifically, her pride caused such things as an unhappy marriage with Brampton Shipley and a severance of all ties with her father Jason and her brother Matt. Her pride served her best in her dying days when she was determined not to submit to frailty and raged against the fading light with the same stubbornness that she had always displayed.

The novel has its first reference to pride in the very second sentences as it begins. Hagar described the Stone Angel as “my mother’s angel that my father bought in pride to mark her bones and proclaim his dynasty...” (3) Hagar’s father Jason Currie was a very proud man himself, a trait that was passed on to his daughter. He took immense pride in the terribly expensive statue created for his wife. He also prided himself in his abilities and had excessive self-esteem. Because he worked very hard, he took great pride in his store. Hagar says, “Father took such pride in the store – you’d have thought it was the only one on earth. It was the first in Manawaka, so I guess he had due cause.” (9) Hagar inherited her father’s pride and exhibited it as early as age six when she said, “There was I, strutting the board sidewalk like a pint-sized peacock, resplendent, haughty, hoity-toity, Jason Currie’s black-haired daughter.” (6) This pride

grew as Hagar grew up. She was frustrated at her lack of co-ordination and her arthritis which caused her to fall.

The alternation that runs through Hagar's life between rebellion and conformity is a result of her pride. Her pride, in its turn, has a paradoxical quality. On the one hand she is sustained by her pride and on the other she is humiliated "hourly and daily" by the vulnerability her age has imposed on her. In the unbending pride of her spirit there is an enormous strength. She comes to her final hospital bed and along with it she also comes to her moment of truth and liberation, the recognition of the force that warped her own life and her love for others. That force is her pride. The author leaves no doubt that Hagar's pride is the spiritual pride that was regarded as one of the seven deadly sins by the medieval theologians. The readers are not told, but perhaps they can surmise that her snatching of the cup of water in her last moment is a symbol of her release from the agony of memory into the great peace beyond life.

**Time:** In *The Stone Angel*, time is the most important factor in determining the structure of the novel. The assertion of temporal dominance occurs a number of times in the novel. Hagar, leaving Bram, and at the same time leaving her hometown, comments on her departure: "Then we were away from Manawaka. It came as a shock to me, how small the town was and how short a time it took to leave it, as we measure time" (147) It is through her sense of time that Hagar measures the space of Manawaka. And then, coming to Vancouver, she voices a sentiment: "You begin again and nothing will go wrong this time." (155) For it is time, not place, that manifests itself in change arising from a change of mind or heart rather than a change of place, and time is mind's dimension.

The novel consists of alternating passages from a past and a present, both of which exist within Hagar's mind. She is either remembering or perceiving the world around her with an old woman's suspicious eyes which give her observations their special twist and colour. It opens with Hagar recalling the stone angel in her rich and racy inner prose, the prose of thoughts readers are expected to believe are addressed to them. And then Hagar describes the cemetery and suddenly switches to the present. From this beginning until about the last quarter of the book, *The Stone Angel* maintains parallel chronological patterns, the present following sequentially the last days of Hagar's life, and the flashbacks following, also sequentially, the course of her life as it appears in her memories.

In terms of action, this is a book of narrow compass, the narrative of an old woman's thoughts and memories on the eve of death, with a single quixotic escapade, to break the pattern. Death circumscribes the whole pattern, for the novel begins with memories of a cemetery and ends with Hagar's last expectant thought – "And then-".

### **Survival:**

In 'Ten Years' Sentences', Margaret Laurence has stated: "With *The Stone Angel*, without my recognizing it at the time, the theme had changed to that of survival, the attempt of the personality to survive with some dignity, toting the load of excess mental baggage that everyone carries, until the moment of death." (32) Three years after Laurence wrote this essay, Margaret Atwood's *Survival* appeared (1972). Though Atwood has made only three brief references to *The Stone Angel* in her book, Laurence considers her novel a story of liberation and frustrated attempts at liberation in a generational context. Hagar's long life is an often failing effort to find

and be herself, and in that sense to achieve liberation. In reality, survival itself is a kind of conditional and limited liberation from the prime necessity of human existence, which is death.

### **Freedom:**

Freedom is linked to survival and also linked to the theme of hostility between settlers and hunters that has dominated the entire history of North America. The contrast between Bram Shipley and Jason Currie which appealed to Hagar is that between the rigidities of the invading mercantilism represented by her father, a strict Presbyterian self-made man and the vanishing liberties of the frontier represented by Bram. In Bram, she sees all those qualities which are different from her father and it is those very qualities which she begins to detest when she goes to live with him. Again, the pride factor comes in the way of liberty and freedom. It is this pride which leads to her isolation and eventual destruction of all her personal relationships.

### **Significance of the Title**

In the novel *The Stone Angel*, the stone angel is a symbol, an object which has a special role. It symbolizes Jason Currie's pride when he sets it up, nominally as a monument to his dead wife, but really to "proclaim his dynasty, as he fancied". (3) It is the dynasty which, in a bitterly ironic twist of fate, expires with him. But, the statue also symbolizes Hagar's blind refusal to recognize her own nature and the consequences of her pride: "She was doubly blind, not only stone but unendowed with even a pretence of sight. Whoever carved her had left the eyeballs blank." (3) Finally, the statue symbolizes the way in which Hagar shares the obstinate, arrogant disposition of Jason Currie, and even his attitudes to life. Pride is the besetting sin of both of them, which makes them often strangely unfeeling. The idea of those unmoving eyes recurs when Hagar's son



John is killed and she says: “The night my son died I was transformed to stone and never wept at all” (243).

### **Central Character of the Novel**

Margaret Laurence herself wrote, “I wrote about Hagar as one individual old woman who certainly came out of my own background. But I was astonished when a number of other Canadians wrote to me or said to me that this was their grandmother. And I didn’t know that it was going to turn out to be everybody’s grandmother.” Readers identified Hagar Shipley as the type of the arrogant old woman fighting against age and death.

Hagar Shipley is sustained by her pride and she is made monstrous by her pride. She is ninety years old when her voice is heard for the first time, and she bitterly describes herself as grossly fat, ugly and clumsy. Her body has grown as grotesque as her unforgiving spirit. She is by turns agonizingly bitter, snarling and sarcastic or weak, vulnerable and weeping. Her son Marvin and daughter-in-law Doris, themselves in their sixties, have to bear with her hour by hour and day by day. They have to bear her stubborn, intractable temper and her massive, unmanageable body. She is humiliated hourly and daily by being so vulnerable, and yet she is impeccably unyielding to them in their honest efforts. She is unhappy for her age, her weaknesses, and for the failures in her life. Yet, in the unbending pride of her spirit there lies an enormous strength. She journeys through memory to recall her life, face its failures and admit her betrayals, and she makes one last desperate bid for escape from the chains of illness and age. She comes to her final hospital bed, but she also comes to her moment of truth and liberation, the recognition of the force that worked her own life and her love for others: “Pride was my wilderness, and the demon that led me there was fear. I was alone, never anything else, and never free...” (292)



Hagar's pride is a factor of her background, both ancestral and historical. Her father Jason Currie was a relentlessly proud man. The little western Canadian town, Manawaka, was built by Jason Currie and other Scottish immigrants like him and was made secure by the pride of its builders. Manawaka was also potentially a prison for its people who were ruthlessly restricted by its propriety.

Readers are never allowed to look directly into the minds of Jason Currie or Bram Shipley in *The Stone Angel*. They are seen only through Hagar's eyes, heard through her ears. Readers know about them what Hagar chooses to let them know. She often describes their appearances and eccentricities and sheds some light on their special ways of speaking. Hagar does not turn either her father or her husband into mere puppets in her memory or her imagination. Yet, she always shows them as her foils, the *others* by whom, in her great egotism, she defines herself. She never has an unreservedly good word to say about any of them. In her vision of life, everybody else is a minor figure. Consequently, the novel has no real dialogue. The characters never truly converse. They exchange statements that are embedded in the great sprawling continuum of Hagar's memory, and their encounters are stylized in recollection. Everything readers know about them is secondary, filtered through the principal character's thoughts.

Hagar's prejudices and her resentments stand out for all to see, and readers are on guard all the time for the bias that sooner or later emerges in all her statements. Her fear and suspicion of the world colour her relationships with everyone. Whatever she says is based on her memory and people like Hagar remember the distant past with great vividness. But are the memories of old

people, however vivid, the real past? In all works of fiction that are based on remembering the past, the readers must regard memory itself as the first creator of fiction. But whatever that past may really have been, it has made Hagar into what she is, the woman whose voice is brilliantly introduced in the first pages of the novel. It is this voice that sings throughout the novel till she goes through her last rite. As Hagar is laid to rest Mr. Troy, the minister, sings: “All people that on earth do dwell.” and readers realize that throughout her life Hagar has not recognized the need for joy. It can only be hoped that in the last moment of her life her mind had been enlightened and her heart opened up.

### **Literary Significance**

*The Stone Angel* is important for it came at a crucial stage in the development of Canadian fiction, which was moving forward from its formative stages. It was moving away from the stylistic clumsiness of writers like Frederick Philip Grove, who sought to see prairie life in terms of an outdated European naturalism and from the didactic earnestness of writers like Hugh MacLennan who, in novels like *Two Solitudes*, had given lessons in the rise of a Canadian national consciousness. Published in 1964, *The Stone Angel* is a study of the enclosed “garrison culture” of North American settlements and of the religion that supported and often distorted the spirit of their people. W.H. New remarked that Margaret Laurence explored the essential differences between middle class expectations and other values, articulated a female perspective, and offered evidence to many young writers to affirm the simple fact that being alive was a political act.

Laurence came at a time when MacLennan's didacticism had served its purpose, and myths were needed to sustain the Canadian imagination. In creating her fictional town of Manawaka, Margaret Laurence offered a powerful myth of Canada in the imaginations of artists and responsive readers. Her role as a woman novelist at that time was also crucial. She built on the pioneering achievements of earlier writers like Sarah Jeannette Duncan and Ethel Wilson to shift the literary point of view from a dominatingly male one to the activity and significance of women in Canada.

Finally, there are changes in attitude to form that began to appear in Canadian fiction during the 1960s. Margaret Laurence as a creative writer was ahead of the fashionable critical trend of the 1960s which tended to be based on the identification of themes. Her novel harps on an idea, the idea of survival. Thus, for many reasons, *The Stone Angel* stands as an influential book in the development of Canadian literature during the 1960s and the subsequent decades. *The Stone Angel* has survived because Hagar Shipley is a universal personification of the urge to survive. Both Hagar and Manawaka, though fictional, have survived in the memories of the readers as symbols of the Canadian spirit of survival.

### **Awards and Recognition**

*The Stone Angel* is one of the selected books in the 2002 edition of *Canada Reads*. The novel has also been adapted into a movie called *The Stone Angel* by Kari Skogland in 2007. Ellen Burstyn as Hagar Shipley had won the Genie Award for best performance by an actress in a leading role in 2008.

In this module we have discussed the background of the author and the novel, its significance in the history of Canadian literature. The plot, main themes and the central character of the novel have been discussed along with the significance of its title.

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**Paper: 07; Module No: 04: E Text**

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**(B) Description of Module:**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Description of Module</b>
<b>Subject Name:</b>	English
<b>Paper No &amp; Name:</b>	07; Canadian, Australian and South Pacific Literatures in English
<b>Module No &amp; Title:</b>	04; Aboriginal Australia: History and Literature
<b>Pre-requisites:</b>	Basic knowledge of English
<b>Objectives:</b>	To provide an idea of Australian Aboriginal History and Literature
<b>Key Words:</b>	Australian Aboriginal History, Australian Aboriginal Literature, Australian Literature

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**About the Module:** In this module we are going to learn that what the Aborigine actually means, from where this term came from and for whom it is being used. In addition to this we are going to learn about Aboriginal History, about their land in a brief manner. We will discuss some of their art form and will try to get acquainted with their culture in the first half of this module. In the second part, we will learn that what the 'Dreamtime' actually is and how is it related with their literature. After that we will discuss some important literary figures of Australian Aboriginal Literature and their works and finally we will try to get some knowledge about Aboriginal films. So, as a whole, through this module we will get an overview of Aboriginal people.

**What is Aboriginality?** The word 'Aboriginal' defines a group of people who lives in a country from the earliest times and the actual inhabitant of a particular land. In Australia, the Non-Aboriginal people who came just about two hundred years ago were used this word to describe the native dwellers of Australia as Aborigines. According to their different place of inhabitants, Indigenous peoples came to be known differently as. Koori in south east

Australia; Murri in north western NSW and Queensland; Yolgnu in Arnhem Land; Nunga in Southern Australia and Noongar in Western Australia.

**Brief History of Aborigines:** The History of Aboriginal Australia starts with the arrival of the people of Indo-Malaysian mainland via New Guinea to the contemporary Australian part of land during the last Ice Age. These land bridges were exposed during the ice age, the Pleistocene epoch, when Indonesia and Papua were getting connected through a land bridge. After the ending of Ice Age, water level of sea again rose and two part of land again got separated, thus the Aboriginal people were bound to live there. On the basis of historical evidences we can assert that Aborigines are one of the oldest civilizations who still continue to live in this world for forty Thousand years back from today. In 1600s, the first encounter of the outsider with these people was recorded through Dutch Sailor, William Janszoon and Dirk Hartog, who were travelling from their native place to their colony in Indonesia, the land of spices. For them this place looks like barren land so they decided to not to make this place as their colony.

Later, in the year 1770, British explorer Captain James Cook had discovered the eastern part of this country fertile. With the help of his report and the brief history of Aboriginal people, British decided to make this country as their colony and sent 12 fleets of ships to settle down in the eastern region of Australia in 1788. At that time when the 'Outsiders' invaded The Aborigines and their long nurtured culture and traditions, they were 750,000 in numbers. And along with this they also have almost 200 different Aboriginal languages at that time. Now in this present scenario a very few languages used as spoken language and others simply went into oblivion as they can't compete with the white tongues.

**Introduction to Indigenous Culture:** Indigenous people of today's Australia are a bit different from as they were used to be before the hitting of the first ship to the eastern region of the country. Australia, in that time used to be totally unspoiled, they did not have any kind of carriages, large farms, tall buildings and even no travelers to visits it. They always gave respect to the environment and carefully they keep in mind that no animals must not be over hunted and no plants to over collected. They used nature as far as their need is fulfilled and made sure that there should not be any kind of natural resources wastage and this ensured that there would remain sufficient food to feed the coming generations. These people were generally wanderers, did not stay same place for a longer period of time to maintain the balance of environment and to confirm it, they did not fishing or harvesting too much at a



certain place. That's why they didn't own a land and in place of that they choose to roam around. The Men hunted the big animals like turtles, kangaroos and emus and women and children used to hunt the smaller animals and collected fruits and vegetables to sustain their hunter lifestyle. In those days indigenous peoples live throughout Australia but now they are restricted in certain part of the country. And day by day it's getting difficult to find out the typical Aboriginal Australian cultures and practices.

Aborigines are the Australia's indigenous people and they are covered only 2.5 % (about 410,000) of the total population of Australia according to the report published by Australia Bureau of Statistics in 2006. They are acclaimed as the most durable society in the world. But traditional way of Aboriginal lifestyle is almost come to an edge and therefore in modern Australia a very few places are remaining for Aboriginals. Arnhem Land is one of those regions. Though this region is not fully isolated from the Modern World it has solar electricity satellite phones to connect with the mainstream world and even flat screen television with DVD player which showcasing the merging of marginal people to the mainstream flow of life.

**Introduction to Aboriginal Art:** When these people came to Australia from some part of Asia, they were in 500-600 different groups. But they have strong spiritual belief, which is being termed as Dreaming by Western philosophers. For Aboriginals, Dreaming is the main basis for their spiritual identity. It helps them to recollect the past, reshape the present and imagine the future. To stay unite and to make their tribal culture and tradition alive, this spirituality helps them to do that. Their Oral tradition of tribal story telling signifies their vibrancy of cultural life and makes them distinguishable. Their songs illustrates the dreamtime and the different stories of their land, and with these their dance and paintings in sand accompany oral tales just as the instruments does for the songs. The Aborigine Art works includes sculptures, rock and bark paintings, basket and bead works can be found in the different parts of Australia. And many of them earn their livelihood by selling this artworks. So after mapping the history of Aboriginal Australia at a glance, now we are trying to get some views over Australian indigenous arts sculptures and music.

**Aboriginal Music:** At first, in this module we are going discuss about the music of indigenous people of Australia. Music or songs is inevitable part for Aboriginals. They had songs for almost each and every occasions of personal and social life: songs for hunting, for

funeral, for ancestors, myths, legends, seasons, animals and all things and situations of which they had encountered with everyday life. Along with these songs, dance is also very important for them. This Music and Dance are also believed that it is belongs to Dreaming, and it is based on the history of their land and creation of it, with these songs they preach their culture, their laws and even how to find food is also being told by these songs only. For them songs and dance is a mode of communication, with which they can connect with different groups of people, they can teach other people about their moral, values, roles and responsibilities.

The Aboriginals had invented and developed many kind of unique musical instruments, such as, 'Didgeridoo', 'Bullroarer', and 'Gum-leaf', among these Didgeridoo is most well known instrument. It is simple wooden pipe like instrument blown with lips like a trumpet. This instrument was invented in Arnhem Land on the Northern coastline of central Australia. It has distinct sound and when it is played accordingly it can make sound like birds and animals.

**Aboriginal Paintings:** Art is the only medium for Aborigines to convey their cultural heritage to future as they did not have any written languages. Not only to pass the information, also to preserve the culture, Art is the only way out. And for Aboriginals, this was totally centered on storytelling. Like music, art has same kind influence for indigenous people, for this ochres is being used to paint on the body of indigenous people, bark, rocks and caves and it is still continuing for last 30,000 years. This indigenous art forms gives us not only the history of primary people of this earth but also the picturesque details of lives and struggle for survival of the artists. Along with this it also gives us the image of trading patterns of that time. Below we briefly discuss about their art forms to understand Aborigines a little better.

Engraving or painting on the caves or stones is the earliest art form of indigenous people. It was started almost 30000 years back in some part of the central Australia, red ochre was being used to draw on boulders or rock shelters. Again indigenous peoples understood this painting as the reflections of dreaming of the earliest peoples. *Narwala Gabarnmang rock shelter* in south-western Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory is one of the example of rock painting. *Dampier Archipelago* in western Australia is one of largest collections of rock art where we can found millions of rock engraving.

**Papunya Tula or Papunya Art** is art style of Western Desert. This art style was also meant for draw on human body and on the ground, there were four primary Aboriginal colours which depict the four great existence of Aboriginal life. Yellow is for sun, Brown is for soil, Red is for desert sand and while the white is for sky and clouds. This art form is also as old as the rock engravings but it gets wide recognition in 1971 when a local school teacher Geoffrey Bardon give inspiration to some men to paint a blank school wall and gave them modern equipments for paintings. As a result this takes a form of movement and today this Papunya Art industry generates as much as \$200 millions nationally.

Apart from these Art styles Aboriginal people has large number of different styles such as Bark paintings, stone arrangements, wood carvings or Punu, weaving and many more. In May 2007 Emily Kame Kngwarreye's work '*Earth's Creation*' was sold to a private buyer for \$1.056 million, with this one example we can understand that this Art styles is how much important as well as how much famous in recent time for the Aboriginal peoples .

### **Aboriginal Literature:**

Now in the second part of this module we are going discuss about the Aboriginal Australian Literature and its position among the so called mainstream Literature. Like the other art form, Aboriginal Literature also derived from the story telling or which we normally know as Folk literature. Before the process of colonization Aboriginals did not have any kind of traditional writing method, all they had is the oral tradition. So we cannot assert that whether the encounter with the white people is boon or bane for Aboriginal as the first literary examples were come from the journals of the explorers of Europe.

Before the exploitation of Aboriginal Australia, it was multicultural, multilingual land. For this there had been an existence of different community and each community has its own story to tell. And it is obvious that each of the stories is different from each other, but in one aspect all the stories were connected with each other that is the 'stories of dreaming'. As we mentioned and used this term for quite a few times in this module, now we are going to discuss this briefly.

**What is dream Time?** Dream Time is a unique feature for Aboriginal Australian Arts and Literature. This is a concept of Aboriginal belief of spiritual existence. Which is never been easy to understand for the non Aboriginal people. According to the Aboriginals, this whole

universe was created by the spirits, their ancestors during the Dream Time. They give everything such as land hills rivers waters animals to them and even the dreaming too. They think that in the beginning time, in the Dream time this Aboriginal people were also being created by their ancestors. For this, To keep alive their ancestors, to pleased their spirits, all the Aboriginal Arts and literature were came into being. Dreamtime is the time of some 65000 years back when this mortal world, this aboriginal people started their journey. For them this Dreamtime is the endless time of the beginning and only through this, Aborigines came to know about their beginning. It is the time when their ancestors created men and women, give them land for cultivate, weapon for hunting and bound them with social codes.

**Dreamtime and Indigenous Literature:** So the idea of dreamtime stories which is primarily be oral was gradually converted into written literary tradition in the shape of Aboriginal Literature. After 1950s, many Aboriginal people uses writing to express their views over their current situation and to make others known about their cultural heritage. And it is obvious that Aboriginals were used English language as a medium to compose their literary texts. It will give them a bit more exposer to the outer world and especially only through this they can easily carry out their agony, their oppression and most importantly their unheard traditional culture to the White people. Melissa Lucashenco was rightly pointed out that Aboriginal Literature is a protest literature, she said “Aboriginal Writing to me at the moment as a protest literature I suppose and it’s centered around land and social justice and legal stuff.” So at the core ‘cry’ is the focal theme of the Aboriginal Literature. As we can say by borrowing Mudrooroo’s words that “it is a cry for justice and for a better deal, a cry for understanding and asking to be understood”. Though revolt is one of the important feature of Aboriginal Literature but critics cannot rooted out the possibilities of other themes. That’s why Nature and Romanticism were also one can trace out in this Literary tradition except this two preconceive notions; Aboriginal culture and tales of oppression in Aboriginal Literature.

### **Aboriginal Literature and its position**

Now in these days greater part of this universe started taking interest in Aboriginal Literature. There are lot of dedicated reader for indigenous writings which one could not even imagine in some 50 years back. Critics were also take this writings very seriously and these native writers earned a considerable attention from around the world. But now question will arise here that is the Indigenous Literature different from well established parallel English Literature? or is it not a integrated part of the collective literature which is known to us as the

World Literature ? These questions will also get answers when we will discuss about some of the important names of Indigenous Literature. Australian Aboriginal Literature is also dynamic in respect of the Literature of other languages. We have already discussed that Aboriginal Literature is mainly based on the life of Aborigines itself , the soil , the environment of Australia which is the very essence of this Literature and more interestingly it is not a separated part from the other Art forms of Aboriginal life.

Like almost of all other Literatures, Aboriginal Literature is also result of reflection of the socio-cultural and economic condition of a land. During the Second World War and the Great Depression, with all the other countries Australia had also been faced the same impact of it and Aborigines suffered the most. Therefore as the sufferings and agonies always transformed into great literary pieces, same thing happened here also.

### **Important Literary Personnel:**

**Katharine Susannah Prichard** (1883-1969) was born in Levuka, Fizi in 1883, grew up in Launceston, Tasmania and finally settled down in Melbourne after getting a half scholarship from South Melbourne college. For her first novel *The Pioneer* (1915), she got the Hodder & Stoughton All Empire Literature Prize in which she tells the story of the early dwellers of Australia. She wrote 13 novels, four collections short stories, and drama, poetry, reportage many more. She was the first Australian novelist who was being recognized in all over the world. In the very next year in 1916 she wrote her second novel *Windlestraws*, though it is not exactly based on the issues of Aborigines but it also got positive critical appreciations. She was not only a novelist but a journalist and political activist too. Prichard founded the Communist Party of Australia in 1921. In 1926, she wrote *Working Bullocks*, for which she gained all her literary reputations. In *Coonardoo* (1929) she gives us a detail picture of traditional Aboriginal life. It was tale of love of White man and with a Black woman which was serially published in a magazine called *Bulletin* from September to December 1928. After this the Short Story collection of her *Kiss on the Lips* (1932), she established herself as major Australian short fiction writer.

**David Unaipon** (1872-1967) was the first Aboriginal Author to be published and the name of the book is *Native Legends* (1929). He was born in Coorong region of Southern Australia. He was at time an inventor, writer, musician and orator and holds the patent for 19 inventions.



And among all his inventions he tried to make life more easier for Aboriginal peoples. As an orator he used to give talks in churches and schools about the Aboriginal culture and traditions. He wrote many articles in Sydney Daily Telegraph from 1924 onwards. In between 1927 to 1929 he wrote three booklets of Aborigine stories. Under the title of *Native legends* five stories of Unaipon's got published in 1929. He was also awarded Coronation medal in 1953 at the age of 81.

**Xavier Herbert** (1901-1984) regarded as the elder statesman of Australian Literature was born on Geraldton Western Australia. He was the illegitimate son of Amy Victoria Scammel and Benjamin Francis Herbert. His writings depict the story of Indigenous soil. His first work *Capricornia* published in 1938 was widely read Australian novel. It was a work of protest and influenced by 1930s Jindyworobak Movement of Australian Literature which was started to free Australian Art from other influences. Capricornia is an imaginative country which was neglected by the history of Australia. He created such kind fictional nation to demonstrate the lives of Aboriginals to the Whites. His other works are *Seven Emus* (1959), *Soldiers' Women* (1961), *Poor Fellow My Country* (1975). For this novel he won the Miles Franklin Award and this is regarded as the longest Australian novel. He is also known for short stories collections and his autobiography *Disturbing Element* (1963).

**Judith Wright** (1915-2000) born on Armidale , New south Wales was a Poet who writes for the rights of Aboriginal land . With her poetries she showcases the Aboriginal sufferings, agonies and the Australian environment. She had successfully built up a relationship between indigenous people with the bush and soil of native land. Her first book of poetry *The Moving Image* published in 1946. It is based on the situation of the Aborigines during the Second World War. Her other collections of poetries were *Woman to Man* (1949), *The Gateway* (1953), *The Two Fires* (1955), *Birds* (1962), *Five Senses* (1963), *The Other Half* (1966), *Alive* (1973), *Train Journey* (1978) etc. And not only that she had also published short stories collection *The Nature of Love* in 1966. Wright was the only second person to win the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 1991.

Apart from this Aborigine authors there are numerous Australian Indigenous writers who devoted their entire life to make Aboriginal Literature a parallel genre with other so called established literature of different languages. Like Daisy Bates (1859-1951), Ion Idriess

(1889-1979), Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920- 1993) Alexis Wright (1950- ), Doris Pilkington Garimara (1937-2014), Lisa Bellear (1961-2006), Anita Heiss (1968) and many more.

**Glimpses of Aboriginal Films:** Poetry novel drama is not the only subject in which the Aboriginal aesthetic expanded throughout the world. There is one more medium which was actively changed the whole scenario, is Films. This form of representation really helps to spread Aboriginal identity to the modern world. In the early age of Australian cinema, white actors did the jobs for indigenous people as Australian government regulated participation of Aborigines to the social and cultural life. 1960 onwards things started to change for Aboriginal Cinema. United Nations questions for human rights for all citizens of a country, Australian Govt. had also follows that rules and bound to welcome Aborigines. That though Aborigines and Torres Strait islanders have been projected in screens from 1920 the silent era, but it's been a long journey to portrays their own issues or stories by themselves. Bruce Mcguiness is one of the greatest film maker for Aborigines who introduces self-empowerment and self-representation of Aboriginality to the world of cinema. He made two films, *Blackfire* (1972) and *A Time to Dream*(1974). There are also very important filmmakers presents in Aborigine Film History, such as, Essie Coffey (1941-1988), her famous film is *My Survival as an Aboriginal* in 1978. Brian Syron (1934-1993) is considered as the first Australian indigenous feature film director. His some famous works are *Bran Nue Dae* (1988), *Jindalee Lady* (1992) as director and *Jeremy and teapot* (1976), *The City's Edge* (1983) as an actor. Tracey Moffat (1960) who is primarily a photographer by profession but she has also a great filmography to be mentioned. Her notable works are *Guniwaya Ngigu* (1982) (documentary), *Nice Coloured Girls* (1987), *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy* (1990) etc.

**Conclusion:** Throughout this module we have learnt about the history of the Indigenous people of Australia and their different Art forms and cultures and in the later part we came to know about their literary contribution to this world. But there are few incidents occurred in the history of Aborigines without knowing this our knowledge about them remains unfulfilled. In 1975, World Council for Indigenous Peoples formed. This incident marked the beginning of cultural transaction between Indigenous culture with the world and this also paved the way for declaration of 'Year of Indigenous People' by United Nation in 1993. With which Aboriginality finally became fully Globalised and as a result new themes and ideas were used to incorporate with Indigenous Literature.



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