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**Exploring Colonialization Through the Experience Of
Aboriginal Australians in David Milroy's Windmill Baby (2005)**

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1. Introduction

One of the most successful Aboriginal theaters in Australia is Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre, by the artistic director David Milroy, which started in Perth, Western Australia, in 1993. It provides training programs for Aboriginal artists who want to be in important roles and presents a professional Indigenous theater program each year (Akerholt, 2000, p. 216).

The new writers, like David Milroy, who was most interested in changing how people thought about Australian fiction, poetry, and drama in the late 1960s and early 1970s, were mostly male at the time. In addition, he wanted to break down barriers about what could be said on stage or in print. They were against American imperialism, as was shown in Vietnam, just as they were against British colonial rule. They now looked to New York or Paris as the places where culture was more important than London. The "generation of" poets were drawn to French symbolists such as Rimbaud and Baudelaire, as well as emerging American poets. Whitlam's reforms were not completely reversed, even though "God Save the Queen" was reinstated as the national anthem. Many people thought the democratic process had been harmed by the reinstatement of "God Save the Queen," one of Australia's last vestiges of colonialism. Indigenous people have been given land rights in over a quarter of the northern part of Australia. The cost of university tuition has never changed. In the 1970s, there was a big rise in the number of mature-age students, especially women. Equal pay for women became more common in the workplace, the Family Court was set up, and Democrats kept having a say in how the government made decisions (Webby, 2000, pp. 13-14).

A group called Native Earth has recently worked with Indigenous peoples instead of national governments to talk about globalization. They avoid the industrial model of production and diplomatic exchange by touring as "foreign relations," or by trading in commodified cultures. It was a three-year project called "Honoring Theatre," and it didn't just involve working together on a single show. For three years (2006–08), Native Earth put on and toured shows by Aboriginal groups from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Forging strategic alliances and setting up "indigenous trade routes through the arts," as the tour's program puts it, were part of the process. These routes are based on trade routes that existed before Europeans came to the area (Native

Earth, "Honouring"). *Windmill Baby*, a play written by David Milroy, is the source of this big idea. This project is based on the play (Solga, 2011, p. 84).

Before the British came to Western Australia, Aboriginal women were seen as full partners in their society and were treated as such. In the past, Aboriginal women had separate areas from Aboriginal men, but these areas were not subordinate. Instead, they were autonomous and of equal value, not subordinate to the men. In the past, Aboriginal women had strong legal rights, and their lives were both culturally and spiritually rich. In fact, after colonization, Aboriginal people were taken away from the land they lived on, and their culture and kinship networks were wiped away. It was common for Aboriginal women to be kidnapped, and venereal diseases were common. Europeans thought Aboriginal women were subservient to Aboriginal men because they thought they were not strong enough to fight for their own rights. As a result, Aboriginal women were thought to be less important than other people and were put in the lowest parts of society (Gregory & Gothard, 2009, p. 41).

One of David Milroy's plays, "*Windmill Baby*," has just come to an end. He has had success and recognition across the country and around the world. This play won the Patrick White Playwrights' Award (Australia) in 2004. First, from 1995 to 2003, David worked with first-time writers and artists on a group show called *Yirra Yaakin*, which was very popular with Western Australian Aboriginal people. Throughout the world, he is known for his work in the development of the Aboriginal theater industry. In 2002, he was a co-recipient of the Myer Award, which is given to people who help the Aboriginal community tell their own stories. The tour was a huge hit. The playwrights and actors David met were Native American. He gave talks about Aboriginal history, family history, and Aboriginal theater in Australia to people of all ages, from middle and high school students to college and university students and members of the community, as well as giving scriptwriting workshops at the University of Queensland (Andreatta, 2008, p. 21).

1.1 David Milroy

From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, David Milroy was the company's artistic director, and he wrote and directed *Windmill Baby* (2005), a one-woman show based on oral histories from Western Australia's Pilbara and Kimberley regions. The play has begun touring the United Kingdom, Canada, and France on a national and international level (Glow & Johanson, 2008, p.

8), in which biographies and autobiographies, which frequently take the form of monodramas, were born out of a desire to tell stories. It also shows how theatre is seen as a place where Aboriginal history is written.

A well-known example of this genre is David Milroy's *Windmill Baby* (2005). An Aboriginal performer tells the audience about the stories he or she has witnessed in these monodramas. The plays accomplish two goals: first, they document Aboriginal peoples' survival in Australia after 200 years of white settlement; and second, they document Aboriginal peoples' survival in Australia after 200 years of white settlement. Second, they act as a way to pass on knowledge and keep Aboriginal oral traditions alive (Az-Zubaidy, 2018, pp. 44-45).

Indigenous people's lives and struggles are depicted in three types of monodramas: urban, rural, and remote. Monodramas abound in which the diverse urban experiences of Aboriginal people are explored. A lot of the time, they focus on a specific aspect of the impact of racist government policies, such as the policies that led to the so-called "Stolen Generations." A number of other monodramas focus on rural life, particularly that which takes place in small towns. A second group of people is concerned about the cultural conflicts and tensions faced by those who grew up in remote traditional communities before moving to urban areas. In addition to these three major genres, a small subset of monodramas tell stories from the past that have never been told before, such as the use of slaves in pastoral industries during the early twentieth century (Casey, 2013, pp. 162-163).

In 2000, the artistic director of Yirra Yaakin, David Milroy, stated that Aboriginal theatre was at a critical juncture in its development. Despite the fact that there was a wealth of talent and experience, there was no real infrastructure in place to allow Indigenous Australians to take control of their work and advance Indigenous theatre beyond its current status. Even though they were no longer considered "new" or "emerging," a slew of talented playwrights, directors, and actors were languishing in limbo because of a lack of opportunities for growth and advancement. Making matters worse, negotiations must take place within the context of Australian media and government discourses that shape social and political representations of Indigenous Australians (IA). As a group and as individuals, Indigenous theater artists have made a lot of progress over the last decade, and they've made a lot of work.

Milroy has a variety of shows that focus on the local area. As a result of this, Aboriginal issue-based theater is produced that focuses on the message rather than on the props, set, or costumes used in the show. *Windmill Baby* was the result of a review of the company's processes and a focus on its goal of creating work for Aboriginal audiences, according to one of the company's major creative artists, David Milroy. Developing an Aboriginal process that included extensive consultation with the community and strict adherence to cultural norms was a top priority at Yirra Yaakin. If it doesn't appeal to Aboriginal audiences, try it out on them first to see if it's palatable (Casey, 2013, p. 103).

At the American Playwrights Conference in Connecticut in 2000, Milroy was invited to be a guest director for the Australian Playwrights Conference. *Windmill Baby* won the Western Australian Equity Award for best new play in 2005, as well as the Patrick White Playwrights' Award, Australia's most prestigious playwriting award. As a result, *Windmill Baby* received the prestigious Tony Award for Best Original Score in 2006. The Deadlys are an annual awards ceremony that recognizes outstanding achievements by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. *Windmill Baby* is credited with launching Yirra Yaakin's international career because it was performed and critically acclaimed at major arts festivals in England, Northern Ireland, Canada, and India. Milroy was awarded the Kate Challis Raka Award in 2007 for the best Indigenous play of the previous five years by the American Theatre Wing. The following aspects are the focus of Milroy's investigation:

"a great social need for social change. [...] It's not only working outside of the community but also working back into the community [...] that sort of thing keeps me involved with theatre, that's what drove a lot of the Yirra Yaakin [work] that I was doing". In 2009, David Milroy created *"Talk It Up"* (Casey, 2013, p. 105).

1.2 Aboriginal Theatre

The writing was used by Aboriginal people as a form of resistance and political bargaining, as well as for personal communication with relatives and friends. At times, government and mission officials viewed Indigenous texts and narrative types of writing with suspicion. Aboriginal people complained that the reserve manager intercepted, read, and sometimes destroyed their letters on some Victorian missions and reserves (Van Toorn, 2000, pp. 26-27).

Their work effectively documents, analyzes, and laments colonialism's effects on Aboriginal people and the land. Some poems direct their anger, accusation, disdain, and sometimes pitying tones at "the unhappy [white] race." In *Van Toorn's book*, he says that some people are more reflective, remembering happier times before the white man came.

Writing by white authors during this time period reveals how attitudes toward Aboriginal people have changed over time, from colonial racism to the more complex issues of today's identity politics. The majority of the time in Australia Many twentieth-century novels dealing with race relations reveal a deep fear of miscegenation, but in a different way than colonial fiction; one of its central concerns is the fate of mixed-race children who have been abandoned or brutalized, as well as their position and fate in both Aboriginal and white society. There have been many ways that Aboriginal people have been discriminated against (Goldsworthy 2000, pp. 122-124).

It was a significant achievement of the 1980s to consolidate an indigenous drama. Aboriginal performance draws on thousands of years of rituals and traditions, but text-based theatre is a new art form. On the other hand, Aboriginal theatre has developed a form that explores its own voice and vision separation. Aboriginal English, Aboriginal English, and words from the writers' tribal language are used to mix Western theater with Aboriginal spirituality, ceremony, and ritual to make unique stories (Akerholt, 2000, p. 225). The professional examples of Indigenous theatre are *Windmill Baby* and the play was created by Perth's Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, and while it is an example of urban theatre in this sense, *Windmill Baby* is also a part of the company's mandate to engage with Indigenous cultural politics and audiences across the state. Its set design depicts the regional far north as a metaphor for national Indigenous–White spatial and cultural tensions. There is a lot of cultural and spatial conflict in this area, so it takes center stage (Carleton, 2013, p. 157).

2. Literature Review

Colonization is a recurrent trait in world history. It dates back to ancient times. For Elleke Boehmer, "It involves the consolidation of imperial power, and is manifested in the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands, often by force." Many citizens experienced the invasion of their nations. There were various types of colonization, and policies that set the colonized countries in

disorder (Boehmer, 2005, p. 2). Imperialism as a theory and colonization as a practice, therefore, continue to be vivid or vital in another form, which is neo-colonialism. Kwame Nkrumah defines neo-colonialism as the final and most dangerous phase of imperialism, whose epitome is that the country is subjected to its hegemony and, regardless of its international sovereignty, its economic system and policy are imposed from outside (Nkrumah, 1966, p. ix).

One of the 'defenders of colonial rights' was the Irishman Edmund Burke, whose criticism of colonialism concentrated on the "abuses of power and intolerance towards the norms, social practices, and institutions of other cultures" in the colonies controlled by Britain. The French revolution came to strengthen this anti-colonialist "when the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity were theoretically extended by its proponents to all races" (Young, 2001, pp. 78-80).

Some of these researchers include Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), Homi Bhabha (1949), Edward Said (1935-2003), and Gayatri Spivak (1942). They all took part in the growth of post-colonial theory. Frantz Fanon was the first critic who thought about post-colonial theory. Because he was black, he analyzed the relationship between colonialism and racism. The critics think that the cause behind Fanon's view of this theory lies in his bitter sufferings with the intention of decomposing the national government founded on the heritage of colonialism (Guerin et al., 2005, p. 304).

Fanon's book, *Black Skin, White Masks*, is a clinical study in which he analyses the psychology of the black person's state of perplexity and shows the abnormalities of the impacts of colonialism. Fanon remarks the black desire to be white, while the whites use slavery as a means to arrive at "a human level." "White men" think themselves superior to indigenous inhabitants. "Black men" seek to show "white men" the uniqueness of their thinking, and the equal worth of their intelligence (Fanon, 2008, p. 3-5).

Fanon, as a psychiatrist, focused on the psychological impact of racism and colonialism. He concentrated his psychological attention on both the colonised and the coloniser. In his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, he argues that 'decolonization,' whose aim is to create a change in the globe, is clearly "an agenda for total disorder." It is a conflict between two opposing forces, enhanced by the colonial situation. The initial conflict between the colonists and the colonized was shaped by violence. There is also an old acquaintance between the colonizer and the colonized. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the colonist claims to know the colonised. Fanon sees that

"[i]t is the colonist who *fabricated* and *continues to fabricate* [emphasis original] the colonized subject." The colonists' wealth stems from the colonial regime (Fanon, 2004, p. 2).

There is a great gap between the colonised and the colonists. They are opposite to each other without aiming to create a union. The European sector is being built with steel and stone for the purpose of lasting a long time. It is a sector full of good things for its inhabitants, white folks and foreigners (ibid:4). In his struggle for independence, Fanon justifies the violence of the colonized against the colonizer. He suggests that the colonizers should be opposed and removed in order to establish a new state. Violence can indeed be considered an ideal mediator. The colonized man liberates himself through violence. This activity evokes the revolutionary, since it demonstrates to him "the means and the end." He justifies the use of violence because it is a "naked violence" that deserves to be destroyed by "a greater violence" (Fanon, 2004, pp. 23, 44).

Said vehemently criticizes the inaccurate portrayal of the East as absurd, unprofessional, immoral, and different, allowing Westerners to describe themselves as relatively adult, civilized, and so on. The occidentals regard themselves as the superior race in comparison to the orientals, and on the basis of this belief, they put forward their justification for colonization. Their division of the world is based upon two parts: the West and the East, the Orient and the Occident, or the developed and the underdeveloped (Fanon, 2004, pp. 227–228).

In his significant book, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha discusses some basic concepts in post-colonial theory. Among the important concepts in this theory is that of "the stereotype." Through his drawing attention to the stereotypes made by the colonial discourse, he clarifies that this discourse is characterized by its dependence on "fixity," which is a concept in the ideological creation of otherness. Colonialists used the word "fixity" to show that there were racial or cultural differences. "Fixity" also "denotes rigidity, an unchanging order, and chaos," says Bhabha in 1994.

To summarize the history of Aboriginal Australia, the 1964 novel *The Dispossessed* by Noonuccal depicts precolonial life (peace and law) alongside the genocide (rape, murder, poison, and enslavement) that occurred during colonization, decimating the indigenous population and causing the aboriginal people to lose their soul and identity. Survivors of colonialism carry their trauma into the next generation. In the midst of intergenerational and historical trauma and the pervasiveness of current trauma, Aboriginal people have been attempting to piece together "remnants" of their culture. In colonial dramas of the 19th century, indigenous characters began to

appear. In colonial dramas, indigenous characters were portrayed in a way that was very much influenced by melodrama's roots (Eckersley, 2012, p. 43).

3. Exploring Colonialization in Milroy's *Windmill Baby* (2005)

David Milroy has written extensively about the impact of colonial history on people's lives. Despite the fact that *Windmill Baby* (2005) is based on the history of Indigenous Australian domestic servants on remote cattle stations in the far north, Milroy delineates his characters in an idiosyncratic manner, raising yet continually dispelling stereotypes and pitfalls of cross-cultural interaction and integrating the play with a playful satirical edge. Because Milroy makes Indigenousness an important part of his characters' identities but not the main one, he creates personas that resonate beyond the racial frame that is often used to look at Indigenous Australian theater.

In the mainstream approach, *Windmill Baby* (2005), Milroy's film, is one of the most notable successes. Since its Australian premiere in 2003, the show has gone on to make five international tours as well as numerous domestic ones. When it premiered in 2003, it was honored with a Patrick White Playwrights' Award. As a play inspired by Fitzroy Crossing residents, *Windmill Baby* depicts a present-day Kimberley landscape and its connection to spirituality. A wonderful female character was created by Milroy in Maymay, an elderly woman with "*unfinished business*" (Milroy 2007: 207). After fifty years, she can't believe how much has changed from her childhood to now, when she watches helicopters round up cattle. However, old stories and past deaths must be acknowledged, and their spirits laid to rest as a result. Using the deaths of two newborn babies, the story of the Aboriginal people on the station and the tragic outcome of a love affair between an Aboriginal man and a white woman under racialized colonial systems are told. For example, Milroy's lyrical language and Maymay's earthy and pragmatic relationship with the spiritual demonstrate Milroy's light touch in dealing with strong emotions. For years, Milroy had been imagining a story based on a collection of stories, legends, and oral histories from the Pilbara and Kimberley. There are a number of characters and stories in *Windmill Baby* that are based on real people, animals, and events (Casey, 2013, pp. 106-107).

Milroy's work has primarily focused on Aboriginal people and their stories. As Milroy puts it, "*it's the whole question of what's traditional and what's contemporary [...] there is*

contemporary Indigenous theatre [contemporary performances based on or drawing on customary performance practices within communities] that changes, adapts, and moves with the times" alongside "contemporary Indigenous theatre" [recognised theatre practice within the mainstream]" (Casey, 2013, p. 119).

In addition, Casey (2013) includes Maymay Starr narrates *Windmill Baby*, a story set in a Kimberley station, as a retrospective of her childhood and courtship. A City-Black/Bush-Black dialectic is used as the narrative focus in the Kimberley region, where the majority of the action takes place. An interracial relationship is explored in the play between the White Station owner's wife ("the Missus") and Wunman, an Aboriginal man with a physical disability who tends a veggie patch near the homestead beneath a windmill. Furthermore, this award-winning piece of Australian drama is notable for its fascinating inversion of racial stereotypes and stock characters unique to the North, as they were originally depicted in colonial era dramas of the 1930s and 1940s. Henrietta Drake (1937) Brockman's Kimberley station drama, *"Men Without Wives,"* hovers at doorways and thresholds as a symbol of the play's transgressive spatial boundary schematics and politics. This piece immediately reminds me of that play. The Missus is only a faint outline in *Windmill*, where she is seen passing through the highly racially charged portal of the pastoral verandah rather than the housemaid Channa. In *Windmill Baby*, the verandah politics of the 1950s and 1960s are brought to life through the memories of old May, who tells of the time when the Boss found Wunman and the Missus talking on this threshold of the Black-White spatial divide as an illustration of the verandah politics of the time:

She says: *"Only the house girls were allowed on the verandah so his blood boiled over when he saw them [Wunman and the Missus], poor missus." I used to think she was made out of wax. She had to keep out of the sun so she didn't melt". "The day before she arrived on the station, boss had everyone raking the yard, oiling the boards and scrubbing the verandah". "He came down to the camp barking like a dog after a dingo".*

Then everything went to hell. Wunman was dragged off the verandah by the scruff of his neck, thrown to the ground, and given the flogging of his life by the boss. I expressed my genuine regret to her.

OLD MAY: *"By jingos, Malvern thought he was gonna get a flogging so he grabbed a lasso in one hand, whip in the other, and hid under the bed"*. BOSS: *"Maymay! Where's Malvern? If that lazy black bastard is still in bed—"* (Milroy, 2005, p. 19)

This incident captures the violence of the northwestern frontier as it is encapsulated metonymically by the pastoral homestead, and conjures up the images depicted in such confronting realist detail, because it is the boss who engages in illegitimate (and socially unapproved) interracial sexual congress, much to the chagrin of the Aboriginal station hands he employs. *Windmill Baby* vividly depicts the boss's violence, but he is the unwitting cuckold in a taboo sexual tryst taking place on "his" property. As a result, *Windmill Baby* places Aboriginal characters, as well as the Northern "frontier," at the center of the drama. Another thing that makes the idea that the "Black Man's Country" can't be reduced to its racial essence is that interracial tensions are getting worse on the homestead, which is supposed to be white but is actually mixed-race.

The play's concept of "indigeneity" provides meta-textual insights into how identity is negotiated in a specific context—namely, in specific artistic instances, in specific places, and at specific times. There are implications for contemporary Australian Indigenous identity formation in this work. Due to the sheer volume of people who identify as Australian Aboriginal today, a universal concept like this would be difficult, if not impossible, to describe and unify. It would instead reinforce a colonial concept of Indigenism that incorrectly assumes cultural and experiential homogeneity that has never existed on Australian soil (Thurow, 2020, p. 12). It is important to look into the literary tools and dramatic techniques used by these Aboriginal playwrights to explore Aboriginal identity and diversity, such as how this play depicts Aboriginal peoples' struggle for land rights and other issues such as the Stolen Generations, death in police custody, racism, and cultural erosion. The play explains why the call for reconciliation with Australia's Aboriginal people is necessary. There were some administrations who thought that reconciliation could be done through services and support for Aboriginal people, not by apologizing and making amends.

Finding one's identity, both one's sexuality and one's place in a predominantly white society, are major themes in this work. Maymay's story and the wider impact of colonization on Aboriginal ways of life and the effects on mixed-ancestry children are both told using direct address, as in David Milroy's *Windmill Baby* (2005), which uses direct address in a similar way

to "Frames" (Milroy, 2005). In plays that deal with issues of race, gender, and class, we hear a lot about equality, self-determination, and personal identity. A variety of perspectives, including those influenced by Australia's multiculturalism and global reach, can be expressed through theater. According to the theater's role as a witness and reporter in life, this is appropriate. Some of the time, I think playwrights have a moral duty to talk about social issues. I agree with Rees that playwrights should write plays about "social, moral, and domestic disintegration" (Helfgott, 2013, p. 153).

Seeing what minority writing can bring to the national cultural table, David Milroy's *Windmill Baby*. Emphasizing the connection through family to country' as a distinctive indigenous characteristic that comes out in Aboriginal writing, which treats the natural world as an active participant in human drama rather than a passive backdrop to it (Chakraborty, et al., 2016, p. 1281).

OLD MAY: *"And that windmill started turning and the water started pumping and all them kangaroos started wagging their tails because everything started coming up green. The missus reckoned Wunman had green fingers. And she was right—very dark, green fingers"*.

In their work, Aboriginal writers and performers in Western Australia's theatre have continued to explore the North/Black/Bush versus South/White/City dialectic in their work, which marks a transition from colonial to postcolonial spatial politics. "The Multiracial North" examines how a postcolonial North is "writing back," with a particular focus on emerging trends. Criticism is directed at Aboriginal-created works that challenge the North-South Black-White binary, while also denying the North as the starry-eyed Souther's multicultural paradise (Carleton, 2008, pp. 27, 235). Retrospective Maymay Starr tells the story of her youth and courtship at Kimberley Station in *Windmill Baby*, which focuses on a city-black/bush-black dialectic in the narrative. In the play, the "Missus" (the white station owner's wife) has an affair with Wunman, an Aboriginal man who tends the veggie patch near the homestead under the windmill, but the play's taboo affair between the "Missus" and Wunman explores interracial sexual practice and desire. However, this drama is of particular interest to this study not only because it won an award for its quality as an Australian drama, but also because it shows an interesting inversion of colonial-era racial stereotypes and stock characters from the north of the country. Maymay is the one who notices that "[t]he missus weren't made for this country":

Old May: *"Well, they both give me a herding look straight back. If a bull wants to jump a fence and a cow is in calf, you just gotta let 'em be. That wasn't the only thing going wrong on the station; we were in the middle of a drought. There was water in the bores but the country had dried up and there was no feed for the cattle. So the boss started taking it out on his men. Freddy Cole got horsewhipped and ran away, but the policemen brought him back. The next time he ran away, gudiyas came in from other stations and met with the boss".*

In *Windmill Baby*, the Missus is seen passing through the racially charged verandah's pastoral verandah portal. In the play, the Missus is barely discernible. Old May tells us of a time when the Boss found Wunman and the Missus on the verandah of the Black/White spatial divide talking to each other (and it is essentially the assimilation era of the 1950s and 1960s being conjured up through memory in the play). According to her, only the housegirls were allowed on the verandah, so seeing Woman and the Missus made his blood run cold. Everything went awry after that. He flogged Wunman until he died, dragging him off the verandah by the scruff of his neck. My apologies were sincere. This incident symbolizes the brutality of the North-Western frontier by using a pastoral homestead as a metaphor. The Boss is the character in that play who, much to the dismay of the Aboriginal station hands he employs, engages in illegitimate (and socially sanctioned) interracial sexual congress. A taboo sexual tryst is taking place on "his" land, and *Windmill Baby* is the unwitting cuckold. As opposed to Milroy's stock characters, who remain anonymous, the Aboriginal characters are not only identified by name but also evoked and described in three-dimensional detail, much of it humorous. Aside from their role as foils or catalysts for the more complex emotional journeys of the central Black protagonists, the White characters' perspectives and inner lives are never fully explored. Maymay knew it would be shameful and disastrous if she had miscarried the child in that situation, so she kidnapped it. A flood takes the *Windmill baby* with it, and her return to the homestead after so many decades away is a tribute to both the *Windmill baby* and her own daughter, Ruby, who died shortly after birth, both of whom she mourns. Instead of using binary spatial equations, Milroy uses hybridity, emphasizing the benefits of both urban and rural areas as "zones" of blackness. The issue at hand is who has the right to call themselves a "true" Aborigine. Urban Aborigines in the state's Aboriginal communities are the focus of this investigation because they feel as if they don't measure up to indigenous communities in the state's northern and other remote regions (Carleton, 2008, pp. 237-240).

Aboriginal plays have produced a slew of strong female characters. David Milroy's powerful, moving, and award-winning *Windmill Baby* comes to life in David Milroy's powerful, moving, and award-winning *Windmill Baby*. As if it were a campfire story, she takes the audience on a journey through the rocky terrain of love and loss. *Windmill Baby* depicts colonial brutality while also recognizing how Aboriginal people are able to survive heartbreaking events thanks to their wit, music, and steely resolve. As it won the Patrick White Award, the judges described it as "hard as quartz, sadly poignant, and hilarious all on one page."

WUNMAN: *"You know, Maymay, the missus read to me about Eden. She tell me my garden is just like that one. Everything comes up green and it's a proper happy place. [Pause.] And you know, there was two fellas who loved each other but things went wrong for them because they broke the law. Maybe one was black and maybe one was white".*

This play depicts some of the most pivotal moments in Indigenous theatre over the last decade. Forced separation, racism in the delivery of everyday services, the struggle with identity, the need to reconnect with family and country, the struggle with abject poverty, the desire for self-determination, and the strong ties of family, kinship, and community are just a few of the themes that distinguish Indigenous theatre. It is, however, a reminder of the resilience of contemporary Aboriginal cultures, a continuation of our communities' storytelling tradition as a means of teaching, preserving history, and communicating across time. Maymay, an elderly Aboriginal woman, enters with a bag in her hand. When the song ends, the light turns on. It's daylight:

OLD MAY: *"Oh my, fifty years has knocked the stuffing out of this old station. He look like graveyard. Graveyard full of memories. Like this old bed".* "Maymay walks to an old rusty bed. She sits down, squeaking the rusty springs". OLD MAY: *"Lot of bloody good memories from this one. Just like riding a bike. Funny thing that! My husband's name was Malvern, Malvern Starr".*

Maymay has returned to the pastoral station where she worked as a maid fifty years ago. As she walks around the old washing line, she remembers the season of love and vengeance that swept through and transformed this dusty collection of bungalows into the setting for an achingly beautiful tragedy. *Windmill Baby* tells the story of black Australians working for White Australia. It's also a classic betrayal and ruin story. *Windmill Baby* is a work of grace thanks to Milroy's deft humour and Maymay's magnificent forbearance. It finds meaning in a meaningless act of violence

and keeps that meaning alive despite the corrosive effects of time and willful failures of national memory. *Windmill Baby* is a rare example of a true love story. In the Kimberley landscape of azure skies and red dirt, an elderly Aboriginal woman returns to a deserted cattle station to fulfill a promise made under the windmill's shadow. In the poetic "campfire storyteller" tradition, with musical accompaniment, the play exposes the harsh relationships between the white boss and missus and the Aboriginal workers in the workplace. Maymay's relationship with the earth spirits and her painful memories of motherhood, loss, and death during colonial violence help her come to terms with the past. Servant Maymay and cook Sally compete for Mal Bourne's attention on an outback homestead. Ruby is the name given to Maymay's baby girl if she is a girl, and her husband tells her so when she gets pregnant. Maymay, on the other hand, has a miscarriage after her white boss makes her work too hard. Sally expresses her feelings for the disabled gardener, Wun-Man, but Wun-Man prefers to be with the white man's wife. When the white boss is drunk, he assaults his wife and servants. Maymay's complications begin when his wife becomes unexpectedly pregnant:

YOUNG MAY: "[screaming] Sally? Sally! Sally! Sally! You stealing bugger! SALLY: *What you busting yourself for, Maymay?! I'm the one who should be angry. I know you been trying to steal my man. I seen you polishing his head. Innnnn! Ouuuutt! Innnnnn! Ouuutttt! Well, you can save your polishing for the kero lamp because he's my man, not yours. Anyway, there's a lot of other men bulling around here. Like... Wunman. He looks all right from back here... when the sun's going down... and he's not crouching*".

Maymay, the show's enchanting, enthralling one-woman storyteller, is an aging Aboriginal woman who has returned to her old camp on the cattle station where she once lived for a short time. However, life was difficult for many Aboriginal men and women in the postwar, pre-referendum period, when they worked for 'the boss' and 'the missus' in almost feudal social structures. Maymay chattily recalls the tumultuous season of love, joy, and revenge that swept through the outback station, resulting in tragedy and sudden ruin, as she hangs out the (now bone dry and red earth-stained) washing for 'the missus' on the twisted wire clothesline. Maymay has kept her emotions to herself for decades. For a limited time, she has the chance to tie up all the loose ends in stories of bravery, spirit, strength, love, tenderness, and loss. There's also singing and a love story involving pumpkins and potatoes that feels almost dreamlike. In this difficult solo

work as Maymay, Her tired, lined face can change in an instant, glowing with childlike mischief and delight. A white a-line dress with one button down the front, a flowery floppy sunhat, and a basket with a water bottle, sandwich, and phone:

Old May: Well, after Wunman had chucked all his potatoes he just sat there staring at the homestead. Then, just as I was gonna drag him away, she came out onto the verandah and held his hands with the little potato inside. I thought this is no good... but potatoes can do strange things to a woman. The shadow and sound of the creaking windmill return".

Maymay's characters in the show include 'the boss' and 'the missus,' as well as Maymay's husband, Malvern, the crippled gardener Wunman, various Aboriginal elders, and even Skitchem the dog. While there is a hint in her portrayal of Wunman, his green-fingeredness and prolific veggie garden are symbolic of happiness and life at the mission. Skitchem is a riot. As Maymay says:

OLD MAY: "Hmmp! Love does funny things to a man. The next day we seen the mail truck kicking up the dust. Malvern was a proper bush blackfella and hadn't seen many trucks before, so he grabbed a lasso in one hand, whip in the other, and hid behind the woodheap. The truck pulled up and there she sat. The little wax candle. No matter I whipped the rugs into butter, because all that sun and dust had made her nose as red as a beetroot. The missus weren't made for this country. But love does funny things to a woman".

The boss's life was not easy (cattle ranch owners). Maymay, on the other hand, has been ruminating for a while. She now has the opportunity to retell those stories of love, loss, strength, and spirit. It is now up to her to complete this task:

"There! The missus' washing is just about dry now. [Pause.] Time to finish this business".

Maymay interacts with the audience and helps to relieve her time on the station by reenacting scenes from her past and playing all of the roles. Her late-teens self as a laundry girl, her husband, the station's boss, his wife, other Aboriginal servants, a white doctor, and even Skitchum, a mongrel camp dog, are all depicted. It's a fascinating story about a young, isolated white woman on a cattle station who befriends and romances an indigenous man, resulting in the birth of a young child. Before the Boss returned to the farm, it was up to the young Maymay to

"get rid" of the child. Maymay is determined to keep the child alive, but she is separated from him while crossing a river. She had to return to tell her story as the Old Maymay:

Old May: *"Windmill Baby, we never got across that river but I did my best. I haven't got much to give you now but here's that quilt me and your mummy made for you... I never got to keep my promise to your daddy... but maybe he come for you tonight... and he can tell you that story... you know that potato one [She puts the quilt down. Pause.] How you end that story?"*

She recounts her life at the station, including her interactions with the white station owner, his wife, and the Aboriginal workers. We learn about the challenges faced by both black and white cattle ranchers, as well as the cultural and social stigma associated with mixed-race marriages and children as Maymay explains that:

"If you start something you must finish it even if it doesn't matter anymore".

She recounts her experiences at the station, including interactions with the white station owner, his wife, and the Aboriginal workers. Black and white cattle ranchers, as well as people in their communities who don't like mixed marriages or people who have kids with mixed blood, are talked about in this book.

"But his mummy held onto that little crippled-up Wunman and loved him... The mouth organ stops as MAYMAY throws some soap". "She stands staring in love lust towards the imaginary Malvern. I bin just fall in love with him."

Maymay then tells stories about her childhood in this remote location during the postwar years in a warm and chatty manner. Another story emerges from these recollections: the relationship between the pastoralist's wife and the station's crippled Aboriginal gardener, and the tragic consequences of that relationship. Maymay is dropped off by her daughter in the middle of nowhere, ostensibly to take care of some "unfinished business." She travels to an old cattle station in western Australia, where she toiled half a century ago, with her new cell phone as her mode of communication.

Maymay's story may not be unique, with a windmill looming over everything, a water tank, the homestead's back verandah, and an old-fashioned washing line, as told by Milroy in *Windmill Baby*. Surprisingly, the title's featured structure is that of a silent observer. The verandah serves as

a more powerful symbol of separation between the privileged station owners. But the storytelling is also, and primarily, full of warmth and humour, thanks to Richards' wonderfully generous performance as the older woman who returns to the setting of her youth. It's like sitting down to listen to a fantastic yarn full of digressions, episodic tales, reminiscences, and self-deprecating humour. Then there's a cute strand about a half-dingo dog and a poodle that's both thematically appropriate and hilarious.

A great deal of David Milroy's work focuses on how colonial histories affect the lives of individuals. On a remote cattle station in northern Australia, *Windmill Baby* (2005) examines the history of Indigenous Australian domestic servants and exposes racism and indigenous women's vulnerability. An energetic and funny first act sets the stage for characters who are free of political or moral ideologies to fall in love, which is then bolstered by a compelling musical and choreographic score. The play is divided into two acts. After a 40-year absence, the characters are reunited for one final night of reminiscing before the club is demolished. Milroy's characters are defined in a unique way, raising but also eluding stereotypes and pitfalls of cross-cultural interaction, which lends the play a playful satirical edge, rather than rehearsing the dominant parameters of the reconciliation discourse in a predictable fashion. It is Milroy's ability to make Indigenous Australian theatre practice an important but not central part of his characters' identities that sets his work apart from other attempts to interpret Indigenous Australian theatre practice based on race (Thurrow, 2020, p. 66). When it comes to the depiction of racial relationships, "If you start something, you have to finish it, even if it doesn't matter anymore," Maymay says. She recounts her experiences at the station, including interactions with the white station owner, his wife, and the Aboriginal workers. Both black and white cattle ranchers have to deal with problems. We also learn about how mixed-race marriages and children are seen as bad by both people in their own culture and society.

Unfinished business from past racialized abuses and practices under colonization, which are often unacknowledged, continues to leave traces in the present, according to stories from different generations. This includes the slave practices used in and to support the pastoral industries of outback Australia until the 1970s. *Windmill Baby*, a monodrama by David Milroy, explores some of this unfinished business. Milroy is a musician, songwriter, and director. Through the eyes

of one woman, his text shows how Aboriginal people were held back by rural racism and poverty, how white people abused them, and how there were exceptions to racist cycles of behavior.

Milroy says that *"the story was blending of a number of yarns, legends and oral histories from the Pilbara and Kimberley that had swirled around in my head for many years."* According to Milroy, *"Many of the characters and stories in Windmill Baby including the dog are based on, in some part, real events, people, and animals".*

Milroy's monodrama is delivered by Maymay, an elderly woman with "unfinished business" (Milroy, 2005, 207). As a child, she worked as a station servant, hand-washing the clothes of the boss's family. For safety reasons, she is now equipped with a cellphone. However, it is necessary to acknowledge the stories of the past and the deaths that have occurred in order to put their spirits to rest. Using the deaths of two newborn babies, the story of the Aboriginal people on the station and the tragic outcome of a love affair between an Aboriginal man and a white woman under racialized colonial systems are told. The lyrical and evocative language, as well as Maymay's earthy, pragmatic relationship with the spiritual, demonstrate Milroy's light touch in dealing with strong emotions and pain (Casey, 2013, pp. 168-169).

4. Conclusion

Colonialism and racism have left their marks on the stories told in monodramas. The stories serve as a way for the creators and storytellers to share and validate their own unique perspectives on the world. Meetings like these shed light on the broader social and political context of the suffering. In the introduction to an anthology of contemporary Indigenous plays, the poem *Windmill Baby* is referenced, and it could be applied to any of the monodramas examined here. The author's writing "chronicles the cruelty of colonization while paying tribute to the way Aboriginal people survive heartbreaking events through humor, music, and steely resolve," he says. In order to reach as many people as possible with Aboriginal Australian stories, the work is bold, dark, and brilliant. Indigenous communities in rural and remote parts of the state are seen as more "black" and authentic by urban Aborigines, a cultural faultline that cuts across the state's entire Aboriginal population. When compared to a "cultural hybrid zone" like North America, Western Australia's Aboriginal communities have thrived alongside the non-Aboriginal majority population, proving that the idea that Perth is a white-only area is ludicrous to begin with.

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