

**AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE IN THE POETRY OF A. D. HOPE, JAMES MCAULEY AND
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Satana, Tal. Baglan Dist. Nashik (MS), India, sahebraok3@gmail.com**Abstract-**

Australia, like other colonies such as India, West Indies, Africa, Canada, and New Zealand, remained one of the colonies of British Empire. After the independence of the colonies, it was a herculean task for the indigenous writers to redefine the wrongly and derogatorily imposed identities affirmatively, as they were stigmatized by the rulers for their purposes. The primary focus of their literature had been to define themselves in relation to their original ethos and aboriginality. The literature of the colonies in English language came into exuberance just after their independence to negate the identities imposed by the English rulers upon the countrymen and derogatory definitions made by the rulers to rule the country. The writers from the colonial countries found freedom at three levels while writing viz. at language level, text level and theory level. The main focus of the litterateurs remained to attack on the negative stereotypes and to glorify their own land. Australian poets such as A. D. Hope, James McAuley, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Judith Wright, Les Murray, etc. portrayed the picture of Australia through their poetry. Apart from the postcolonial issues of the land, the poets focused on the landscapes in their poetry. Therefore the main objectives of the paper are to explore the land of Australia reflected in the poetry of major Australian poets such as A. D. Hope, James McAuley and Judith Wright.

Keywords- Landscape, exploration, colonialism, postcolonial literature, sensibility, aesthetic sensibility, feminine sensibility.

Australia is one of the colonial countries dominated by British Empire for a hundred years, which falls under first world commonwealth countries. The land is full of rocks, bushes, sands, dense forest and vast area of desert with full of extreme heat and rain therefore it is inhabitable making life very difficult. The land is not fertile but rich in its resources as it is the land of gold. As far as the history of the colony is concerned, the people migrated from England along with some European countries to Australia in the period from 1788 to 1841 shaped the population (near about 30 percent of its total population) of Australia. Now they became the permanent citizens of Australia. The migrated people were not the travelers or they were not in search of any resources, but they were primarily the criminals deported and exported by the British government on account of committing crime. The aboriginals were not advanced in technology and education, but were living their life with satisfaction with whatever the resources they could accumulate. The culture of Australia is transplanted due to the migration and imitation of English men and therefore it bears a lot of similarities to that of England. When Australia became free, the litterateurs started developing the theme of nationalism through their writings. Australian sensibility started to be developed into single identity as Australians by dissolving the various identities of the Europeans and the foreigners. Therefore, Australian sensibility, pricking conscience, love-hate relationship, and nativity were the major themes of the Australian literature. Australian poetry is a recent phenomenon having different themes such as celebration and exploration of landscape, Australianness, imperial ideas, post-colonialism, etc. As far as Australian landscape is concerned, the litterateurs believe in the exploration of the bushy land of desert terrains of Australia to understand the nature of the land of mother Australia. Therefore an exploration of Australian landscape which has come

with the blossoming of Australian culture that arrived around 1950 is likely to be explicable through some select poets such as A. D. Hope, James McAuley and Judith Wright.

In his poem *Australia*, A. D. Hope (1907-2000), an Australian poet and professor, explores the landscape of Australia and her natural resources. In the very beginning of the poem he calls Australia as a nation of trees. He writes, "A nation of trees, drab green and desolate grey" (Hope) Dark and dense forest signifies the shocked sensibility which infers the age old geology and the concept of virgin forest in the life of the nation which ultimately signifies the non-advancement of civilization. Although it seems negative explanation of the landscape of Australia but the poet has stern desire that his land should be a better place to live. In this regard, Varma rightly pointed out the characteristic feature of the poetry of A. D. Hope. She says:

"A. D. Hope too has discussed about aborigines, about the geographical condition, about the people of Australia in his poetry. Sometimes referred to as eco poetry, poems that explore various aspects of the natural world can offer readers new perspectives of native wildlife and landscapes, and the way we as humans interact with them. Nature has always been a common theme of Australian poetry." (Varma web).

The poet visualizes the nation with the mythical image of sphinx having the head of a man and the body of a lion which symbolizes the admixture of human civilization and nature. It conveys that Australia is not a country but a land of forest. King has rightly observed, "Australia, despite its many ironies, could be seen as boasting the national image and indeed first appeared in one of the many literary journals of the time which intended to promote local culture." (King 126). The poet has emphasized the forest and rivers of Australia as her resources although the rivers hide themselves in the sand. As far as the human civilization is concerned it has no old history of human civilization. It also shows the unfriendliness of Australian landscape when the poet says, "drab green and desolate grey" (Hope). Here desolate means the uninhabited land that leads to connote it as a young country, but the poet says it is wrong. The poet utilizes the imagery of a woman without change whose breasts are tender that shows external beauty and womb shows internal beauty. According to the poet, the external Australia is beautiful like a young woman but internally she is dried. The youth of the country connotes that the country has potential but due to lack of intellectuality, there is no use of the resources present within the country. Had the intellectuals worked, they could have made the country productive. It resulted into creating the shocked sensibility about the nation in the minds of readers. Readers come to know that the land of Australia has capability to produce the things as she is young but can't yield fruit due to lack of intellectuality and spirituality that is required for the individual development. The poet points out that Australia is the land of foolishness, immense stupidity and sheer ignorance. The ignorance is about establishing the culture of its own.

The poet A. D. Hope presents Australia as the land without culture, architecture, spirituality, heritage, history, music and natural resources, therefore the people of the land don't live but they survive. Rooney rightly pointed out, "In an Australian context, refusals of cultural inheritance have often expressed, or intersected with, recurring settler-colonial anxieties about legitimacy and belonging." (Rooney 10). It underlines that where culture dwells there is an atmosphere of living, otherwise one has to survive. But unfortunately, in the subsequent stanza, he has to expose the robbers who looted the country and drained it. The robbers are none other than second-hand Europeans expelled from their land. As he expresses:

"Where second-hand Europeans pullulate
Timidly on the edge of alien shores." (Hope).

In these lines, Hope identifies the robbers of the land as the second-hand Europeans who came in swarm

on the seashore. All these foreigners settled in the five cities are referred as five teeming sores because they polluted the cities and robbed the resources of the land. The five cities referred here are Melbourne, Sidney, Perth, Canberra and Adelaide. This is the postcolonial statement that speaks back to the masters who exploited the land and drained the natural resources of the land. To him, the land has become desert but he has hope of the arrival of second prophet from the same land like the prophet who had come previously from Arabian Desert and will realize the identities of the people who are boasting. This reminds the poem of W. B. Yeats' *The Second Coming* (1920), in which he prophesized the next coming. Here the poet shows the requirement of the situation of having an existence of desert for the emergence of prophet. The foreigners migrated to Australia settled on the shore exploited the country. They don't create anything new. Due to their inactivity, A. D. Hope calls the modern civilisation of Australia as the Ape's chatter because they lack civilised minds. They imitate the British people who affected the beauty of Australian nature that is why it is a shocked sensibility.

James McAuley (1917-1976), an Australian poet, literary critic and journalist, through his poem *Terra Australis*, explores explicitly the southern part of the Australian landscape and presents an aesthetic beauty of Australia through its flower wattle. Page exemplifies, "*Terra Australis* (c. 1938-40), for example, seems to take as its avowed prime purpose the celebration of a more stereotypical Australian landscape." (Page 7). He expresses that the land is approachable only through fabled ocean; this represents the South Pacific Ocean which is full of fables. The poet refers Quiros, a great 16th century Portuguese navigator, who actually was in search of Jerusalem but reached Australia and felt Australia with full of myths. To Quiros, Australia is mythical land therefore it is full of all types of things whatever one can imagine. Further he adds that the land is full of similes such as wattle, the air, magpies, Larrikins, angophora, white cockatoo, insolent emu, etc. These are the similes used by the poet but at the same time they play role of imageries and portray the romanticised picture of Australia that produces aesthetic sensibility. The simile of Angophora trees standing on the hills and preaching like the Moses who used to give sermons produces Australian aesthetics. The birds sing melodious songs whereas the tree like angophora stands and gives sermons. The poem is abundant with flora and fauna of Australia that shows the richness of Australia. While emphasizing the power of wattle fragrance, the poet expresses that the fragrance is so powerful that it can scatter even the doubting hearts. The poet writes, "... the wattle scatters its pollen on the doubting heart." (McAuley). The poet presents the natural resources of the powerful sunrays which are vertically shooting the land of Australia shows that they are having certain aim. Having strong sunrays is the good quality of any terrains which Australia possesses. The poem *Terra Australis* ends with an affirmative tone of beauty and joy.

Judith Wright, Australian poet, environmentalist and campaigner, through her poem *Woman to Man* (1946) presents the feminine sensibility of Australian landscape. She utilises the imagery of woman for Australia and man for every Australian (explorer) and brings out dialogue between man and woman as if an explorer is exploring woman's body and psychology. Rooney has rightly pointed out, "From the earliest, her representation of female experience – epitomised in the widely admired poem, 'Woman to Man' (1946) – augmented her national standing:" (Rooney 8). The poetess says to the explorer that the explorer explores the darkness and can see the face of Australia. It suggests that to see the real face of Australia one has to be an explorer with clear vision. The labourer in the poem is an explorer who is eyeless that suggests the requirement of inner eye to see the real picture. Indirectly it suggests that the explorer becomes eyeless because Australian forest is so dense that one cannot see its beauty and richness in the dark thicket. The land has seed waiting for its resurrection day, but it is without shape and self that shows the rough and tough land of Australia. It seems that the poet believes in the resurrection as Jesus Christ was resurrected. It inferences that Australia may be the land of bushes and

cactuses but it has potential to resurrect. The poet suggests that only the silent, swift and serious explorer having sight is able to see the face of the unimagined land. The expression demands visionary exploration to understand Australia's beauty. Wright visualises the readers that Australia is not a child and it has no name. Here, the poet makes a dialogue between a man and a woman. Man is none other than an explorer- every Australian, whereas woman is the country Australia itself. The woman says to the man that only they know what has happened, because now the man is a hunter who has chased the country. It means he started the journey of an exploration into the arena of the land and that will give birth to the third one that is laid in the process of exploration. The poet says, "The third who lay in our embrace." (Wright) In the third stanza, the poet points out that the result depends on the strength of the man's arms that will work to cultivate the land of Australia. With precautions they will be able to leave the legacy of working culture that may be beneficial to the future generation. In the fourth stanza, the country says that her relationship with the explorer is of maker and made. The explorer has to make an exploration and he will succeed to achieve his goal. He has to raise questions and the country will answer it. This question and reply is a continuous process for the better future of the country. For the incessant attempts, the explorer has to hit the darkness of the country and then he will be able to see the light. To accomplish the work, the country announces him to hold her for the fear he may leave her without exploration. The poet has thus shown the feminine sensibility through an imagery of woman who is pregnant. The title of the poem *Woman to man* suggests that the country is waiting to be explored by the Australians and she is yearning to be embraced by the countrymen. Judith Wright has beautifully utilised the imagery of woman for Australia to express feminine sensibility of its landscape.

To conclude, Australian Landscape remained one of the prominent themes of the poetry therefore the poetry is called as bush ballads because the landscape described by the poets in their poetry is full of trees, bushes, vegetation, plants, green hills and valleys with dark thicket. The landscapes described by the poets present three sensibilities viz. shocked sensibility, aesthetic sensibility and feminine sensibility, which are reflected in the poetry of A. D. Hope, James McAuley and Judith Wright respectively.

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