

BOOK REVIEWS

A SHORT HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE BY PAUL SHARRAD, 2024, HYDRABAD: ORIENT BLACKSWAN, [ISBN 978-93-544-2291-1] Price INR 845.

Paul Sharrad's book comes as a judicious work in the domain of mainstream English studies in particular and cultural studies and literary historiography in general. Australian literature in English comes as a significant domain under the rubric New Literatures in English, and has offered varied lenses to look at the world literature from the view point of local histories and hybridity.

Marked with a complex colonial history, different patterns of colonization, myth making and diasporic connections from various parts of world, Australia has emerged as a unique seat of literary culture. The literary canvas in Australia, starting from indigenous idioms modelled with the colonial culture, and the subsequent cultural mix, has given a new flavour to literature that shows its own newness, that in the contemporary times, is wafting from the process of hybridity.

The Preface and Introduction, the book is divided in nine chapters. Chapter one, titled "Convicts to Reform 1788-1850" offers a note on social, political and cultural contexts of the select genres of literature. Different texts of non fiction, like William Dampier's *A Voyage to New Holland in the Year 1699*, Sydney Cove's *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* (1789), and *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson* (1793) have been contextualized *a propos* to the emerging sense of national literature at that early phase of Australian literature.

Chapter two, "Boom and Bust to Federation 1850-1901" begins with the statement that "three things that changed the fabric of Australian society between 1850 and 1900: the discovery of gold in Victoria and New South Wales, the break up of large pastoral land grants into smaller wheat and sheep and orchard farms, and the foundation of state parliaments with elected Australian members." (p16).

Chapter Three appears as "Commonwealth to Collapse 1901-1930". Chapter Four appears as "Susso to Soldiers 1930-1950". Chapter Five is titled as "Prosperity to Vietnam 1950-1965" and Chapter 6 is listed as "Dissent to Dismissal 1965-1975". The seventh chapter of the work appears as 'Multicultural to Bicentenary 1975-1988'. Chapter Eight is titled 'Deregulation to GFC 1988-2008' and Chapter 9 appears as 'GFC to Covid 2008-2020'. The titles of the chapters suggest the content to an informed reader in the domain concerned.

In these chapters, the work offers a succinct view on the origin and development of Australian literature. It offers a balanced note on popular aboriginal writings, writings in media and getting canon and those writing for the cause of an association with the land, culture, landscape, and associating it with fellow literary landscapes and the culture-human-literature ecosystem across the world. As a reader from Indian subcontinent, and that from the mindscapes from the 'New Literature ecosystem', anyone can scale relatability with the Australian past because of the common link that the both literary landscapes share, when it comes to British interference and colonization. The historical facts are arranged in

an interesting manner about a land which was mostly occupied by Britishers and immigrants.

The book explores how Australian fiction and non-fiction texts originated and stood firmly in rocking circumstances since 1788. Australian literary expression shows a small number of printing presses or publishing houses, and it was only in 1803 that *Sydney Gazette* comes to light as the first newspaper. Thomas Wells' *Michael Howe, the Last and Worst of the Bushrangers of Van Diemen's Land* (1818) appear as main proto literary text in the Australian landscape. The historian infers Anna Maria's *The Guardian: A Tale by an Australian* (1838) to be the first novel written by a woman and published in Australia. The historian feels that the Australians, approaching 1850s, felt that there existed something like 'Australian literature'. It was tinged with local speech and behaviour. Due to a larger number of Australian children working on farms, no writers came up with a proper children's stories until William Howitt's *A Boy's Adventures in the Wilds of Australia* (1854) and Richard Rowe's *The Boy in the Bush* (1869).

After the investiture of an Australian Literature Society in the late 1890's, a number of writers came up with poems, serialised novels and stories for magazines and newspapers for their local readers. In the late 19th century, the features of its literary works were a combination of bush ballads, romance novels and short stories mostly based on rural life. Henry Lawson comes up as one of the pioneers of short story writers branding his works as the celebration of unionism and mate ship. Bertram Stevens' *The Golden Treasury of Australian Verse* (1909) offers a testament of 19th century Australian verse, with special listing of the effects of war, The Great Depression and white settlements on the Australian literature during the early 1900s.

It is also mentioned in the pages of *A Short History of Australian Literature* as to how the conflicts erupted between the colonizers and the colonized, and how the press was censored. There emerges a fresh literary note with the themes like mining, farming, building of railways, loading ships or other such manual labours. Miles Franklin's *All That Swagger* (1936) emerges as the representative text of the times. Patrick White's dominating Australian literary scene has been portrayed by the historian. Miles Franklin Award, Australia's first national literary award, bestowed upon Patrick White for his novel *Voss* (1957) makes a global voice, that spans to the phase, making White as being the Australia's first Nobel Laureate for literature in 1973. Judith Wright went through a successful phase of her poetry with the poems like 'The Gateway', 'Birds', 'The Two Fires' etc. *A Short History of Australian Literature* further, illustrates other poets like Kenneth Slessor and R.D. Fitzgerald and Judith Wright. Judith Wright, Kenneth Slessor and R.D. Fitzgerald offer a mild criticism of white society in their verses. With the popularity of radio plays during 1940 – 1970 several playwrights emerged on Australian literary scene.

With the publication of Johnno in 1975, David Malouf emerged as a significant literary and cultural voice of Australia. Reflecting upon modern Australian poetry, the historian refers the contribution of Les Murray, who has tried to creatively engage the dimensions of Australian culture, local families, folklores, bush ballad form of poetry and lives after both the World Wars and the Great Depression. During this time, a new wave of theatre and the related playwrights made room for themselves in Australian literature. Formation of new theatre companies like La Mama (1967), The Pram Factory (1970) in Melbourne and The Nimrod Theatre Company (1970), The Stables (1975) in Sydney create significant ripple in national culture.

The upsurge in worldwide cultural revolution and feminist consciousness affected the Australian literature as well. The Melbourne Women's Theatre Group was founded and women playwrights gave their best in this phase. Dorothy Hewett with her eight major plays during 1967-75 dominated the literary scene. David Williamson emerges as one of the most significant modern playwrights whose 'The Removalists' makes international success. With the publication of *The Oxford History of Australian Literature* (1981) and the first edition of *The Macquarie Dictionary* an authentic history of Australian English literature, and an authentic source book on Australian English come to light.

Literature is always free from the clutches of authority. Novelists like Peter Carey question official Australian history. Kevin Gilbert's *Inside Black History* (1988), Kate Llewellyn and Susan Hampton's *The Penguin Book of Australian Women Poets* (1986) and John Tranter's *The New Australian Poetry* (1979) offer a fresh spectacle on literature that negates the dominance of otherwise hegemonic forces. The subcultures of drugs, music, and the protest against wars and censorship etc. become the subject matter of Australian poetry in this phase. Wallace Crabbe became an important literary figure who is in literary practice till now. The phase is also known for Life writing that gains popularity with Sally Morgan's *My Place*. The aboriginality is coming to the forefront offering an insight into alternative modernity.

The book further, offers an insight into the phase of 1988 to 2008, when Australia witnessed rapid growth in film making and creative writing. Activist-writers like Alex Miller raised the voice of Black people in the works like *Landscape of Farewell* (2007) and *Journey to the Stone Country* (2002). Kim Scott, the author of *Benang: From the Heart* (1999) and *That Deadman Dance* (2010), emerges as the first Aboriginal writer to win the Miles Franklin Award twice. The decade from 1990 to 2000 witnessed notable literary works from the migrants. Writers like Adib Khan, Beth Yahp, John Coetzee have offered notable voices to diaspora community. Writers like Marion Halligan, Liam Davison, Cate Kennedy and James Bradley list their presence as the popular writers of the phase 2000 - 2020 with their poetry, and

Peter Boyle, Robert Adamson, Judith Beveridge, Kevin Hart, Joanne Burns, Jill Jones etc. mark their presence with new voices in poetry. It also talks of a group of Aboriginal musicians like Bob Randall, Archie Roach and Kev Carmody who have published famous songs highlighting voices from different 'cultures'. Many a mini narrative are heard and local histories are given voice. The aboriginal voices are listed, and thus, the historian has made a pastiche of all emotions in building an edifice called Australian literature.

The book has, therefore, offered authentic facts on the texts, contexts and connotations of Australian literature across two centuries. The author has arranged the literary history in cultural context that is quite in sync with the general assumption of cultural studies. It suggests that literature is a product of culture. In a systematic order, the literary historian places the texts and trends in historical contexts of political and social change. An appendage-glossary of local usages and a list of reference materials add to the value of the work. It blends comprehensive coverage with selective attention to literary works, and so the readers can 'get the feel' of a nation's creative spirit. *A Short History of Australian Literature* will be an indispensable companion to anyone interested in Australian studies.

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SULABH SANITATION IN INDIA: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS, by Sumit Saurabh Srivastava. 2022. Jaipur: Rawat Publications. [ISBN 978-81-316-1189-0 (HB)] pp. XXVI + 505. Price INR 1495.

Falling under the broad rubric of Sociology of Sanitation, the book under review addresses a central concern of humanity since ages, that is sanitation. For the purpose of the book, the author has bracketed sanitation as availability of safe, hygienic, functioning and inclusive toilet facilities. The introductory part of the book briefly outlines what is meant by sanitation and provides a background of the book arguing that lack of sanitation services and facilities have become one of the global problems which needs urgent attention. The second chapter provides an exhaustive understanding of sanitation the way it has been understood in social sciences. Furthermore, through 'Burden of Diseases', the author has attempted to interlink sanitation, health and hygiene. The section on women in/and sanitation presents a gendered reading of sanitation. Chapter three underlines major water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) initiatives taken at global level. In doing so, the author also briefly maps out the scenario of sanitation facilities at the global level. Subsequently, the chapter underlines how the issue of sanitation has been addressed in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Seven and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) six.

It has been conventionally understood that the provision of sanitation services is the sole obligation and duty of the state; taking a detour, the author in chapter four has outlined key participatory sanitation approaches which have been successful in the 'bottom-up' planning framework to resolve the problem of lack of sanitation facilities. The book deliberates upon Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS) and Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) as major elements of ensuring sanitation through the public and community's participation. One of the unique scholarly deliberations contained in this book is the fifth chapter which dwells upon the genesis, history and typology of toilets. While dwelling upon the pioneers of modern toilet technology, the author has also underlined the revolutionary Sulabh two-pit toilet technology as devised by the founder of Sulabh International and Sulabh Sanitation Movement, Dr Bindeshwar Pathak.

The sixth chapter brings in to the fore that sanitation and its dynamics in Indian social order cannot be understood without its deep socio-cultural anchorage in hierarchical and 'graded inequality' based on caste and caste system. The author has traced the historicity of caste and untouchability and interlocks it with sanitation practices. It is argued that hierarchical and exclusionary caste system has relegated a group of castes who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy to indulge in the sub-human practice of manual scavenging. State interventions in manual scavenging are critically discussed. Towards its end, the chapter has also briefly discussed how certain civil society organisations have addressed the issue of manual scavenging. Taking the public policy approach and governance model as its foci area, the seventh chapter has critically engaged with how the post-independent India state responded to the needs of sanitation through various policies and programs. A brief profile of sanitation facilities in rural and urban India has been also attempted including a section on

status of sanitation in slums. It has been argued that the sanitation policies have evolved over a period adjusting themselves to the changing priorities of the population at large.

The eighth chapter is dedicated to Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2014 as a flagship program geared towards inclusive sanitation and health for all. While placing Open Defecation in Swachh Bharat Mission, the author has provided insights into the dynamics between open defecation and socio-economic and cultural values. Sulabh International Social Service Organisation which is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations is at the centre of ninth chapter. Since its foundation by Padma Bhushan Dr Bindeshwar Pathak in 1968 in Patna, Bihar; its significant contributions in the field of sanitation include faecal sludge management, gender in WASH, ending open defecation, eradication of manual scavenging through construction of Sulabh two-pit toilet low-cost sanitation technology among others. The author has highlighted the multi-faceted role played by Sulabh International in the fields of sanitation through Environmental Sanitation and Public Health (SIAESPH) and Sulabh International Centre for Action Sociology (SICAS). Subsequently, Sulabh's role in the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2014 is also outlined by the author. Rehabilitation and alternate livelihood of scavenger women through promotion of soft skills by Sulabh International has been also dealt by the author.

It is the tenth chapter taking Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Bindeshwar Pathak as its starting point that we see how author has attempted to highlight their common goal i.e. sanitation for all and divergent means to achieve it i.e. '*tatti pe mitti*' (putting soil on night-soil) by the former and employing Sulabh two-pit toilet low-cost sanitation technology by the latter. The author has exhaustively discussed how both Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Bindeshwar Pathak have been instrumental in working towards sensitizing the common mass regarding the necessities of safe and hygienic sanitation. They both worked tirelessly to bring in the issue of sanitation to the 'mainstream' of our thought and action. It is to be noted at this juncture that in no way the author has attempted to compare both the personalities in terms of zero-sum game rather has shed light on how two individuals of different times resolved with iron grit to solve the issue of open defecation plaguing India. The Conclusion summarises the key findings and arguments of the book.

As one of the earliest founding authors of Sociology of Sanitation academic discourse, I found the book encyclopaedic, informative, and interesting in nature. The book not only presents the kaleidoscopic and exhaustive nature of sanitation and the myriad issues involved within it; but it does so in simple fluid language and introduces the reader to different aspects of sanitation. The complexities of sanitation in its socio-cultural anchorage with special reference to India has been beautifully and seamlessly brought out by the author. The book is a must to all those who are engaged with the field of sanitation in Humanities and Social Sciences in general and Sociology of Sanitation, Public Policy and Sanitation, Development Studies with an emphasis on sanitation, Sanitation and Social Work among other.

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