Chapter II

Indelible Cicatrices

Canadian literary works have long surpassed the need to project their national identity and to eulogize a Utopian society. This shift is an imminent yardstick in gauging the extent of maturity attained and to ascertain the prominence of Canadian Literature. It is an established fact that literary ideologies have truly shaped many a nation. In Canada too, there has been no dearth in this arena. Writers, here, have sought to create a multi-generic harmonious Canadian society by polishing political concerns and formulating amicable social ideologies. The list of writers who have played their part in this respect is inclusive of such as eminent as George Ryga, Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, Timothy Findley, Joy Kogawa, to name a few. Sharon Pollock’s contribution, in this respect, is indicative of the expansion of the Canadian vision of progression. Hers is a unique contribution on two accounts---as a First Nation playwright, her earnest concern for the minorities has received tremendous commendation and next comes her tendency to draw upon past historical incidents which adds a new dimension to the perception of Canadian literary tradition. Old is moulded and reconstructed with the solid purpose of fermenting national unity and fostering righteousness. Her noble vision and her method in subtly delivering the message as a sugar-coated pill render her plays an all-time appeal.

This Chapter deals with three of Pollock’s plays Walsh, The Komagata Maru Incident and Fair Liberty's Call. These plays are replete with the scars of past incidents. Although the wounds may have healed with the passage of time, they have left behind indelible cicatrices. These scars remain and remind posterity of the wrongs done in the past. Pollocks’ peek into the past is neither to condemn nor to glorify history and the heroic feats of the past. Her primary purpose in re-visiting history is as much to sensitize the audience to the atrocities of yesteryears as to create a different perspective to recorded
events. Cynthia Zimmerman explains thus: "These \textit{Walsh, The Komagata Maru Incident} and \textit{Fair Liberty's Call} historical plays, which embrace large political issues, have a subversive intent. They rediscover our national heritage and challenge complacency"\textsuperscript{(93)}. Pollock's sensitive and sincere approach that throws light on several indecorous incidents from the Canadian past lends her work a rare distinction that rests on the purity of her intentions. The playwright has scrutinized past events and sought to uncover hidden facts. In an introductory note to the published version of \textit{TKMI} (1978) Pollock states the importance thus: "As a Canadian, I feel that much of our history has been misrepresented and even hidden from us. Until we recognize our past, we cannot change our future" (Pollock 226). Her tactfulness which is in full play here succeeds in extracting the desired objective of learning from past experiences, lest they be repeated in future.

\textit{Walsh} has the settlement of the Canadian West as its background. The historical incident of the aftermath of the Montana Massacre at the Little Big Horn is depicted with the motive to unleash the truth as against newspaper accounts and Government entries. Pollocks' enquiry tests the consequences that prevent Major Walsh of the North West Mounted Police from doing justice, on a humanitarian basis, to the mellifluous friendship that he has come to develop with the sincere aboriginal chief of the Hungpapa Sioux, Sitting Bull. In \textit{TKMI}, Pollock implores the audiences to atone for the faults committed under the cover of enforcements of law. The play draws upon the strategic methods employed by the Canadian Government, during the early 1900s to curb the influx of Asian immigrants into their country. In 1914, the Komagata Maru, a Japanese streamer carrying three hundred and seventy six prospective immigrants of Asian origin was forbidden to disembark its passengers by Canadian officials with vested interests. The ensuing incidents that thereafter unfold make for interesting drama. Over and above this, the play sets the clock ticking for a commendable change-over. \textit{FLC} is a more recent
'history' play. The background is maritime Canada of 1785. Here, Pollock shows how in one family is enacted the conflicts of The American War of Independence. She sets out to dismantle the Loyalist myth of heroes in exile as perpetuated by history. Her cause to social justice is projected through the divided loyalties of the characters. The emotional struggle they are forced to endure on account of the war puts forth the plea for peace on earth.

The apogee of these three plays rests in the unifying factor of re-staging the past with the purpose of shaping a universal nationality. Anne Nothof in her essay on "Postcolonial Tragedy in the Crowsnest Pass: Two Rearview Reflections by Sharon Pollock and John Murrell" speaks of Pollock's belief "in the importance of retelling history to those who have inherited it's consequences" (235) thus:

According to Pollock an interrogation of history is a necessary process of self-awareness and understanding — both on a national and a personal level . . . . She probes the postcolonial "nation-building" narratives to dramatize the neo-imperialisms they conceal . . . Pollock's historiography is postcolonial, "an ongoing reassessment of the past that facilitates a perception of the present and the future ". . . . postcolonial histories attempt to tell the other sides of a story and to accommodate not only the key events experienced by a community (or individual) but also the cultural context through which these events are interpreted and recorded."

(236)

Anne Nothof further explicates that Pollock's intention in re-playing past incidents is not as much to record a past activity as to a concern to repudiate "insidious assumptions and attitudes which may still effect public and private policy" ("Crossing Borders" 82). In
the case of *Walsh*, the federal Government's decision to starve Sitting Bull and his people so as to keep them out of the Canadian boundary is revealed at a new angle. The supposed righteousness of the act is ripped apart and the reality of the pathetic plight of the native Inuit Canadians is opened out. *TKMI* takes up the cause of the British Columbia Government's attempt to prevent the immigration of coloured British citizens to their territory. The play re-creates the historic episode of the 1910's only to demolish prevalent views that Canadian history is a relatively 'clean' one without rampant hostilities and bloodshed (Nothof, Crossing Borders 83). The Loyalist settlement in the aftermath of the American Revolution is where *FLC* is set. Here, the social injustices that are inflicted is brought out through family politics. Divided loyalties take their toll; in George Roberts' family one gets to see how the notion of fairness is falsified in the imposition of a reconfigured authority. In all these plays, the audience are made to perceive of such audacious behaviour, thereby ingesting in them a seed of the desire to undo the wrongs of the past.

The nature of the cicatrices created due to these historical incidents is made indelible by these plays of Pollock. Social conscientiousness is evoked through the articulation of counter-discursive versions of the past, thus, giving credibility to the famous war quote of George Washington: "Labour to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire, called conscience". This chapter purports to delve into the themes of exploitation, racism, and the squeeze between personal inclination and outward pressures. The inherent dehumanizing traits and the concern for ethics that form the crux of these history plays are also dealt with. The scholar's intention is to relate these thematically and project that conscientiousness is evoked in the audience thus satisfying the primary concern of the playwright. Pollock's insight in awakening key issues by
drawing from real life incidents ignites the spark of unconditional belief and forbids the reader/audience, from repeating shameless acts from history, without blatant compulsions.

In the plays discussed, Pollock has drawn liberally from historical incidents. However, these plays are neither idealistic representation of historical facts nor have they been written with the objective of glorifying heroic feats or personalities. Her depiction presents a slice of life of the time recorded with a clear and pure motive to awaken people, to remind them and to make them learn from the past in order to set ideals for the future.

Exploitation of the gullible seems to have become a way of life on this earth. It is common to all mankind and is a threat to rob humanity of the rich nutrient of morality. The task of effacing this factor is a laborious one and calls for commitment and involvement of people from all walks of life. Many a noble soul has endeavoured to prevent this ugly scar of exploitation from marring the beauty of mankind. Sharon Pollock as a responsible world citizen has devoted a fair share of her writing to this end.

In Walsh, Pollock shows how Government machinations exploit the Aboriginals. The Hungpapa Sioux, under their chief, Sitting Bull cross the border of the United States of America and enter the Canadian Frontier seeking asylum. The Sioux are a simple people with ordinary needs; borders, reservations and trials that were not part of their lives until then, perplex them. It is beyond their comprehension that they should be ordered about in their own land. It is pathetic that a once proud race, which has always been self sufficient, has been robbed of their land and is now forced to plead for mercy from the White Government (Queen Victoria). The native Indian is unable to perceive the political strategies employed to oust them. Now they seek Canadian patronage as they do not want to be sent back to the United States where they stand trial for the death of General Custer and his men at the battle of Little Big Horn. They are made dependent for
their basic needs such as food supplies and ammunitions to hunt. This is a strategic ploy towards starving them into following orders to retreat. Their retreat is ironical here, for, once they cross the border they do not move to a favourable position by escaping the hazards of facing trial but on the contrary they accord a favourable position to their enemy to avenge and defeat them.

Exploitation, here, has a ripple effect: the Americans who seek revenge for the Custer debacle, use their power to exploit the authority of Major Walsh of the North West Mounted Police who in turn exploits the vulnerability of the chief who is forced to exploit the innocence of his tribe. It is such a vicious cycle is that it rests not with the effacement of the Sioux tribe from the Canadian boundary and the assassination of Sitting Bull but only with the degeneration of the Major himself. Then surfaces the truth—in reality, power, rests not necessarily with those with power and position but with those with the knack to manipulate. Exploitation is the explosive that nullifies life.

It is ironical that Louis, a Metis scout, pleading the case of Mrs. Anderson, a settler, says:"It is not lawful to take what is not your own . . . (Walsh 146). Mrs. Anderson is hysterical that her wash tub has been stolen by the Injuns! But the whites have usurped this new land and all that it had to offer, without any qualms. The sentiments pour out in these powerful words of Sitting Bull: "We have never sold our land! It has been stolen from us! "(Walsh 151). The seriousness of both these issues, discloses the severe extremity of the concept of exploitation. Such trivial issues as wash tub or a horse on one end and the serious issue of life on the other bespeaks of the atrocities of the times. Deprivation of land leads to denial of basic rights to the original inhabitants of the place. Walsh's arrogance and insolence is exhibited when he says that it had then been "decided" (Walsh 151) that the Sioux would belong to the President in Washington although earlier circumstances had promised them a totally different set of (secure?) living conditions.
Fair treatment, that which was the promise all along, exists but sadly only in words. The plight of Crazy Horse of the Oglala (who fought together with the Hungpapa Sioux against Custer) is a case in point. Although the Red skins had avoided belligerence, pledged obedience and signed to settle in the reservation allocated for them, the betrayal of the White man had wiped out the entire clan. Even after the knowledge of all these debacles, the Sioux display exemplary behaviour. They deny the Nez Perces (a peer tribe) in their time of dire need in compliance to the orders from the Major. “They observe the law” (Walsh 159), and help preserve peace. Towards the end, upon Walsh's brusque orders they take up the reservation set up across the borders for them. The tribal chief relents and demurely signs the agreement, placing complete trust in the Major. All this done but to what avail? That, their tribe would not be punished is pure drama, a strategy to drive out the Sioux.

Upon realisation of the true intent, Walsh exclaims “Larger issues at stake” (Walsh 163). These words swallow justice in all their entirety. People prioritise things. When in a frenzy, people seek further enjoyment. While preserving the already availed ones, they resort to undesirable methods and exploit the vulnerability of those within their authority. They sacrifice their finer instincts for supposedly larger issues that are at stake but in the due process they end up breaking down. So the net result of this vicious circle culminates without actually meeting its set objective. In the case of the Major one sees this happening. Does not the Major end up a bitter man? Dejection and depression become his lot towards the end of the play where he removes his tunic, symbolically suggesting that this would be the last time and that he had failed on humanitarian grounds.

*TKMI* stands as proof to state that Pollock’s play reflects the social concern that she nurtures towards the common good of not merely a particular community or her own nation, but of all humanity. In this play, she critically analyses the judicial powers of the
Immigration wing of the Canadian Government of the early 20th century. She points accusing fingers at the exploitative nature of its executions. How else could one interpret her dynamism? Pollock's foothold is that human beings, inevitably, always act in their own best interests. In the play she suggests that this inherent nature be tempered with a humanitarian attitude. This is indeed the best way to cordially sustain human relationships.

In the play, William Hopkinson, the Immigration Inspector is made a victim. Just as the Major was used as a pawn in Walsh, Hopkinson is used as a device to detain passengers on board the Komagata Maru. He is made to conduct spying operations against the Vancouver Sikhs who are trying to facilitate the landing of the passengers from the streamer (Bessai 48). His Achilles Heel is his heritage. His 'brown' mother gives him the mixed blood of an Eastern origin much to his chagrin. This gives his superiors an upper hand and channelizes their means to exploit him. Although he works with great fetish to negotiate a favourable outcome for his Government, his divided self reproaches him. Mid-way through this endeavour, he desires to reverse things. Only then realization dawns upon him that he is a mere “toy man walking through a toy town” (TKMI 285). Towards the end, as the moment of his death approaches, he sadly acknowledges that the “mechanical precision” (TKMI 285) had snubbed out the last of his sense of identity. His assassination at the hands of Mewa Singh seems to condone his idealistic fervour of being regarded as a White during his life-time. In his death, he has embraced that which he had eluded in his life-time: “In Pollock's play, Hopkinson actually embraces his assassin, reversing the lifelong rejection of his Indian identity. Caught between his identification with "the ruler and the ruled", Hopkinson dies a most ironic death” (Holder 116). His death is marked by his acceptance of a guilty conscience, for he had, throughout his life supported deeds of an exploitative nature without a qualm.
T.S, the Master of Ceremonies is employed by Pollock to don many roles and to categorically develop the plot. When Hopkinson reports to him about the steamer's dock and the Sikh passengers' eligibility as military veterans to enter Canadian territory, T.S retaliates by saying “The word is no entry” (TKMI 236). There are loop holes in the law and these are meant to exploit any given situation. T.S manipulates these to his advantage. The Canadian immigration's decision to decline the entry of the ship-load of immigrants is to be sustained by the court on two grounds. Firstly, they have not satisfied the first rule of making a continuous journey from their own country to the port of disembarkation. The reason for this is simple enough — there's no steam ship line with a direct route from most Asian countries. Secondly, the levy of the tax of two hundred dollars per head for an entry into the country is simply too high for an average Indian. Literally, no stone is left unturned to arrive at the desired objective of forbidding Asian immigration.

If one strategy fails, another is embarked upon with ardent fervour. The officials then decide to stop supplies to the ship, supposedly to weaken the immigrants' resolve to wait out the term to gain entry to Canadian soil. The helplessness of the starving inmates of the ship is exploited here. The barbarity of the entire situation is encased in T.S' summation where he confides that the presence of immigrant in their land is permissive, only if the “operative word's 'a few'” (TKMI 258). It is atrocious to note that he addresses the immigrants as "It". The scheme is to extract from them cheap labour and make them provide a market to consume home-products, while keeping their numbers to a bare minimum. This indeed is exploitation to the core and all this while making them a “handy scapegoat!” (TKMI 258). To substantiate this he later dictates the ancestry of the immigrant tradition. In detail is given an account of how the government reversed its allegiance of providing ownership to the savage Canadian land if and when tilled to
transform it into productive farmland. Once the result was procured, the suffering immigrant was unceremoniously expelled and left to fend for himself.

The pathos is that this tradition has been carried forward and no positive change had been effected till that time. The threat of failure of all ploys employed to oust the steamer make the government officials promise recompense for the hardships inflicted. Promises are lavished for almost everything that is demanded of them but it is a definite truth that nothing will be fulfilled. The diplomacy of the government is such that negotiations will come to a grinding halt with the realisation of its desired objective.

The lament of the Woman on the sailing steamer in the return journey to its homeland substantiates the rights of the immigrant as a British subject. The immigrant has lost many a loved one and sacrificed many a treasured objective in displaying his loyalties to the crown. However, the well being of the immigrant is least in the prerogative of the ruler. Powerless and gullible, they have not the ability to sustain by resisting exploitative overtones.

*FLC* gives expression to Pollock's passion for a revisitation of history and for endorsing the right perspectives by delving into the war times of New Brunswick in 1785. The backdrop of the massive influx of 16,000 Loyalists into Canadian territory after the American War of Independence is utilized to establish that social values had been marginalized in the war between divided loyalties. The common man was, then, forced to choose sides based on the chances for his survival, irrespective of subjective aspirations and opinions. In this oscillation between the morally correct and the situationally correct, just ideologies become subservient. Exploitation thus becomes a common phenomenon and an accepted one when set against such a background.

Pollock is able to evoke strong emotions by letting the audience/reader witness incidents through the medium of an estranged family — that of George Roberts. The
family, as victims of war, has been forced to evacuate its homeland to seek livelihood in an adopted country which offers them no respite. George, a crest-fallen and ousted Bostonian socialite, has for the most part of his life striven to benefit from his allegiances in order to sustain his material interests. His responsibility towards the upkeep of his family prevents him from exercising loyalty. Therefore he deems it beneficial to side with the Loyalists as this might procure for him the Promised Land in the new territory. He craves to strike a balance as one of his sons, Richard chose to be a Patriot eventually meeting his end at war. So, George coerces Edward, his other son to take up the Loyalists' side. However Edward, unable to live with the injustice begotten by his chosen side, the British, kills himself. So they bury Edward and establish that they had buried Emily, the twin sister. Thus Emily becomes Eddie. George endorses that "it was necessary!" (*FLC* 15). But his wife Joan, traumatized by war, with the loss of her home, her sons and her wit, has opposing views. She retaliates thus, “It was Necessary! Because of Richard! Their Rebel Brother, our Son! Because of their Loyalist father! Because of you! Because of King and country and taxes and tea and —!” (*FLC* 15).

The exploitation of the situation to suit George's purposes makes Joan explode, “Three of them gone! Murderer! You're a murderer!”(*FLC* 16). Her predicament directly relates to the exploitative nature of George. Kathy K. Y. Chung in the article, "Lookin' To a Better World for our Children: The concept of Inheritance in Pollock's *Fair Liberty's Call" makes a point by stating that George Roberts' world has turned upside down. George, embittered by his own failures in life resorts to expedite the process of acquiring his lost social status by propelling Edward and Eddie. Chung points out:

> The irony is that George is trapped by his own political and familial machinations. . . . George cannot regain his masculine authority over his daughter by exposing her performance without jeopardising his own
position. . . . George Roberts has attempted to bind the next generation with his own "laws" and dictate how its inheritance will be used. Ultimately, he fails (156).

Eddie's retaliation, “I was willin' to die for you then,” . . . “I'm not willin' to live for you now” (FLC 66) marks her liberation from an exploitative state.

The Loyalist soldier was promised to be given land in the new country, as a recognition of his devoted service and as a gesture of good will so as to enable him to start afresh in this new place. However, the ordinary Loyalist soldiers' wait had remained threateningly prolonged while the best land was distributed unfairly amongst those who wielded power and authority. Pollock's seems to present an answer to tide over similar situations in the current times. She makes Eddie speak for her, thus — “Exercise freedom of choice, citizens, or be party to your own oppression!”(FLC 19).

The bitterness and cruelty injected by the war and in the name of loyalty to the country and trust in the parliament and king seem nefarious and vile while in its aftermath, the meaninglessness of war times become evident. George's reaction to Eddie's effort to seek out the injustices of war —“That sense of justice and fair play, that's a good thing, but it's got to be tempered with a sense of reality, Eddie”(FLC 40), seem out of date when placed in comparison with Eddie's convictions. She deems it proper to shoot Frank Taylor who is the cause of Black Wullie's (an ex-slave and a former scout) despair as also an usurper of the promised land. Eddie thereby forestalls the cheated Wullie's indenture and Frank's seizure of land from a soldier's widow. Her conviction to resort to restore justice to the affected in this manner stems from the fact that in reality nothing else would bring about this desired, just outcome. Her ideology to combat injustice by using force, although crude, does not fail to establish righteousness.
Annie, the elder daughter and Eddie, the younger one emerge redeemers of the situation. Annie, although credited with profound maturity and level-headedness reckons it proper to exploit the vulnerability of Major Andre, a Loyalist spy who sought shelter at the Roberts’ household. She discloses that she had betrayed him and had had him captured by the Rebels not as much as towards favouring sides but to avenge her brother, Richard's death. Her love for her brother is explicit here— to understand that she valued those ideologies that her brother so painstakingly adhered to, is proof enough. She endorses that although her betrayal would not have made a difference in the final outcome of war, it had, at the same time not improved anything for the victims of war (i.e.) Richard, Edward or Major Andre. This explains that values attached to seemingly small things that are often overseen in the wider spectrum of the war's background, are far from trivial and that they bring about marked consequences. Here, Annie's admission made at a crucial point in the plot, resolves Major Anderson's revenge motif. He heeds her advice, relents and makes an exit without causing harm to anyone, much to the delight of the gathered party.

Exploitation thus rules the roost and injures those susceptible to weakness. It marks the pain and agony caused to the multitudes by a minority who deem it appropriate to leech the host in the hope of a gain or advantage. This section of mankind is bereft of the finer qualities that exist in the essentially humanitarian multitudes. However, the grim reality that looms large over mankind is that this situation shows no signs of change. The sad truth is the probability that it could remain on the face of the earth as long as the existence of mankind.

As an individual, man has always been confronted by an internal struggle. Sometimes this struggle is the effect of his own divided self, his inability to make a decision but in most instances the struggle happens because of the varying degrees of his
personal inclination and outward pressures. In this case, a certain restriction is enforced upon him and this prevents him from carrying out the dictates of his mind and soul. When such restrictions cannot be surmounted and when he is forced to irrevocably submit, he comes to be entwined in suffocation. Thereafter, his thoughts and deeds take a course different from his originally intended one; after a certain point his strong individuality gains ground and he begins to see reason. However it is then often too late for any reconciliation. This particular station in a man's life is a dangerous juncture because it becomes a binding factor to seal the destiny of the affected individual. This is the resultant factor as going against the dictates of the inner voice destroys a conscientious man. Although otherwise worthy of credibilities, these men cannot be redeemed from the impending doom. They end up succumbing to destruction in their frustration and desperation. Walsh, Hopkinson and George, belong to this category of men. It is heart-rending to see these men alienate themselves from their ideologies and estrange themselves from their souls in the course.

The conflict between personal inclinations and pressures from higher authorities is explicit in Walsh. Jamie Portman's explanation of this concept dwells on the anguish of Major Walsh, superintendent of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) when he was “saddled with an assignment he detests” (136). The assignment was to ignore the pathetic plight of Sitting Bull and his Native Indian subjects --- the Sioux, and to force them to cross the border into America. The Sioux were all waiting for trial by the United States government for the massacre of Major Custer at the Little Big Horn in 1876. Portman goes on to state that this was an "assignment at which he [Walsh] balks, jeopardizing his friendship with Colonel MacLeod as well as his future usefulness with the force" (136).

Portman elucidates that although there are no explicit answers supplied by the play, it does implicitly suggest that in making Sitting Bull and the Sioux cross the border,
the Canadian government was "condoning genocide" (136). He feels that the personal conflict of Walsh is primary:

"Yet all this is essentially background to the personal conflict which is the main reason for the play's existence and the conflict is two-fold— the conflict between Major Walsh and his superiors over the best way of dealing with Sitting Bull, and the conflict within his own heart and mind between duty and his conscience and sense of justice" (136).

A man, filled with a sense of pride and of such social standing, as Walsh, is forced to combat forces in order to mete out justice and secure for the Sioux what is legally right (i.e.) a reservation for them in Canada. However, when he arrives at a juncture wherein he has to compromise his ideals, bitterness shrouds him and sucks his generally complacent energy. He learns that the Sioux are used as "pawns" in order that "other considerations" are accommodated (Walsh 161). Torn between a sense of justice and his duty to obey orders, the Major explodes, "I'm a person. I exist. I think and feel! And I will not allow you to do this to me!" (Walsh 161). But he soon relents because Mac Leod, commissioner of North West Mounted Police (NWMP), discloses the content of the dispatches he has brought from the headquarters. According to these, Walsh has to stop food supplies to the Sioux and write a note of apology failing which he has to turn in his resignation. Bereft of choice, Walsh gives in, “They say one's strongest instinct is self-preservation . . . and I've made the force my life. . . . To whom do I send this letter?” (162).

The decision has been made. However the implications of the aftermath open up nagging concerns in the person of Walsh. A worthy soldier is wrapped in despair. He explodes that honour and truth exist merely as words. This notion rakes up the human cause and evokes queries as to the state of values and principles on this earth. His
frustration upon confronting Sitting Bull, his friend, leaves a strain upon him. He cannot bear to starve the Sioux; he is perplexed at the complexities which are brought into life by people. He is dejected that the simplest of things are complicated (Walsh 163).

Robert C. Nunn in "Sharon Pollock’s Plays: A Review Article," comments on the impressive climax of the play:

> When he [Walsh] breaks, he does so in the only way possible for a man of his integrity, by brutally, physically, acting out the cruelty hidden in the Prime Minister's directives. At the cost of his and Sitting Bull's self-respect, he strikes him and sends him sprawling. (144)

In the anti-climax which concludes the play, Walsh returns to his post after an extended leave and illustrates his plan to his men to stage a mock-attack on Sitting Bull. This plan, however, is thwarted when news of the death of Sitting Bull at the hands of the United States Army reaches them. Walsh's grief, then, reaches a horrendous high and what ensues best epitomizes both the divide in his character and also the amalgam that fuses this line of divide. Walsh symbolically lays down his gun and removes his tunic. Thus, freed from his bond to fulfill duties, his deliverance becomes complete. Walsh can, thereafter, rest assured that he would never again be compelled to do those tasks that sever away from the dictates of his heart.

Analyzing the character of Hopkinson in *TKMI*, it will be befitting to note that the very selection of the name has been done with utmost care. Pollock, here, recalls the military officer, W.C. Hopkinson. The official who had been specially summoned to deal with the Sikh immigrants in Canada as he had a "substantial knowledge of their dialect from India" (Basu 110). The name thus adopted, Pollock ventures further and renders the Hopkinson of *TKMI* a mixed ancestry. Hopkinson, born and brought up in Delhi, had his roots firmly planted in the Indian soil. His attachment is intact even after his migration to
Canada in 1907 to work as an Immigration officer. An added responsibility to this job was to keep his superiors abreast of Sikh movements in the city. This was to curb opposition and upheavals, if they were to rear their heads obstructing or upsetting the functioning of the economy as commissioned by the Canadian Government.

The split self of Hopkinson comes to pose a threat to his own self. Although, initially his identification with the whites is total and complete, as the plot develops, his wisdom gets the wiser of him. His attachment to the whites begins to fluctuate and he begins to empathize with the ship-load of stranded Sikhs.

This sharp turn in his convictions soon subsumes him, for he cannot come to terms and make reconciliation. His earlier versions gradually change and give way to sympathizing with the immigrants’ plight:

HOPKINSON. ... I have a job, and I do it. *(TKMI 242)*

...  

HOPKINSON. ... Now there's your difference between white and coloured -- the Gift of Responsibility. *(TKMI 242)*

...  

HOPKINSON. ... If it weren't for the British, they couldn't construct a canoe, must less charter a steamer. *(TKMI 243)*

...  

HOPKINSON. I've promised them food and water. *(TKMI 246)*

His superiors reprimand him for his weakness and then we see him torn between mind and soul. Initially, he had wanted to support the "winning side" *(TKMI 278)*, but later he realizes that the sailing westward of the Komagata Maru would not satisfy him or vent the fire in him. Ironically fulfilment happens only when he atones for his conduct towards the end, by, embracing death. His words to Mewa Singh, "I open my arms, I say: Now!" *(TKMI 286)* is followed by bullets shots from Mewa Singh's gun. This secures for
Hopkinson the peace that had eluded him in life—peace at last for a man whose turbulence costs him his life.

Cynthia Zimmerman in her article "Sharon Pollock: The Making of Warriors," talks of Hopkinson as the compromised official pushed by his government to actions that even he can't stomach (69). She cites Pollock who extols him as "a far finer man" (69) when placed in comparison with Walsh. According to her, Pollock's reasoning rests on the fact that since Hopkinson "accepts responsibility for it" (he embraces death, bravely), "it is not despairing; and that's a high point" (69).

However, when Hopkinson stands in comparison with Evy, his mistress, one finds her more matured and focussed. She is presented as a foil, to give the audience a peek into the other side of the happenings. Although subjugated, in the manner of her position, to Hopkinson, her clarity of vision saves her from meeting the same fate as Hopkinson. Evy's snide remarks aimed at Hopkinson are towards helping him accept the truth of his mixed heritage and to deal with the steamer-issue competently. Where he fails to see reason, Evy succeeds by virtue of endorsing that which she feels is right. Although, helpless in resurrecting the plight of the minority group, she wins kudos for culminating her opposing ideologies by quitting. She chooses to leave the whorehouse and with it, her attachment to Hopkinson. This is because in spite of her low stature and profession, hypocrisy is not in her vein. It is this act that influences and instigates Hopkinson to courageously meet the consequences of his actions and face death.

Joan Roberts, the mother in FLC, is most affected by the horrors of war and has been driven mad as a consequence. She has been made to relinquish her home and hearth and along with those, her peaceful life in Boston. The revolution after the American War of Independence has driven the Roberts' family to New Brunswick. Their efforts to sustain themselves are not supported by the government, as was promised. A simple lady
with common aspirations is thus left, bereft of joy for no particular fault of hers. Her
longing for togetherness with family is thwarted by political pressures that cause rifts in
the family. Her misery is heightened with the loss of both her sons— Edward and
Richard.

Anne Nothof relates Joan's position to that of Brecht's *Mother Courage*. She
expands thus:

She [Joan] appears in the first scene with the remnants of her family,
dragging her cart with their belongings into unknown territory. But she
lacks Mother Courage's aggressive acquisitiveness, and she doubts that the
land to which they have come will ever become their home: her footprints
leave no mark on the soil (“Crossing” 483).

However, towards the close of the play, Joan is able to reconcile and is "able to
see her footprints in the 'virgin' soil, and begins to believe that a new home is possible"
(“Crossing” 484). Although hope is a redeeming factor her condition is pathetic:

JOAN. The reason that I sing in the night. (*FLC* 26)

... JOAN. Is because I lost my heart's delight. (*FLC* 26)

These lines reflect her pangs and her yearnings for the past, for the good old days
and underline her misfortune. The characterisation of Joan in the play is tactful. It is her
horrible plight that shows the intensity of the horrors of war times.

George Roberts' pull between personal inclination and external pressures is such
that he loses sight of what he actually wants from life. His activities are carefully
machinated to bring about the desired result of persistence and survival. Hence it becomes
hard to conceive his priorities— he does, not what he really wants to do but that which is
profitable to him in the given situation. He manoeuvres every situation to this end. This
explains his loyalty as a Loyalist. This reveals the reason behind Eddie's impersonation and the cause for Richard's separation and ultimate death. Anne Nothof in "Crossing Borders" expedites that, "he is a "buyer and a seller" who will" sell his soul "to get what he wants. Moreover, he assumes his family "will do whatever is required "to protect his interests" (481).

The irony of the situation lies in the fact that after all, these carefully planned machinations do bring him neither his primary concern of property and power nor a state of well-being or contentment. He holds on to the blood-stained waistcoat presumably that which belonged to his Rebel son Richard, and proclaims it as the "only trophy of war" (FLC 43). In reality though, it is obvious that the waistcoat is exactly the opposite, it is an object of mockery which affirms that George has failed both as a father and as a Loyalist. His belief and ideologies to support the crown in order to safeguard his family backlash on him and he becomes a hapless victim of circumstances.

'Colour' as general term, has a very pleasant association but when it takes the adjectival form, 'coloured,' a negative connotation seeps in. It is disheartening to note that the 'colour' of the human skin has come to distinguish and divide Homo sapiens. This division has unceremoniously dehumanized man. It has inflicted untold suffering and crushed the dignity of the sufferer. This notion which characterizes racism strikes at the grass root of the human rights convictions to which all human beings are entitled. Equality before the law is a basic right. Denial of this basic right forms the basis for most misery and grief. More often than not, it has triggered incitements of extremity. When dignity is threatened or denied, a human being comes to acquire a certain vulnerability which will inevitably lead to annihilation. This double-edged phenomenon either blots the abuser or consumes the abused. Its outcome is always destructive and hateful. Sharon Pollock has striven hard to alleviate this undesirable component by creating awareness
and by propelling right attitudes. Through her historical plays, she combines fact laced with fiction to drive home a remedial mechanism for this evil.

Brian Parker and Cynthia Zimmerman, in "Theatre and Drama," state that a revolutionary tendency in many of the plays on Canada's own history "was evident in Canadian Theatre between 1972-84 and that these plays were predominantly siding with the losers in the settlement of the country and the struggles of early capitalism" (203). Walsh traces the disintegration of Major Walsh, and projects that the government in 1876 Canada "was more interested in good relations with Washington than in the plight of the starving Indians" (203).

The typical racist attitude of the government is to thrust its policies on the Indians with a partiality that prevented objective consideration of an issue or condition. Loads of equipment and seed are sent to the settlements with orders to make Indians plough and transform the rough lands of the region. However, the Indians, by virtue of their origin cannot be subjugated to perform domesticated tasks. Crow Eagle, a Cree settler, retaliates to pressure, thus—"I do not wish to be servant to a cow" (Walsh 147). The Major understands their predicament and acknowledges that transforming the “dust bowl” into produce-fields would demand magic feats (Walsh 147). However the government remains unreasonably stubborn in its dictations.

Racist attitude is again evidenced in the treatment of the Sioux. Canada was, then, referred to as the “country of the Great White Mother” (Walsh 149) and boundaries were not demarcated to divide nations. A nation which was geographically one has come to be divided without ceremonious considerations for the inhabitants. The pathetic feature is that the Natives cannot comprehend the political margins and the motives of the rulers, both of which are susceptible to change. They are appalled that they have to seek permission to live in their own land. A chief of the Hunkpapa Sioux pleads thus: “GALL.
... We have no place to go. We come home to you asking for that protection you promised” (Walsh 149). He goes on to reason that their attacks had only been in defence. But they were being attacked, “Now we are hunted as we hunt animals” (Walsh 149). When the causes for such treatments are delved into, only one meets rationalization and that is, undoubtedly, the colour of the skin.

The Sioux had been in the settlement, under Walsh's control, for six months and in all these months, they had “behaved themselves,” “they're as good as gold,” (Walsh 151) but still they cannot rest assured of safety. As Louis, a Metis scout proclaims---

“'Mericans send Longknives up here. Dey kill every Indian dey see—little ones, big ones, mama with bebe— dey don't give a good goddamn, friendly or hostile. . . . You got red skin . . . He points his finger. . . . bang-bang! Louis' skin got reddish tinge”(Walsh 151).

The awkward silence that follows in the stage direction at this point is perhaps to drive home the intent seriousness of the issue. Racism is not to be endured as a way of life, just because it has been in existence for a long time. Walsh's words, “fair treatment to all” (Walsh 151), are shallow and fail to impress the Sioux. Experience makes their chief, Sitting Bull, wise in learning the ways of the Whites. He says, “I have no white friends” and follows it by remarking “Red men choke and die on white men's words!” (Walsh 152).

Ironically, this becomes true in the case of Sitting Bull, himself. Perplexed by the reasons for his people's predicament, Sitting Bull wonders whether it is because the "skin is red" (Walsh 156). His trust is wasted upon the helplessness of Walsh, who is himself a 'pawn' in the hands of higher officials. General Terry of the US army advises Walsh that it is imperative to ensure "the elimination of the savage," but is quick to modify —"the control of the savage, elimination of the savage aspects of the Indian's character" (Walsh 155).
If the exemplary behaviour of the Indians, when left undisturbed, earns for them the term "savage" then would it not be proper to describe the uncouth behaviour of the white ruler as 'uncivilized'? Indeed the white ruler follows no code of conduct or rightful law but acts on orders to satisfy his greed of acquisition. The impact of racism is thus far-reaching and strikes at the base of the human value system.

*TKMI* is a strong commiseration for racism. The character of the master of ceremonies, T.S, whose initials have been interpreted to stand for 'The System,' dons many roles to represent superiors in the Canadian government. The powers vested on him, by virtue of designations, make him arrogant, haughty and egoistic. His supercilious behaviour towards the 'coloured foreigners,' (*TKMI* 249) makes the audience cringe. The expressions of contempt that he aims at Sikh Immigrants — "criminally inclined, un-sanitary by habit, and roguish by instinct, heathen and debased class" (*TKMI* 249), are prejudiced, venomous remarks used to spite and humiliate the minority group. The obsession with this racist attitude does not stagger at any stage during the entire drama with the steamer. Till the close of the play, there is no repentance on his part. There is no apprehension or remorse for such conduct either.

The pathos of the possible immigrants who are stranded aboard the ship is powerfully captured in the play. Two characters stand above all else in projecting the racial overtones —William Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector and 'the woman', a Sikh immigrant. The former is a case representative of the violator of human rights formulations whereas the latter epitomises the abused. Astonishing, though, as it may seem, in the play, the abuser becomes the victim while the abused experiences triumph. The paradox lets the reader / audience into an analysing mode. Does a momentary victory help man realise true objectives or does thorough soul-searching let him respire and sustain?
William Hopkinson's descent is the skeleton in his cupboard. Although, half Asian by origin, he chooses to proclaim that he is a white man. His dedication to work necessitates him to act as a spy to keep an eye on Sikh movements in Vancouver. During these occasions, when he is "all dolled up" (*TKMI* 267) as a Sikh, a part of him succumbs to the allurement of the situation. However, he refuses to acknowledge what most appeals to him. This tendency is because he supposes that the Asians are an inferior race for no specific reason. Instead of living by his own convictions he pressurises himself to be inclined to think like the white man. Here, self-denial runs parallel to the denial of the basic rights inherent to those aboard the steamer — the right to life, liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law. It is pathetic to note that not even one of the above listed was granted to the passengers, the reasons being purely political in nature. This was the strategy adopted by the Canadian Government to exclude all Asian immigration (*Lahiri* 179). Pradip Lahiri contends this further by citing Evelyn Kallen:

> The play boldly underlines what Evelyn Kallen calls, "categorical discrimination" consisting of "the arbitrary imposition of norms that protect the values and interests of powerful majorities at the expense of those of vulnerable minorities . . . an explicit violation of the fundamental human rights of stigmatised minorities member. (179-80)

Although the immigrants as British subjects and as veterans of the British army had the guaranteed right to enter Canada, they were made to endure the hardship of waiting aboard for over five long weeks without potable water or adequate nourishment. This is another strategy to enforce the departure of the steamer. Starvation as a strategy! This goes to prove the extent to which manipulative men stoop in order to achieve their selfish goals.
William Hopkinson as the executive employed to carry out these political machinations realises this but only at a later stage. But then, it is too late to rectify. He finds that there is no sense of achievement in the departure of the steamer although he had desired just this all along. However, the departure marks the onset of a revelation for him. He finds that it is justice that subsumes him---through the bullets from a Sikh's (Mewa Singh) gun. A sad ending to an ambitious beginning.

The woman takes the exact opposite position to William Hopkinson. She, singlehandedly, stands for the three hundred and seventy-six passengers. Her demeanour and disposition reflect the mood of the entire marginalised group. Her reactions, at several points in the play, mark her as a prudent subject. She is fully aware that the officials cannot, on legal grounds, deny them entry into Vancouver. So in the beginning, the despair that later shrouds her is absent. Her brave words used to boost the morale of the child in her arms as well as to boost her energy, flag with the prolonged suspension:

WOMAN. . . . Our food and our water are rationed. How long must we wait?

(TKMI 240)

. . .

WOMAN. . . . Don't look at them on the shore, they are ugly! (TKMI 252)

Later, after the mounting of the attack on the Komagata Maru, the retaliation, and with the realisation that racist prejudice had gained ground, she declares, “we go back . . . I am not a possession, a thing. I am myself and I will fight for myself and my son and my people. I am strong. (TKMI 280).

The woman is a typical example of a victim of racism. The mental torture that she is forced to endure on account of their confinement on the steamer is worsened with the expectation and longing for relief. Pollock employs the character of the child to maximise the feeling of empathy. Would not one's heart yearn to feed a crying child? What if the
child is not given food, on purpose, in order to extract the desired outcome of chasing away the prospective immigrants? Would not then it evoke feelings of resentment and frustration? This is exactly what happens here.

The feminine form is often attributed with a certain gentleness and docility, a kind disposition, a simple temperament and marked submissiveness. But, here, in the play, it is used to depict the indomitable spirit of mankind which cannot be effaced even when placed in adverse situations. The Woman's strength of character results in her acceptance of the unfavourable outcome. She has not been able to wipe the slate clean of racist overtures. She has not set foot on the Canadian soil. She has not realised her objective of procuring immigration either. Still she has emerged victorious. This reiterates that victory lies in the power to overcome and that it rests on the zest for life.

Wullie, a former scout with the Legion presents the strong issue of racism in FLC. As a good friend of Eddie, he takes credit for saving Eddie's life whilst serving at Tarleton's Loyalist Legion. Thereupon Eddie strives to establish the right by endeavouring to secure for Wullie the certificate that would free him and make him eligible for land. However, this is no easy task as Wullie has to prove that he was a Rebel-owned, run-away slave, fighting with the Loyalists. If this cannot be established then he would be considered Loyalist-owned and this would not buy him his freedom.

Wullie presents his case and exits off-stage, to re-enter only towards the end of Act One, frantic, in his search for Frank Taylor. Taylor had bound Wullie by his indenture agreement, cheated him into bondage for thirty-nine years while taking his consent for only one-year. Frank connives to force Wullie to 'mark' the indenture by establishing that he possessed evidence proving that Wullie's certificate had been forged with Eddie's help. He had, thus tricked Wullie into bondage once again. When Wullie, then, learns of Frank Taylor's death, from the gathered Loyalist group (consisting of the Major, George, Daniel
and Anderson), his relief has no limitations. However, the gathered group accuses Wullie of being guilty and swear to avenge the death of Frank Taylor, a Loyalist. In reality, Eddie had shot Frank Taylor fatally, in order that justice be meted out and also to secure freedom for Wullie.

The plight of the 'coloreds' is explicit in the following conversation:

DANIEL. Jesus, man, you're skinny, ain't they got no eats in Shelbourne?

WULLIE. Coloureds done be run out of Shelbourne, we over in Birchtown now. People sold everything, now they starvin' and sellin' themselves back into bondage.

EDDIE. What about your land allotment and rations?

WULLIE. Molasses and meal, and that give out after White rations. Most often nothin' left.

EDDIE. And the land?

WULLIE. We can't get title. (FLC 48)

'Coloureds' thus represent a deprived lot. Inhuman acts of being driven from one place to another, and the inaccessibility to such basic amenities as food and shelter, make their acquired 'freedom' meaningless. Survival becoming a challenge, they have no option but to force themselves back into bondage. Stripped of dignity, they are forced to live out of the mercies of the Whites.

Wullie should be given due credit for his capability and intelligence — he is able to single out Anderson from the group and demarcate him as a Patriot. While the others in the group remain flabbergasted and shocked, he is quick to react and adjudge the change of events when Anderson holds them all at ransom. In spite of intellectual maturity, such people as Wullie are fated to remain doomed for no valid reason but for the triviality of pigmented skin colour.
Wullie's is a positive approach to life, regardless of these setbacks. Although, harassed and humiliated as a black slave, he emerges hopeful towards the end of the play. The suggested togetherness of Eddie and Wullie lend a romantic touch to the otherwise serious theme of the play. Eddie retrieves Frank's copy of the indenture paper and disposes it. With this act she has indeed retrieved for Wullie, his life. Thereafter, between the two of them, they decide not to take up further assignments in the army but to “stay right here” and “try to make a place” *(FLC 73)*. Here ends the play but there begins a bright new future for Wullie.

These 'historic' plays also throw light on the humanistic inclinations of the principal characters, thereby showing that moral concerns form part of people's duty in order that human welfare be promoted. A deliberation on social conscientiousness would not be complete without reflecting upon the inherent humaneness present in the characters. It is this aspect which enables nobility to surface and helps balance and even out the defects in society. But for its presence, there would be no hope of redemption. Humanitarian concerns are ethical concerns that enhance the chances of visionaries' visions to materialize and help create a congenial atmosphere for spreading goodwill among people. This becomes a progressive step in paving the way for universal brotherhood which is the desperate need of the hour. The humane aspect, which *is* the differentiating factor between man and animate beings, needs to be recognized as the solution to most problems rampant in society. The touch of humanism will magically transform the crudities present and usher in progressive betterment.

Clarence, the new Mountie recruit is representative of the presence of humanist trait in man. Although third in importance (after Sitting Bull and Walsh) in the play (Page 15), his instinctive empathy places him on a pedestal and gains him the audience's favour. Malcolm Page reads that Clarence's moral ascension parallels Walsh's decline (16). It is
clear to mark the gradations in the young soldier's demeanour. In the opening part of the
play, brimming with energy to fulfil his duty, he exclaims, “An Injun War! . . . I could kill
the man who get to kill Custer!” (Walsh 144). But with the Nez Perces episode, moved by
the poor living conditions of the denied Indian group, his mentality undergoes a sea
change. The simple gesture of giving his coat to a freezing Indian child speaks volumes of
his kind nature. Further, when he learns of the politic strategies of the government to
drive out the buffaloes across the line so that the Indians may, in their pursuit to feed
themselves, follow suit, he remarks, "They're people aren't they?" (Walsh 158). Finally,
the knapsack from the mess, that he carefully conceals before presenting it to Crowfoot,
Sitting Bull's "Little One" (Walsh 163), earns for him appreciation from the Indian chief,
"you have a good heart" (Walsh 163). Even under restricted circumstances, Clarence is
able to keep his poise and respond in an upright manner to inhuman acts.

Walsh, closely follows Clarence but loses out to the latter because bureaucracy
stifles Walsh's effort and his spirit. Several incidents highlight Walsh's initial compassion
and fervour to mete out justice to the Natives— he is moved by the plight of the Nez
Perces and sends his coat to one of the deprived lot; he acknowledges the credible
worthiness of the Sioux in his letters to Mrs.Walsh; he sends recommendations to Ottawa
seeking to help the Sioux. However, these soon evaporate when he finds there are "larger
issues at stake" (Walsh 163).

Jerry Wasserman in "Sharon Pollock," introduces the play Walsh in the revised
edition of Modern Canadian Plays and speaks of Major Walsh thus:

Walsh's dilemma is that he cannot ultimately be both a private person and
an officer at the service of his political masters. At first he is confident he
can juggle the two roles . . . Eventually he must choose. And when he can
no longer avoid committing himself, he chooses duty over friendship . . .
Once having denied his humanity he becomes a broken man, a travesty of the brave soldier he once was and, eventually, the wreck we meet in the Yukon at the beginning of the play, years after his betrayal of Sitting Bull (140).

Such is the consequence of dehumanisation. Walsh's disintegration is total and final because he could not give expression to the dictates of his heart.

Sitting Bull is the first in line of the affected party. He is baffled at the vindictive attitude of the government and puts forth "an honest question" — "How does the white man sustain himself beneath the weight of the blood that he has shed?" (Walsh 153). In the initial stage, his trust in Walsh is complete, "I will call you White Sioux and I will trust you." Later, in the climactic scene, after he makes his last appeal to Walsh, his convictions begin to change. The humanity he looks for is lost—he laments that he prefers to "die fighting than die of starvation" (Walsh 163). But larger considerations—"I must think of all my people. I must think of the ones here now and the ones that come after . . . what is best for them" (163) forestall him. Sitting Bull's wisdom and goodwill are fated to doom in an atmosphere that lacks humanitarian aptitude.

The TKMI is not a mere documentation of the factual happenings of the 1914, Vancouver incident to keep the Asian immigrants at bay, forbidding their entry into Canada. It scans the emotions of the people involved—both the inflicted and the afflicted, thus it acquires a laudable depth. The play seems to suggest that a humanitarian attitude is the dire need of the hour. The play, by the nature of its intent is meant for all times. It arrests the audiences' attention irrespective of their geographical locations and sets them on an introspective mode. Pollock strategically employs the character of "a woman", a Sikh immigrant, to impress upon the audience, the presence of three hundred and odd prospective immigrants. Pollock is able to play on the audiences' emotions by
depicting the untold sufferings aboard the ship. The plight of the Woman who reflects the sentiments of the victims aboard kindles the finer feelings of the audience. Their involvement thus absorbs them in the play and helps achieve the desired objective of the playwright— that of creating awareness about past atrocities. The changing temperament of the Woman from joy, upon first sighting land; through dejection, upon enduring hunger and thirst in the immigrants' forced confinement and; finally, the hope that God shall judge injustice with a heavy hand, projects the stifling atmosphere of inhumanity. Her plea is for the recognition of the ideals that are essential for humanity.

Evy, Hopkinson's mistress depicts humane concerns through her actions and reactions in exploitative situations. Nunn's "Sharon Pollock's Plays: A Review Article" describes the juxtaposition of the Immigration department's ultimately successful effort against Hopkinson's ultimately unsuccessful effort to suppress the truth of his inheritance as an "interesting process" (31). Where Evy responds very naturally— she is horrified upon witnessing a Sikh being beaten by whites as she rides past in a street car, Hopkinson rationalizes the government's racist immigration policy (31). He fails in his effort to console her, for, she is petrified at the atrocity and wonders, "But why does it happen?" (TKMI 248).

Evy is also instrumental in resolving the dilemma of Hopkinson and making him come to terms with the truth of his mother's race. According to Nunn, “the racist denies a part of his own humanity in denying the humanity of others” (31). Evy has opposing views and does not support Hopkinson from the beginning. She cannot comprehend the necessity for Hopkinson to act as an informer to track the illegal activities of the immigrants. She questions him, "Don't you like honest work?" (TKMI 252). She does not want to be his accomplice. Even when provoked she retaliates---"I'm a whore and what you do is offensive to me! What you do would gag me! I'm a whore and when I look at
your job, I could vomit!” (TKMI 252). She wants to deter him from his prosecution of
duties to make the Komagata Maru set sail and leave the shores of Vancouver with its
shipload of Asians intact—“I won't let you do this!” (TKMI 264), “Don't go” (TKMI 276).

Evy begins to empathize and begins to relate to the horrid nature of the
atmosphere but Hopkinson's stubborn persistence pressurizes her into deciding to leave
him. Her decision impresses Hopkinson to accept that which he had vehemently denied
all his life—“the lifelong rejection of his Indian identity” (Holder 116). Beneath his tough
exterior there had existed a tenderness which had always sought recognition and
supremacy. Unable to digest the hardships inflicted upon the inmates of the stranded ship,
he promises them food and water. He explains his actions thus—“I felt it only—
humanitarian to grant one week's provision” (TKMI 246). His wakening to the existence
of the other self is gradual and runs parallel to the deteriorating state of his dominant self.
After over five weeks since the forced departure of the steamer, he feels no sense of
achievement or pride of accomplishment. Then he only longs for a certain something
which embraces him through the bullets from Mewa Singh's gun. As Anne Nothof rightly
explains:

> He is forced to acknowledge his self-destructive hypocrisy, and he accepts
> his death at the hands of a revolutionary Sikh, Mewa Singh as adjust
> retribution for his lack of compassion for others, and his betrayal of his
> heritage. In choosing to effect repressive policies, he has denied his own
> humanity. (90)

Thus Hopkinson stands as proof that humanitarian causes nourish life whereas its
absence will cause self destruction.

In the absence of a humanistic touch, man becomes susceptible to nefarious acts
of barbarism. He lets loose the demonic instinct in him and seeks to derive satisfaction by
appeasing this instinct. However, in reality there can be no real joy in such acts as it soon becomes evident when the mirage lifts to reveal only nothingness. There is no sense of satisfaction at the end, for even if it were present at the beginning, it does not last long.

Wartime nourishes humane and inhumane attitudes equivocally. This is because war accords myriad opportunities to choose between the two. In _FLC_, it is heart wrenching to note the episode described by Daniel, a young Ex-corporal in the Legion. When they have gathered to celebrate the Loyalists' togetherness after enduring the hardships of the American War of Independence, he recalls the incident of a Rebel boy. The boy had accidentally fallen into a river, trying to escape the attack of the Loyalists. Frank Taylor, then in command had recognized the boy— “Billy Boy!” he exclaims, “Billy Boy, it's me!” (_FLC_ 17). Taylor had planted the seed of hope in him, but had mercilessly shot him to death. If Taylor is inhumanity personified, then Eddie and Annie emerge as humanity personified. Their demeanour marks that goodness can be tapped and that global values can be stamped in order to restore peace on earth.

Annie, the elder daughter acts with profound maturity through the play. She consoles her depressed mother and is instrumental in helping her accept the circumstances. She fights for righteousness in any given situation. The ironies of war bemuse her as she realises that innocent lives (as those of both her brothers— Edward and Richard) are sacrificed while allegiances higher in the hierarchy change. Later, when Anderson retaliates by asking that one among the Loyalist group should take up responsibility and sacrifice his life for the unjust butchering of his brother at Waxhaws, Annie acts spontaneously. She strives to deter Anderson from carrying on the cycle of the revenge motif. Her words are chosen with great care to bring about the desired effect:

ANNIE. Will killin' me ease the ache in your heart for your brother? Why not kill us all? Maybe that would wipe away his final terror and pain. (_FLC_ 64)
ANNIE. Who could I kill to clear Mama's head. (FLC 64)

Her words are powerfully tinged with wisdom. Skilfully, she manoeuvres the rival to see that evil begets evil. Anne Nothof's comments in "Crossing Borders," reflect the same:

... Annie persuades Anderson that justice can never be effected through revenge, and that compassion is the only way to end the cycle of bloody reprisals. She believes that the best way to serve our brothers is to build a better future for our children. (96)

Annie supplements this ideology by following up the safety of Major Anderson when he finally relents and departs without causing any harm. When the others want to "capture the bugger" (FLC 69), she shows her magnanimity by letting him go free. The social conscientiousness of the humaneness projected here forms the gist of the play.

Eddie proves her worth most prominently on two occasions—the case of Frank Taylor and the cause of Wullie. Her courage, evident in her re-gendering transformation from Emily to Eddie becomes marked in her efforts to secure righteousness and seek out the injustices of war. Frank Taylor is the cause of Wullie's despair as also an usurper of the "promised land" (FLC 39). Eddie therefore deems it proper to shoot Frank, thereby forestalling the cheated Wullie's indenture and the incident of his land seizure from a soldier's widow. Her conviction is that this is the only way to restore justice to the affected. Even George commends her for her "sense of justice and fair play" (FLC 40).

Eddie's fervent exercise in securing the much-sought-after freedom for Wullie projects the humanitarian attitude inherent in her. She wishes to prove that Wullie was a Rebel-owned slave who had fought for the British. She has a mature head over young shoulders and does not hesitate to secure for him that certificate which would legally
release him, by forging it. She understands that in order to achieve just goals such trivial
issues had to be overlooked. Her passionate outburst reflects her concern for establishing
the good, “Exercise freedom of choice, citizens, or be party to your oppression!” (FLC
19).

Eddie's upright and positive aura permeates the atmosphere and engulfs all around
her. Indeed she exhibits adulthood replete with a ripeness which generally makes an onset
only with age. Thus Annie and Eddie depict that goodness can be elicited through
displaying humanitarian concerns and that humaneness which brings one to claim
responsibility for human actions will ultimately bring about the manifestation of morality.

George's reaction while embracing his dead 'Rebel' son's waist coat deserves a
mention at this juncture. The action shows that side of him which he so strives to suppress
— his love for his estranged son. This act portrays that love is the governing factor which
lends the humanitarian touch. When tempered with love, humanitarian issues do take a
strong hold and project that wrongs can be erased from society.

Society entails that man conforms to a set of a specified code of ethics. This
adherence is to ensure the harmonious existence of the various ethnic groups that
compose the entirety of Homo sapiens. It marks the socially acceptable from the socially
uncongenial. Thus this set of a code of ethics is that which forms the base upon which
forms the primary base for any given society. A disregard for this set, upsets the very
foundation and dismantles the entire set up. Social values which develop from human
values are pertinent to the conglomeration of the peoples of the world. In Pollock's
'history' plays, this disregard has been reason enough to cause destruction in all its totality
either to property or in the personal front of the characters'. Pollock's link between
societal issues and the code of these ethics become all too evident when applied to the
individuals Walsh, Hopkinson and Joan Roberts in the plays Walsh, KMI and FLC respectively.

The code of ethics that underlies man's conduct should necessarily be tempered with humanitarian concerns. A concern in the welfare of the fellow being is a characteristic of mark of good society. In Walsh, the Major himself is a staunch supporter of this ideology. However, his split priorities forbid him from carrying out what is right because as part of his duty, he has to thrust certain policies upon the Native dwellers, to which he himself is averse. His order to Sitting Bull, to deny the Nez Perces, is a case in point. He realises the credibility of their demands to help out the fellow-tribe at their time of need. But his hands are tied, for he has not the authority to permit the Sioux to offer help. So without any display of emotions, he rules out considerations of the reasons and bluntly but gently orders the Nez Perces to move out of the reservation. A conscientious man by nature, he is able to understand that the Natives cannot be ordered about in their own land and that hollow promises cannot bind them to orders from the head quarters.

When Sitting Bull cites that all those clans, (Bear Ribs, White Antelope, Iron Shield, Black Kettle, Stirring Bear, Crazy Horse) which had taken the white man's promise had had to meet their own doom, Walsh replies, “You . . . Make your point” (Walsh 156).

Walsh is dejected that his requests to the government authorities to “aid these Indians” (Walsh 164) when the extinction of the buffalo sets in, are neglected. Further, he is infuriated at the lack of impartiality in the law. The system entails that he punish a native for theft but it does not 'see' that the native is not at fault for he had offered the affected settler, the horse, the only one he owned, in exchange of the cow, which he had slaughtered to feed his starving family. He exclaims, “But where's the justice in it?” (Walsh 164).
Astonishingly the lack of ethics in the prevalent system is deciphered by Harry and Clarence, both of whom do not belong to higher ranks in the army-hierarchy. Their conversation reveals that there is a lot that has to be changed if justice should mark the proceedings of the government orders. Clarence explains that he had joined the army because he “wanted to do what was right” (Walsh 158) and make his mother proud. He clarifies “I guess she's proud of me . . . . And as far as what's right goes . . . that don't seem to come into it” (Walsh 158). If officials higher in the hierarchy were to share these sentiments, then a difference could have been brought about in the treatment of the Natives.

Harry explains the strategic firing of the American soldiers on the border to drive the buffalo across the line, towards the north, so that the American government need not be burdened with the task of feeding the Indians at the reservations. Clarence taken aback by the implications, exclaims—“It ain't fair!” (Walsh 158). His faith, that the government under the auspices of the British would provide the Indians food and relief is only a myth and he realises it himself, soon enough. When he brings the news of Sitting Bull's death to Walsh, he is filled with anger. The agreement that none would be punished, if the natives gave in to the pressures and surrendered themselves to the American Government, had not been honoured. "His anger is spent, but his anguish traumatises him.

Colonel MacLeod, commissioner of the North West Mounted Police, a representative of the government officials nearer to the crown, impresses upon Walsh that just as in chess, where, a pawn is sacrificed in order to gain an advantage on the other side, it was necessary to "see the whole picture." He convinces Walsh, although jeopardizing their friendship, "to see that no food stuffs, clothing, ammunition or supplies are given them [Sioux] . . . If they do not possess the money to pay for them.” (Walsh161). The request for payment is only arbitrary because they are aware that the
Natives do not possess money. It is only a strategy to force them into surrendering to the Americans for the murder of General Custer. As Robert C. Nunn suggests:

It [Walsh] chronicles how these men [Walsh and Sitting Bull] join the thousands of victims on the romantic myth of 'The Opening of the West', which casts the Indians as villains and the whites as heroes, and is utterly impervious to the truth . . . . Walsh is pressed into the service of a fantasy cynically subscribed to by the Canadian government to maintain good relations with its mad neighbour to the south (143).

Thus, the lack of ethics is formulated by the government and therefore it should be seen that it is the government and the law which are at fault rather than the individuals who carry out the orders as part of their duties. It is also to be comprehended that formulations of laws should be laced with humanitarian concerns and that these formulations be amended from time to time in order that they suit the necessities of the times.

Cynthia Zimmerman points out that T.S, the Master of Ceremonies who plays many roles in *TKMI*, holds together the various scenes by his presence, "A magician and barker with a confrontational style, he comments, explains, directs the characters, plays various parts and promotes a carnival atmosphere" (70). This was the "creative solution to practical problems "in order to surmount the difficulty of projecting an ordinary account of documentary details" and to make it more "committed to political comment" (70).

The suggestion that the initials, T.S stands for 'The System' stands validated (Nothof 96) as he is made to represent various government officials of the times. His haughtiness and moral superiority flout the rules of good society. His contempt for the Asian immigrants aboard the stranded steamer, his obnoxious behaviour in forcing them to leave the harbour and his biased temperament are outrageously supported by the prevalent law. He points out that "No judge and no court and no officer thereof shall have
any jurisdiction to review, reverse and restrain, quash or otherwise interfere with my holding and making and giving, detaining, deporting" (TKMI 241).

Further, T.S's stance that it was necessary to pick up a reason to board the ship, in order to "mount a police action" and "arrest those aboard" (TKMI 259), falls in tune with his clearly racist attitude. According to him, the people aboard the liner are mere commodities, the fate of whom can be signed off according to their relative worthiness. He cites the "bilingual law," which comes to his aid, "With-the-Power-Vested-in-Me-by-His-Majesty's-Government-I-Hereby-Give-You-Formal-Notice-to-Sail!" (TKMI 271). The steamer is thereafter boarded by the officials with instructions to fire "if necessary" (TKMI 277). The Komagata Maru is thus forced to deport.

Thus, a totalitarian theory is adopted so that selfish motives are achieved and retained without a concern for judicial administration. It is evident, here, that the system itself feeds such unacceptable concepts, taking the question of whether it is right to blame an individual (here T.S) when the entire system is at fault.

Zimmerman suggests that the presence of the Asian mother along with her unseen child, who reflects the sentiments of those aboard is "to heighten the emotional impact throughout the play . . . she remains behind a grill which suggests both the ship's helm and a cage" (70). Though stranded aboard the stagnant ship and unable to endure famine, she remains strong, imbibing strength from ruminating about the valour that is inherent of her heritage. She does not allow herself to become embittered although she resents the ugliness of the people ashore the beautiful Vancouver. Sadness overwhelms her but this soon matures, with her acquired bravery into a matured conviction. Through the depiction of Mewa Singh's final words, she places her belief that God shall judge injustice with a heavy hand. Pradip Lahiri holds up this character as the Mother-India figure (183). Indeed
just as the woman is caged behind, at the rear of the stage, justice for the ethnic minorities too remains confined within a cage.

Hopkinson's lack of ethics is influenced mainly by his position in the immigration department. Duty requires that he does certain things which are, strictly speaking, far from humanitarian concerns. Although initially torn between official duties and those toward his conscience, he later reconciles to acknowledge his part Asian identity. However, it is a pity that, then, it becomes too late to rectify his wrongs and emerge unscathed. He is left helpless and death comes as a relief with his willingness to embrace it.

A conscientious worker is made to compromise his ideals—Hopkinson is forced to assist senior officials in devising new strategies to make the steamer leave the harbour without permitting the passengers to disembark. He stoops to the level of using starvation as a strategy to help the government realize its objectives—“I'll see it [the ship] wrapped round with rot and rust and manned by skeletons before one bastard disembarks” (*TMKI* 258). Later, after the attack on the ship and its forced departure, he compares himself to a toy, a mechanical man and suffers mental agony. Finally, peace does embrace him; only that when it does, Hopkinson has already been engulfed onto the folds of the All Pervasive Destroyer—Shiva (of Hindu mythology) through the bullets from Mewa Singh's gun. A dramatic ending, indeed, for a man who had lived an encumbered life.

This disregard for ethics, especially during wartimes, is very common, as the disturbing arena brings uncouth behaviour to the forefront. Arms and ammunitions are within the common man's reach and values are subjugated when survival of the fittest decodes the dictum. In *FLC*, as Major Williams, George and Daniel begin to drag out the paraphernalia of war in order to prepare for the Remembrance Ritual, they begin to reminisce past incidents. At the Battle at Waxhaws in the year 1780, Banastre Tarleton's
Legion overtook and defeated the Americans as they retreated after the fall of Charleston. However, this victory was marred by a black mark—the British Legion was said to have attacked the American forces even after they had laid down their arms asking for "quarter". "To Give Quarter" is to promise not to kill an enemy soldier who is surrendering. A soldier may ask for and may be given quarter. Tarleton became infamous for his disregard of war ethics. Thereafter, "Tarleton's quarter" assumed the meaning of "no quarter" and in the ensuing event at King's Mountain, the Americans sealed their victory by dishing out this very same "Tarleton's Quarter" to the surrendering British soldiers as an act of revenge (*FLC* 3-5).

Eddie's account of King's Mountain presents the pathos of the situation. Her comment while recounting the incidents at Waxhaws and King's Mountain, that it had after all ended fair enough, posts the query of redressal. The Rebels, then fuming under the experience at Waxhaws, retaliate when asked for "quarter" by the British Legion at King's Mountain. The Rebels yell back "Tarleton's Quarter" and keep shooting at the captured British soldiers. Her words "Mercy sought. None given" (*FLC* 30), round off that moral and ethical behaviour are merely empty expressions and that they achieve a secondary position when revenge is in the air.

Annie's account of her visit to meet her Rebel brother, Richard, when he was taken prisoner, in a prison ship again bespeaks of an import of an ethical code. She says, "I offered somethin'. Them in charge wanted it" . . . Or they took it" (*FLC* 60). This reference, although casual, marks the disregard for sexual morality.

Frank Taylor's disregard for ethics brings him to ultimate doom. Although, a chivalrous soldier who had fought bravely at Cowan Ford and Waxhaws, "he was a miserable bastard" (*FLC* 29). His cunning binds Black Wullie into an indenture agreement for thirty-nine years, of which Wullie himself is not aware. Eddie burns the
document to ensure Wullie's freedom but her father, George Roberts, accounts that Wullie is "property" (FLC 49). Such treatment meted out to a fellow human, explicates that ethics were wilfully neglected during the times. Later, when Eddie presents him with Frank's copy of the indenture paper, joy and relief flood him. He is, thereafter, able to take the decision to decline joining fresh enlistment of the army and to stay on in the new country.

Major John Anderson of the Rebels, who vows revenge on the Loyalist party to avenge his brother's death, points out the lack of justice in political machinations. He paints a dreary picture of the war background in which his brother was killed. He reminds Daniel of the hoary past, “… some of you went from one pile of bodies into another, pullin' off the dead and killin' the wounded and livin'. And one of the livin' was a fourteen-year-old-boy who had time to cry "quarter" 'fore the sabre came down” (FLC 54). This again speaks of the negligence in saving a small boys life. The disclosure does none of the Loyalists' proud, as Daniel Wilson acknowledges this (FLC 54). The situation in each of these cases would have been reversed if the underlying tone had been ethical. An ethical bind would have checked disreputable acts.

Sharon Pollock's cause to social justice is highlighted in her evocation of past incidents. Where people would prefer to bury the unsavoury incidents of the past and strive to project the niceties present in the country of origin, Pollock has boldly undertaken to explore the ignominious. Her motive to trigger in the right by motivating the audience to think about past atrocities has been appreciated by her contemporaries and critics alike. Jamie Portman reports in The Calgary Herald—“Pollock's play [Walsh] takes unrepentant dramatic license on occasion, but it also puts flesh on the bare and dusty bones of history.”
The themes dealt with in this Chapter relate to social causes. Walsh epitomized the traumatized Major Walsh, who suffered humiliation and ignominy in the sordid struggle between mind and soul. The historic incident at Fort Walsh is deconstructed by the playwright and the impact on the audience is greater because this is a depiction of a real-life happening. If the events had been fabricated, then probably, it would not have evoked such strong feelings. History breathes life into the characters' and it becomes necessary to judge the morality of their actions because it is based on true incidents.

**TKMI,** which literally involves the audience, highlighted the racism and discrimination that were rampant in the 1900s. Here again, the treatment of the prospective immigrants jolts the sensibilities of the dormant reader/audience. Pollock is clear in her purport—not to advise the audience or inject methodologies to rectify the system. Her method of drawing from past incidents that belong to a bygone era, supplants the desires for a fresh change in the future. Her motto seems to be--- minimising suffering and maximising harmony. Hopkinson, the dejected soul puts forth the plea that those of his tribe should weigh the pros and cons before carrying out the dictates of duty. Evy, stands for the able, independent-thinking lady. Her humanitarian notions find an equal in Clarence, of Walsh and Eddie of FLC.

**FLC** is again dependent heavily on the history of the war times of 1785. The principles of the government concerning land allocation to the Loyalists in the new country and the racial disparity in granting freedom to the slaves are woven into the fabric of the story. The injustice done to Black Wullie, Eddie's struggle to rectify the wrong, Annie's concern to redress Anderson's act of revenge—all raise the play's pattern of projecting and involving a socialistic concern.

Jenn Stephenson in his article "Re-Performing Microhistories: Postmodern Metatheatricality in Canadian Millenial Drama" has quoted Ric Knowles' examination of
historically inflected metadramatic plays of prominent playwrights. He transposes that the history plays of Pollock:

Despite their divergent approaches to documenting historical events, . . . actively eschew any attempt to canonize official history or establish a stable national mythology. Instead by destabilizing history . . . these historiographic plays present the making and remaking of history as a contingent and ongoing process. Ultimately, these plays do participate in nation-building, not by telling history, but by challenging contemporary audiences to tell new and better stories in the creation of a future Canada.

The plight of the afflicted people evokes sympathy, destroys apathy and ignites a pithy passion to uphold human rights. Mere documentation of an event of the past is never capable of evoking an impact; it is the emotions of the people on whose lives the historical incident had such an impact that moves the audience, impelling them to think deeply and act according to the dictates of a conscientious soul.
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