CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

A DISCOVERY: AN UNADULTERATED AUSTRALIAN BEING

Containing all prehistory in our bones
and all geology behind the brain
which in the Modern age could melt these stones
so fiercely, time might never start again.

(‘Geology Lecture’ A Human Pattern 172)

Judith Wright has transcended all histories and their reductions to arrive at ‘prehistory’, which the Australian space still holds within. This lingering ‘prehistory’ in the bones of the surviving Australians, is revived through a holistic experience of place from racial, gendered and social perspectives. Wright as the deviant writer, has restored an infinite space of Australia where each moment of existence is infinitely sustained through an intimate interanimation of her poetic and writerly self. History can deny this infinite space but Wright’s brilliant plethora of literary vernal has proved that the Australian space is an existential, cultural, emotional and spiritual essence of the living world that cannot be obliterated irrespective of repeated attempt to over-write history superficially. The literary gems discussed in this thesis reveal that several imperial strategies ranging from cartography, photography, biography, diaries of explorations, memoirs, renaming of places and imported domestic and cultural ethos are nothing but mute alibi of the imperial annexation of space. Wright provides an alternative path bypassing authoritative univocal delineation of space. This new outlook by a white woman writer who strikingly contradicts her predecessors is unique and daunting indeed. Her vision of space thus can be summarized in the words of Michel Foucault who has supported Gaston Bachelard’s view:
that we do not live in a homogeneous and empty space, but in a space that is saturated with qualities, and that may even be pervaded by a spectral aura. The space of our primary perception, of our dreams and of our passions, holds within itself almost intrinsic qualities: it is light, ethereal, transparent, or dark, uneven, cluttered. Again, it is a space of height, of peaks, or on the contrary, of the depths of mud; space that flows, like spring water, or fixed space, like stone or crystal.¹

Thus, for Judith Wright, place is not carved out of space by dissociating an area from rest of the world and fixing it for fugitive humanity, but rather space transforms into place through a union of the subject and the object. It is a fusion of emotions, sensibilities and human experiences than a three-dimensional physical structure. It is also not abstract for Wright because for each of us, the meaning of space differs in relation to our involvement with that space. Space is therefore an incessant variety of individual experiences and in the process it unconsciously transforms into place. For Wright, the reconstructed modern Australian space is fragmented ruthlessly that simultaneously has disoriented one's own identity. The various proliferated cities of Australia with their skyscrapers and huge infrastructure elucidate fragmentation, alienation and discord. Perhaps this is the reason why she vehemently has protested against mining of The Great Barrier Reef.² Spatiality is more a matter of experience and feeling than defining it in terms of Cartesian geometry. Through all her works, she has embodied that when the self interacts with the space, it becomes the place of existence. The elemental difference between Wright's elucidation and imperial delineation of space is that, for Wright space is perceptive and existential while for the latter, it is materialistic. When Judith Wright has visited India in 1970, Wright's enumeration of India reveals how much she is engrossed with the Indian cultural and emotional space of the living
within few weeks of her trip. With a mixed bag of reactions and an impartial criticism about
the nation, Wright in her letter to Dorothy Green (written on 1st March, 1970) expresses:

No, as a matter of fact I rather thrived on India. Perhaps that mad combination
of political intrigue, age-old poverty, metaphysical and religious heights, and
history, proto-history, pre-history agrees with me. ..............I would far rather
go back there than to Europe. Dreadful I know. Now my cupboards are a
confusion of Kashmiri shawls, Mysore silks and sandalwood, and translations
of the literature.

(With Love & Fury: Selected Letters of Judith Wright 207.)

The essence of Indian space emerging from the cultural, geographical, historical and
emotional atmosphere has transformed it into a place for her. Her configuration of Indian
space can be different from the others, but what Wright wants to convey is that when the
existence of the individual coalesces with the space, which means a kind of immersion, as
Maurice Marleau Ponty, the French phenomenologist termed as “body-subject”3 it is then,
one finds him or her as part of that place. To round up on Wright’s elicitation of space, this
chapter tries to accomplish the derivative concept of space in Judith Wright’s literary opus
from all the debatable contentions in the previous chapters.

Wright observes how cultural interferences influence space to transform into a place,
thereby envisioning it as a fluid construct. The thesis has examined how she has blurred
‘whiteness’ pedagogy by transcending spatial boundary of racial and sexual legitimacy to
forge an identity for herself, as well as for all those women who passively suffered trivialized
existence. This migration across the boundaries liberates the creative spirit that has been
suppressed within the conventional racial and gendered walls of manipulated history. In the
journey from the conqueror’s space to the conquered place, this research has enumerated how
her literary works reveal a painful metamorphosis of the white woman, disinheriting her race
and adopting herself as a child of the lost world and its people. In the retrospection of 'Lost Generation', there have been several literary works of indigenous writers, but a white woman struggling against the racial currents and adopting an identity of 'prehistory' is worth researching. Wright has subverted the legacy of patriarchal authority in re-constructing the identity of the white woman. The Australian colonial space ranging from domestic to civic is reconfigured in her works as a dystopia, where physical and psychological violence remain as undercurrent. Her cultural shock from her race has alienated her into a marginalized position till she is left in dissonance and conflict within herself. Her determination to abandon the illusion of the imposed identity and the desire to resurrect the soul is expressed when she writes

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Though we've polluted
even this air I breathe
and spoiled green earth;

still, as the sun comes up
bearing my birthday,
having met time and love
I raised my cup——

Dark, bitter, neutral clean,
sober as morning——
to all I've seen and known——
to this new sun.
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("Turning Fifty" A Human 141)
This poem written on her fiftieth birthday reveals how Judith Wright has rejected to collude with white guilt in the disguise of white supremacy. No doubt this daunting act by a woman in the nineteenth century Australia is arduous but this diversion from the beaten track is made possible through the binary opposition of guilt and topophilic inclination to the land where she is born. For Wright, the great archive of Imperial History acts as an ‘epistemic violence’ to appropriate colonial establishments. In her transcendental journey across the Australian space, Wright finds herself as a victim of epistemic violence where in her pernicious ignorance she has applauded her forefathers in the hollow glory of colonialism till her moment of epiphany arrives:

The mind runs restless. Cast
back now, before time’s done,
running head-down and thin
on the scent of the dying past.
Where does it all begin?
If evil has a beginning
it may disclose its meaning.

(“White Night” A Human 173)

Wright’s active participation in protecting the Great Barrier Reef despite severe physical handicap, her ever growing involvement in deliberation of issues related to environmental and ecological degradation, her acute concern over the neglected and withering Aboriginal culture and her stark autobiography reveal again and again a strong love for the birthplace and her suffering due to the pain inflicted on the land. She has travelled from what is ‘civilized’ to the wild and the ‘uncivilized’, from the ‘legitimate’ ‘protected’ phallic world to the irrational surrogated matrilineal world of nature where she has traced her buried voice, thereby creating an alternative space of autobiography. She never transcends from culture to
nature because nature is the source of her cultural proliferation unlike her predecessors. For Wright, nature and culture do not constitute any ambiguity because she has treasured the deep cultural remnants in nature.

In the land of exile, Wright has developed in her memoirs and autobiography the long love-hate process of physical displacement and transmogrification of a gamut of generations from alienation to self actualization with the place. Throughout her works, Wright explicates the philosophy of living being a state of mind before it becomes the sense of being. For the natives, physical exile cannot dissociate their soul from the land although the body as the impediment can undergo severe torture. In contrast, Wright has focused on the psychological exile of the whites rooted within themselves and is so disruptive that it reduces one’s identity as meaningless and insubstantial. The indelible shape of an awful monstrous space is deconstructed slowly through ages till a day has arrived when her grandfather loved the land that has consumed his first child. This space that has always been the dungeon and derelict space synonymous to purgatory for all the fallen men of her race appears as a place of dynamic of love and creativity, her muse inspiring the poet to listen to her buried voice.

In the course of this analysis, the thesis has explored heterotopias in her writings which hold an intricate relation with the space at large. These heterotopias whether signified in the little space of the ‘Conch-shell’, the desiccated place of the ‘bora-ring’, the ruined ‘Old Prison’, those prohibited places of female sexuality that have marked the onslaught of painful adolescence, those long cherished family albums that are left with few remnants of photographs from the past or the huge tree where the Aborigines practiced their totemic rituals –all have interrogated, inversed and reflected like a mirror. In The Order Of Things Foucault has exemplified the mirror and a painting of Diego Velazquez called “Last Meninas” as the unique example of both utopia and heterotopia. It is utopia because the mirror has reflected a virtual space where the object is present and yet that space does not
exist in reality. It is heterotopia because it is an object and a medium which has a material reality. These spaces of ‘down under’ which once seemed to be the utopic vision of the settler’s dream now appear to Wright as heterotopias eliciting perversity, cruelty, self-glorification and the suppressed desires. The thesis has studied both ‘heterotopia of crisis’ like the forbidden and sacred territories and ‘heterotopia of deviance’ like the asylum, or the prison house unleashed in Wright’s new definition of space but all of them have disrupted disturbed and denounced the ordering of space in Imperial History. At the same time some of these heterotopias are reflection of Wright’s own suppressed desires which she has transparently revealed in her autobiography. Wright also shows the cultural bifurcation in spatial distortion. Deviant heterotopias like graveyards are always distinctly identified as secluded place of distortions from life but for the natives, the entire space is imbued with the spirit of the ancestors as they have believed in the intermingling of spirits with the entire space. She has deconstructed the engendered utopic space and the ennobling history. In his preface to *The Order of Things* Foucault defines:

**Utopias** afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. **Heterotopias** are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language.\(^5\)

The planning, pre-planning, alteration, molding and the desire for developing a replica of England in Australia is therefore, mocked by Wright as nothing but a utopic desire and a brute combat to construct a world of their own on the bare bones of the decadent race.

On the other hand, the thesis has calibrated how Judith Wright’s search for self identity has traced an exceptional shift from repulsion and ‘placelessness’ to an aesthetic attachment to the place which is viewed as ‘topophilia’. This space is seen both in terms of physical and
mental space. While she has been involved in an intense bondage with the land, her houses named Quantum and Calanthe are not mere architectural space disclosing her economic and social status, but rather they have anchored her own existence. For her, the house is soaked with her emotions and passions so that even within that closed space, she has undergone a transcendental process through a gamut of emotions.

The thesis also has come across another significant spatial aspect, which is 'body' as a spatial metaphor. Body as a space is repetitive in her works but Wright shows how this body can indulge in a utopian impulse especially where the white female body in colonial Australia is a cultural commitment to ideals of purity and beauty and "the reiterative and citational practice through which discourse produces the effects that it names" 6. Whether it is her deep reflection on the family albums where the photographs of women are preserved as essential epitome of serene beauty or it is her bitter experience of her physique that does not count to be included as a sexist icon, Wright is thoroughly critical how the body awaits imposition of utopian fantasy. For her, woman’s sexuality in terms of bodily representation is equaled with social body so that the body emerges as a power construct. The bodily space is fetishized as site of libidinal discourse, the discharging point of all pent up anxiety and the source of voyeuristic pleasure of lustful possession:

    and flesh has now become
time’s instrument
for the first task that is set
and the easiest learnt.
Two shapes obsess it: need,
and the need satisfied. ("Flesh" A Human 82)

Wright shows to shape the body and reveal it as the space of desire is an inevitable outcome in the patriarchal world where women like her friends, cousins and colleagues
indulge in a desperate enterprise to become appealing. This explicit utopian vision is observed also in the land which is portrayed as an object of desire, alluring the male gaze to explore and inscribe a text of his own. The bodily inhibitions like menstruation and gradual ascent to adolescence are regarded as awkward and shameful as if it is another colony that needs discipline as well as punishment. The white man as the phallic signifier attempts to control the land and the body so that his obsession ends in possession and distortion.

The bodily metaphor she unveils is observed as tropes of marginality, fertility and exploitability integral to the politics of colonization of space. The politics of open and closed space is also discussed that shows how the white patriarchy enclosed their women in the claustrophobic panoptical domestic space in the name of protection. The open space becomes a symbol of desiccated culture, disfigurement and sexual concupiscence. However, there are hardly any texts where Wright has delineated on the archetypal body of the Aborigines. She has revealed that whether it is seen as the reflection of the traditional voluptuous black woman or the black man with his indomitable spirit, this space is always the bait for molestation and torture. The bodily space as a site of trauma has unveiled for Wright what history cannot provide just as Cathy Caruth has explained in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*:

Trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language.⁷

The geographical mystic space has undergone several changes, tortures, alterations and yet its essence is left as an indelible impression in the living phenomena of the land. The
wounded space that Wright reveals still bears the pain of genocide, and her poetry captures the silent lament that never reaches the ears of imperialism. The existing natural phenomena still linger with irrecoverable wounds if only one knows how to see. The body like the land bears uncomprehended violence withstanding painful memories that in Wright’s writings demand articulation and resistance. The various sexual and psychological abuses that Wright has confronted in her childhood are unveiled in her autobiography. Wright has diagnosed this as an attempt to enforce her in a world of ‘loss’, a void which Hélène Cixous finds to be the point of beginning in order to articulate about oneself. Similarly she has recalled incidents like ‘Hometbank massacre’ where the space still echoes suppressed groaning. This history must be acknowledged as a continuation of the present otherwise one’s own subjectivity is vague and meaningless. For Wright this wound can be a secret history but it still haunts the white man’s memory as they don’t dare to traverse in those places. Space is therefore seen as inclusive of interior and exterior, the visible and unseen just as the soul and the body are interrelated. This wounded bodily space also reflects the wounded mindscape for Wright.

Wright’s biographical portrayal of herself in tune with the land shows how there is a spontaneous reaction of her mind and her body to the secret germ of life in the land. Her words draw life from spontaneous and ‘unfathered’ Australian flora which skeletons her intimate romance with Australian space. Wright embraces her body as the land and her language as the natural flora that carries the essence of the true space of Australia. In her essay “Some problems of being an Australian poet” in Because I Was Invited she has criticized those poets like Furnley Maurice and his depiction of landscape in his poem like ‘Melbourne Odes’: “Not only the theme, but the language of this sonnet point to the problem; it is second-hand language, stale scraps from the English table” (Because I Was Invited 54) Wright has celebrated the feminine body as the source of creativity just like the land that has its own mystic energy. This complete union between the self and the place is because Wright
has realized that “You can’t get happiness from anywhere outside your own being; it comes first from obeying your own inner truth, and it’s only then that you begin to live.” (With Love 34)

Such metaphorical association of the colonial space in relation to her body and mind is a new dimension in a white woman’s writings. Water bodies like rivers, lakes, huge mountains, and the mysterious bush are not merely poetic props but they reveal how a poet blurs the line of difference between the body and the land. The stripping of the gum tree, the red flaming flowers blossoming with passion, are reflections of the poet’s perception of life in its various stages. Such detail poetic reflection of the natural process is often associated with the woman’s physiological changes. This outer space is not grotesque or exaggerated in the demonized shape as her race has done for cultural ‘othering’ of the space. Wright’s poetic route has adorned the land and the body as the space of self-adulation. She has not only written an unending ever challenging biography for herself but it is also a biography of the space. Hence a tree is not merely a tree that is dying or vibrant with fruits and flowers, but in her sensuous remembrance she can also revive the entrenched memory of a traditional dancing posture of the Aborigines, or the memory of her love shared under the tree with her husband Jack Mk Kinney. So the tree becomes a living partner in her reciprocal journey of love and pain. Space is not as Newton propounded an absolute ‘sensorium’ but can be the very essence of life similar to what painter Paul Cezanne has viewed:

The Landscape becomes reflective, human and thinks itself through me. I make it an object, let it project itself and endure within my painting....I become the subjective consciousness of the landscape, and my painting becomes its objective consciousness.9

Body as a repeated spatial motif has appeared in her work as living metaphor of dream, joy and suffering, a palimpsest where history itself is wrought and time is enriched. The
thesis has viewed Wright's poems reflecting on physiology like ‘The Hand’, or ‘Flesh’ in a new way of looking at unremitted history that cannot be legitimized or captured within the boundary of Imperialism. For her, each organ is like distinct signature of a poet, a poetry that is unique. Wright has presented her own body in her works as a space of defiance and deviation rather than a space of conformity.

Reflecting on spaces that are diffident and fugitive, one key area of tension and collision that the thesis has pondered over is boundary and enclosure. Heidegger has described: “A boundary is not that at which something stops but the boundary is that from which something begins its essential unfolding.” This is true in case of Wright who has discovered history beyond the boundary. What appears to be a legitimate end is highly interrogative for Wright. The boundary as a scale of prohibition and inhibition and its psychological implication becomes more prominent to her. This boundary is reflected by Wright with greater implications. It is the borderline between sanity and insanity, civilized and uncivilized, pre-history and history, man and woman, colonizer and the colonized and last but not the least space and place. The boundary has become a very discursive issue in Judith Wright's reflection because it appeared through the analysis of her texts that Wright has problematized the concept of boundary in relation to communication, transformation and transcendence. Unlike the traditional interpretation of boundary that conveys a line to demarcate and differentiate, Wright has deconstructed it as a psychological frame that highlights the wanted while attempts to hide the unwanted. A boundary is therefore a negotiation with the self in the great enterprise of construction of history. This flimsy boundary of delimitation and allocation of the land appears to Wright as ideological boundaries. In contrast to these ideological colonial boundaries like fencing, segmentation or rhetorical boundary, Wright has reflected on the natural boundaries undetermined by blind imperialism. The natural geographical boundaries of the great Australian space have formed great frontiers like the
impenetrable bush, the unfathomable desert, or the chanting of the cry for the dead which are untouched by the cognitive acts of the new comers. However there is another boundary existing in this resurrected Australian poet, a boundary that stands between two strands of her mind: “the love of the land we have invaded, and the guilt of the invasion.” (Born of the Conquerors: Selected Essays 30) This boundary is blurred when the anima of the land is united with her artistic spirit. The poems from The Gateway reveal how the poet blurs such boundaries in her transition from domestic to socio-political space.

The colonial boundaries are also the byproduct of colonial ambitious mind and political complacency of the male chauvinist ego. Whether it is the syntactical boundary in the diaries of the explorers or the borderlines of family photographs, for Wright those boundaries are hypocritical and they unleash unlawful ambition followed by distortion of the land. The thesis has shown how Wright in her codification of the earliest settlement of her forefathers, mocked their boundary of legitimacy and their attempt to aggrandize space. Her pungent ridicule at such futile endeavor of creating boundaries has lacerated scourges on the authoritative assertion of Imperial History. This boundary acts almost like a shield, a resistance to the fear of being caught and persecuted. Judith Wright attempts to deconstruct such boundaries so that she herself is ashamed to see the naked ghost of her forefathers prowling in the hinterland of sin and guilt.

The question of boundary in terms of legitimacy and illegitimacy is also blurred in her autobiography. From her liminal spatial existence and struggle with her femaleness, she has crossed such ‘borderline syndrome’ and exclusively in stark and unabashed manner, Wright has shown that she is unwilling to negotiate with such naïve cultural, sexual and racial boundaries. Some of her poems reveal how she is proud of her sexuality which others may connote as insatiable desire and virulent passion mismatched for a white woman. Her transgression of this ‘borderline syndrome’ is manifested when she has proved that
dismantling all boundaries, besides having a womb to procreate, a woman has a hand to challenge the world with her signature and a mouth to articulate the truth. If marriage is considered as a permeable boundary of legitimacy in man-woman relationship, Wright’s dissident for marriage as a protective boundary is expressed when she reveals it as an enactment of negotiating gratified sexuality within the white domestic space. Her pregnancy outside the institution of marriage, her endless struggle to economically support her husband, her protest against inequality of wages or living in the prohibited zone of the prostitutes during her early years; are some of the issues that the thesis has raised which reveal how such social undeniable boundaries have reinforced her to rebel against the authority. Her autobiography is therefore a space for all those custodians unwanted and unrecognized for centuries. Her autobiography is an emancipation of matrilineal space of fragmented memories, a space for all the debris of the ‘wretched’ soul, for lost love, for privacy that is ventured and for shattered desires. The forefather’s documentation and fabrication of history is structured by borders and parameters. Wright’s autobiography appears in this research as an endless discourse just as in her poems like ‘Lake in Spring’, she attempts to bring those several layered ‘I’, each time discovered with a new dimension in her mother, grandmother and many predecessor women.

The autobiography is incompletely complete in the sense that it does not cover a dimension of time from her birth till death but she has captured those significant moments that are essential in understanding the spatial displacement of a poet from constraints to freedom. She has emerged in this self-enumeration as someone who is always challenging, migrating, and decolonizing all boundaries of social and personal prejudices. Wright’s search for spontaneous love and solace in the land during the most tumultuous phases of her life is a way of blurring the traditional boundaries between interior, domestic realms and exterior
terrains so that the inside is the strange and uncanny space of alienation and desolation while the place outside is an abode of joy and peace.

Wright has also transcended the boundaries of time with her philosophy of 'being'. The feeling of deja-vu revived through reflections on worn out obsolete objects is a recurrent tendency in Wright’s poetry and prose. These ordinary inanimate objects become animate like talismans, souvenirs and mementos of her life and define how such negligible space that contain those dilapidations, hold a sky full of dreams and desires, some memorable memory of love and togetherness. The physical space that each of these significant objects preoccupy almost becomes a living sensation of the various perceptions like warm touch, intense smell or some unforgettable tunes from the past. Baudrillard has explained this in his early work *System of Objects*:

“...what gives the houses of our childhood such resonance in memory is that within its interiority of the home objects and humans are bound together in collusion where objects take on emotional value.”

However, one significant inviolable boundary that Wright rarely has highlighted is the dynamics between the black women and the white women. The eerie silence in this respect stems from the fact that she could not stumble upon any authentic resource which has accounted for this pervasive relationship in the colonial era. She is aware that there existed an unwritten borderline of mistrust, disbelief and prejudice between the white and the black women which she has apprehended from few instances. Wright has described how her grandmother May Wright

.....even towards the end of her life, fifty years later, there was little warmth in her reminiscences of the Nulalbin Aborigines. Though the women and girls had given her help for little more than kitchen hand-outs and cast-off clothing, and had looked tenderly after babies and taught them to swim, so that the high
bank above the waterhole which had caused the death of the little McMaster
child was less of a terror to her, she mentions none of them by name in her
memoirs—not even Clara, household help for many years......

(The Cry For The Dead 195)

In her impartial observations, Wright has confessed that the white women’s relation with
the black women is of negation and erasure although in their deepest realm of the heart they
are aware of their relentless contribution. This confusing and complex borderline between the
women of two races is mainly constructed by the colonial man. The white woman’s
limitation and fear in negotiating a healthy relationship with the black woman is primarily
diagnosed by Wright as a result of her lack of self-assertion and control by the patriarchal
figure of the family. Each woman, the black and the white is trapped in the battleground of
their womanhood and Wright has expressed how this is further complicated by the colonial
heterogeneous complications and conflicts. Judith Wright’s intense friendship with
Aboriginal woman writers like Oodgeroo Noonuccal has revealed how this woman has
abandoned such boundary by her clean breast confession of the guilt of her race and ardent
pure love that overflows all boundaries. This is evident in her loads of praise for the
Aboriginal writers in the letter to David Brook:

Incidentally, I am still in correspondence with Silvana, who is good example
of an artist marginalized in all her pursuits because, not only female, she
doesn’t stick to a linear singularity of mode and just be a poet or a painter or a
sculptor or a weaver. Oodgeroo’s the same and it’s interesting that Aborigines,
poor primitives like women, express themselves in all the so-called arts
without distinction, and don’t specialize in order to lord it over their rivals.

(With Love 487)
Beyond the boundary of colonial resistance and hegemony, Wright has traversed to that space of creativity where racial and sexual boundaries are insubstantial.

Wright's literary works finally appear in this thesis as an alternative reflection of space through her poetics of phenomenology. This pre-historical space of dusty burnt out emotions is revived by Wright through a poetic immersion into the life force grounded in contemporary Australian space. This technique uniquely defines how Judith Wright rejects all suppositions and idiosyncratic explications and concentrates with her powerful poetic perception on the phenomena in the space. The cultural remnants and geographical structures of the Australian space may appear insignificant and ephemeral to Imperial History but Wright's hovering over these phenomena gives an effervescent sensation to structure the pre-historic space. Wright's phenomenological search and past-life regression indulge in her primordial experience of the space and thereby reinvigorate the space of the ancient world. According to Edward Said,

"............even as we must fully comprehend the pastness of the past, there is no just way in which the past can be quarantined from the present. Past and present inform each other, each implies the other, [...] each co-exists with the other [...]. Neither past nor present [...] has a complete meaning alone 13"

All her literary scholarship is an endeavor to acknowledge the past without which the present and the future are incomplete. Her unself-conscious experience of the Australian space is corporeal and lived through the sensations of the body. With a cluster of physical and psychological experiences among the spatial phenomena, Wright is able to reach the living spirit of the space. Her poetry with a flashback technique takes us centuries back to look at the trees whose buds will bloom in future. Simultaneously there is a deep spiritual awareness of the space that transforms it into place much like Aboriginal cosmological world where the spirit of the past and present dwell simultaneously through the identification of the one and the other. Wright has been aware of this sense of dwelling as it is evident in her own words:
For Aborigines, every part of the country they occupied, every mark and feature, was numinous with meaning. The spirit ancestors had made the country itself, in their travels, and fused each part of it into the “Dreamtime”—a continuum of past, present, and future—that was also the unchangeable Law by which the Aborigines lived. The spirits remained in the land, passing on their essence through the births and rebirths of Aborigines themselves, and still present in the telling of their stories.

(“Landscape and Dreaming” Daedalus 32)

This sense of dwelling through an inextricable intertwining of the self with the space where the past and present are intermingled is also traced in Wright’s works in this thesis. Thus, Wright articulates a sense of unconscious transcendence through a phenomenological reflection of the world.

This legacy of Aboriginal Dreamtime in Wright’s repertoire shows a tendency to discard the western concept of time as a linear progress. The imperial discourse reveals that this dynamism of time is crucial in the construction of history that differentiates past and present because space is passive in Imperial History. In contrast, for Judith Wright time is ‘spaced’ in her triggering images and spatial metaphors like rain forests, a lake, a tree like camphor laurel, or a figure like Jacky. A whole series of poems from The Gateway as well as her other poems reveal that Wright often indulges in Time Travel that relates to a movement of going backward and forward through irregular oscillations between past and present without any definite chronological pattern. In this Time Travel, imagination, memory and emotion play crucial role. In unpredictable ways, Wright’s journey is a relational explanation between past, present and future. In this journey the significance of objective time is meaningless but what is significant is the subjective time. Objective time refers to the western concept of time which is measured by clock. In subjective time Wright indulges in an imaginative
transformation through her consciousness. Interestingly H.G Wells in his *The Time Machine* claims that

Man....can go up against gravitation in a balloon and why should he not hope that ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time-Dimension, or ever turn about and travel the other way. 14

Wright’s embarking on Time Travel in her poetic detour cannot literally change the past but she can dwell in the past to confront the truth in defining the nation. In her reminiscence of her childhood or in her phenomenological evocation of the existence of a lost culture, the place of dwelling exists exactly in its primal stage while the temporal value becomes less significant. Thus, she re-experiences the past and dwells in that place that seeps into the present space. She endorses Aboriginal circular view of time that exists as collective unconscious or a ‘psychic residue’ on the space. Wright’s poetic intensity has percolated this sensation of psychic residue over the space when she indulges in a process of osmosis between herself and the space. She discovers this psychic residue while “Digging the garden” and pondering on “remnants:/ crockery bits, smashed bottles,/ iron bolts, shoesoles,/ lost toys...” (“Habitat” *Alive: Poems 1971-72* 3) or among “splitting bark” of the gum-tree where she learns “the written track/ of a life” (*A Human* 75)

The fauna and the flora, the rivers and the hills are primitive reservoir where time is not fugitive but enriched in the spatial manifestation. Time as a spatial metaphor thus provides a cultural distinctiveness of the place and Judith Wright attempts to capture such existential consciousness. In *The Cry For the Dead* Wright reflects on the Rainbow Serpent as an emblem of the earth’s spiritual timelessness all though she cannot fully absorb herself because more of a guilt conscience than any other imperatives. Thus the introductory survey of development of the concept of ‘time’ in western theoretical domain from Strabo to Posidonius for whom time is dominant over space seems less significant in the spatial
discourse of Judith Wright. Wright shows through her poetic and narrative enumeration that the Australian space is not absolute and independent of emotion and essence of the living world. For her it is also a psycho-symbolic space that is densely layered with emotional and spiritual flow of life creating thus a geo-cultural world of its own. Space for her is the archive of time that unconsciously and profoundly preserves time's augmentation.

Wright's deconstruction of the linear movement of time is also reflected in her rejection of the hegemony of regular structure of autobiography. Instead of following a chronological pattern of life, the autobiography *Half A Lifetime* is irregular in timeline of events invoking fragmented, polyvocal histories. The structure of the autobiography is an unfinished journey where the priority is more towards a resonance of spatial memory and emotions than a series of movements through linear progress of time. This is because the journey she embarks upon the abysmal space of 'pre-history' is never pre-ordained by ulterior motive. This crucial difference between a pre-planned biography/autobiography on the axis of linear time and an unplanned biography/autobiography on the axis of multilayered space is well defined by Paul Carter in his interview with David Malouf:

"...the conventional way of thinking about a journey is to imagine it already finished: we start from somewhere because we are going to get to somewhere else. There's a parallel here with how much biography is written: we start of with the place where the person was born, the environment and the hereditary influences; then we move through childhood and adolescence into adulthood.... In other words it was already foretold and the biographer simply recovers the lost track of time, the track that lies behind the person."

He further adds:
What I wanted to say was that...... we should think about the biography of the explorers, not in terms of a set of influences, which are already there, but rather in terms of the explorers' orientation towards the world ahead.  

Half A Lifetime is chorological rather than chronological where the subjective self is consistently involved with the space it inhabits. Her husband Jack McKinney’s philosophy is strongly reflected in her works where the self is incessantly interlinked with the immeasurable space. For her this selfhood therefore cannot be measured in a single linear movement but like the immeasurable eternal space, the self is also made of shimmering multiples and multitudes that like innumerable atoms are infinitely induced with the living space. The several untold history of her mother, aunt and grandmother contain within it, seeds of many histories waiting to burst. The inconclusive ending without any defined structure gives way to the shapeless narrative that reflects Wright’s sense of ‘being’. Wright has therefore enumerated beautifully in her poem: “Indeed, since I am neither Here nor There/ I cannot live, and therefore cannot die”. (“Judas in Modern Dress” A Human 117) This deliberate rejection of time as past and present in the form of ‘Here’ and ‘There’ shows the existence of the self in the boundless space of freedom without any determination.

Like a Dantesque soul, Wright’s peregrination indulges in sufferance from guilt, amnesia and unrequited love. Like those falcon peregrinators of her poems like Swamp Pheasant, Winter Kestrel and Currawong, her poetic journey makes us fly exhilarating in the unbounded, unmapped Australian space of freedom. Dwelling is therefore not fixity but incessant flow like the river with “a wild perpetual voice” (“River Bend” A Human 232) or her favorite Eucalypt moving with abundant vitality. What her forefathers failed, this fifth generation Anglo-Australian poet has succeeded in reflecting the space as an extension of her own corporeal penumbral self. The same place which is the primordial mother in Wright’s writings is also the bounteous lover of joy and suffering, the frantic poet full of madness of
creativity, the little dotting child with dreams in her eyes, or the mature woman in her old age full of wisdom relishing in her dusky evening, the nostalgia of love and hate. Thus we come across a new vision of space. That which the westerners defined as wild and sagacious appeared to Wright as pure, truthful and bereft of pretension invoking a profound sense of being in the space of the living. We see an open measureless extension of wilderness in the creative mindscape of Judith Wright. For the first time in Australian literary field we have seen a white woman writer whose writings reveal an antique fugitive world with its lost glory revived, a counter space of women with modalities of love, creativity and freedom. For Wright, history of the place is in its incorporeal emotions and sensibilities of the living. It is reflected in the color, sound, smell, in the geology, paleontology, cosmology, topology that still linger with the legacy of a history and to know them one must love and inhabit the place. Just like the pure natural movements of the birds without any intention, or the adrift rhythm of the waves, or the motiveless scattering of the pollen grains, her poetic penchant among the natural phenomena insinuate automatically a sporadic wondering and a ceaseless insinuation of the self and the place:

I turn and set that world alight.

Unfurling from its hidden bud

it widens round me, past my sight,

filled with my breath, fed with my blood.

(“This Time Alone” *A Human* 146)
NOTES


2. The Great Barrier Reef is the world’s largest coral reef. This is a natural treasure house of Australia and is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. With its lush of greenery and abundance of marine life, it stretches over 3000 km. It has the world’s richest and largest collections of corals. UNESCO listed the Great Barrier Reef as a World Heritage Site in 1981. In her book *The Coral Battleground*, Wright has explicated the natural beauty of such rich storehouse of marine life and she has protested against raping such natural heritage. In order to conserve the Reef, she also launched several campaigns and few days before her death, at the age of eighty five she has attended a march for social awareness.

3. The French phenomenological philosopher, Maurice-Merleau-Ponty has coined this term ‘body-subject’ to explain the relation between body and perception. Ponty does not believe that a body is purely an object. He believes that there is an inter-connection between perception and action. For him it is body and not an abstract mind that interacts with the world. Body is the lived experience that interacts with the world without any definite map. For further reading, see Maurice Merleau Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* trans. Routledge & Kegan Paul (New York: Routledge Classic 2002)

4. Epistemic violence is a term coined by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak to define a process of deconstructing the western point of view in understanding a text. Spivak explains how the subaltern is silenced by patriarchal power. For further details see


8. It refers to the conflict between the European occupant and the Yeeman people, the original inhabitant of central Queensland, at the stations on the Dawson River. The Yeeman have vehemently protested the invasion of the European settlers. On 27th October 1857, the Yeeman have attacked the Fraser homestead where the Fraser family who used to occupy Hornet Bank Station died ranging from children to aged people. Many European women are being raped, men are castrated and altogether eight members of the Fraser family died brutally. William Fraser, who has been away at the time of the massacre, has become a ruthless avenger and Billy Fraser also indulged since then in mass killing, genocide and rape of the Aborigines at random. To know further, see Judith Wright, *The Cry For The Dead*. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981) 88-90 Also see Patricia Clerke, “Turning Fact into Fiction: the 1857 Hornet Bank Massacres” *Margin: Life & Letters in Early Australia*. 65 (Mulini Press 1st April 2005) 8 [http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-135076688.html](http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-135076688.html)


11. Borderline syndrome refers to disorder in personality because of instability, impulsion and feeling of emptiness. It is sometimes related to dissociative identity disorder. This is a medical term in psychiatry to diagnose patients who are between neurosis and psychosis. For further study see Roy Richard Grinker, Beatrice Werble, and Robert C. Drye, *The Borderline Syndrome: A Behavioural Study of Egofunctions* (New York: Basic Books 1968)


15. “Space, Writing and Historical Identity: David Malouf talks to Paul Carter about the Road to Botany Bay.” *Thesis Eleven*, 22 issue 1 (1989) 92-105, 1 Jan 1989 <http://the.sagepub.com/> 10.1177/072551368902200107 The online version of this article can be found at: http://the.sagepub.com Published by: Sage Publication http://www.sagepublications.com