Chapter - V

Contextualizing the Brutal Violence

(Barungin)

An important play from the works of Jack Davis is Barungin (Smell the Wind) on account of its insightful exploration of the immense tragedy that befell Aborigines in all aspects of their life in the wake of subtle and brutal domination of the White settlers. The title of the play Barungin seems deliberately taken from aborigine tongue. It means smelling the wind, which is the instinctive manner in which Aborigines used to recognise many things in nature – like food, water, changes in weather, etc – by smelling the wind. Jack Davis extends the meaning of this expression barungin to the new context of brutal violence of the Whites people against the Aborigines, leaving large numbers of them dead or dying in prisons. Now the smell of the wind does not promise good things of life but only rotting wounds or portents of impending destruction. The change in the smell of the wind indicates the change in their personal, social, political and cultural aspects of their life. Change seems to be hanging in the air always and the aborigine cannot miss it. For instance, what Granny Doll says about ‘barungin’ sums up the significance of the title of the play:

GRANNY DOLL: All sorts of things. About our lot, the massacres, the burning, the chains and the floggings.

Pinjarra, Ballaginm Arthur River, Vasse, Kondinin.

Old Grandfather, he used to tell us about his father, and his Grandfather, old Grandfather Walitj, and how
they used to go hunting in the Avon valley and that old
man, he would stand on the side of the hill and

*barungin, barungin!* (45)

Upon Meena, Granny Doll’s daughter, asking her what ‘barungin’ means she reflects:

GRANNY DOLL: It means ‘to smell the wind, ’coz that
wind used to talk to him and tell him where the kanga-
roo and the emus and the ducks were, and the rain and
when people were around he learned about *barungin*
from the old people from a long time back. But now
the wind’s got too many smells: motor car, grog,
smokes, you want meat now, you go to the
supermarket. (45)

The entire play is set in Perth, Western Australia and the story revolves around
the Wallitch family. The play starts and ends with a funeral. The significance of
the funeral parallels the title of the play. The names of all those Aborigines who
have sacrificed their lives for the sake of their communities and culture are read
out at the end of the play as an honour roll. The main focus of the play is on
aborigine deaths in custody. One observes that though the crimes are petty and
can be overlooked, Aborigines are taken into custody. In most of the cases it is
someone else who has committed the crime for which an aborigine is taken into
custody and is often found dead. There were very few safeguards and even those
nominal safeguards were rarely implemented earnestly. Shoemaker in his book
*Black Words Whites Page* remarks, ‘Not only economically, but politically, judicially, socially and culturally, black Australians suffered at the hands of Whites politicians, policy-makers, and pastoralists.’ (17)

One observes that the Wallitch family is there to bid adieu to the departed soul but the preaching creates unrest. The people present there are not as much interested in the preaching as they are in paying their final respects to the departed soul. They do not care for what the American fundamentalist preacher is saying as his preaching is only empty words. They know that such sermons are worth nothing in practical terms. The sermon is riddled in irony and paradox. The preacher tries vehemently to convince the mourners that though man is permanently damned from the Garden of Eden for the original sin, he is treated well in the abode of God. The mourners fail to get the spirit of the sermon as his preaching stresses the frailty of human existence. This is a concept very alien to the Aborigines as their cultural ethos teaches them oneness with nature, including its innate power. For the Aborigines life is a celebration and one should respect it by following the laws passed on by the Ancestral Spirits during the Dreamtime. This is also partially the reason behind the restlessness of the gathering. On the other hand the preacher talks of the departed soul, Eli, very derogatorily. He says that Eli is a man who has sinned all his life. This Christian concept of life as a result of the first sin of man is once again in conflict with the Aboriginal view of life as sacred and as a celebration. In reality Eli was a man who possessed many good qualities. As the drama proceeds one also comes to know through Meena’s words that Eli was such a good human being that he had
never hurt anyone in his life. This is another reason that the mourners become restless. The preacher continues:

And because Eli was a man he was weak and frail, and because he was weak and frail he sinned during his brief stay on God’s Earth. But now as he sits – now as he sits – in God’s presence I know – I know – I know! – that God in all his wisdom will look kindly and benevolently upon Eli, that poor, poor wretched sinner. (6)

This emphasis of the preacher on the sinful, degenerate nature of Man from birth itself is something that is alien to the aborigine mind which has a more holistic view of life, creation, death and a more harmonious vision of any dying man as a being who lived purposefully and is returning to his rightful abode that is NATURE (which is part and parcel of DREAMING along with Man and all creation.) To Aborigines, the universe is a projection of Consciousness as Dreaming. To the western mind the universe is a material structure into which Man comes and lives for some time; if he lives according to the prescribed code of ethics predetermined by an extraneous God, he is worthy and deserves God’s love. But if he has not lived that way, he only needs Penitence and God’s pity for his redemption. If he is not penitential sufficiently he is bound to be consigned to hell fires in spite of a loving God whose condition for love is endless repentance. Thus man is pushed into a miserable condition of self pity and self hate by the teaching of the preacher. In this context, the condemnatory language
of the fundamentalist preacher about Eli as a weak frail sinner is almost repulsive. At those sensitive moments of his funeral Eli is to be remembered with affection. But Eli is described as a degenerate sinner who can be saved by only an absolutely self-righteous and self-complacent God. This view of life and death reduces human beings only to self-pity and defeatism. The irony peaks when the preacher affirms that ‘Whites people do not have a monopoly on heaven, because there in God’s house, all men are equal.’ (5) An apparent indictment of Whites hegemony over the cultural, social, economic and political aspects of Aboriginal life is marked in irony as the preacher proceeds. The preacher proceeds insisting:

Give up the ways of the flesh.

This is God’s world, not yours and He wants you, you

and yes you, to live in harmony in His world together.

Remember life on Earth is short. Live – live – live in

His world as He wants you to live. Give – give – give

up your evil ways of drinking, gambling and fornicating. (6)

The statements are paradoxical. Admittedly, the percentage of alcoholism and gambling is high in the Aboriginal communities. But the root cause of these problems, often overlooked by the less discerning, lies in the history of Aboriginal-Whites dynamics right from the time of first contact. Indeed alcoholism, gambling and such vices are rampant in primitive societies only owing to poverty and frustration which are due to exploitation by the Whites.
A closer analysis of their condition reveals the fact that the Aboriginal rehabilitation programs, policies, etc are only notional and make no impact as they are either not framed or not implemented after consultation with all the stakeholders, especially the Aborigines. Very often there is a hidden agenda behind such policies. No help is extended to those addicted to gambling or alcohol to rid themselves of these vices. Similar weaknesses among the Whites are conveniently overlooked.

A funeral is an important occasion for Aborigines to gather and interact. The aborigine social life centers around land and important land marks. An important place among them is the place where funeral rites are performed. It is only at these places that a lot of emotional bonding is possible for the Natives. But, as land went into the jurisdiction of the White settlers, the social interaction is weakened and traditional values are not properly propagated among Natives. Then the Funeral also became another occasion for de-culturisation of Natives through emphatic teaching of Christian values and Christian view of life by Christian preachers, as we can see in the American fundamentalist’s sermon at Eli’s funeral.

Mudrooroo talking about the ‘Black Reality’ as he introduces the play tells us that:

Nyoongah funerals are of great cultural significance being not only a time of mourning, of laying the deceased to rest, but also a time of strengthening family ties through communion….Whites
settlement of Australia has been for the Aboriginal people a two hundred year long funeral service. (viii)

The Aborigines converted to Christianity have absorbed the new faith in different ways: some for their own good, some as a compromise and others in confusion. Granny Doll, Robert and Meena have, to an extent, absorbed the spirit of Christianity. People like Shane and Peegun are probably aware of the discrepancy in the preaching and practice of Christianity by the Whites. They seem to have taken Christianity only for political and social convenience. There are others who are caught in utter confusion. When Arnie asks Peter how one of their mates, Tip Williams, is doing in the prison, Peter replies:

PETER: Tip Williams? He’s had it. Walks around singin’ hymns all day and preachin’ and prayin’ and night time he screams out something terrible. You’d reckon the Devil himself was in there.

ARNIE: Them evangelist fucked him up if you ask me.

SHANE: Yeah, once they got you, you can’t get away from them.

GRANNY DOLL: They must do some good; that’s why they go visitin’.

PEEGUN: I know why they go there: to get a good credit rating in the heavenly bank. (47)

Meena is amazed at the number of cousins who have come and greeted her at the funeral and wonders how many cousins she has got. Granny Doll’s answer
‘Gawd knows’ (8) again is very revealing. It hints at how the Aborigines were removed from their ancestral land and their communities broken up. Children were taken away from the parents breaking their sense of community and the passing of traditional knowledge from one generation to the next. The culture too in such a situation cannot be passed on. The present Aboriginal communities are reduced to the pathetic condition of meeting the other members of their communities only at funerals. When Meena says that a lot of their people are buried at Northam, Gran sighs that they are ‘buried all over the place’. Another hint of the cultural genocide of the Aborigines Mudrooroo in Us Mob writes:

Our Nyungar system of ordering the universe began to come apart when Captain Stirling sailed up the Swan River and established a settlement there. More and more land was taken and if we protested we were ruthlessly suppressed. Incidents like the massacre of Pinjarra in 1834 severely damaged our kinship system and over the years the classifications gradually disintegrated. Nevertheless, our large extended families still survive and when a family member dies we come together in our hundreds to farewell them. (25-26)

Many things which have been part of their ancient culture are now alien to the present Aboriginal generation. When Granny Doll tells Little Doll that Uncle Robert has got some kangaroo for them, Little Doll expresses her dislike for kangaroo suggesting the cultural alienation that is part of the mental make-up of the younger generations. There are certain aspects in every culture that are
comprehended and lived only by the ones born into that culture and grow up in it. Food habits are an integral part of a culture. Kangaroo which was a chief part of the one of the Aboriginal diet is viewed differently by the present generation Aborigines. They were not reared on kangaroo meat as they grew up in the altered colonial conditions where kangaroo meat was a rarity.

As the play progresses one is made to sense the strained relationships in an Aboriginal family from their interaction with one another. The men shoulder no domestic responsibility, are reluctant to take up jobs, squander whatever little they earn by playing music in public places or drinking, smoking and gambling. Peegun alone has been taking up odd jobs to earn a living. Unlike the other men in the family, he is very practical and is aware of the Aboriginal situation in the ‘Whites’ world. Racism and the residual effects of colonization prevailing in Australia might partially be a reason behind the reluctance of the Aborigines to seek jobs in modern times. The impact of colonialism and its racism percolate into several layers of life through the administrative machinery by which any government can interact with people. In the context of colonial Australia this interaction takes the form of clever taming of the Natives through Native bureaucrats. In an impoverished society people with a defeatist mindset can be tempted to wield power as employees; and they begin to cling to power to compensate for whatever they lost in terms of social and psychological security and racial identity. Jack Davis uses the simile of a coconut for a brown aborigine enjoying power as a bureaucrat and is brutalized by the new taste of power. A coconut is brown outside but its kernel is Whites. The Aboriginal bureaucrat has
a brown skin but a European mindset in dealing with his fellow brown population. When Peegun tells Shane that he thought that Shane has got a job in the office of the Aboriginal Affairs Department they both agree that it is not Aborigines like them who manage to get a job but only the ones who are ‘two-tone black on the outside, Whites on the inside.’(12) Shane calls such a person ‘A bloody black beaurocrat’ (12) As the play proceeds one realizes that Shane, in spite of his own weaknesses, is sharper than Peegun.

The scene reveals the casual attitude of Peegun and Shane as they prepare to play their instruments. Peegun explains how a didgeridoo is made to the Whites audience. He tells them that the instrument is made by sending female ants into a sturdy piece of wood. The female ants eat into the soft central part of the wood. Then couple of male ants are sent into the same piece of wood and the zigzag movement of ants will burrow the inside of the wood creating the hollow. This account of how the instrument is made naturally leaves the ignorant Whites audience in wonder. But Peegun is actually laughing up his sleeves. This is a harmless unheroic act of his vengeance. One cannot miss the rich irony in this. The didgeridoo which was an integral part of Aboriginal life, is completely alien to the present generation of Australians, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal.

As the family sits together to play Trivial Pursuit, one realizes how low the levels of education are among the Aborigines and how ill-informed they are. When Peegun mentions that his great grandfather was Irish, Children were taken away from their families and communities and put in missions by the settlers on the pretext of giving them ‘education’ and a decent upbringing. But Peegun’s
standard of education raises the question of the quality of the education that the half-castes were given by the Whites in the missions and what kind of future it would hold out for these half-castes.

When Peegun tells them that his great grandfather was Irish, Shane makes racist remarks. Robert rebukes Shane asking him not to be racist. Robert represents those Aborigines who in spite of all the odds have worked hard with great determination in adverse circumstances and have made the best of the few opportunities given to them through optimism and balance. He is very well educated and does not stereotype the Whites or belittle them. As they continue playing Trivial Pursuit, there arises a discussion on where Captain James Cook was born. Peegun claims that he has seen the cottage that James Cook was born in when he visited Melbourne. Robert informs them that Captain Cook was born in Marton, Yorkshire, England, and that the cottage has been moved from England to Fizroy Gardens as a gift by the English people. He asks Peegun to use his intelligence and reason out that ‘He couldn’t have been born in Melbourne when he hadn’t even discovered Australia yet.’ (21) Peegun retorts that he had never discovered Australia as Australia was discovered by the Nyoongahs. Robert agrees with Peegun that it is the Nyoongahs and not Captain Cook who discovered Australia. This is an assertion of Aboriginal claims on the land as they were present on the Australian soil from times immemorial.

Robert has studied Australian History at university. On hearing this Peegun remarks that it is English’s history, meaning that what is considered in the present day as Australian history is in reality the English version of history
which claims that Captain Cook has discovered Australia followed by Whites settlement. It is history written by the Whites from a Whites perspective. It is not the history of Australia from the perspective of the Aborigines. Identity of Australia from different viewpoints. According to Peegun Australia’s identity is to be derived from prehistoric ancestor who discovered it and gave birth to Aborigines as a community. The European discovery cannot be said to create an identity for Australia from the viewpoint of the original inhabitants. To Europeans, Australia is a discovery in time. To Aborigines, Australia is an ancient timeless reality.

Through the game of Trivial Pursuit, comes the fact that Aborigines who want to make a mark for themselves had to compete in the Whites cultural arena and prove themselves by the Whites’s yardsticks of knowledge and skill.

Robert is a well-rounded character whose maturity has helped him make peace with the past. He is well aware that the past cannot be undone and history, a manifestation of inexorable destiny, cannot be dismissed by logic or sentimentalism out of existence. The only way to go forward is to accept reality and bring spiritual courage to the Aborigine passion for life. Jack Davis is not an appellant. He is an optimist. He does not brood over the past as he is well aware that what has been lost cannot be brought back. So he employs a calm state of mind and looks to the future with hope. Jack Davis projects this approach into not only the character of Robert. This is evident in all his works but he also records, faithfully and with empathy, divergent reactions of different individuals to the same destiny. He does not react to an inevitable historical
situation like a naïve appellant victimized. He emerges as a bold crusader with a lot of optimism and belief in his roots. The Aboriginal spiritual view of life, nature and the world gives him quiet energy to look at facts of life without fear and hate. He appears convinced that it is only by balancing Aboriginality and modern post colonial life that one can go forward and Robert stands as a symbol of this belief. Mudrooroo in *Us Mob* asserts:

... the outside still penetrated and even when Australia was Indigenous Australia, there is enough evidence in our traditions to suggest that our land was never the isolated continent as established Master texts.

In fact, whatever the past position it is impossible for Us Mob, to remain in or reconstruct a splendid isolation. For now our very beings and cultures are part of Australia and the world. (6)

The game of Trivial Pursuit becomes an occasion to drive home many aspects of colonial strategy aimed at marginalizing the Aboriginal and obliterating their culture. For example, they have given new names to all things related to the Aborigines killing their culture and making it alien to Aborigines themselves.

ROBERT: ‘What name do the Aborigines give to their Aerophone?’

PEEGUN: What?

ROBERT: ‘Aerophone’.

PEEGUN: Spell it.

PEEGUN: They never ad ’em; you’re makin’ it up.

[ROBERT shows him the question]

Them old Nyoongahs never ’ad ’lectricity or nothin’…

ROBERT: Give up?

PEEGUN: Yeah.

ROBERT: ‘Didgeridoo’. (22)

The character of Robert is contrasted with the character of Peegun. Robert is a well educated and cultured Aborigine. He has knowledge of both, the past and the present. He always has his head above his shoulders no matter what he achieves in life. Robert has managed to find a balance between Aboriginality and Christianity and between their past and their present. As a young educated Aborigine he tries fulfilling his role in greater Australian society. He becomes a symbol of reconciliation through a sound understanding of the gifts of traditional culture and the contemporary facts of modern urban reality. He can put together ‘aerophone’ and ‘didgeridoo’.

When he comes to pick up Granny Doll, Meena and Little Doll to church one Sunday morning Peegun tries to rip at least two dollars off Robert. Robert, resists successfully. Peegun and Shane do not realize that inspite of unjust circumstances in which they have been placed by the Whites rule, it is still possible for them to make their lives better. Robert is a living example of this. Jack Davis doesn’t lose sight of diversity of human nature and ability and the consequent variety in response to situations common to all. Every individual has his own share of energy to face and absorb reality and every individual also has
his own vulnerable points. In reality the reaction or response to the same situation is never uniform. Though Robert, Peegun, Shane and others are beset by similar social circumstances their responses are bound to be varied. Robert is well informed of the past and the present and has the energy to act upon the present reality intelligently. Some bear the harsh reality with tight-lipped patience. Others may endlessly complain about their lot. People like Peegun are not well-informed about many facts of history and tradition but they camouflage their bitterness in light-hearted banter. Jack Davis humanises and individualises his characters admirably and does not make them allegorical types.

Aboriginal children like Little Doll and Micky are pawns of history and racism even in present day Australia. Their childhood is placed in a hostile environment not conducive to healthy growth. The play throws up constant reminders of the severely deprived circumstances of Aboriginal families.

As Micky grabs the margarine Granny Doll asks him to go easy on it as there isn’t much of it left. Micky grumbles that there is never enough of it in the house. Meena asks Micky not to complain and suggests that one should be thankful for what one has instead of grumbling. Meena had once experienced the abundance of her culture. But it also taught her how to be contented in spite of all the odds.

Micky at the age of fourteen, is a lost child. He does not have the anchoring of their ancient culture. Meena wants to know who has been supplying him alcohol and with whom he has been drinking. But his response is
disrespectful and arrogant. Fissures appear conspicuously in the structure of the family because of sour relationships among family members in modern times. The Aborigine culture is remarkable for closely knit family relationships. The slow abrogation of family relationships is chiefly due to poverty and helplessness but the process of disintegration is also further aggravated by alcoholism and absence of traditional values in the modern environment. The way Micky answers Meena smacks of the reaction of any modern young man in urban environment to the well-meaning inquires of parents about his day-to-day life.

MEENA: *Mickee!* Where have you been? You’re drunk.

MICKY: So are you.

MEENA: Where did you get the grog from? Who gave you the grog?

MICKY: *Wetjala.* Who gave you yours?

MEENA: You answer me. Go on, answer me!

[Crying, MICKY *vomits in the sink.*]

MICKY: It’s good enough for you and him and everybody else to drink, but not me.

MEENA: You’re only fourteen years old…

MICKY: You’re pissed, Mum.

MEENA: Fourteen years old…

MICKY: I don’t care.

MEENA: I’ll make you care. You’ll care.
MICKY: Anyway! Anyway! You got nothin’ to talk about.
You can do what you like. In bed with Uncle Pee. Big
Heroes, both of you. Big heroes. (24-25)

When Meena comes to know that he has been to Slugger’s, she warns him that he is inviting trouble by doing so to which Micky snaps that it is the same with her as well. Meena cheats on Arnie during his time in the prison with Peegun. This might be another reason for Micky’s resentful attitude.

When Shane comments that Micky, with his attitude these days, is surely heading for trouble and that he wonders how in-spite of being older than him Peegun managed never to spend a night in gaol, Peegun proudly claims that he is a survivor. Shane describes Peegun as a ‘miracle.’ The use of the term ‘miracle’ is noteworthy. Going to ‘goal’ is common for the Aboriginal men as already mentioned. Peegun has used intelligence to keep out of jail but does not use it to improve his situation in life, unlike Robert. Both are in the same political, social and economic conditions in relation to their ethnicity. But Robert is one of those Aborigines who have not given up faith in the Dreamtime and have managed to rise above environmental limitations to make a life for himself. Peegun and Shane do not appreciate the fine balance Robert has achieved. Peegun and Shane fail to see Robert’s success as also a ‘miracle’, one that should come from within the self.

Peegun asks them to leave Micky alone as he is just stepping into the big bad world of the Whites that they now live in and that he needs to learn how to survive. He adds:
Look, in this country you got
ten times the chance of ending up inside if you’re black
than if you’re Whites. So you gotta keep a step ahead of
the cops. (29)
The play introduces the audience to the black reality of being behind the bars
without any fault of theirs.

One day upon entering the house Micky realizes that there is no one at
home. Just to double check,

\[\text{He walks from room to room checking that the house is empty. He exits and re-enters with an array of stolen property including a camera, several cassette tapes, a ‘ghettoblaster’ tape recorder, another Walkman and a Pair of binoculars.}\] (41)

Micky’s furtive act of hiding something under the house before entering the
house and double checking before bringing them out is an indication that there is
something wrong about the goods. It is only when Peegun catches Micky red
handed with a stolen walkman and a pair of binoculars that suspicion is
confirmed. When Micky lies to Peegun that they belong to him, Peegun confirms
that Micky is lying to him from the way Micky stammers when he is questioned.
He is sure that Micky has stolen these goods. He warns Micky that if the police
have caught Slugger they might as well be there in no time to search for Micky.
Peegun forces Micky to admit that he has been stealing and to produce before
him all the goods that he has stolen till then.
PEEGUN: [*interrupting, savagely*] *Shut up!* Right, if you pinched this stuff you’ve got other stuff stashed somewhere. Right?

*Silence*

MICKY: No, Uncle Pee?

PEEGUN: Where is it?

*Silence*

Where is it, Micko?

MICKY: Under the house.

PEEGUN: Where?

MICKY: Under the floorboards, in Mum’s room.

PEEGUN: You’d better get it.

*Pause.*

All of it.

*MICKY goes to the bedroom, pushes the bed aside and lifts some loose floorboards. He produces an assortment of electrical and sporting goods.*

All of it. (42)

Peegun is surprised to note that Micky and Slugger have stolen sundry things like walkman and binoculars as well as cars like the Porsche. Upon Peegun enquiring what they have done with the Porsche they have stolen he replies, ‘Nohin’. It ran out of petrol, so we dumped it.’ (42) one wonders whether Micky and Slugger do not understand the graveness of their act and steal ignorantly just
for the fun of it or do it to satisfy their desire to ride such a car as they know how difficult it is for them to own one. Perhaps there is in this situation a subtle hint of the attractions that Whites civilization holds out to the world of the subaltern.

Little Doll tells Meena and Gran Doll that she does not want to go out with Micky and his friends as they are acting like big boys these days. One is also aware that he is addicted to alcohol, lying and stealing. The lack of a proper male model to follow could also serve as a signal to the youngsters that emulating the men at home is okay.

Peegun offers to help him get rid of the stolen goods. He tells Micky to hide them in the rear of Peegun’s car till he can make it to a guy who knows how to get rid of stolen goods without trouble. Peegun also warns Micky that he is going to help him just this one time. Micky is warned not to repeat it anymore. Micky is told that it is good for him to change his ways and stay out of trouble by behaving himself. Peegun, in spite of his own frustrations and irritability, is very considerate and understanding towards Micky as he thinks that Micky must have done this out of sheer childish desire to own those things without actually understanding the implications behind stealing.

When Meena informs the family that they would be taking Pee’s car to drive to the swimming carnival at Geraldton, Peter enquires if he has a license. Peegun replies, ‘Who needs a licence?’ (49) Peter offers to renew his before they go. Peegun does not care for the rules framed by the Whites as the Whites do not follow them when it comes to dealing with the Aborigines. Peter on the other
hand is a law-abiding citizen who accepts the Aboriginal situation and believes in mutual co-existence with cooperation and understanding. Peegun’s contempt for the Whites rulers and their framing of rules and subtle violation of them and their selective discriminatory attitude – all this social and administrative atmosphere is repulsive to Peegun and drives him to irritation and recklessness.

Shoemaker in his work *Black Words White Page* explains:

...a whole range of specific conditions were either initiated or changed by the war experience: among them, missionary activity, and Aboriginal wages, strike action, health, and demographic patterns. Some so these bore fruit in increased Aboriginal self-confidence and defiance; others resulted in excessive exploitation of Aborigines and consequent Black Australian despair. (29)

Jack Davis is a realist in presenting not only the historical and contemporary conditions of the Aboriginal society and culture but also in depicting the characters in all their shades and colours presenting their true human nature. Thus he makes his characters recognizable and distinct individuals. But they are not absolutely localized. They share the universal traits of different types of people found in any society and in any social background, behaving with predictable tendencies. Jack Davis’ art of characterization is truly laudable.

Family has a very significant and key role to play in moulding any individual’s personality. It is from the family that an individual learns about the significance of life. Micky, a teenager who is just becoming an adult,
surrounded by adults who have a good share of vices which cannot be overlooked. They are not to be blamed totally, as to an extent there are a number of extraneous factors, some within their control and others beyond their control, thrusting upon them the situation they are in. Micky is a confused lad growing up in such an atmosphere with no proper support or guidance at home. So it is also natural for Micky to behave as his elders do. Upon Little Doll telling Meena that Micky and his friends are acting like big boys and are smoking, he lies about it. He shows no guilt. Instead he argues with Little Doll. Micky is the arrogant present generation Aboriginal youngster trying to ape his male elders. As he does not have a good role model he is lost. The younger generation of boys and girls are victims of the ills of western modern life which imported new diversions and habits into the Aboriginal life. Smoking, alcoholism, gambling have no place in the original Aboriginal life. Imported from the west they exercise great fascination on the fresh minds of the youth cut off from tradition. Moreover imitation of the western ways of living gives them a false and artificial sense of equality with the Whites. These tendencies among the youth create cracks between the older generation and the younger generation and accentuate the older generations’ sense of loss in terms of traditional cultural values. But Meena persists in trying to get at the truth. When she approaches him gently Micky admits that he has been out with Slugger and that a Wetjala has given them some drinks. He then informs them that he has managed to stay out of sight but that Slugger has been taken by the cops. There are a number of issues that a modern aborigine confronts in the present day. There is symbolic significance in
the fact that it is the Wetjala who has given the alcohol to Micky. There is obviously a deliberate motive on the part of Wetjala to debase the aborigine through alcoholism.

The Aboriginal household has become a constant place of violence as a consequence of influences, some obvious, others not so easily discernible. The fight which leads Arnie wound Peegun in the arm with a knife is an example of how an aborigine household is never peaceful and how due to the thrust of external factors the Aborigines are prone to violent emotional outbursts. Though it is Peegun who provokes, Arnie reacts because of his insecurity about his relation with Meena. Though he tells them that Peegun has run into him no one is ready to hear him. Arnie tries in vain to explain his family that he did not mean to do it. They are all in a rush to help Peegun out of the situation. Granny Doll remarks, ‘You’re all mad. Stark raving mad, the whole lot of you.’ (51) The scene is also a pointer to the psychological trauma that the Aborigines live in.

Instance of the harsh face of Australian racism innate in the Australian society is brought out on ‘the prison farm day’. Granny Doll, Meena, Little Doll and Robert go to meet Peter and Arnie in the prison. They come to know that Arnie has been taken to Fremantle. Peter has his arm in a sling. He says that it happened when he was playing basketball, and the way they play it in the prison is very tough. Granny Doll enquires if he is being treated well in prison. He says that some of the cops (policemen) in the prison are okay while a few of them are real bad. He adds that it is manageable as long as one does what one is asked to do by the cops (policemen) without questioning. Meena is curious to know if
there are many *Nyoongahs* in the prison where Peter is. He says, ‘we’ve just about got them *wetjalas* outnumbered, and we all stick together.’ (31)

Robert meets the superintendent and tries to find out why they had to shift Arnie there. But as he is black, the Superintendent does not respond at all to him. He decides to pursue the matter later. Once again Robert’s wisdom is brought out. When Meena and Granny Doll ask him if he had found out when Arnie was taken to Fremantle he says:

> ROBERT: I don’ know, they wouldn’t tell me. I’ll make a few phone calls on Monday morning and find out.

> Come on, no use hanging about here. (32)

Upon returning, Granny Doll and Meena realize that the men in the house have not even bothered to clean the house inspite of Granny Doll and Meena specifically asking them. Instead they get ready to eat what Granny Doll and Meena have bought. Shane at least apologizes whereas Peegun lies that he is sick, Granny Doll retorts sarcastically that he is ‘Self-inflicted.’ (33)

The magpies at the goal remind the family of the story of the “The Magpie” which has given their grandfather his name. Though they have heard the story many times from Granny Doll they insist the she narrate it once more for them. These stories contain in them lessons for life. The story that Granny Doll narrates to the family about the magpie and the crow not only tells them about Aboriginal Dreaming and history but how traits like jealousy might bring doom even to the strong and mighty. Meena asks Granny Doll how they have got their name Wallitch.
Granny Doll narrates:

‘Walitj’ is ‘the hawk’, ‘the night hawk’,
and you know the Wallets? Well, they’re the same as us, only when old Grandfather Dave went to the War, then army fellas couldn’t say ‘Wallitch’, so they changed it to ‘Wattet’. Wetjalas killed our language, but that Walitj, the night hawk, he flies over the camp late at night and whistles – loud – and when some Nyoongah is gonna die, he always comes over and screams out. Up at the Moor River, old camp, plenty of Walitj up there. That night hawk would fly over Grandad’s camp and whistle. The night he died – you were just a young fella, Shane – that bird flew low over this house… (36)

The night hawk screaming out when a Nyoongah is about to die suggests that the Aborigines had still lived in rapport with nature. Nature forms an integral part of Aboriginal culture. Their rituals and traditional beliefs come alive in their lives now and then, creating in their perturbed minds a nostalgic longing for a vanished past of firm faith in nature, destiny and human values all comprehended in their traditional concept of Dreamtime. Mudrooroo in Us Mob explains:

One of the main features of the Indigenous spirituality is to keep the earth and the environment in good repair, to look after it, and
this obligation has been passed down as Law from the Dreamtime.

The Dreamtime is always present within us. We are there at the beginning of creation and it is our very selves which continue the processes of creation and preservation. (52)

Jack Davis through his depiction of Walitj at the prison establishes the theme of his play. He employs the Aboriginal symbol of death, Walitj. Though the Whites man has up-rooted Aborigines’ life beyond recognition, Aborigines have managed to keep their links with their roots. At a deeper level it is symbolic of the main theme of the play i.e. Aboriginal deaths in Custody. Landing in the prison means death to the Aborigines.

The story that Granny Doll shares with the family brings back to life the role of oral tradition in keeping Aboriginal culture alive. Traditional and cultural knowledge was passed on from generation to generation in the form of stories. As Granny Doll recounts these stories one realizes that these fables of folklore contain Native cultural myths and archetypes to which one may turn for a deeper understanding of life and evaluation of contemporary situations. Women in the community were entrusted with the responsibility of passing on the knowledge and culture of their ancestors from one generation to another fulfilling their duty as story tellers.

When Peegun starts playing his Didgeridoo Granny Doll sighs that it is all that the Noongahs have got now, and even that really does not belong to them. She is deeply depressed at the disintegration of their culture. Meena and Peegun
try to cheer her up telling that things do change and that one should accept change with grace.

GRANNY DOLL: [poining a he didgeridoo] That’s all

*Nyoongahs* got now, and that don’t really belong to us.

Dances are gone, laws gone, lingos just about gone,

everything finished.

MEENA: Aw. Mum, tings change.

PEEGUN: We got reggae, rock, soul, lots of things.

GRANNY DOLL: And grog.” (Davis 44)

Meena and Peegun cannot relate to what Gran shares. Mudrooroo in his work titled *Us Mob* explains

But what happens when the laws are no longer followed and the stories encoding the laws no longer have social purpose? What happens to these narratives and what is their importance now? I suggest that they become socially meaningless, except as signs of a diffuse Indigenality. That is, they become merely stories, though indigenous stories. (96)

It may be so that Meena and Peegun are not fully aware of what these mean in their original sense to the Aborigines or it might be so that they are so used to the western comforts and way of life that they cannot do without them and this encourages them to be practical and accept change as it comes. It could also be that they do not want to brood over the past which would affect their future. One of the most optimistic and noble feature of Jack Davis’ personality is his ability
to comprehend his rich Aboriginal ancestry, make peace with his Aboriginal past in the wake of colonization and look upon the future of Aborigines with optimism in spite of all the odds in the present. He is guided by pragmatism in his view of the past and the present and in his hopes for a bright future for the Aborigines in the land of their ancestors. Meena and Peegun represent this aspect when they do not allow either the painful memories of the past or the pitiable conditions of the present to dampen their spirit in working towards their future.

When Micky complains that he is bored and expresses his wish to go out Gran talks of her youthful times. She tells them that their generation never had a boring experience, though they did not have a radio and the only things they ever knew were a button accordion and a mouth organ. The elders in the family narrated tales of their tribe, the land and everything in it.

The significance of the title becomes clear in Granny Doll remarks about how the barungin that carried all that the Aborigines needed in life is replaced with a dead smell of the wind. Mudrooroo in his introduction to the play explains:

Barungin (Smell the Wind) is an attempt to come to grips with the European dominance of Australia, a dominance which over the last few years has resulted in approximately a hundred Aboriginal men dying in police custody. Barungin (the Southern-Western Australian Nyoongah word) means ‘to smell the wind’. It is said to have been used as a term referring to the survival skills of the
Nyoongah people to find food, water, to forecast the weather and so on. The term is used metaphorically by Jack Davis to refer to the number of Aboriginal corpses which pollute the wind, the smell of death sums up Aboriginal-European relationships since the invasion. (i)

Just like in Jack Davis’ other play “The Dreamers,” the women in the play, Meena and Granny Doll play a key role. It is they who try to keep the lives of everyone in their family intact. They have very strong personalities. The contrast in the treatment of Aboriginal women in the past and the present is brought out here. Aboriginal women were the centre of Aboriginal culture nurturing their communities and ensuring the continuity of their culture from one generation to another. Though the Aboriginal women continue to play the same role as they did in the past, as the nerve centre of their families, communities and culture, the respect and treatment that they receive in the present are not the same as that experienced by their ancient counterparts. Though it is still the women who hold their families and culture together, the perception of the males towards the women has changed. They do not acknowledge and venerate the contribution of the women in the smooth running of the household and their lives.

Aboriginal female characters are different from mainstream female characters. Though Aboriginal women are doubly victimized they still stand out as epitomes of inner strength, knowledge and wisdom by and by carrying on their Aboriginality from one generation to the next, fighting the injustices and balancing the present. Meena expresses her desire to give her children good
education. When Little Doll insists on playing a game of Trivial Pursuit before she goes to bed, Meena insists that she plays only for a while as it is already late and remarks to Little Doll:

You’re goin’ right through to universi-

versity. You’re not goin’ buskin’ for a living. (18)

Meena has had a lot of experience as an Aboriginal woman. So she is aware as how important it is for especially Aboriginal women to be educated inorder to lead a decent life. Micky requests Peegun not to tell what he has been up to either Meena or Gran as he knows they under no circumstances would tolerate him. The strength of the feminine aspect is brought out here once again by the writer. Micky probably is well aware of Granny Doll’s integrity and strength of character. He is also well aware of Meena’s innate strength in running the family and taking care of them successfully keeping in view the interests and betterment of every single person in the family in spite of limited means and resources. She helps the family in whichever way she can if she could help it. Micky though does not express his feelings, respects Meena for the strength of her character and love for her family in spite of a few weaknesses in her character. Her innate integrity and concern for the well being of her family probably shadows her weaknesses. This might be the reason that Micky, though not in the least expressive, respects her.

One can also observe gradual changes in the Aboriginal female too. Meena is less patient and wise when compared to Granny Doll. She in more perplexed when she confronts by the darker side of Micky. She loves her son
deeply but does not know how to handle his darker side. She is not very tactful or sensitive in dealing with Micky. When Micky informs her that Slugger has been taken to Children’s court instead of explaining and cautioning him to observe where his ways would end him she says, ‘you should be there with him.’(38) She even tries beating him with Peegun’s belt. Fortunately Peegun stops her, thus saving, her relationship with her son. Micky is also aware of her illicit relationship with Peegun in the absence of Arnie. The insecurity of a young boy in him might have made him take refuge in alcohol and theft. This could be the reason that he does not respect Meena as he respects Granny Doll. Yet he recognizes her concern for the family.

The greatness of Jack Davis as a dramatist can be understood in the way he portrays his characters. He does not idealize any character. He presents them in their natural self with their strengths as well as their foibles.

There are a number of issues that a modern aborigine confronts in the present day. Arnie is back home from the prison. One notices that he is a transformed soul now and has given up drugs and alcohol. He informs Meena that he plans to get a job at the market in West Perth. The bestial reality of Aboriginal condition is brought out by Jack Davis in the character of Arnie. Arnie does not appear in person till almost the end of the play. Arnie is absent on the stage till the end but in his absence is his continuous presence, representing the problem of men folk languishing in prisons while the families simmer with unrest and internal conflicts in their relationships. He seems to be present in the play only to make the audience aware of how the external thrust of the Whites
Australia lands the Aborigines in prison but when given a fair opportunity can build a good life. Meena wants to go to see her daughter take part in the swimming carnival but Arnie stops her.

ARNIE: I can’t go. Out of bounds. Condition of parole. So me an’ Meena’ll stop with Aunty Dolly.

MEENA: I’m goin’.

ARNIE: No you not.

MEENA: I’m goin’ to watch my daughter swim.

ARNIE: you’re bloogy-well not and you can take it or leave it. (49)

But Meena is determined as she knows that the only way to win in a Whites world is to defeat them in their own skill. Shoemaker in *Black Words Whites Pages* emphasizes,

But there is another unfortunate side to these achievements. The fact that they took place in the era of assimilation is extremely significant for, in almost all cases. The Aborigines were held up as models for their race. They were models, not solely because of their talents and skills, but because they had succeeded according to the standards of the Whites Australian world. They were, allegedly, assimilation personified. But this tokenism had disastrous consequences, which illustrate the inherent flaws of the doctrine yet again. In an attempt to shower fame and recognition upon these Aborigines and to set them upon an assimilationist
pedestal, Whites Australians also-if unwittingly-endeavoured to cut them from their Aboriginal roots. In short, Whites Australia tried to deny their Aboriginality, except as a somewhat romantic creative impulse. The sorry consequences of this pressure on those such as Namatjira and Tudawali have been documented elsewhere, 36 but the point remains that assimilation was a potentially and actively destructive doctrine and, above all, this explains why it was doomed to fail. 37 But only in the 1960s did Australians begin to realise the magnitude of that failure and the folly of the original attempt. (73)

Assimilation of western culture by Aborigines is glorified and eulogized whereas very little of Aboriginal culture is assimilated by the Whites. It is a one way process very much exaggerated only to trap and tame the Aboriginal mind. Arnie would like to spend time with Meena but he should have stopped her more politely. Male ego or his insecurity and doubt in the relationship between Meena and Peegun make him wish to dominate Meena. Meena knows how difficult it is for Aboriginal children to be selected in such competitions in a racist country like theirs where racism is omnipresent but never obvious. She therefore wants to extend her full support to her daughter by being there and giving her moral support on her big day. Perhaps she sees in her daughter a chance to fulfill all the opportunities she had lost as a young Aboriginal girl trying to be on par with her Whites counterparts.
The attitude of the Aborigines towards their own people and towards the Whites is very subtly expressed in the play. When Robert informs them that he is going to address Rotary Club Meet in Parmelia, a place named after the ship that carried the Whites to their land and everyone is eager to give their opinion.

ARNIE: You stir ’em up, Robert. Make them wetjala piss.

Meena: you can’t hurt wetjala; they’ve got no conscience.

Robert: Yes they have. We just gotta help them find it.

Peter: There hasn’t been much sign of it in the last two hundred years.

Meena: And there won’t be in the next two hundred.

Robert: You’re wrong.

Peter: Ah, all black fellas are good for is fightin’ amongst themselves.

Robert: You’re wrong. (52)

When Meena enquires if he is prepared for his presentation, Robert responds, ‘Yeah, sort of. There’ll be some tjenarks there tonight all right.’ (Davis 51) He balances his Aboriginal beliefs as well as his Christianity. His Aboriginality has shown him the truth behind the obvious. He is aware of the universal spirit of oneness that is innate in the religions. So he is able to embrace Christianity on par with his Aboriginality.

Robert is direct and plain in his address. He talks about the Parmelia is arrival way back in the eighteenth century, and the brutal atrocities of the Whites
on the blacks which still continues. He tells them how the *Nyoongahs* thought that the Whites were their ancestral *jungas*, evil spirits, returning to them from the world of the dead. Thus could not imagine someone leaving their home land and going somewhere and settling. This is what the Whites took advantage of.

In the cemetery at Rottnest, there are thirteen graves …not one of them Aboriginal … Yet hundreds – may be thousands – died in custody on the island … Condemned prisoners were taken on the island and hung at dawn in front of a parade of prisoners in the quadrangle of what is now the tourist hotel … In the winter of eighteen eighty-three …of a hundred and eighty Prisoners …sixty died in the space of a few weeks in An influenza epidemic and another thirty of measles … For you Rottnest is a holiday resort … For us … It is what *Auschwitz* must be for the Jews… (55)

They come to know that there is a riot in Koolbargdon where Peter and Meena have taken Little Doll for her swimming carnival. Granny Doll is worried that Peter, Meena and Little Doll have not returned home yet she could sense that something might have gone wrong. Shane tries to reassure her. This plight of the Aborigines in the hands of the Whites policeman is explained by Mudrooroo in his work *Us Mob* explains thus:

It appears that if the police see an Indigenous person driving an expensive car they automatically assume that he or she must have
stolen it. Another problem is that Indigenous people have different social habits such as treating outside areas as social space, which is against the so-called mores of the Master community. A group of Indigenous people hanging out on a street corner, or in a park, for example, is often considered an unlawful gathering by the police and they move in to disperse it. Again, being drunk in a public place – are considered to be so – using ‘unseemly’ words, or so-called offensive behaviour are often charges which stem from rigorous policing of Aborigines. (104)

Jack Davis presents this very realistically in the play. Robert brings the information that the cops were checking all the black fella’s cars and on finding some stolen stuff in Peter’s car, they have picked him up and that he has received a message from the police at Koolbardon informing him that Peter is found dead in the cell just after midnight. The fact that the police are checking the cars of all the blacks is in itself testimony of the racism and discrimination in the Whites Australia. Peegun’s irresponsible attitude is emphasized when, though he himself had hidden the things that Micky has stolen in the rear of his car, he does not warn Peter and others when they borrow his car inspite of knowing that there would be a lot of patrol on the route that the family would be taking. He is also aware of the fact that the cops would eye blacks with double suspicion. Only Granny is shrewd enough to have sensed that the ones gone to the carnival might have been caught in some trouble taking all the circumstances into consideration.
Coroner reads out the report that has been given by Koolbardon Hospital after carrying out the autopsy about Peter’s custodian death. It clearly shows that he had been subjected to crude violence by the cops at Koolbardon resulting in his death within hours of his arrest even before any investigation could be started. This is a common experience for innocent Aborigines. This raises the question of denial of basic human rights to the Aborigines. The ‘common’ experience of Aboriginal men going to prison has at least two conspicuous aspects: the indignity, suffering and looming death of the aborigine, which is the darkest side of it; secondly, the by-product of this gruesome experience is the coming together of a large number of Aborigines at a gloomy place of agony where they can poignantly contemplate their past, present and future of ‘Us Mob’. It is an understanding of their total situation which no other experience or no other place can provide.

As Adam Shoemaker notes in ‘The Real Australian Story’, Jack Davis is truly very bold in his voice, claiming that “Wetjalas have no conscience”. He forcefully and eloquently presents a very strong argument about the brutal suppression of the Aborigines by Wetjalas, and awakens the conscience of non-Indigenous theatre-goers to contemplate and debate the unjust, unethical and inhuman treatment meted out to the Indigenous population in Australia by the Wetjala.
Conclusion

Aboriginal literature is the only area for scholars who seek social consciousness in literature to contribute their share to the world through their work. With works of organizations like the United Nations and many other individuals of the same thinking the works of Aborigines and Natives cannot be confined to their own geographical locality. The shared experiences and solidarity of the peoples of the ‘fourth world’ transcending the political and geographical boundaries has relevance to the scholars across the globe to undertake research on the lives of these people. A socio dialectical analysis of the fourth world is essential in nature. Traditional literary analysis does not concentrate on relevance of the research area to the contemporary times. Only when research parallels reading and understanding of the times that one is living in it in turn contributes for the betterment of lives for all. A lot of comparative research is now being carried on between the Dalits of India, Afro-Americans, and other Natives. This comparison between different Native groups helps in bringing about the solidarity in voices unheard as each learns from the other’s experience. In the light of Indigenous consciousness globally there are similarities as well as differences. Among all these groups there are issues that are yet to be settled. With organizations like the United Nations, Sociologists, Anthropologists, etc. the world had turned its attention towards the Natives. Though the social, cultural, political and philosophical aspects of the different these groups may differ in many ways from one another there is a common thread of experience in that they share. Technology and Globalization has
brought them nearer to each other to share their experiences and solidarity with each other. Studying and understanding these Native Literatures is retracing human civilization, as for every civilization nativity is its genesis. So no scholar can explore this area of knowledge without a proper understanding of the genesis as when one does not include one’s nativity one does not become holistic in one’s approach. If one wants be contemporary one must take the true essence from Aboriginality for them to develop. Aboriginality is nothing but that conscious within oneself that human beings are part and parcel of the elements of nature and their continuity in spiritual communication in the cycle of life. The communication flows constantly between nature and human beings. The barbaric and savage practices should be replaced by scientific and rational thinking of the present but the essence of humanism must be upheld. The study of Aboriginal literature is a study of rational thinking and equity as research tunes one in higher order of thinking.

Another significant reason for taking up research in Fourth World Literatures is to fill the cultural gaps in cross-cultural communication and understanding. As we all know understanding cultures is like tip of an iceberg when viewed superficially. Only when we understand the depth of a culture we are capable of understanding and communicating well. This understanding is again the outcome of research. As a lot of the Aboriginal history and its people are lost to the test of the Whites dominance it is not very easy for people who are interested in understanding these cultures to find adequate material. So more and more research in the area fills this gap. Research in these areas makes a lot of
material available for the public to utilize it for their different purposes. For example, Barry Malezer and Cheryl Sim talking about the issues for teacher preparation in Indigenous Australian Studies and benefits of teaching Indigenous Australian Studies in a cross-cultural context talk not only the lack of competence of the teachers dealing with the subject but as well give various challenges of the teachers to teach the subject like the community and the teachers themselves being racist, fear of delivering the issues wrongly as there isn’t much support to the field of Aboriginal Studies, no sufficient time to cover the topic, attitudes of parents reinforced in the children, etc. now in the Australian context though there are common threads of Aboriginal culture and experiences as Indigenous Australians, due to the diversity of the Aboriginal cultures within in different communities, care must be taken while understanding issues related to each community as a single analysis will not hold good to all the communities. Any given aspect must be analyzed individually for each of these communities as their lived realities through ages are very different. These lived realities stem out the conscious that in turn is passed on from one generation to another that cannot be completely comprehended by an outsider. This again is another challenge to be overcome if we need to understand these communities in their true spirit. Research helps in challenging the existing beliefs and knowledge of one’s own mind. When one tries understanding these communities one tries breaking through the popular stereotypes and tries getting down to the truth. This in the form of research is disseminated to a larger audience. It is exactly in such scenarios as these that research would help the
society in a new direction giving new insights to old problems. Research in one area opens the minds of individuals in other areas as well. This is the very reason why research in the Fourth World Literature opens a whole new world of peace, tolerance, understanding and equality as it is only through these literature that one realizes the existence of multiple realities in a single given context. Another example of this is the condition of the Dalits in India, especially in the modern times. The issue is many folds. Though they share common suffering of that of the fourth world around the globe they have a different experience as Indians. If the fourth world around the globe faced the residual effects of colonization for their present state due to the atrocities perpetrated on them by the White settler, the Dalits in India to this day face it in the hands of their own people in the name of caste and creed. The veto power of the indigenous minorities in different countries in the parliament is not enough for their bill to be passed even to this day. They are still dependant on the Whites majority to get it passed. In the Indian scenario though the constitution gives a lot of provisions for the betterment of the Dalit communities, they still need to fight something unseen as the power to control the resources are still in the hands of the majority dominant castes.

Literature in general and Drama in particular stirs the sole of its audience thus plays a very vital role in bringing about change in the society. Jack Davis as a dramatist uses drama exactly for this political and social purpose. The knowledge of the background of the Australian Aborigines becomes significant
for decoding the Aboriginal texts. Barry Malezer and Cheryl Sim emphasize that:

Aboriginal studies has a dual purpose. While it can create an avenue for young Aboriginal children to develop or maintain a pride in their cultural heritage, it can also be used as an effective tool in sensitising non-Aborigines to the rich and complex aspects of Aboriginal society. (National Aboriginal Education Committee, 1985:31)

Jack Davis is an epitome of Aboriginal activism and social change. His impact is multifold and this is the reason I have chosen to explore the plays of Jack Davis in my thesis. One can observe that the ramifications of the Epic theatre that had been consolidated by Bertolt Brecht which takes the lives of simple people has paved way for the Aboriginal Drama. Each play of Jack Davis is of contemporary in nature. He depicts the life of ordinary people and their plight in the contemporary world and their experiences. Thus the plays of Jack Davis contribute their share to the modern dramatics upholding the spirit of Ibsen and Brecht. What world needs today is people like Jack Davis, Nelson Mandela, Phule and others who do not waste their time complaining and blaming the past offences but move forward with optimism thinking what next. If research can concentrate and bring to light the works of such torch bearers of hope and optimism it would contribute its share for a better tomorrow ensuing equal opportunities and better living for all.