



## ***Dedication***

*To*

*My beloved grandparents to whom I am eternally indebted.*

*My brother Massi*

*All my friends*

*My dearest mates (Rezika, Dyhia, Tina and Ghania)*

## **Acknowledgments**

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## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	i
Acknowledgments .....	ii
Abstract.....	v
I. Introduction .....	1
a. Review of the Literature.....	1
b. Issue and Working Hypothesis.....	3
c. Methodological Outline .....	4
Endnotes.....	5
II. Background Chapters: Method and Materials .....	7
1. Method .....	6
2. Materials .....	9
a. Biographies .....	9
❖ Edward Irving Wortis' Biography.....	9
❖ Baz Luhrmann's Biography .....	10
b. Synopses.....	11
❖ Synopsis of Wortis' <i>The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle</i> ...	11
❖ Synopsis of Luhrmann's <i>Australia</i> .....	13
Endnotes.....	15
III. Results .....	17
IV. Discussion.....	18
Chapter One: Racial Otherness in <i>The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle</i> .....	18

<b>Endnotes.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Chapter Two: Racial Otherness in <i>Australia</i> .....	26
<b>Endnotes .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Chapter Three: The Othering of Women in <i>True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle</i> .....	33
<b>Endnotes.....</b>	<b>40</b>
Chapter Four: The Othering of Women in <i>Australia</i> .....	41
<b>Endnotes.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>V. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Selected Bibliography.....</b>	<b>49</b>

### *Abstract*

*This research paper attempts to compare Edward Irving Wortis' novel **The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle** (1990) and Baz Luhrmann's movie **Australia** (2008). It aims to provide a contextual regard of women and colored men; specifically, Indigenous people and black Africans as depicted in both cited works. It also explores the ways these characters reflect Said's designation of 'The Other.' This comparative study relies on Edward Said's theory *Orientalism* (1978) and draws on some of its significant concepts; particularly 'The Other'. This study has revealed that neither the geographical distance nor the cultural difference prevented Wortis and Luhrmann from tackling the same issues of racial discrimination and gender inequalities.*

## 1-Introduction

Othering is a social and historical phenomenon. For centuries, certain social categories such as; women, blacks and Indigenous people were considered as others presuming they are lacking fundamental characteristics. They are perceived as different, inferior and treated accordingly. The process of othering creates prejudices and leads to discrimination, as well as, the establishment of violent social hierarchies. In fact, Women faced intense oppression from lacking legal rights and independence. Their subordinate status is regarded as the natural state of society predestined by divine will. Likewise, Indigenous people and African-Americans received unfair treatment and have persevered through countless years of exploitation.

Othering can be found in different areas, and it can be identified in extant literary works, which serves as a means of expression and of construction of a shared worldview. Despite the large numbers of debates that are conducted with the attempts to establish a new context, where men, women and ethnic minorities will be treated fairly, equally, with dignity regardless of their differences, the oppressive process of othering is recurrent during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and it persists till nowadays. Irving Wortis' novel *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (1990) and Baz Luhrmann's movie *Australia* (2008) reflect the process of othering through their characters' self-representations and life experiences.

This piece of research is therefore an attempt to compare both selected works, as we intend to look to the extent to which the embodiment of 'the other' is explored within their respective portrayal of women, Indigenous people and African-Americans.

From our review of some of the critical points of view written upon Edward Irving Wortis' *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* and Baz Luhrmann's movie *Australia*, we have noticed that both works received a considerable amount of criticism.

To begin with, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (1990) is a historical fiction novel. As a literary genre, Critics such as Galda and Cullinan maintain that: “Historical Fiction is a distinct genre which is made of imaginative stories whose events took place in the past”<sup>1</sup>. They also claim that: “this genre is realistic since the circumstances and people it describes could have existed in real life”<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the two critics argue that: “Historical Fiction does not only portrays facts or reproduce settings, it also intertwines them with imaginative stories”<sup>3</sup>.

Anne Scott Macleod is one of the major historical professors who criticized the young adult novels. She argues that: “*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* conveys an inappropriate modern feminist point of view through representing a strong independent heroine”<sup>4</sup>. She affirms that: “it is not suitable to portray female characters behaving differently from social norms and expectations.”<sup>5</sup> Although Macleod finds the story of the novel as enticing, she describes its plot as preposterous, in other words; uninteresting”<sup>6</sup>.

Joanne Brown is another critic who examined Wortis’ novel *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. She states: “despite that the novel presents a clarify narrative, the reader can hardly believe the accuracy of its events.”<sup>7</sup> According to Brown: “Readers suspect the authenticity of the novel’s account; describing a young woman who defeats a vicious captain aboard a ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean”<sup>8</sup>.

The Australian film maker Baz Luhrmann and his movie *Australia* have also received different critical standpoints. In his article *Obama and Baz Luhrmann’s Australia*, Brian McCoy notes that: “*Australia* represents the legacy of mixed history of our country. It also reminds us of the colonial intruder; the Second World War, the bombing of Darwin as well as the cattle barons”.

In their essay *Imaginative Cinematic Geographies of Australia: The Mapped View in Charles Chauvel’s Jedda and Baz Luhrmann’s Australia*, the two Australian professors Peta Mitchell and Jane Stadler argues that: “Australia is in many ways a re-creation of Chauvel’s classic



*Jedda* (1955) because in both films the female character is called ‘Sarah’, and Jedda is the name given to the Drover’s dog”<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, both films share similar geographical settings and discuss the issue of the Stolen Generations.”<sup>10</sup>

Besides, in her article *Baz Luhrmann’s Electric Musical Signature in the Red Curtain Trilogy* (2013), the Australian researcher Rebecca Coyle notes that: “Luhrmann’s Australia shapes the major cultural issues of European settlers in Northern Australia. It combines different cinematic productions including; *Gone with the Wind* and the celebrated American musical *The Wizard of Oz*.”<sup>11</sup> According to Coyle, Luhrmann uses a muted musical approach, with reference to distinct works such as *Somewhere over the Rainbow*, Beethoven and Elgar music and an extract from Australia’s popular bush song *Waltzing Matilda*.”<sup>12</sup>

From the above review of the literature, it is clear that both Edward Irving Wortis’ *The True confessions of Charlotte Doyle* and Baz Luhrmann’s *Australia* are two outstanding works whose importance attracted great critical attention. However, one can notice that many critics have dealt with the two selected works separately. Most of the critics reviewed limited themselves to their literary value, others focused on their form and style as well as their characters. To our best knowledge, no previous study has been undertaken so far to compare both works. Therefore, it remains our task to conduct a comparative study of Irving Wortis’ *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (1990) and Luhrmann’s *Australia* (2008) relying on Edward Said’s theory *Orientalism* (1978), and Simone De Beauvoir’s work *The Second Sex* as a sub-theory.

Our interest in the study stems from the fact that despite the geographical distance and the cultural difference, the two authors deals with common universal themes and issues such as; othering, racial discrimination, social constraints and identity construction. Indeed, America and Australia were and still are favorable areas of investigation as both settings witnessed great historical events. Our main concern in this dissertation is basically to show the way both selected

works reflect Edward Said's designation of 'the other'. Also, we will try to identify the affinities that both works may share.

At the methodological level, our research paper is composed of four sections. It starts with an 'Introduction' that states our main purpose. And it includes a review of some of the literature written on Edward Irving Wortis' *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* and Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*. It also states our issue and the working hypothesis we have set. The 'Methods and Materials' section provides a brief summary of Edward Said's theory *Orientalism*, Simone De Beauvoir's work *The Second Sex* and the biographies of both Wortis and Luhrmann, as well as an overall synopsis of their works under scrutiny in the present research work. The 'Results' section displays the findings of the research. As for the 'Discussion' section, it is composed of four chapters. The first chapter deals with racial otherness in the novel portrayed through the male character Zachariah. The second chapter is concerned with racial otherness in the movie depicted through the aboriginal child named Nullah. While the third chapter is devoted to the exploration of the othering of women in the novel presented through the female protagonist Charlotte Doyle, the fourth one revolves around the othering of women in the movie shown through the female character Lady Ashley. This piece of research ends with a 'General Conclusion' that restates the main issues that have been examined.

## Endnotes:

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Seely Debra and Ramrath Garner Eleanor. Two Views of the Past: *Historical Fiction and Autobiography*. US: The Alan Review. Vol,31, No.3. 2004, p21

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> McCoy Brian. *Obama and Baz Luhrmann's Australia*. Australia: Eureka Street. Vol.19, No.1, Iss.1. January 2009. P23.

<sup>10</sup> Mitchell Peta and Stadler Jane. *Imaginative Cinematic Geographies of Australia: The Mapped View in Charles Chauvel's **Jedda** and Baz Luhrmann's **Australia***. Australia: Historical Geography. Vol. 38. 2010. P 28.

<sup>11</sup> Coyle Rebecca. *Baz Luhrmann's Electric Musical Signature in the Red Curtain Trilogy*. Australia: Screen Sound. Vol.6, Iss. 4. 2013. P28.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## Background Chapters

### Method and Materials:

#### 1-Method

##### Summary of Edward Said's Theory *Orientalism*(1978)

Edward Said is a prominent Palestinian-American scholar and an important figure in postcolonial studies. In his highly acclaimed work *Orientalism* published in 1978, he examines the history and nature of Western perception and attitudes towards the East. For Said, the word Orientalism does not only mean something related to the Eastern countries, but it also refers to the misrepresentation of the Eastern people and their culture.<sup>1</sup>

Said provides three main definitions of Orientalism, which are basically; academic, imaginative and historical/material. His first designation is the academic interpretation:

Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient--and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist--either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she says or does is Orientalism.<sup>2</sup>

Within his second definition, Said defines Orientalism as follows: “a style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident.’”<sup>3</sup> In addition, his third definition is drawn upon historical and material context:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it; in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.<sup>4</sup>

Edward Said traces *Orientalism* to the period of European Enlightenment and colonization of the Arab World. Indeed, the West sought to dominate the Eastern World for more than two thousand years since classical antiquity<sup>5</sup>. He emphasizes the idea of Western attraction by the Orient because it “had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and remarkable experiences”<sup>6</sup>. Said draws this view through the writings of some great intellectuals

such as; Disraeli, Kipling, Homer, Nerval and Flaubert, whose imaginative depictions have immensely contributed to the West's romantic and exotic picture of the Orient.

Being an Arab Palestinian living in the West, Edward Said explores the way these ideas constitute a reflection of European imperialism, He states that:

The Orient is Europe's greatest, richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other<sup>7</sup>.

It is important to note that Edward Said conception of *Orientalism* was influenced by a variety of thinkers such as: the French theorist Michel Foucault and the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci. Edward Said was influenced by Foucault's notion of discourse as being a system of thought that defines what can be known. This system is inextricably linked to power in all its forms, that is to say; knowledge and power are inter-related<sup>8</sup>.

According to Said, Orientalism is a systematic creation and representation of an oriental other, basically different and inferior to a European opposite. In other words, it is a discursive formation whose academic, imaginative and institutional functioned over years to naturalize the subordination of the Oriental other they invented<sup>9</sup>. The discourse of Orientalism and the notion of 'the other' are built on the basis of binary oppositions, and given a credit on the name of science.<sup>10</sup> Europe shaped its own self-conception through defining and representing the Orient as its polar opposite. The first is seen as rational, developed, superior, whereas the latter is perceived as aberrant, underdeveloped and inferior. Thus, in setting up dichotomies and binary opposites such as: 'Occident' and 'Orient', 'Us (Westerners), They (Orientals), 'Ours' and 'Theirs,' 'Self' and 'Other,'<sup>11</sup> the West constructed its own identity that is superior to the non-Western, and enabled the former to maintain its power and dominance over the latter.

Moreover, Antonio Gramsci's work is also crucial in shaping Edward Said's analysis in this area. Indeed, Said is inspired by Gramsci's notion of hegemony in understanding the representation

of *Orientalism* in Western scholarship and their relation to the establishment of power over the Orient.<sup>12</sup> On this basis, Said affirms that Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the West in a whole series of possible relationships with the orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand.”<sup>13</sup> According to Said, the Western knowledge about the Orient is not a natural fact, but rather a hegemonic cultural production.”<sup>14</sup> The West is deliberately creating an inferior ‘other’ through experts and narratives, in order to sustain its dominance and superiority. Nowadays, all the media sources including; television and film industry are continuously reinforcing the stereotypes by which the Orient is perceived.

‘The Other’ is a member of a dominated out-group (them, other) whose identity is considered lacking and who may be subject to discrimination by the in-group (us, the self).<sup>15</sup> For Said, Othering is a process of exclusion, a system of discrimination which sets up two false identities as opposites.<sup>16</sup> The process of othering, Edward Said maintains, is that of linking the Oriental ‘other’ by the Orientalist ‘subject’ to elements in the Western society, (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor).<sup>17</sup> The creation of an inferior ‘Other’ is necessary since it allows the West to recognize itself and sense its superiority. Therefore, the West defines and constructs its own identity not only by opposing itself to the Orient, but also to internal elements in its society. Hence, what applies to the Oriental as a conception and idea of inferiority and backwardness applies to the lesser categories such as women and Blacks.

### **Brief Summary of Simone de Beauvoir’s Work *The Second Sex*.**

Simone de Beauvoir is a French novelist and an existentialist philosopher. In her groundbreaking book *The Second Sex* published in 1949, she discusses the problems that women have faced throughout history<sup>18</sup>.

De Beauvoir central thesis is that the patriarchal society oppressed women by forcing them to take a secondary position. Women were considered as ‘the other’ and defined in opposition to men. She states: “she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the absolute and she is the other”<sup>19</sup>.

Being an existentialist philosopher, Simone De Beauvoir believes that humans are free to create their own lives and to write their own destinies. She affirms that femininity is not a natural truth, but a social constructed fact”<sup>20</sup>. Furthermore, she rejects all the explanations provided by psychology, biology, Marxism as well as the various mythical representations including; the Eternal Feminine and The Myth of Women which doomed women to be the other.”<sup>21</sup>

## **2- Materials:**

### **a- Biography of Edward Irving Wortis**

Edward Irving Wortis is an American author of young adult children literature. He was born on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1937 in Brooklyn, New York. His twin sister called him “Avi” which subsequently became his pen name<sup>22</sup>.

Avi grew up in an artistic environment. Avi was fond of reading and writing since his childhood, though he suffered from a writing disorder that affected his abilities and led him to misspell words or reverse letters. The first step on Avi's course to writing professionally was reading everything from comic books and science magazines to histories, plays and novels. Despite the skepticism of his teachers, he decided to make a career of writing while still in high school<sup>23</sup>.

Wortis attended the Elizabethan Irwin High School in New York. After earning Bachelor and Master degrees, he earned a master in Library Science from Columbia University. Avi worked in the performing Arts Research Center at the New York public library from 1962 to 1970. Besides, he worked as an assistant Professor and Librarian at Trenton State College in New Jersey from 1970 to

1986. He took playwriting courses, and had a strong-minded teacher who taught him the way to put together a plot and develop characters, with Wortis providing him a structural foundation for his own writings<sup>24</sup>.

Edward Irving Wortis wrote more than 75 books for different ages and in distinct genres such as: Historical fiction, Adventure tales, Graphic novels, Comedies, Mysteries and Fantasies. He has many Award-winning books among them: *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (1991), *Nothing But The Truth* (1992), and the Newberry Award-winning *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* (2003).<sup>4</sup> His personal life and surroundings had deeply influenced his writing since his parents were political activists who fought against racism and stand up for women's rights<sup>25</sup>. Avi is a prolific writer of many works of historical fiction, which are stories written to portray a particular period of time in history<sup>26</sup>. In *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* although Avi gives an account of the social norms and values of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he promotes acts of bravery through portraying a strong female protagonist who is given the dignity of choice to become what she wanted to be.

Irving Wortis became a renowned writer despite his disability. He believed that writing is his God given gift. And if someone has a story to tell, and is determined to work hard, they definitely can succeed. Currently, he enjoys visiting schools and brings his copyedited manuscripts to children with learning disabilities.

## **b- Biography of Baz Luhrmann**

Baz Luhrmann is an Australian film maker, screenwriter and producer. His original name is Mark Anthony Luhrmann. He was born on September 17, 1962 in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Baz grew up in rural Australia. He first became charmed by the world of movies and the power of storytelling at his father's theatre. He moved back to Sydney with his mother and siblings after his parents' divorce.<sup>27</sup>



His first attempt to gain entrance to Sydney's National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, he won a role in the film *Winter of Our Dreams* (1981). During that period, he also acted in four early episodes of the long-running television drama *A Country Practice* (1981-93). On his second attempt, he was accepted by NIDA. Luhrmann was chosen to work with the English Producer Director Peter Brook on Brook's 1985 theatrical production of the Mahabharata. He graduated from NIDA in 1985 with a degree in acting. Besides, they founded "Bazmark", a film production company with the motto, "A life lived in fear is a life half lived."<sup>28</sup> During the 1980s; Luhrmann worked as an artistic director for the 'Ra Project for the Australian Opera.' He produced three theatrical works; *The Australian Opera's Lake Lost* (1988), *Dance Hall* (1989) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.<sup>29</sup>

Luhrmann is an acclaimed film director and an innovator of contemporary cinema. Among his most successful productions are his first three films known as the 'Red Curtain Trilogy': *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1996) and *Moulin Rouge!* (2001). In addition, He directed and released *Australia* (2008) and *The Great Gatsby* (2013), which also received remarkable success. He won many Academy Awards including the Victorian Green Room and the Critic's Prize<sup>30</sup>.

Luhrmann had a strong determination to set a historical fiction in his homeland. He was also interested to learn about their indigenous culture, which he considered as being unique and ancient. In fact, *Australia* (2008) is one of his earliest epic films. It starred Nicole Kidman as Lady Sarah Ashley, Hugh Jackman as Drover and Brandon Walters as the half-aboriginal child Nullah. Despite being a romantic adventure, it tackles the issue of the Stolen Generations, and it deals largely with one of the darkest chapters in Australian history; 'the bombing of Darwin'.<sup>31</sup>

#### **c- Synopsis of *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle***

*The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle (1990)* is a historical fiction novel written by the American author Edward Irving Wortis, published in 1990. It is set during the crossing of a ship in the Atlantic Ocean, from England to America in 1832. The novel traces the transformation of the main protagonist Charlotte Doyle who grew up from a typical proper girl to an independent brave sailor<sup>33</sup>.

The story starts in the early summer of 1832. Charlotte Doyle, a proper girl of thirteen years old decides to take a big voyage aboard a merchant ship named *Seahawk*, departing from Liverpool, England to join her family in Rhode Island, America. She is supposed to travel with two other families, but they delayed their voyage. Therefore, she finds herself the only female passenger journeying on the ship. At the beginning, Charlotte feels lonely and unsure of herself. Aboard the ship, she meets Zachariah, an old black cook and sailor who offers her a knife for protection and tries to befriend her along the way<sup>34</sup>. The rest of the crew members for Charlotte are like “men recruited from the doormat of hell”<sup>35</sup>. Captain Jaggery seems at first to be different from the rest as he reminds her of her father.<sup>36</sup>

As the story goes on, Charlotte discovers a mutiny against Captain Jaggery whom she trusts truthfully. Being frightened by the crew, she informs the captain about the secret plan. Thus, the latter shoots Mr. Cranick who was hiding aboard and whips Zachariah mercilessly. Charlotte believes Zachariah to be dead and feels guilty for revealing the crew’s plan. Consequently, she is determined to work with the other crew members, and help them with their tasks. However, Jaggery is disturbed by her change and furiously makes her stay in the forecabin and becomes calling her Mr. Doyle.<sup>37</sup>

As the ship faces a powerful hurricane, the first mate Mr. Hollybrass is found killed with Zachariah’s knife which currently belongs to Charlotte. Unfortunately, she is found guilty and is accused of murder by the vengeful captain. When she is to be hanged, the former falls and dies. She

escapes punishment in a life-death struggle. Eventually, Zachariah turns out to be alive, and Charlotte becomes the new captain. Finally, as she arrives home, she puts back on her lady clothes and intends to hide what happened. But, her father reads her diary, and decides that she needs punishment and reformation. In the end, she resolves to escape and turns back to the Seahawk. Charlotte casts aside the comforts of home for the life of a seafarer<sup>38</sup>.

#### **d- Synopsis of *Australia***

*Australia* is an epic and romantic action adventure film. It is set between 1939 and 1942 just after the first bombing of Darwin during the Second World War. The movie was released to cinema on 26 November 2008 in both UK and USA. The story centers around an English Lady 'Sarah Ashley' who has to run the cattle farm of her dead husband in Australia, with the help of the Drover' and the half-aboriginal boy 'Nullah'<sup>39</sup>.

The movie opens with information about WWII and its destructive effects on Australia. Afterwards, it moves to the issue of Stolen Generations with the attempt of the whites to take away aboriginal children<sup>40</sup>. Lady Sarah Ashley arrives to Australia from England in 1939 to force her husband to sell his cattle, Faraway Downs. The latter sends an independent cattle Drover, in order to transport her<sup>41</sup>. Sarah's husband is killed just before she arrives, and the authorities tell her that the killer is an aboriginal elder' King George'. Meanwhile, the farm's manager Fletcher tries to get Faraway Downs under his control. The childless Sarah is taken by the half aboriginal Nullah, who tells her that the cattle is stolen. Consequently, Fletcher beats Nullah and threatens him. Thus, Sarah fires Fletcher and runs the farm herself. She also succeeds to persuade the Drover to take the 1,500 cattle to Darwin for sale. Drover leads a team of six other riders, including: his aboriginal brother-in-law Maggari, Sarah Ashley, Nullah and the station's accountant Kipling Flynn.<sup>42</sup>

On their way, they come across a number of obstacles such as; the fire set by Carney, who owns much of the lands in Northern Australia, leading the cattle to run away. Finally, they reach

Darwin and deliver them safely. Along the way, Sarah and Drover have fallen in love. They lived together happily with Nullah at Faraway Downs for two years. At last, it turns out that Fletcher is the murderer of Sarah's husband and also Nullah's father. The movie ends with King George calling for Nullah to return to the outback with him.<sup>43</sup>

## Endnotes

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- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.p4

<sup>22</sup>Avi, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle study guide*, New York: The Glencoe Literature Library, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2007.p9

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<sup>26</sup>Avi, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle study guide*, New York: The Glencoe Literature Library, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2007.p9

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid, pp10-13.

<sup>32</sup>Quinlan Deidre. *Australia*. Eds, McGivern Alicia, et al. Dublin: Irish Film Institute. 2009, pp4-8.

<sup>33</sup>The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle summary. Super Summary. Last modified: May 12, 2017. Available on: <http://www.supersummary.com/the-true-confessions-of-charlotte-doyle/summary/>

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990,p30.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.47.

<sup>37</sup>The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle summary. Super Summary. Last modified: May 12, 2017. Available on: <http://www.supersummary.com/the-true-confessions-of-charlotte-doyle/summary/>

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>O'Hara Marguerite. *Australia*. Australia: Screen Education, 2008, p2

<sup>40</sup>Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia (2008) Movie*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008.

<sup>41</sup>O'Hara Marguerite. *Australia*. Australia: Screen Education, 2008, p3

<sup>42</sup>Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia (2008) Movie*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

### III. Results

This research paper explores the issue of ‘The Other’ in Edward Irving Wortis’ novel *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (1990) and Baz Luhrmann’s movie *Australia* (2008), relying on Edward Said’s theory of *Orientalism* (1978) and applying some main ideas of Simone De Beauvoir’s work *The Second Sex*.

Our exploration of the two works under study has shown that both Irving Wortis and Luhrmann bridged the gap of time, culture and geography. They share some similarities at the level of themes, description and self-representation of their characters; specifically; Indigenous characters including, the Aboriginal child ‘Nullah’ and the black African-American ‘Zachariah’ as well as women; namely Charlotte Doyle and Lady Ashley.

Through our reading of Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism, we have learned that his analysis of ‘the other’ reflects not only the East or ‘The Orient,’ but represents also other categories in society such as: the indigenous people, women and blacks. Therefore, we have deduced that these characters represent the archetypes of the ‘Others’.

In addition, our analysis has shown that America and Australia are two historical settings that experienced the same issues of race and gender. Both Irving Wortis and Luhrmann tackle the same issues throughout their cited works. We have noticed that their characters are stereotypically represented since they are experiencing gender inequalities, social prejudices and racial discrimination.

On the whole, our comparative study has revealed that Irving Wortis’ *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (1990) and Baz Luhrmann’s movie *Australia* (2008) share some mutual aspects at the level of themes and characters. However, they are not totally akin since both differ in form and the construction as well as development of their stories.

## IV-Discussion

In this section of our work, we will explore the themes of race and gender in both Irving Wortis' and Baz Luhrmann's works, *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*(1990) and *Australia*(2008), relying on Edward Said's theory *Orientalism*. We will also include some of their important historical events.

### Chapter I: Racial Otherness in *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*

The embodiment of *the Other* in Edward Irving Wortis' *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* lies in its actual portrayal of one of the book's most significant characters 'Zachariah', an old black man who suffers from the cruel jokes made by the white crew members aboard the ship<sup>1</sup>. Mostly, because he is African, he is viewed as being dirty, unfaithful, menacing and dishonest. In fact, throughout history and during the 1800s, people of African origin were considered inferior and bestial<sup>1</sup>. They were enslaved in parts of the United States, especially in the southern part. Although in the Northern states including Rhode Island, slavery was not widespread, slaves were bought and sold at auctions like commodities. The Slave Trade law made slaves powerless victims of their owners, and those Africans who were free encountered harsh discrimination in the workplace and in the courts<sup>2</sup>, just as is the case of Zachariah.

Like the Oriental who is viewed as backward, degenerate, uncivilized and retarded as Said states<sup>3</sup>, Zachariah is regarded as extremely inferior and untrustworthy because of his skin-colour and impoverished condition. He is also judged not by the content of his character, but by the colour of his skin. Charlotte says:

His clothing, what I could see of it, was even more decrepit than the previous sailor's, which is to say, mostly rags and tatters. His arms and legs were as thin as marlinspikes. His face, as wrinkled as a crumpled napkin...when he smiled--for that is what I assumed he was attempting--he offered only a scattering of stumps. But his eyes seemed to glow with curiosity and were all the more menacing because of it<sup>4</sup>.



Additionally, Zachariah represents the Oriental who is always in the position both of outsider and of incorporated weak partner for the West<sup>5</sup>, as Edward Said maintains in his analysis of Orientalism. When the former offers his long-lasting friendship to Charlotte, she initially ignores it and objects his suggestion because of her western sense of superiority. She states:

Zachariah looked at me. It may well be", he said softly, that Miss Doyle will have use for a friend". Finding his suggestion--from him--unpleasant, I chose to ignore it Miss Doyle is so young! I am so old! Surely there is something similar in that. And you, the sole girl, and I, the one black, are special on this ship. In short, we begin with two things in common enough to begin a friendship. "I don't need a friend," I said.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, Said argues that the West 'or Occident' had for centuries defined itself through portraying the East as its polar opposite. He also finds a disturbing and fantastical geography of West Vs East, one in which the West's depiction of itself as civilized and advanced depended on the degradation of Asian and Middle Eastern cultures as barbaric and backwards<sup>7</sup>. In the novel, the western characters are described in contrast to the non-western character Zachariah. Charlotte considers the latter as an uncivilized alien, since she is accustomed to an expensive life style. As she states at the beginning of the novel: "My family dressed me as a young woman, bonnet covering my beautiful hair, full skirts, high botton shoes, and, you may be sure, white gloves."<sup>8</sup>Unlike Zachariah who wears rag clothes and works as a servant on the ship., Blacks were ranked by science and religion as inferior, consequently the Whites classified them as slaves, and justified the manner in which they were perceived and treated."<sup>9</sup> In the western mind, whatever Zachariah is not, Charlotte actually is. Therefore, what Said calls polar opposite, is Charlotte's view of Zachariah as her contrasting image. She says:

Never had I met with such impertinence! That this Zachariah my inferior, a cook, should tell such a slanderous tale of violence and cruelty regarding Captain Jaggery to me—as though it were a confidence—was deeply mortifying. I would not, could not believe it!<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, Europeans define themselves through defining the Orientals. Zachariah represents the Orient which, according to Said, is portrayed as a society that is brutish, irrational, underdeveloped and further in need of modern Western enlightenment. The Occident in contrast as it is depicted

through the characters of Charlotte and Captain Jaggery, is perceived as culturally advanced, rational and sophisticated. Thus, it is not surprising that the inaccurate cultural representations and the subtle Eurocentric prejudices are attributed to Black Africans who are stereotypically regarded by the general public as *the others*. On this basis, Edward Said maintains:

Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment made. Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplied—indeed, made truly productive—the statements proliferating out from Orientalism into the general culture.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, these false assumptions and social prejudices regarding Africans as biologically and culturally subordinate, also in need of European enlightenment and to be removed from darkness are created by the West in order to dominate the Orient. All these distortions according to Said are carried out for generations by scientists, philosophers, writers, economists and political theorists, afterwards, become widespread within western consciousness. This is illustrated in the novel, through Charlotte's treatment and perception of Zachariah. She states: "This Zachariah, my inferior."<sup>12</sup> Throughout the novel, one can notice that the latter is disturbed by his unfamiliar white surroundings that he sharply contrasts. Along the voyage, he distances himself from the other crew members. When he tries to tell Charlotte about Captain Jaggery's cruelty, she distrusts him completely, and suspects him of committing the murder of the first mate Mr. Hollybrass. She says: "you were there on deck; you had every reason to want him dead."<sup>13</sup> The Orient is constructed by the West as anti-western, superstitious, eccentric and threatening. Thus, these generalized attributes associated with the Orientals are what Zachariah represents in the Orientalist and Westerners thinking.

Charlotte claims that someone does not deserve justice when he speaks badly about someone else in a higher class and position. Zachariah represents the Orientals who are inveterate liars, lethargic and suspicious<sup>14</sup> in the mind of the orientalist, as Said maintains. While speaking to Charlotte, Zachariah says:

-Miss Doyle, Mr. Cranick has but one arm now. He was that much beaten by Captain Jaggery, who, as he said himself, took the arm. I was first surgeon, then carpenter to Mr. Cranick”.

-“I don’t believe you! Justice is poorly served when you speak ill of your betters. It was a phrase I had heard my father use many times.<sup>15</sup>

Edward Said notes that “since the Oriental is a member of a subjected race, he had to be subjected.”<sup>16</sup> Adding to the fact that the Africans are viewed inferiors, they are treated unfairly even ignorantly, in favor of privileging of the West. In Irving Wortis’ novel, Zachariah is physically tortured and brutally punished by Jaggery, the captain of the ship and the other crew members who accuse him for committing a mutiny against the former. Consequently, they beat him cruelly and whip him till his body cuts down. Thus, Zachariah is subjected by them and becomes their object victim. He must be judged, punished and disciplined, since the Oriental is something one judges, something one studies and depicts, something one disciplines<sup>17</sup>, as Said puts it. While witnessing the incident, Charlotte narrates:

Mr. Hollybrass turned Zachariah so that he faced into the shrouds, then climbed up into these shrouds and with a piece of rope bound his hands, pulling him so that the old man was all but hanging from his wrists, just supporting himself on the tips of his bare toes. I turned to look at Captain Jaggery. Only then did I see that he had a whip in his hands, its four strands twitching like the tail of an angry cat. Where he got it I don’t know.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, this treatment is widely common towards the slaves. It is generally characterized by inhumanity and brutality. This is due to the belief that Western cultural superiority was and still is at the peak of the African culture. Hence, the Africans must be controlled and dominated. Moreover, Edward Said emphasizes the idea that the Western European and American literature, scholarship, distortions and stereotypes strengthen racial prejudices against non-Western cultures through their classification as *the others*. Therefore, this projected image of the Orient; namely Africans in the mind of the Westerners is defined as *the other* as Edward Said states. This is the case of Zachariah who is viewed by others as being subordinate and from a primitive race. Africans are regarded irredeemably inferior and sub-human beings to white races, intellectually, culturally and morally.

This justified making Africans work as slaves due to the belief that they are suited by nature to hard work, and obviously exist to serve white people.<sup>19</sup>

Edward Said argues that “the very designation of something as Oriental involved an already pronounced evaluative judgement.”<sup>20</sup> Zachariah represents the Oriental people who appeared in Western representations as examples of various racial stereotypes. For decades, the Westerners equated blackness with evil and death; the first reaction to people with black skin is to confirm that they are some form of devils and monsters. It is basically illustrated in the novel, when Charlotte first comes across Zachariah, she fearfully utters few words while she attempts to stifle her tears: “I turned about to see an old black man, who in the light of the little lantern he was holding, looked like the very imp of death in search of souls.”<sup>21</sup> These recurring stereotypes, myths and clichés doomed the Africans to be cannibalistic, barbarous and menacing.

Originally, there was only discrimination due to unsustainable developments in the African continent. Afterwards, the European sense of superiority extended and led to the emergence of racism, shaping Africans as slaves and treating them as mere properties.<sup>22</sup> Through referring to Irving Wortis’ novel, one can notice that despite being a free man, Zachariah still suffers aboard the ship from injustice and racial inequalities that prevent him from defending himself, and having access to a fair trial. Like “the Oriental who is viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism”<sup>23</sup> as Edward Said maintains, Zachariah is regarded as inherently inferior and subservient to white people. Thus, it establishes the idea of Western superiority and the Orient’s inferiority within the Western mind. While speaking with him, Charlotte says:

“Zachariah...”

“What?”

“You’re...a black man”

That I am. But this state of Rhode Island where we’re going, it has no more slaves.” He suddenly checked himself. “Or am I wrong?”

“A black man, Zachariah, a common sailor, testifying against white officer...” I didn’t have the heart to finish.<sup>24</sup>

As a matter of fact, Zachariah cannot distangle himself from the effects of racism. During the nineteenth century, slavery still remains an important means for gaining wealth. The Northern businessmen made great investments through the Slave Trade”<sup>25</sup>. The colonial attitudes remain insistent through generations. This is what Said calls the unchanging Orient in the mind of Westerners. Accordingly, Said points out that “Orientalism is a discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even bureaucracies and colonial styles.”<sup>26</sup>The knowledge of the Orient created and established within the discourse of Orientalism serves to build an image of the Orient and Orientals as subservient and subject to domination by the Occident. This is the case of Africans generally and Zachariah specifically.

It is important to point out that throughout history; the Orient is Europe’s greatest, richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant.”<sup>27</sup>With the onset of European colonization, the European countries sought to dominate the rest of the world, and came in contact with the lesser developed countries including Africa, which evoked their desire and interest of exploration as well as adventure. The Europeans believed in their superiority as they were technologically and politically advanced. They constructed artificial boundaries; the Occident and the Orient. According to Edward Said, “such geographical designations are an odd combination of the empirical and imaginative.”<sup>28</sup>All these inaccurate designations and false assumptions constitute a fundamentally political doctrine that aims to fix an everlasting powerful position for the West overseas. For Said, the Orientalist creates a series of binary oppositions according to which Europe; namely the West is the ‘*self*’ which is seen as being basically superior, human, developed and virtuous. Whereas, the Orient, that is to say; the Orient or ‘*the other*’ is regarded as the West’s opposite reflection. It is viewed as being inferior, sub-human, backward and depraved. As a result, the orientalist through his writing constructs a kind of hegemony that establishes a common truth about reality for both groups.

Throughout our analysis of the novel, these binary oppositions are clearly depicted through Zachariah's patronizing representation. He is shaped as a black figure and is given a name which originally associated him with Semitic religion. This portrayal of the non-western character 'Zachariah' follows the orientalist stereotyping mentioned by Said in his analysis of *Orientalism*. The former represents the East which is depicted as anti-Western, hypocrite, barbaric and dangerous. All these racial prejudices make Zachariah 'the other'. The other western characters including Charlotte and the Captain Jaggery stand for the West which is illustrated in positive ways as superior, modern and independent. One can conclude that Wortis' portrayal of the black character Zachariah as dangerous, violent and primitive comes from the general view that the members of this race are biologically and socially inferior. Edward Said explains that what is circulated by cultural discourse and exchange within a culture is not a natural truth but representations."<sup>29</sup> Thus, Said defines *Orientalism*:

as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.<sup>30</sup>

To sum up, as Orientalism is a discourse, it forms our understanding of the world and it shapes the way we perceive and conceive reality. The racial prejudices and inaccurate stereotypes and clichés establish in a way or another, a common truth about reality that becomes a shared belief within ethnic groups. Although Charlotte and Zachariah become working partners at the end of the novel, the constructed vision of Africans as *others* and inferior to whites is so ingrained into people's thinking that is difficult to remove or change easily. Said states that Orientalism applies to African American, women, the working classes and so on.

## Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> Acharya, Avidit et al., *The Political Legacy of American Slavery*. Chicago: The Journal of Politics. Vol 78. No 3. 2016. pp 621-624.
- <sup>2</sup> Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle study guide*, New York: The Glencoe Literature Library, 1st edition, 2007.p 12
- <sup>3</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism : Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p 207
- <sup>4</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990,p23
- <sup>5</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism : Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p 207.
- <sup>6</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p25
- <sup>7</sup>What is Orientalism? | Reclaiming Identity: Dismantling Arab Stereotypes. Last modified May 12, 2017. Available on:<http://www.arabstereotypes.org/why-stereotypes/what-orientalism>.
- <sup>8</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p 2
- <sup>9</sup> Foster, Gerald A. *American Slavery: The Complete Story*. Dayton: Cardozo Public Law, Policy and Ethics Journal. Vol 2. May 2004. P402.
- <sup>10</sup> Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p43.
- <sup>11</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism : Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p6.
- <sup>12</sup> Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990,p43
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid; p,186
- <sup>14</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p39.
- <sup>15</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990,p40.
- <sup>16</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978,p207
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid; p,40
- <sup>18</sup> Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990,p100
- <sup>19</sup> Foster, Gerald A. *American Slavery: The Complete Story*. Dayton: Cardozo Public Law, Policy and Ethics Journal. Vol 2. May 2004. pp403-404.
- <sup>20</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism : Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p207
- <sup>21</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990,p23
- <sup>22</sup> Foster, Gerald A. *American Slavery: The Complete Story*. Dayton: Cardozo Public Law, Policy and Ethics Journal. Vol 2. May 2004. p406
- <sup>23</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p207
- <sup>24</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p162
- <sup>25</sup>Foster, Gerald A. *American Slavery: The Complete Story*. Dayton: Cardozo Public Law, Policy and Ethics Journal. Vol 2. May 2004. p405
- <sup>26</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism : Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p2
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid; p,1
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid; p,331
- <sup>29</sup>Laceb, Rafik. *The Other in Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*, Tizi-Ouzou: University of Mouloud Mammeri, 2009/2010, p94.
- <sup>30</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978,p 3

## **Chapter II: Racial Otherness in *Australia***

*Australia* explores the recurring historical phenomenon of ‘the *other*’ through its portrayal of the Australian Stolen Generations. Edward Said’s analysis of *Orientalism* is further used to reflect the experience of the Indigenous people within the Australian society.

In the first scenes of the movie, Baz Luhrmann introduces one of the darkest chapters of Australian history. The Stolen Generations are the Noongar and Torres Strait Islanders aboriginal children of mixed-race, who were forcibly removed from their families. They become known as the Stolen Generations since many aboriginals were affected by the removal<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, during the Second World War, almost one million Australians were involved in the war. Their mainland came under direct military attack for the first time. On 19 February 1942, the bombing of Darwin also known as The Battle of Darwin, was Australia’s greatest disaster. The Japanese aircrafts destroyed ships in Darwin’s harbor. Most of the city’s military and civil infrastructure known as Australia’s Pearl Harbor was demolished. Consequently, many urban areas suffered great damages from the hostilities, and resulted in large numbers of casualties. Overall, around 250 people lost their lives, and between 300 and 400 civilian soldiers were injured<sup>2</sup>.

It is important to mention that during this period of war roughly between 1905 and 1969, the lighter skinned were often the most to be taken away as part of systematic policies of forced assimilation. They were placed by the Australian state government in church-run missions and sponsored institutions, where they were to be re-educated and Christianized<sup>3</sup>. This is the case of Nullah, an eleven-year-old half-aboriginal boy who is vigorously taken away to foster care arrangements, typically on Christian missions on an Island off Darwin. Nullah says: “Them Coppers come take me away. They want to put me on that mission Island. Make me into a white fella.”<sup>4</sup>



In accordance with Edward Said's concept of the self and the other, one can notice that from the opening scene of the movie *Nullah* is portrayed as weak and vulnerable. He strives within the White Australian society as he lives in constant danger and tries to hide from the authorities who long to take him away and the other Aboriginal children, in order to place them in Christian-missions or in the foster care of white families. Nullah states: "Them White fella bad spirit. Must be taken from this land."<sup>5</sup> The former describes them 'bad spirit' since they are cruel and merciless. The white Australians attitude towards the Aborigines resulted from their imperialist expansion which carried with it basic notions of exotic otherness and racial inferiority"<sup>6</sup>.

In fact, throughout Australian history, mainstream narratives depicted European civilization as the onset of modernity and progress. And since the Indigenous community was extended over the Australian continent, White colonizers sought to exterminate and displace the Indigenous people, their cultural traditions and their beliefs. On this basis, Edward Said affirms that "Orientalism as discourse is a system of exclusion, lies and myths."<sup>7</sup> As it is portrayed through the movie, the Aboriginal children are victims of destructive policies of assimilation, leading to devastating effects on Indigenous communities. Their personal trauma becomes trans-generational, since most of the children grew up knowing little about their aboriginal names, families, culture and heritage. Hence, their wounds cannot be healed easily. It is the case of Nullah who does not know his real father. He says:

See I not blackfella.  
I not white fella either.  
Them white fellas call me mixed-blood...  
half-caste-  
Yea!  
Creamy.  
I belong no one.<sup>8</sup>

Edward Said suggests in his *Orientalism* that "the West is powerful and articulate, while the East is defeated and distant."<sup>9</sup> In truth, Nullah reflects the defeated East, as he experiences the feelings of fear, loss and emptiness, and lives in isolation from his community. He suffers

enormously from verbal, physical, as well as emotional abuse. Neil Fletcher, the white station manager mistreats Nullah and accuses him of lying as he tries to tell the truth about his hidden plan to steal the farm, Faraway Downs from the English aristocrat Lady Ashley. Therefore, Nullah is similar to the Oriental who belongs to a subject race as Said states. Fletcher says:

Yeah, no, they're funny, little creamies.  
They're all a bit soft in the head, yeah.  
That's why the, uh, government  
sends them to the mission.  
They all tell bloody monstrous lies.<sup>10</sup>

Fletcher also beats Nullah's mother violently when she attempts to protect him. Indeed, the Indigenous women were vulnerable to physical as well as sexual mistreatment and all sorts of abuse. This violence toward the aboriginals became common practice over decades.

Luhrmann's presentation of Indigenous people and the Euro-Australians lead to classifying them into binary oppositions, which are misleading and destructive. The Indigenous community is considered nomadic living in poor primitive conditions and inherently inferior to white settlers. In Contrast, the latter considers itself superior militarily, culturally and even morally. One can conclude that the Aboriginal communities became places of increased suffering. As it is illustrated in the movie, the Drover tells Lady Sarah that he was only married once to an aboriginal woman. Unfortunately, she suffered from tuberculosis, an infectious disease that affected her lungs. As a result, she died after being prevented by local officials to receive a health care treatment. While speaking to Lady Ashley, the Drover says:

Yeah. I was married once.  
Really?.  
Mmm. To a lovely girl.  
That was before I went off to war.  
And what happened?.  
Well, I marched off  
for mother England...  
and by the time I came back,  
she was sick...  
with T.B  
But back then, the hospitals

wouldn't treat, um, blacks.  
Oh, right. I see. Yeah.<sup>11</sup>

As it is cited above, the Aboriginal people suffer from racial prejudices and gender inequalities that prevent them to have the same rights as the whites. The Indigenous people represent the Orientals who, according to Said, have to be subjected since they are members of a subjected race.”<sup>12</sup>

In fact, during the Second World War, the interracial marriage was illegal in the Australian Northern territory. Hence, the Drover distances himself from his society and becomes an independent cattle driver. Add to this, the Indigenous people are portrayed as homeless. This is the case of Nullah's grandfather who is wandering around lands. The White Australians claim that the indigenous people need help and protection, thus their discrimination is disguised as protectionism. However, it is worth to mention that the Indigenous people had a long-lasting deep spiritual connection with lands. “The health of land and water is central to their culture, but also gives them the responsibility to care for it. They feel the pain of the shapes of life in country as pain to the self.”<sup>13</sup> This justifies Nullah's return with him at the end of the movie to walkabout, which refers to the journey experienced by male Aboriginal Australians in the wilderness, in order to mark their transition into manhood. Nullah states:

My grandfather, King George-  
he take'em me walkabout...  
teach me blackfella way .  
King George tell me  
I gotta go walkabout. If I a man,  
I gotta walkabout.  
Learn'em be a man.<sup>14</sup>

Edward Said was influenced by the Italian communist thinker Antonio Gramsci's theory about hegemony, which refers to dominance by consent. The former notes:

In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept of any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. It is hegemony or rather the result of cultural hegemony that gives orientalism the durability and the strength I have been speaking about so far.<sup>15</sup>

For Said, the West maintains its power and dominance over the East through hegemonic ideologies. All the representations constructed by the West create a discourse that aims to maintain their hegemonic purposes; they seek to encourage imperialism and make it legal as well as to strengthen the belief of the Western's moral duty to bring enlightenment and to civilize the East therefore, discourse reinforces its strength and sustains its durability through hegemony. One can deduce that Luhrmann's movie brings about hegemonic purposes. The policies set by the Australian government and authorities were not protective but destructive. Laws including the Industrial School Act (1874) and the Aborigines Act (1905) stated that: "any Indigenous child 'surrendered' to an institution could be detained there without parental consent, or contracted to employment after the age of 12 until the child reached 21 years".<sup>16</sup> They were used to unmask reality, through deluding the Aborigines into believing that they were made for the sake of self-protection. In fact, they stimulated the government's control over their lives.

In one of the movie's scenes, the authorities come to take Nullah pretending that he needs appropriate training and education. While speaking to Lady Ashley, Sergeant Callahan says:

Your former manager, Neil Fletcher.  
He informed me that there's a half-blood  
Aboriginal child out here somewhere.  
I thought we might pick him up  
and put him in the good hands of the church.  
I will be sure to look out for him.<sup>17</sup>

Obviously, it is through hegemony that the Euro-Australians uphold their superiority. Luhrmann's portrayal of his main protagonist Lady Ashley as an anti-racist who supports the Indigenous community and fights for their liberty stands for an ideological hegemony. Moreover, the representation of his characters reflects the general knowledge ingrained in his mind as well as his ancestors'.

It is important to mention that the white Australians did not only maintain their control over the mixed-race descents through invasion and oppression, but through constituting a large body of

written texts, legislations, annual reports, official government, documents, local administrations and so on. They also created racist terms such as: half-caste, half-blood, bloody and creamy. This is obviously shown in the movie, Nullah is labeled by the white settlers; half-caste, filthy creamy, mixed-blood and half-blood. These racial concepts were empirical designations to sustain their power over the Indigenous people. Their colonial strategies were carried across generations. On this regard, Edward Said states: “There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate, the latter must be dominated”<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, the Euro-Australians dominated the Aboriginals’ lives, beliefs and wrote their destinies. They were basically longing to exterminate the Indigenous culture through imposing their own. They reinforced their dominance not only through murders, enslavement, and imprisonment, but justified it through literature and different narratives. The Indigenous community are not considered as citizens or people, but as problems to be solved and confined.<sup>19</sup>

The contrasting representation between the West and the East is illustrated in the movie; the Indigenous people are viewed in opposition to the white Australians. The presentations of the native characters including; their physical appearance, tendency as well as their settings lead to their categorization as others.

In short, though not fully described, Luhrmann’s movie *Australia* offers an insight into the life of the Indigenous people. Over the past decades, they faced all sorts of discrimination, including insults, humiliation and oppression. Aboriginal children experienced emotional detachment and were deeply affected by negative stereotypes, offensive racial terms as well as unbearable racial and gender inequalities. However, the positioning of mixed- descent ancestry as others become a general belief shared between people generally and the white Australians specifically. This belief is supported by narratives as media sources. Similarly, the view of blacks including Irving Wortis’ African-American character Zachariah as the other is also carried from one generation to another.

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>*Australia under attack, Bombing of Darwin* .Department of Veterans' Affairs. Australian Government. Last modified May 19, 2017.

[https://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/about%20dva/media-centre/media-backgrounder/P02087R%20Australia%20under%20attack\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.dva.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/about%20dva/media-centre/media-backgrounder/P02087R%20Australia%20under%20attack_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Stolen Generations . Kaartdijin Noongar-Noongar Knowledge . Last modified April 30, 2017.<https://www.noongarculture.org.au/stolen-generations/>

<sup>3</sup> Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia (2008) Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008. P1. Available on: [http://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie\\_script.php?movie=australia#](http://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=australia#)

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.,p,1

<sup>5</sup> Said, Edward. *Key Terminology Orientalism*, Introduction to Unit 4. Encountering Conflict 2015. Available on:

<https://learn.stleonards.vic.edu.au/vceeng/files/2015/06/everymanintro.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>*Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978,p8

<sup>7</sup> Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia (2008) Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008. P1.

<sup>8</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p45

<sup>9</sup> Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia (2008) Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008. P14. .

<sup>10</sup> Ibid,p31

<sup>11</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p 207.

<sup>12</sup> 'Seeing the Light: Aboriginal Law, Learning and Sustainable Living in Country', Ambelin Kwaymullina, Indigenous Law Bulletin May/June 2005, Volume 6, Issue 11. Available on :<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/land/meaning-of-land-to-aboriginal-people#ixzz4iDUFJ1Zj> Accessed : 21/05/2017

<sup>13</sup> Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia (2008) Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008. P45

<sup>14</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p7

<sup>15</sup> Stolen Generations . Kaartdijin Noongar-Noongar Knowledge . Last modified April 30, 2017.<https://www.noongarculture.org.au/stolen-generations/><sup>16</sup>

Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia (2008) Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008. P21

<sup>17</sup>Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978,p 183

### Chapter III: The Othering of Women in *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*

. The Oriental is linked to other elements in western society such as; women. According to Edward Said, they share an identity prescribed as alien.<sup>1</sup> In the novel, Charlotte, a thirteen-year-old girl is going to experience a life changing adventure aboard the *Seahawk*. Being a part of the patriarchal society of the nineteenth century, which viewed man as the head of the household and woman as a symbol of family life and motherhood, she admits that her subsequent actions and strong ideas will bring her harsh judgment. She narrates: “not every thirteen-year old girl is accused of murder, brought to trial, and found guilty, but I was such a girl. If strong ideas and action offend you read no more.”<sup>2</sup>

Initially, Charlotte is described as a superficial decorative object which reflects the typical lady of her time. She states: “My family dressed me as a young woman, bonnet covering my beautiful hair, full skirts, high button shoes, white gloves.”<sup>3</sup> We soon learn that her identity is invented outright by her patriarchal society as she says: “I certainly wanted to be a lady. It was not just my ambition; it was my destiny.”<sup>4</sup> Similar to the Orient which is perceived by the West as being a static frozen object as Edward Said states, one can notice that Charlotte is the object and her patriarchal society is the subject since the latter decides what she is and what she will become. In her book *The Second Sex*, Simone De Beauvoir states that woman is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the absolute—she is the Other.”<sup>5</sup> Charlotte remains submissive and obedient and tries to impress her father through reading and writing. Said argues that “since the Oriental is a member of a subjected race, he/she must be subjected.”<sup>6</sup> Charlotte has been taught to obey and accept, and must be seen but not heard. She states in one of the novel’s passages: “What could I do? All my life I had been trained to obey, educated to accept.”<sup>7</sup> While speaking with Mr. Grummage; a business associate of Charlotte’s father. She says:

But Mr. Grummage", I said. "I'm sure my father would not want me to be traveling without..." Mr. Grummage silenced my objections with an upraised hand. "Miss Doyle," he said, "my orders were clear and allow for no other construction."<sup>8</sup>

From the above quotation, one can notice that Charlotte has almost no voice. She is incapable to decide for herself or even make the smallest decision. Due to the way she is perceived and decided for by the other male characters, Charlotte portrays the Orient with its "silent indifference and feminine penetrability"<sup>9</sup> as Said suggests. In his analysis of Orientalism, the latter stresses the fact that the relationship between the West and the East is based on the dichotomy of self and other. It is created by the West to oppress the East and nationalize their dominance as well as exploitation over it. He states: for identity, whether of Orient or Occident, is finally a construction that involves establishing opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their difference from 'us'.<sup>10</sup> Similar to Charlotte's relationship with the other male characters is based on this binary opposition of 'Occident' and 'Orient' as a means to generate patriarchal authority and establish women's inferiority.

Throughout the narrative, Charlotte represents the silent defeated Orient through her submission and subjection as well as her delicate sensibility. She says:

My weeping lasted for the better part of an hour. And Captain Jaggery? Without intending to hadn't I done him a great wrong when I'd cut his face—albeit unintentionally—with the whip. Could he, would he, forgive me?. Beyond all else I had been educated to the belief that when I was wrong—and how often had my patient father found me at fault—it was my responsibility—mine alone—to admit my fault and make amends.<sup>11</sup>

As Charlotte tries to apologize to Captain Jaggery about her unintended harm, the latter replies: "you insulted me before my crew as no man should ever be insulted. Insulted by a sniffing, self-centered ugly, contemptible girl who deserves a horsewhipping."<sup>12</sup> Though captain Jaggery disrespects and humiliates Charlotte and deprives her of subjectivity, the latter is conditioned to accept passivity and inauthenticity. She states: "I sunk to my knees, hands in prayer like supplication. I began to weep uncontrollably. He snarled? I want nothing to do with you. Nothing!..And don't you dare come to my cabin again, he shouted. Ever!"<sup>13</sup>



In his analysis of *Orientalism*, Edward Said maintains that “the very possibility of development, transformation, human movement in the deepest sense of the word--is denied the Orient and the Oriental.”<sup>14</sup> In the novel, Charlotte tries to prove herself to Captain Jaggery and the other male crew members that she is willing to help them with their tasks aboard the ship. However, they underestimate her abilities and undermine her confidence. While speaking to the crew, Charlotte says:

I do mean it, I said, finding boldness with repetition, I want to be the replacement for Mr. Johnson.  
You're a girl, Dillingham spat out contemptuously.  
A pretty girl, Foley put in. It was not a compliment. Takes more than canvas britches to hide that. And a gentlewoman was Grimes's addition, as though that was the final evidence of my essential uselessness.<sup>15</sup>

One can deduce that Charlotte is looked down and considered inferior to men. She represents the unchanging Orient and Oriental since she is denied every possibility of independent work and satisfactory achievement. On this basis, De Beauvoir states: “we are exhorted to be women, remain women, become women”.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, Edward Said notes that the West perceives the Orient as exotic and an eccentric entity. Similarly, the male crew members regard Charlotte's actions and behaviour as being strange, unusual and unnatural. Captain Jaggery says:

Mr. Grimes, I ask you, did you ever hear of another girl who desired to learn the use of a knife?  
No sir.  
Do you not think it's unnatural?  
Agree.  
Mr. Barlow, you are not young. In all your years have you ever seen, ever heard of a girl who took up crew's work?  
No sir, I never did. So then, is it not unusual?  
I suppose.<sup>17</sup>

Edward Said affirms that the West views the female Oriental with “sexist blinders.”<sup>18</sup> The latter is considered as inherently inferior to the Western male. Since the West defines itself in opposition to the East, it creates binary oppositions such as: the Self, subject and the other, object in order to dominate the latter. Charlotte appears from the beginning to be an Oriental positioned

female figure. The male crew members represent the self and subject, whereas Charlotte is the object and the other. Hence, her status is not natural but man-created. Captain Jaggery says: “A girl who, all agree, is unnatural in every way she acts. Gentlemen, do we not as natural men, need to take heed? Is not our duty, our obligation, to protect the natural order of the world?.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the male characters stand for the West which is considered strong, masculine and superior, while Charlotte represents -the Orient with its weakness, femininity and inferiority.

On this concern, Simone de Beauvoir maintains that throughout history, women have been reduced to objects for men. The patriarchal cultures define man as the norm, authentic, absolute and transcendence. In contrast, woman is defined as deviation, sentiment, inwardness and immanence.”<sup>20</sup> Captain Jaggery despises Charlotte and blames her for causing disorder on the ship. She is considered as a threat to human order because she attempts to challenge men’s authority. In his conversation with Charlotte, the former says:

Do you know why I despise you Miss Doyle?. Do you?

No I admitted.

The world of a ship, Miss Doyle, is a world not without quarrels, sometimes bitter quarrels. But it is, Miss Doyle, a world that does work according to its order. But you Miss Doyle, you interfered with that order. You presumed to meddle where you have no right. Look at the way you acted! The way you’ve dressed! It doesn’t matter that you are different. Don’t flatter yourself. The difficulty is that your difference encourages them to question their places, and mine. The order of things.<sup>21</sup>

As it is illustrated above, Charlotte represents the Oriental who is from a “subject race” as Edward Said puts it. Charlotte is marginalized and subjected because of her gender. She narrates: “Don’t be afraid of her, Captain Jaggery cried. Look at her. She’s nothing but unnatural girl, a girl trying to act like a man. Trying to be a man. She can only harm you by living. Let her have her punishment”.<sup>22</sup> Charlotte is also accused of lying and of committing the murder of the first mate Mr. Hollybrass. The former represents the Orientals who are perceived through the eyes of the West as irrational, brutish and “inveterate Liars.”<sup>23</sup> Captain Jaggery says: “not enough to have murdered Mr. Hollybrass! She would have murdered me. I tell you, she would murder you all.”<sup>24</sup> As Charlotte tries to defend herself, Captain Jaggery cries:

She's the one who lies! The truth is she wants to take over the ship. Yes, she does. Would you stand for that? Do you wish to put into port and have this girl spread the slander that she, a girl, took command of this ship, took over each and every one of you and told you what to do? A girl! Would you ever be able to hold your heads up in any part of the world? Think of the shame of that!<sup>25</sup>

As a matter of fact, the western male believes in his autonomy and superiority since he is perceived as the leader and the one who has the right to rule and govern. Charlotte Doyle represents the oriental female other who is supposed to remain obedient, dutiful, and passive since she is considered as inherently inferior. Through these prejudices, the western male held their power and oppression over women and justify their patriarchal authority which constitutes a part of colonization. "When this voyage began I had high hopes you would help me keep the crew in order with your ladylike ways,"<sup>26</sup>says Jaggery.

As we have mentioned earlier, "identity of 'self' or of 'other' is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies."<sup>27</sup> In other words, people's identity is not innate but rather constructed. Throughout history, men identified women as the other. The patriarchal society invented myths that doomed woman to be inferior, subject as well as relative to man.<sup>28</sup>The former established social categories and constructed binary oppositions that show the difference between us 'men' and others 'women'. This discourse which is built upon the system of exclusion and a structure of lies and myths,<sup>29</sup> as Edward Said maintains, make these inaccurate distinctions become visible and therefore establishing a common truth about reality.

In the novel, Charlotte Doyle represents the oriental female other since she is considered as docile, feeble creature and inferior to the Western male. She is taught from her infancy to look after her appearance; to dress modestly and behave like a lady, and to implicitly obey her father's instructions. Charlotte says:

I rose up, brushed my hair for a full twenty minutes (I did the same at night). Finally, I parted it carefully, wanting it smoothly down—anything to keep from its natural and to

me obnoxious wilderness. I smoothed my dress, robbed my shoes. Then, I went to his cabin door and knocked timidly.<sup>30</sup>

Towards the end of the novel, when Charlotte reaches home in Rhode Island, America, she is confronted to her father's discontentment. Being raised in a patriarchal society, Charlotte is prevented from taking an active role and is expected to act like a doll, with her father determining fundamental conditions and making the key decisions. The latter says:

When I sent you to the Barrington School for better girls, I had been, I believed, reliably informed that it would provide you with an education consistent with your station in life, to say nothing of your expectations and ours for you. I was deceived. Somehow your teachers there filled your mind with the unfortunate capacity to invent the most outlandish, not to say unnatural tales.<sup>31</sup>

The western men reflect the West which is active, while Charlotte is basically the opposite of the male characters and considered to be passive and non-participating, therefore must be subjected to men. While speaking to her father, Charlotte says:

Silence, he roared.  
I closed my mouth.  
What you have written is rubbish of the worst taste. Stuff for penny dreadful! Beneath contempt. Justice, Charlotte is poorly served when you speak ill of your betters such as poor Captain Jaggery.<sup>32</sup>

As a matter of fact, Charlotte represents the Orient which is identified with a bad sort of eternity and tended to be "static, frozen and fixed eternally,"<sup>33</sup> as Said notes it.

To sum up, it can be said that Irving Wortis' *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* carries some patterns of Edward Said's Orientalism, conveyed through the representation of the main female protagonist Charlotte Doyle. Drawing on binary oppositions of the West/East, the author portrays Charlotte as the representative of the Oriental female whereas the male characters as the representatives of the Western male. Wortis tends to show the deteriorating status of woman through the patriarchal discourse. Though Charlotte succeeds at the end and becomes a sailor, women were and still are silenced and unvoiced by the patriarchal culture and society which tell them the way they should act, dress and live. People rely on stereotypes to understand the world

around them, and for this reason they are hard to be overlooked, consequently societal norms are firmly established in people's minds.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p207
- <sup>2</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p2
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid.p2
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid.p2
- <sup>5</sup>Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Ed and trans. H.M. Parshley.UK: J. Cape. 1953, p16
- <sup>6</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p207
- <sup>7</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p19
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid. p18
- <sup>9</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p206
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid.p332
- <sup>11</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p105
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid.p106
- <sup>13</sup>Ibid.p106
- <sup>14</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism : Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p208
- <sup>15</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p118
- <sup>16</sup>Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Ed and trans. H.M. Parshley.UK: J. Cape. 1953, p13
- <sup>17</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p179
- <sup>18</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p207
- <sup>19</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p179
- <sup>20</sup>Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Ed and trans. H.M. Parshley.UK: J. Cape. 1953, pp15-61
- <sup>21</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p202
- <sup>22</sup>Ibid. p 207
- <sup>23</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p39
- <sup>24</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p207
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid.p207
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid.p202
- <sup>27</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p207
- <sup>28</sup>Beauvoir, Simone de. *The second sex*. Ed. and trans. H. M. Parshley. New York : Vintage books, 1989, p1405
- <sup>29</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p6
- <sup>30</sup>Wortis, Edward Irving. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*. New York: Avon Books, 1990, p67-105
- <sup>31</sup>Ibid. p223
- <sup>32</sup>Ibid. p223
- <sup>33</sup>Said, Edward. *Orientalism : Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p208

## Chapter IV : The Othering of Women in *Australia*

Edward Said's designation of Orientalism "as a form of thought for dealing with the foreign,"<sup>1</sup> can be applied to examine the male/female relationship and to describe the process of constructing othering among internal social minorities and subordinate groups such as women. It is important to mention that for centuries, women were oppressed within patriarchal societies. Though they have gained some rights as men, they strive for equality and recognition. In the movie, *Lady Ashley* is going to take a big adventure from England to Australia where she intends to run her husband's cattle farm, Faraway Downs. The former wants to prove herself in a patriarchal society with men being dominant in the workplace. She is stereotyped and portrayed as cowardly as well as incapable of taking action. The manager says: "what Lady Sarah Ashley has to do with Carney's stranglehold of the beef industry!"<sup>3</sup> She is seen as vulnerable, sensitive and a "delicate English rose,"<sup>4</sup> says the station manager Neil Fletcher.

The revolutionist feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir states in her book *The Second Sex* that men dominate women and deprive them of independence"<sup>5</sup>. In Luhrmann's movie, the main protagonist Sarah Ashley is represented as unsafe and dependent on Drover's help. She states: "my husband, Lord Ashley has sent a trusted man to collect me. A Mr. Drover." <sup>6</sup>Lady Ashley and the other male characters are portrayed in stereotypical ways. While the former is seen as being passively dependent, the latter is given primary authority and leadership. This contrasting representation leads to their positioning into binary opposition. Throughout the movie's scenes, one can notice that Sarah Ashley is described as being nice and compassionate, in contrast men are portrayed as being assertive and competitive.

Luhrmann's representation of the British aristocrat Lady Sarah Ashley is a reminder of the characteristics of the Victorian woman. During that era, women were denied intellectual or professional success. They were rather confined to domesticity and were seen as a symbol of marital stability<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, women's outfits show their separation from the public sphere and

workplace. They put on long dresses that enabled them to perform any physical activity<sup>7</sup>ref), just as is the case of Sarah Ashley who wears long tiny dresses.

In the movie, it is also found that the portrayal of Lady Ashley and the other male characters brings about hegemonic purposes as the claim that the cultural stereotype of leadership fits men better than women. Drawing on Gramsci's concept which he identifies as "the leadership based on the consent of the led,"<sup>8</sup> large mass of people give consent so that an idea exist and becomes an accepted norm in society. On this concern, media is an ideological instrument through which hegemony is achieved. Since it promotes certain attitudes and social values that societies hold, it generalizes inaccurate gender stereotypes that determines the roles and characteristics of men and women. As one can see, the idea of femininity is found in history and today's culture as well. Till nowadays, women are subjugated, controlled and underestimated. In his conversation with Lady Ashley, the Drover says:

Lady, this ain't trotting in Kensington Gardens.(Scoffs)  
Mr. Drover, I could show you a thing or two about horses .  
Pretty sure, when it comes to horses, there's nothing you can show me.  
- Bring the horse.  
-You can't be serious.  
Where you think you are going?  
Shanghai?  
A lady never knows what she might need<sup>9</sup>.

Luhrmann's made an allusion to historical and cultural myths about women, which are highly accepted currently. In order to define themselves, the Western male constructed myths and metaphorical concepts which seem to be reasonable. In doing so, they build their racist self-image and esteem. Sarah Ashley is called Mrs. Boss; it is used ironically to demonstrate her weakness rather than strength, and to emphasize her need of man's support and collaboration. She says: "Mr. Drover! Teach me to break them horses."<sup>10</sup> The Drover is depicted as emotionally and physically stronger because of his patience and bearability. In contrast, Sarah Ashley is portrayed as being neither decisive nor constant. While speaking to Lady Ashley, the Drover states:



-You can't win against Carney, so just take my advice, lady. Grab King's Carney's offer and go back to England as quickly as possible -Listen, you said your dream was to breed a thoroughbred with a bush brumby. If you agree to help me, I will give you my Capricornia.<sup>11</sup>

Lady Ashley represents the female other. She is subject to representation since she is put in subaltern situation, which in turn justifies her subordinate status. She is depicted similar to the Oriental who is seen as childlike, irrational and different<sup>12</sup>, whereas the male characters stand for the West which is rational, virtuous, mature and normal.

Furthermore, Lady Ashley and the Aboriginal women are portrayed in stereotypical ways. In fact, it reflects most of the social views of gender. Women are generally seen as seductive and exotic. They are destined to be possessed and exploited. The Drover states: "Like the women of the outback. They're mostly native women, Aboriginal women. They're very easy to,(clears throat) to get along with, if you try."<sup>13</sup> Women are easily fooled, manipulated and enslaved. "Some white stockmen like to have an Aboriginal woman on the drove...to keep 'em company at night. They shave their heads, make 'em look like boys...and work 'em like any other stockman during the day,"<sup>14</sup> says the Drover.

Therefore, Women's stereotypical representation is an ideology adopted, in order to deteriorate their status in society and thus justifying their subordination and subjection. Lady Ashley is perceived as irrational and feminine sexually. The characteristics attributed to her portrayal contrast with men's morality, rationality and masculinity. Actually, this way of thinking originated from the traditional dichotomous thinking, which established a violent hierarchy. Male and female is one of the ancient binaries built in dominance since one category is privileged than the other<sup>15</sup>. While speaking with Sarah Ashley about her husband, the Drover says:

-I'm a brumby man, but his fancy English filly, Capricornia... has really caught my eye. She is gorgeous. I've always wanted to mate an English thoroughbred with a bush brumby.

-Just like you have it on with that poor girl you're exploiting... and-and-and God knows how many others.

-What are you talking about?  
You got a filthy mind, lady. You're an animal<sup>16</sup>.

Drawing on Foucault's notion of discourse which he defines as "regulated practices that account for a number of statements,"<sup>17</sup> one can conclude that the portrayal of the main protagonist Lady Ashley is affected by the traditional patriarchal beliefs, thus Baz Luhrmann's representation of gender roles is a reflection of the patriarchal discourse, which already has been approved and sustained. According to Foucault:

Every society has distinct relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be constructed, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse<sup>18</sup>.

Knowledge and power are inter-related; hence Luhrmann's voice is clearly heard and shown in his movie. It enables him to present femininity focusing on its childish aspect. In this regard, Foucault maintains that "institutions and human beings produce ideas, which eventually create reality for individuals."<sup>19</sup> The meaning acquired from discourse does not only accomplish specific purposes, but also make humans adopt and strengthen previous assumptions, as is the case of femininity.

For centuries, masculinity and femininity were two contradictory characteristics distinguished through culture. Feminine culture is perceived as tolerant and feeling pity for the weak. One can notice that Sarah Ashley is described as anti-racist and sympathetic towards the half-aboriginal child Nullah whom she tries to protect under whatever circumstances. Masculinity as it was and still is seen as carrying essential life values as success, power and development<sup>20</sup>.

Although the latter half of the twentieth century witnessed remarkable changes in the roles and social expectations of women through the activism of feminism, women did not receive the same opportunities as men, particularly in the workplace and the education sector<sup>21</sup>. Women's leadership is believed to be executed in female ways as they lack the fundamental traits that men possess<sup>22</sup>. Stereotypical beliefs are hard to be dismissed since women live in a masculine world, where culture adopts traditional masculine norms. In the movie, Lady Ashley is represented as a weak, feeble

creature. She is effectively voiceless and has given no importance. She is underestimated and subjected by the other male characters. She is portrayed as physically and intellectually inferior.

While speaking to Fletcher, Carney says:

-Are you running cattle out of Faraway Downs, Mr. Fletcher?  
Uh, no, no. I don't work there anymore. Well, I suppose Lady Ashley's droving the cattle herself  
(chuckles) – (Laughs) -  
Someone must be helping her.  
-That's right, Neil. Someone must be helping her<sup>22</sup>.

Women struggle to reach their full potential. Some believed that they might have difficulty doing jobs that involve physical strength. Societal expectations are clearly illustrated in Luhrmann's movie. Women were denied performance of any physical activity, which include skills and power. All along her way to Faraway, Downs, Lady Ashley believes in the need of man's leadership and in the necessity of his contribution and support. She relies on the Drover to collect her. She says: "I am to be met by my husband's trusted man, a Mr. Drover to collect me"<sup>23</sup>. She also asks him instruction: "Drover teach me how to break them horses."<sup>24</sup> The stereotypical representation and the prejudices conveyed through the movie, establish a common sense about reality which according to Gramsci constitutes "a view of the world that is adopted from the past and currently absorbed."<sup>25</sup> Such has been the case of women who throughout history are considered as inherently inferior to men.

In short, Baz Luhrmann portrays his main protagonist Lady Sarah Ashley as a representative of the female other. The attributes given to the latter are similar to some extent with stereotypical western images and prejudices attributed to the Orientals. At the end of the movie, Lady Sarah Ashley succeeds in her mission with the Drover's assistance, and they manage to bring Ashley's husband cattle to Faraway Downs. Society and culture has been telling us for the longest time that women need men, therefore they cannot be independent. This world view is inherited from the past, and is highly adopted nowadays. It is obvious that the American author Irving Wortis and the

Australian producer Baz Luhrmann share nearly the same view about femininity. Though being from distinct geographical areas, their selected works mirror their social mores and expectations, which are all on the forefront of the American and Australian mindset.

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Edward. Said, *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p332

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Baz. Luhrmann, *Australia* (2008), Movie Script, p3

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p4

<sup>5</sup> Beauvoir, Simone de. *The second sex*. Ed. and trans. H. M. Parshley. New York : Vintage books, 1989, p223

<sup>6</sup> Baz. Luhrmann, *Australia* (2008), Movie Script, p2.

<sup>7</sup> Tinklin, Teresa., et al. *Gender and Attitudes to Work and Family Roles: The Views of Young People at the Millennium*. Scotland: Gender and Education. Vol,17. No, 2. 2005.p 130

<sup>8</sup> Bates, Thomas R. *Gramsci and the theory of Hegemony*, University of Pennsylvania press: Journal of the History of ideas, (Apr.-Jun., 1975), Vol.36, No.2.p.352

<sup>9</sup> Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia* (2008) *Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008. p19

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p17

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p18

<sup>12</sup> Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon, 1978, p40

<sup>13</sup> Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia* (2008) *Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008.p8

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.p18

<sup>15</sup> Elbow, Peter. *The Uses of Binary Thinking*. Massachusetts: Journal of Advanced Composition. Vol, 13. No 1. 1993.p 52.

<sup>16</sup> Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia* (2008) *Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008. p9.

<sup>17</sup> Mills, Sara. *Michel Foucault*. London: Routledge, 2003, p3

<sup>18</sup> *Foucault, Michel. Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al. (New York: Pantheon, 1980),p93*

<sup>19</sup> Mills, Sara. *Discourse*. New York: Routledge, 1997, p54.

<sup>20</sup> Kessler Martina. *Female Leaders in the 21st century in a masculine world*. South Africa: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship. Vol 79. No 2. 2014, p2.

<sup>21</sup> Tinklin, Teresa., et al. *Gender and Attitudes to Work and Family Roles: The Views of Young People at the Millennium*. Scotland: Gender and Education. Vol,17. No, 2. 2005.p 130.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Luhrmann, Baz. *Australia* (2008) *Movie Script*. Australia: Bazmark Films Australia, 2008. p26

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.p4-5

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.p17

Stoddart, Mark C. J. *Ideology, Hegemony, Discourse: A Critical Review of Theories of Knowledge and Power. Social Thought & Research*. Canada: University of Columbia, 2007, Vol. 28, p201

## V-Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, we attempted to achieve a comparative study of Edward Irving Wortis' novel *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* (1990) and Baz Luhrmann's movie *Australia* (2008). We have explored how Irving Wortis and Luhrmann deal with the issue of the other, relying on Edward Said's theory *Orientalism* (1978). This theory allowed us to explore the way characters in the selected works, reflect Said's designation of 'the other.'

Through our work, we have demonstrated that despite being from different geographical areas and cultural backgrounds, both works depict common universal themes and issues such as: racial otherness and the othering of women. We can notice that in both works, characters experience . These deteriorating circumstances are what make of them the archetypes of 'the others.' In addition, we have shown that though Wortis' *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* and Luhrmann's *Australia* were written in different periods, they convey the same description as well as self-representation of their characters. Furthermore, we have displayed that both selected works carry the basic elements of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, through their portrayal of women and blacks.

Our comparative study allowed us to develop our critical thinking skills and get a more sophisticated understanding of cultural difference. We think that both mentioned works contain interesting and workable themes that can be studied and explored by other students. Therefore, we invite students to undertake a Marxist study and a feminist reading of Irving Wortis' novel *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* and Baz Luhrmann's movie *Australia*. And also to explore the theme of class in the two selected works.

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