

**Intersections of History and Culture: Migration and Transnational  
Identity in Kirsty Murray's Children of the Wind Series**

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by

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## **A Note on Documentation**

The documentation in the thesis is prepared in accordance with the style format suggested by *MLA Handbook* (9<sup>th</sup> Edition).

## **Abbreviations**

SES – Socioeconomic status

IDPs-Internally displaced persons

## Abstract

The study is based on Kirsty Murray's Children of the Wind series, which comprises *Bridie's Fire* (2003), *Becoming Billy Dare* (2004), *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* (2005), and *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* (2006), four interlinked historical novels for children. The research undertakes a comprehensive methodological exploration of the Children of the Wind series and problematises how contemporary Australian children's historical novels engage with and embrace discussions around transnationalism. In an era marked by a significant rise in nationalism, as well as prejudice and hatred against migrants, children's writers such as Kirsty Murray have emerged as a crucial force in challenging and debunking stereotypes about migrants.

The first chapter delves into the exploration of the Children of the Wind series as an intersection of transnational literature and migration literature through a critical exposition of Kirsty Murray and her body of work. The second chapter examines the socioeconomic and historic-cultural constructions in the Children of the Wind series. The third chapter focuses on the topic of child migration and its various aspects, such as push-pull factors, displacement and nostalgia. The fourth chapter focuses on exploring transnational formations and identity through the lens of the Children of the Wind series, highlighting how child migrants' experiences contribute to the construction of transnational identity.

**Keywords:** Child migration, transnational identity, transnational formations, historical novels and historical consciousness

## സംഗ്രഹം

ബ്രിഡീസ് ഫയർ (2003), ബികമിംഗ് ബില്ലി ഡെയർ (2004), എ പ്രയർ ഫോർ ബ്ലൂ ഡെലാനി (2005), ദി സീക്രട്ട് ലൈഫ് ഓഫ് മേവ് ലീ ക്വാങ് (2006) എന്നിവ ഉൾപ്പെടുന്ന കിർസ്റ്റി മുറെയുടെ ചിൽഡ്രൻ ഓഫ് ദി വിൻഡ് നോവൽ പരമ്പരയെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയുള്ളതാണ് ഈ പഠനം. ചിൽഡ്രൻ ഓഫ് ദി വിൻഡ് സീരീസിന്റെ സമഗ്രമായ രീതിശാസ്ത്രപരമായ പര്യവേക്ഷണം ഈ ഗവേഷണം ഏറ്റെടുക്കുകയും സമകാലിക ഓസ്ട്രേലിയൻ ചരിത്ര നോവലുകൾ എങ്ങനെയാണ് ട്രാൻസ്നാഷണലിസവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട ചർച്ചകളിൽ ഏർപ്പെടുകയും സ്വീകരിക്കപ്പെടുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നത് എന്നതിനെ ഈ ഗവേഷണം പ്രശ്നപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. ദേശീയതയുടെ ഗണ്യമായ ഉയർച്ചയും കുടിയേറ്റക്കാർക്കെതിരായ മുൻവിധിയും വിദ്വേഷവും അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തിയ ഒരു കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ, കുടിയേറ്റക്കാരെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള സ്റ്റീരിയോടൈപ്പുകളെ വെല്ലുവിളിക്കുന്നതിനും ഇല്ലാതാക്കുന്നതിനുമുള്ള നിർണായക ശക്തിയായി കിർസ്റ്റി മുറെയെപ്പോലുള്ള ബാലസാഹിത്യകാരന്മാർ ഉയർന്നുവരുന്നു.

കിർസ്റ്റി മുറെയുടെ സൃഷ്ടിയെ വിമർശനാത്മകമായ ആവിഷ്കാരത്തിലൂടെ അന്തർദേശീയ സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെയും മൈഗ്രേഷൻ സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെയും ഒരു വിഭജനമായി ചിൽഡ്രൻ ഓഫ് ദി വിൻഡ് പരമ്പരയുടെ പര്യവേക്ഷണം ആദ്യ അധ്യായം പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു. രണ്ടാമത്തെ അധ്യായം ചിൽഡ്രൻ ഓഫ് ദി വിൻഡ് പരമ്പരയിലെ സാമൂഹിക സാമ്പത്തിക, ചരിത്ര-സാംസ്കാരിക നിർമ്മിതികൾ പരിശോധിക്കുന്നു. മൂന്നാമത്തെ അധ്യായം കുട്ടികളുടെ മൈഗ്രേഷൻ വിഷയത്തിലും പുഷ്പ-പുൾ ഘടകങ്ങൾ, സ്ഥാനചലനം, ഗൃഹാതുരത്വം എന്നിങ്ങനെയുള്ള വിവിധ വശങ്ങളിലും ശ്രദ്ധ കേന്ദ്രീകരിക്കുന്നു. ചിൽഡ്രൻ ഓഫ് ദി വിൻഡ് സീരീസിന്റെ ലെൻസിലൂടെ അന്തർദേശീയ രൂപീകരണങ്ങളും സ്വത്വവും പര്യവേക്ഷണം ചെയ്യുന്നതിലാണ് നാലാം അധ്യായം ശ്രദ്ധ കേന്ദ്രീകരിക്കുന്നത്.

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## Introduction

The thesis critically examines the complex approaches and strategies children's writers adopt that challenge the stigma of simplicity associated with children's literature, thereby bringing light to the capacity of the children's historical novels to engage and address complex issues in a transnational era. Children's literature is often characterised as innocent, inept and lacking the gravity found in works intended for adult audiences. This perception stems from the belief that children themselves are inexperienced and unsophisticated. The idea of being straightforward and crude stigmatises genres and subgenres of children's literature. Citing the examples of "Dickens, Hardy, Joyce, Woolf, and Thackeray," Peter Hunt points out that an exhaustive search of their critical works reveals no "mention of their work for children," which is evidence of the perception that "children's books" were "marginal to literary studies" (6). The prevailing inclination to perceive literature for children as trivial and not so complex is still a deeply entrenched notion in academia and the literary realm. It is crucial for scholars and educators to challenge this perception and recognise the value and complexity of children's literature.

Carrie Hintz's *Children's Literature* (2020) explores the stigma of triviality associated with children's literature and the marginalised status of the field. A dominant perspective within literary scholarship has traditionally positioned children's literature as embodying purity, simplicity and entertainment value. This belief, deeply ingrained in our understanding of children's literature, is encapsulated in the assertion that "children's literature is anything with a shorter, simpler structure; works with shorter, simpler structures are children's literature" (Hintz 10). This statement highlights the circular definitional construct inherent to the concept of children's literature and underscores the pervasive nature of this conviction. The

stigma of simplicity and lack of depth associated with children's literature extends to most genres and sub-genres.

Children's historical novels are one of the genres in children's literature most susceptible to the aforementioned ideas of purity, innocence and triviality. The deeply ingrained notion of simplicity associated with children's literature frequently overshadows historical novels written for young readers. Therefore, children's historical novels often remain overlooked in the realm of critical analysis, receiving relatively limited critical attention. Children's historical novels distinguish themselves by specifically imagining the implied reader as a child or a youngster. This idiosyncrasy in the perception of the implied reader makes children's historical novels distinct from the forerunners called historical novels. Despite being an extensively used genre of children's literature among academicians and librarians, children's historical novels maintain a peripheral position in academia. Consequently, it has often escaped the researcher's focus and lens of critical inquiry, leading to a knowledge gap in critical discourse regarding children's historical novels. Reducing the research gap can call for a more comprehensive examination of how historical events are portrayed and how accurately cultures are represented in narratives, thereby significantly shaping young readers' perceptions of history. Additionally, addressing the knowledge gap by building on existing research can increase the genre's value in education and literary studies.

Contrary to the common perception of simplicity, children's historical novels are intricate and multifaceted, akin to literature designed for adults. Margaret Meek and John Sharwood Smith, in their article "The Historical Fiction for Children" (1980), mention that Geoffrey Trease, in *Tales Out of School* (1949), for the first time cogently criticised the common perception of children's historical novelists as

inferior. Meek and Smith concur with Trease's strong opinion that a children's historical novelist is not "simply an inadequate adult novelist but an artist in his own right" (Meek and Smith 60). It is essential to recognise that children's historical novels, much like their adult counterparts, can introduce "discord, potentiality, and perplexity" (de Groot 90). While historical novels can challenge established historical narratives, they also hold the potential to reshape historical accounts within the boundaries of deeply ingrained ideologies. Despite its pervasive use as a pedagogical tool within established educational frameworks, children's historical novels have yet to elicit robust engagement with theoretical frameworks and critical analysis from the academic community. In an era characterised by a resurgence of nationalist sentiments, it becomes crucial to critically examine the ideological content embedded within children's historical novels, given its potential influence on young and sensitive minds.

Children's historical novels provide an ideal platform for exploring national constructs because they primarily eulogise the country's political and global images, thereby encompassing a subset of the nation in narratives. Children's historical novels are an effective teaching tool for promoting national construction by incorporating themes and ideas into school curricula and pedagogical practices. The narratives of children's historical novels intersperse national constructs such as national identity, national hero, national costume, national symbols and everything else that can unite an "imagined political community" known as a nation (B. Anderson 6). Such constructs make it easy to distinguish between 'we and them' by playing a "role in the development of children's understanding of both belonging (being one of us) and differentiation (being other)" (Meek x). Thus, children's historical novels use national

identity as a potent literary tool to project dichotomous frameworks such as ‘them and us.’

Children’s historical novels play a crucial role in shaping young readers’ understanding of both their own national identity and that of others. Margaret Meek states, “National identity, commonly regarded, is a stylistic way of identifying differences between ‘us’ and ‘others’, chiefly in terms of origins, optings and associations” (ix). A critical examination of the politics involved in selecting and integrating specific historical events into novels and an in-depth analysis of the reasons behind celebrating certain events while excluding others in children’s historical literature will reveal additional facets. It is also crucial to consider the impact of highlighting specific characters as focal characters or antagonists in children’s historical novels on the perception of heroes and villains. This underscores the need for a more inclusive and nuanced portrayal of national identity in children’s literature.

Furthermore, a nation’s literature frequently mirrors the longstanding hostilities between countries, serving as a primary means of delineating the dichotomy between them and us for young readers. For instance, in literature, writers often represent the heroes as ‘us’, while they typically portray the antagonists as ‘them.’ These projections are ubiquitous in writing that adheres to methodological nationalism in terms of its content, themes and motifs. The literary corpus of nations is typically characterised by a pervasive undercurrent of mutual antagonism, manifested through a cycle of recrimination and blame-shifting directed at each other. However, it is worth considering the case of a multicultural country such as Australia, which embraces a mosaic cultural model. It prompts us to consider the national identity of individuals portrayed as antagonists and protagonists in children’s

historical novels. Hence, perpetuating tales of traditional antagonism in narratives highlights the potential harm of propagating old animosity between cultures, leading to cultural wars.

According to Jerome de Groot, children's historical novels effectively establish and delineate the concept of "nationhood and national identity" (94). Historical novels often exhibit a proclivity for adhering to a national framework, i.e., a national paradigm, establishing national constructs and fostering a collective sense of identity. Authors of historical novels use national myths, legends, cultural heritage and socio-political episodes to reinforce the notion of national identity among readers. These constructions serve to delineate a nation's perception and position on the global stage, while also reinforcing these perceptions among readers. Therefore, literary works that embrace and exalt transnationalism and transnational identity are counter-narratives that challenge and redefine prevailing literary norms.

The process of redefining the national paradigm in children's historical novels is a counter-discourse, achieved through two distinct approaches. The first approach that looks into transnational history challenges the limits of a single national view and methodological nationalism, which means believing that the nation is the natural and necessary unit of analysis for understanding social, political and economic events. A "transnational" approach to history is a "response" to limitations or "problems" arising from "national histories" (Curthoys and Docker 235). Typically, authors of historical novels choose a singular national perspective in their portrayal, focusing mostly on their own nation. Novels that trace transnational history are a counterargument to this existing perspective. Writing and researching about another country and effectively conveying it in the story is a complex undertaking. When trying to chronicle the history of a foreign nation that doesn't correspond with the

author's own national identity, certain cultural barriers may emerge. These barriers could be anything from impediments arising from the intricate linguistic complexities to cultural biases, making it more difficult to understand the history of that country and its intricate web of transnational ties. As a result, authors who attempt to portray transnational history within the framework of historical novels demonstrate remarkable courage.

In the second approach, the concept of a singular national identity is disrupted by celebrating transnational identity. In a global context where immigrants often face suspicion and hostility, especially during the rise of nationalism, celebrating transnational identity holds significance. In contemporary politics, political parties employ the strategy of othering, which is an act of portraying a group as fundamentally different from and alien to the rest of society, as a means to gain an advantage in political competitions. This othering strategy often results in the marginalisation and exclusion of certain groups, imposing a significant burden on those who must demonstrate their nationalism to withstand social auditing. In a time characterised by the pursuit of unwavering national allegiance, celebrating transnational identity within literary works represents a bold and impactful assertion.

In an era of surging nationalism, the poetics of children's historical novels face a formidable challenge. Traditionally, purveyors of children's historical novels have promoted national ideals, educating future generations through national stories and legends and thereby fostering a fervent sense of national consciousness. However, when writers choose to depict transnational narratives, they deviate from this norm. Celebrating migrants' transnational identities in narratives can cause tension, as nationalist movements frequently demand monolithic loyalty from immigrants and their descendants. This constructs a fraught dynamic as children's literature navigates

between fostering inclusive identities and adhering to hegemonic nationalist expectations. Understanding how these historical narratives, which embrace transnationalism as a theme and a counter discourse to rising nationalism, are thriving in contemporary times is a compelling research problem.

The thesis aims to examine the intricate components of modern children's historical novels and their capacity to challenge the prevalent national framework. Children of the Wind series reinvent the standard national paradigm inherent in historical novels by emphasising transnationalism during the nationalist era. The series deviates from the conventional patterns of children's historical novels through two discrete methods. First, the series sheds light on a concealed historical occurrence about child migration, symbolising a solemn period in the country's past. Historical novels, traditionally used as a tool to elevate a nation's status and heritage by inspiring readers with a sense of nationalistic pride, diverge from this established paradigm by incorporating a nation's grim historical realities and subsumed narratives. Consequently, the projection of subsumed historical events can potentially evoke a sense of national shame, disrupting the long-standing teleological function of the historical novel, which is to construct a narrative that glorifies the national image by enticing nationalistic pride. Secondly, the Children of the Wind series deviates from genre conventions by embracing the concept of transnational identity during a period characterised by prejudice and suspicion towards immigrants, presenting a direct challenge to established societal norms. In a historical era characterised by pervasive global nationalism, this distinctive area of divergence from the generally accepted norms of the genre serves as a significant testament to defiance.

Within a specific context of Irish-Australia, the Children of the Wind series delves into complex themes such as migration and transnational identity. The series

explores a multifaceted array of subjects, such as the phenomenon of child migration, the formation of immigrant identity, the transnational dimensions of diaspora, the process of cultural assimilation within a multicultural society and the influence of community on shaping historical narratives. The Children of the Wind series explores the protagonist's evolving sense of self, one that transcends national borders and embraces a transnational identity. This journey of self-discovery becomes increasingly pronounced with the culmination of each narrative.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The thesis aims to provide insights into the narrative portrayal of child migration, explicitly focusing on the Irish experience in Australia and the construction of transnational identity portrayed in the Children of the Wind series. By redefining the traditional national framework prevalent in historical novels, Children of the Wind series highlights the significance of transnational connections amidst the emergence of nationalism. The study looks into how transnationalism challenges our reading of historical novels for children.

The study's objectives are to investigate how child migration is depicted within the narrative framework of the Children of the Wind series, as well as its underlying implications and nuanced subtexts. Furthermore, the study endeavours to scrutinise the crucial role that nostalgia plays in cultivating a steadfast connection to the homeland among the child migrants portrayed in the series. In addition, the study examines the challenges faced by child migrants in the process of reconstructing a sense of 'home' in host land and reflects on the psychological mechanisms and strategies, notably 'nostalgia', employed in the narrative to attain transnational identity. Next, it aims to evaluate the significance attributed to historical fiction within the realm of children's literature and assess its efficacy as a genre in cultivating

historical awareness and consciousness among its readership. Finally, the study critically examines ‘transnational identity and transnational formation’ as essential elements of the narrative’s transnational approach.

Kirsty Murray’s *Children of the Wind* series serves as the study’s focal point and is regarded as critical primary material. The study conducts a textual analysis of the series by drawing theoretical speculations from the discourse on migration, diaspora and transnationalism. To enrich the analysis and gain deeper authorial intent, an email interview with Kirsty Murray was conducted, and an excerpt of the same is attached in the Appendix of the thesis. Additionally, the study uses relevant academic literature, including books and peer-reviewed articles, as secondary materials to provide a strong theoretical foundation and contextualise the textual analysis.

## **Literature Review**

Within the realm of academic and critical discussions surrounding diaspora, transnationalism and migration, there is a prevalent focus on terms like route and root. Numerous scholars have thoroughly analysed these terms, which have significantly evolved within the framework of transmigrant-diaspora discourses. Contemporary critical and literary theories have examined the notion of *root* through the postmodern perspective of rhizome, resulting in the transformation of *root* into a concept that encompasses multiple directions. Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari introduced the term rhizome in, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980). Since then, this concept has gained significant traction in the fields of Postcolonial and Diaspora Studies. Within diaspora discourses, the term rhizome pertains to the state of being multi-rooted for a migrant individual within a global landscape marked by transnational movements. This seminal text propose the concepts of “connectivity, heterogeneity, and multi-directionality” within contemporary language, culture, and

identity studies (Lahiri 163). Critical theories examining migrant subjectivity have observed a transition from a hierarchical structure or arboreal to a more lateral or rhizomatic approach in the development of migrant and diaspora Studies.

In *Diaspora Criticism* (2006), Sudesh Mishra, a key figure in the field, presents an analysis that classifies the paradigm shift in diaspora theory into three phases. As per Mishra's analysis, the initial phase emphasises the "subjective division between the host land and the homeland," which he calls "dual territoriality" (Mishra 16). According to Mishra, the initial phase serves as a representation of the concept of diaspora, specifically emphasising its arborescent nature, characterised by branching and division. The first phase represents the root-generated (arborescent) idea of diaspora, in which split and duality play a significant role. "Gabrielle Sheffer, Walker Connor, William Safran, and Robin Cohen" are the key players in this phase (Mishra 14; Lahiri 21). Whereas, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, James Clifford, Deleuze, and Guattari are pioneers of the second phase (Mishra 16–18). The second phase favours laterality, and the diaspora is lateral and multipolar in contrast to the first phase's linear and bipolar orientation (Mishra 17; Lahiri 22). The second phase saw a shift towards emphasising transnational connections and the impact of globalisation on diasporic communities. Mishra describes the third phase as the "archival turn," a critical reassessment of earlier approaches and a growing focus on the specificities of individual diasporas (100). Mishra contends that during these phases, diaspora criticism has frequently depended on excessively simplified frameworks and disregarded the influence of economic forces in producing diasporic realities. He advocates for a more discerning and sophisticated approach that considers the intricacies of globalisation and the varied experiences of diasporic cultures.

The proponents of the transnational studies during the early 1990s established it as a theoretical framework and sought to redefine the role of migrants as influential social agents, diverging from the previous emphasis on transnational studies mostly centred on multinational firms and other organisations. The phenomenon of transnationalism has led to an increased focus on migrants as active participants in fostering social connections. *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods* (2010), Rainer Baubock and Thomas Faist offer an extensive elucidation and examination of the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism, emphasising their interrelatedness while recognising subtle differences. Seminal texts that extended scope of transnationalism encompass *Transnationalism* (2009) by Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism, Nationalism and Australian History* (2017) by Anna Clark et al., *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (2005) by Avtar Brah, and *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized NationStates* (1994) by Basch, Linda, et al. These texts, along with many others, have been instrumental in expanding our understanding of transnationalism

Numerous contemporary scholarly publications and academic articles have emerged, delving into the intricacies of transnationalism. In, “Transnationalism: Current Debates and New Perspectives” (2022), Miriam Tedeschi et al. delve into new insights within the arena of transnational studies. The article details the research process, which involved analysing a selection of highly cited recent articles and books on transnationalism. This analysis aims to gain insights into the prominent scholarly theories and the changing discourse in the field (Tedeschi et al. 604). Tedeschi et al. additionally examine the various challenges faced by the field of transnationalism, as well as the wide range of materials and methods employed in analysing this complex phenomenon. “(Dis)connecting migration: transnationalism and nationalism beyond

connectivity” (2020) by Magdalena Nowicka; “Disrupting Globalisation: Transnationalism and American Literature” (2018) by Begona Simal-Gonzalez; “Literary Transnationalism: A Europeanist’s Perspective” (2016) by Peter Morgan; and “Responding to Transnationalism Phenomena” (2023) by Sebahattin Ziyanak give insights into the current debates and perspectives in the field of transnational studies.

Transnational literature, particularly within the context of Australian literary discourse, has gained scholarly attention in recent years. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, Australian authors have projected themes of migration, diaspora and cultural exchange, reflecting several complexities and fluidity of identity. The literary landscape of Australia, significantly influenced by migration and colonialism, reflects the multicultural identity of the nation. However, this multicultural phase has emerged through a series of distinct and evolutionary periods. The first settler Europeans who settled in Australia tried to maintain Anglo-Celtic dominance, but waves of immigration from Asia and the Pacific changed the face of the nation. Australian literature took a new direction after colonialism; it marked the emergence of inclusivity through the multiple voices and stories of immigrants, thus opening up the space for transnational perspectives.

In *Australian Literature: Postcolonialism, Racism, Transnationalism* (2007), Graham Huggan highlights the transformative impact of globalisation on national literature, including Australia’s. He argues that globalisation has led to the emergence of transnationalism, which is prominently seen in cultural creation and consumption. The text concludes with a compelling argument for adopting a transnational perspective in Australian literary studies, challenging the prevailing view of Australia as an isolated entity in the global literary landscape (Huggan 150). Children’s

literature, with its unique role in navigating discussions on nationalism, plays a significant part in fostering global dialogue. This is particularly evident in the context of Australia's transnational nature, marked by culturally hyphenated migrants and internal divisions within the diaspora. The historical novels in particular have effectively depicted Australia's complex genealogical and cultural dynamics, characterised by conflicting narratives and tensions.

John Foster et al., in *Bush, City, and Cyberspace: The Development of Australian Children's Literature into the Twenty-First Century* (2005) examines the transformation of children's literature in Australia. The study highlights the transition from didactic, romantic and hierarchical narratives to more liberal, realistic and inclusive representations (Foster et al. 9). Additionally, it examines the evolution of Australian children's literature, specifically focusing on its transition from emulating British literary traditions to developing a distinct and original style. Furthermore, it critically investigates the evolving perspectives on immigrants and the concept of Australian identity. The predominance of recurring themes centred on the challenges posed by harsh environments, bush rangers and resilient indigenous populations were prominent characteristics in a significant portion of children's literature about Australia during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The transition from parodying British culture to embracing its distinct style is striking. *Bush, City, and Cyberspace* further emphasise the predominant thematic preoccupation of Australian literature with migration.

James Clifford discusses the concepts of "route" and "root" in his influential work *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (1997). He contrasts the idea of roots, which is fixed and essentialist identities tied to a place of origin, with routes, which refer to movement, travel, and dynamic cultural exchanges

that shape identities (7). Similarly, Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) critiques essentialist notions of racial and national belonging by framing the diaspora as a circulatory network of ideas, people, and cultural practices (19). Together, James Clifford and Paul Gilroy dismantle the myth of cultural purity, demonstrating how identities are forged through routes—historical displacements, forced migrations, voluntary travels, and the constant flow of ideas. Their work shifts the analytical focus from origins to pathways, from exclusionary narratives of belonging to inclusive models of becoming. This theoretical lens proves especially vital for analysing postcolonial, migrant, and diasporic experiences, where identity is often negotiated across multiple geographies and histories. By privileging movement over stasis, both scholars offer a framework for understanding identity as a process that is perpetually in flux, contested, and remade through encounters across difference.

In spite of the fact that migration is a foundational and ubiquitous theme in Australian literature, a concerning lacuna exists within the scholarly and literary corpus regarding the theme of child migration. Despite Australia being the most considerable dumping ground for child migration, the nation's literature has not adequately represented it. In *The Forgotten Children: Fairbridge Farm School and its Betrayal of Britain's Child Migrants* (2017), David Hill asserts that the untold stories of the children residing there present a starkly different and disturbing picture compared to the academic and historical records (xxiii). David Hill, a child migrant in Australia, recognises the lack of research on child migration. The dearth of in-depth scholarly and literary output on child migration compels us to question the existing priorities in migration literature. However, there is a limited number of texts dedicated to the topic of child migration to Australia, including Alan Gill's *Orphans of the*

*Empire: The Shocking Story of Child Migration to Australia* (1997), Philip Bean and Joy Melville's *Lost Children of the Empire* (1989), Gordon Lynch's *UK Migration to Australia 1945–1970* (2021) and Ellen Boucher's *Empire's Children* (2014).

Kim Wilson's *Re-Visioning Historical Fiction for Young Readers: The Past through Modern Eyes* (2011) and Charlotte Beyer's "Hungry-Ghosts: Kirsty Murray's Irish-Australian Children of the Wind Series" (2014) are two impactful scholarly investigations of Children of the Wind series. In *Re-Visioning Historical Fiction for Young Readers: The Past through Modern Eyes*, Kim Wilson observes a noteworthy pattern in reimagining and reworking historical narratives, which are shaped to align with contemporary social and political ideological perspectives. According to Kim Wilson, the perception of the past is contingent upon the lens of the present era. To substantiate the argument, Wilson provides several illustrations, including the second book, *Becoming Billy Dare*. The author recognises the persistent presence of the contemporary within historical contexts. Wilson also notes that multiculturalism-focused children's historical stories frequently mirror current political ideologies and viewpoints (8). Wilson argues that children's historical tales foster notions related to national identity.

Charlotte Beyer's article "Hungry Ghosts: Kirsty Murray's Irish-Australian Children of the Wind Series" (2014) also explores Irish identity and trauma representations in Kirsty Murray's selected novels. Beyer's article included in *Internationalism in Children's Literature* (2014) explores "how the protagonists of Children of the Wind negotiate the experience of diaspora" (Beyer 176). Editors Karen Sands-O'Connor and Marietta A. Frank, in their introduction to *Internationalism in Children's Literature* (2014), observe that the Children of the Wind series pivots around "individual child-migrant characters and their journeys

towards becoming identified with Australian identity and culture” (12). Beyer’s article also sheds light on how marginalised voices and invisible perspectives can emerge, thus contributing to the nuanced representation of identities and belonging.

Despite the significant contributions of Kirsty Murray to the field of Australian children’s literature, very few studies have been conducted on her works. The research gap underscores the need for further research to explore child migration, diaspora and transnational identity as depicted in the *Children of the Wind* series. The exploration of multifaceted possibilities presented in the literary works of authors like Kristy Murray is a highly pertinent matter within the current socio-political landscape. A research inquiry into the concept of migration and transnational identity holds significant relevance within the socio-political and cultural framework, not just within a specific nation’s literature but also on a global scale. In light of Australian politician Pauline Hanson’s discourse on immigration and concerns regarding Australia’s susceptibility to foreign domination, it is imperative to initiate a reassessment of the contentious issues surrounding nationalism and diversity. In the global setting, a perpetual struggle exists between a nation’s sense of nationalism and its international policy promoting diversity, making this research a pressing and important task.

The research undertakes a comprehensive methodological exploration of the *Children of the Wind* series. The study examines the interconnections between history, culture, migration and transnational identity, as indicated by its title. The research problematizes how Australian children’s historical novels engage with the transnational and how contemporary children’s historical novels embrace discussions around transnationalism. The *Children of the Wind* series depicts the plight of migrants who strive to make a home in a new country and their resistance to cultural

stereotypes and assimilation. Additionally, the study examines how transnationalism challenges our interpretations of children's historical novels.

## **Chapter Framework**

“Introduction,” serves as a foundational framework for the subsequent exploration of the chapters in the thesis. The introduction discusses major components, such as the research problem, research aims, methodology, review of related literature, relevance of the research and chapter divisions. Introduction serves as a road map to the following chapters by providing a comprehensive overview of the existing literature and meticulously dissecting the scholarly contributions that shed light on the research domain. The significance and relevance of this research are then explicated, highlighting its potential to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. Finally, a meticulously crafted chapter division for the ensuing chapters provides a clear overview of the thesis's organisational structure.

The first chapter, “Critical Exposition: Journeying through Kirsty Murray's Narratives,” is an inceptive study of Kirsty Murray and her body of work for children. While migration-related themes and their critical analysis are not new in academia and literature, the issue of child migration, a significant and complex one, has been largely overlooked by writers and academicians. This underrepresentation in literature, particularly in historical novels, is a knowledge gap that needs unstinting attention. Despite its dark and grim nature, the theme of child migration has not captured the same level of attention as themes like World War I, World War II, civil wars, the Holocaust and slave narratives. The study aims to shed light on how Murray, a significant figure in children's literature, tackles these complex issues in her novels for children. The study locates the Children of the Wind series at the

intersection of transnational and migration literature, highlighting the potential outcomes and motives behind Murray's work.

The second chapter, "Unravelling the Past: Socioeconomic and Historic-Cultural Constructions in the Children of the Wind Series," scrupulously studies the socioeconomic and historic-cultural constructions in the Children of the Wind series. The study appreciatively investigates how the author skillfully depicts and navigates socioeconomic differences and injustices in the fictitious universe, including the narrative and thematic components such as Irish diaspora, ethnicity, sectarianism and socioeconomic status of the Irish in Australia. In the case of Children of the Wind, socioeconomic constructs act as catalysts for either slowing down or boosting the rate at which a migrant integrates into a host country, as well as the reluctance to fit in. The chapter aims to investigate how the author depicts and explores social gaps and inequalities within the fictitious universe by examining the Irish diaspora, their ethnic status, and their socioeconomic status (SES), and exploring the implications these factors have for the characters and the larger narratives.

The third chapter, "Push-Pull Factors, Displacement and Nostalgia: The Subtexts of Child Migration in the Children of the Wind Series" focuses on the topic of child migration and its various aspects. The discussion commences with a comprehensive analysis of child migration, encompassing a precise definition and an exploration of diverse historical occurrences of child migration throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Australia. Subsequently, the chapter examines various reasons that served as catalysts for child migration, as depicted in the series and evaluates the extent to which these representations align with historical accuracy. Murray's work is grounded in the fact that it is primarily fictional, but at the same time it draws heavily from real-world historical verities and social tribulations

and her representations of child migration emanate from extensive research and consultation with erudite resource persons in the field. The phenomenon of displacement is an inherent aspect of child migration, giving rise to potential psycho-social challenges for the young migrants. Hence, the research examines different forms of displacement and their resulting repercussions, as depicted in the series. The chapter additionally elucidates diverse psychological methods employed by child migrants to manage the experience of displacement and the resulting bereavement. Dealing with the present through longing for the past, nostalgia serves as a coping mechanism for child migrants.

The fourth chapter, “Negotiating National in the Era of Globalisation: Transnational Identity in the Children of the Wind Series”, deals with the concept of transnational identity and transnational formations of the characters. Transnational formations in this context refer to how the characters’ identities and experiences are shaped by their interactions and movements across national borders. It looks into the transnational identity formation of child migrants and the various literary approaches employed by Murray to narrate the aspect convincingly by building characters and their identities. The chapter also sheds light on various transnational formations of characters in the series based on parameters like mobility and locality. The study identifies four types of transnational formations as propounded by Janine Dahinden and critically examines how characters’ transnational identities are connected with such formations.

“Recommendations” open up a world of potential for future research in the field. The study, at its core, focuses on diaspora and transnationalism, offering a myriad of opportunities to probe into diverse cultural and political issues. The research can be advanced by exploring the historical fiction for children as a unique

category, seen as a socio-political commentary through the lens of new historicism. The research could be further enriched by including additional authors from Australia who exhibit comparable characteristics in their written works. There is also a fascinating opportunity to expand upon the study by establishing connections between contemporary historical fiction for children from India and Australia. The research can be further deepened by examining the correlations between government policies about emigration and historical fiction within the same temporal context, a potential area that promises intriguing findings.

The study concludes with a summary of the research findings in the previous chapters. It brings to light how Kirsty Murray addresses the theme of migration and transnational identity in the *Children of the Wind* series. In an era marked by a significant rise in nationalism, as well as prejudice and hatred against migrants, children's writers have emerged as a crucial force in challenging and debunking these stereotypes about migrants. For example, Murray challenges the misconception that an immigrant diaspora's identity is rigidly bound to either the homeland or the host land, which is redefined by projecting transnational identities. Murray's narratives effectively defy the dominant national paradigm in children's historical novels by actively embracing transnational history and transnational identity.

## Chapter One

### **Critical Exposition: Journeying through Kirsty Murray's Narratives**

An educational piece of writing or a story focused on the phenomenon of migration has the potential to foster comprehension of cultural diversity and ethno-regional dissimilitude, contributing to the development of tolerance and social inclusivity among its readers. Similarly, reflecting on the identity crises inherent in migratory experiences can foster readers' nuanced understanding when faced with real-life situations. This chapter critically analyses Kirsty Murray's narratives for children, delving into the fundamental themes and motivations that shape her storytelling. Murray's narratives for children, especially historical novels, feature the theme of migration as their central subject. Understanding the phenomenon of migration and its associated experiences can provide valuable insights that broaden young readers' perspectives. Furthermore, the chapter assigns a specific locus to *Children of the Wind* at a critical intersection of migration literature and transnational literature.

Deciphering a text's underlying motives is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of both the author's intent and the subsequent impact on the readers. The study identifies four motives in Kirsty Murray's *Children of the Wind* series: (i) fostering historical consciousness; (ii) projecting subsumed past or historical events; (iii) redefining the national paradigm typical of historical novels for children; and (iv) highlighting marginalised focal characters. The chapter begins with an introduction to author Kirsty Murray and a critical exploration of her works. Next, it explicates transnational literature and migration literature, elucidating its intersecting elements in

Children of the Wind. Finally, the chapter culminates with an analysis of the discerned outcomes and motives of Children of the Wind.

### **Kirsty Murray: An Introduction**

Kirsty Murray's passion for children's literature has earned her several literary awards and global recognition. Among these awards were the Western Australian (WA) Premier's Award, the New South Wales (NSW) Premier's History Award, and the Aurealis Awards for Best Children's Book in 2013, confirming her standing as an influential writer in the field of children's and young adult literature. The State Library of Victoria, acknowledging her exceptional literary contributions, bestowed upon her the esteemed position of Creative Fellow in 2006. Furthermore, her artistic journey charted an international trajectory, immersing her in the Asialink Literature Resident Project in India between 2007 and 2012. This enterprise broadened her literary horizons and fostered cross-cultural communication, resulting in storylines that resonate globally. Murray received recognition for her passion and competence with a nomination for the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award in 2017–2018. These distinguished recognitions are a testament to her far-reaching contributions to children's literature.

In Murray's works, one finds an explicit intersection of history and culture, allowing young readers to interpret the text in their own way without streaks of didacticism. In an interview conducted with Murray, she asserts that "didacticism in children's literature undermines children's engagement with the text. Children have a keen sense of justice and are often highly moralistic – even more-so than adult readers. Heavy-handed moral instruction can alienate young readers" (E-mail). Murray strongly believes that, more than indoctrinating, the text should engage with

the readers' minds by delighting and educating them. Though the embedded ideas in a text can influence the readers in many ways, an explicit didactic approach, where the text preaches too much on what is good and evil, can destroy the essence of the narrative.

Children's historical novels have an inherent tendency to indoctrinate and dictate to their readers about a nation's past by eulogising the country as a hero. However, Murray consciously avoids such preaching and imbuing ideologies by adopting a transnational approach, using focal characters from varied ethnic and racial backgrounds to contemplate historical contexts. This employment of focal characters of a transnational nature helps to provide a fresh perspective on historical contexts. Transnational dimensions are highlighted in her narratives for children while scrutinising the focal characters and their identities. Murray's transnational approach, in turn, redefines the concept of Australian national identity and the evolving nature of Australian nationalism. It takes great effort to interrogate the national paradigm in children's historical novels to redefine such established notions of national identity. An overview of Murray's extensive bibliography will shed light on her literary strategies to bring a transnational approach to her narratives.

As a children's writer, Murray understands the subtle link between a nation and its children's literature. Her historical novels stand as exemplars of exceptional craftsmanship, bearing substantial literary merit amidst the array of genres she has authored. Murray contends that in her "twenty-five years of working as a professional author," she has a much "better understanding of how every nation wants their children to understand their culture and their history" (E-mail). Her experience as a writer has contributed to a much clearer understanding of the strengths and limitations of children's literature. The statement "better understanding of how every nation

wants their children to understand” shows her profound understanding of the subset called ‘nation’ inherent in historical novels for children. Her historical novels for children are a by-product of this understanding of the nation’s role and connection to children’s literature. Engaging in a close reading of Murray’s celebrated literary oeuvre stands as an effective means of shedding light on her noteworthy impact on the realm of children’s literature, as well as her distinctive imprint on the body of contemporary historical novels designed for young audiences.

Murray has written numerous children’s novels with nuanced thematic exploration and literary approaches. However, a distinct subset of her works falls into a coherent category unified by the overarching theme of transnationalism. These works either feature a character grappling with an identity crisis or embody transnational themes in their very essence. A brief overview of her select works, including *India Dark*, which was published in India as *The Lilliputians* (2010), *The Year It All Ended* (2014), *Strangers on Country* (2020) and *Eat the Sky, Drink the Ocean* (2014), apart from her seminal Children of the Wind Series (2003–2006), substantiates the implicit yet pervasive transnational framework tacit in these narratives.

Kirsty Murray’s *India Dark* (2010) is a historical novel, set in the 1900s in Madras, India, exploring the often overlooked and ordinary aspects of Australia’s history, grounding the narrative in comprehensive research. The narrative unfolds through the eyes of Poesy Swift and Tilly Sweetrick, who find themselves compelled into a life of servitude throughout their formative years. The story revolves around two girls reaching India as a part of a travelling theatre group and how they are compelled into certain precarious circumstances. *India Dark* effectively encompasses all “five components outlined in The National Statement for Engaging Young

Australians with Asia in Australian Schools,” pertaining to the learning aims and the novel is deemed appropriate for “pupils in the age range of Years 7-10” (“India”). This novel critically analyses a transnational historical event that has received limited attention in the literary realm. Judith Way and Helen McIntyre assert that *India Dark* serves to enhance students’ “comprehension of the relationship between Asia and Australia” (10). The incorporation of Asian and Australian experiences in Murray’s text serves to foster inclusivity, enhance understanding and safeguard cultural heritage, all the while elevating the voices of marginalised communities and facilitating cross-cultural exchanges on a global scale.

*India Dark* would not have been possible without Murray’s personal experience of travelling to India and closely observing the cultural components and regional specificities included in the book (Way and McIntyre 10). Murray received funding from the Australian Council and served as an Asialink Resident at the University of Madras in 2007. This invaluable experience allowed her to enhance the vividness of her imaginative setting by physically visiting the various locations frequented by the theatre troupe. She journeyed all the way to India to get a taste of the local customs and to research historical records to prove the veracity of the story surrounding the Lilliputian Theatre. On the theatre circuit that linked Australia and India, hardly any secondary sources were accessible (15). Fieldwork in India and extensive library research at several Australian institutions provided Murray with empirical evidence and factual information.

The idea of transnational dimensions of history is a recurring concept in Murray’s historical novels. *India Dark*’s core framework, which revolves around an Australian theatre troupe travelling to India, serves as a clear illustration of transnational aspects, including the advancement of travel methods and

communication technology that facilitate interconnectedness. The novel addresses prejudices and discriminatory attitudes that can emerge when two cultures confront each other, thereby encompassing transnational aspects as a prominent theme. Thus, the novel brings to light a marginalised historical event underrepresented in mainstream narratives, while also celebrating the transnational nature of Australian history.

The novel *The Year It All Ended* (2014) explores the identity crisis of German-Australians against the historical backdrop of the First World War. Murray uses characters from various national and ethnic backgrounds to portray a historical story from a different perspective. *The Year It All Ended*, a historical novel, portrays the plight of families during First World War and its consequences from a German-Australian perspective, particularly focusing on a “German-Australian family and the attitudes they faced during the war” (Werry). The story begins and ends in Adelaide, Australia, with the narrative later shuttling to France and Belgium, much like in Murray’s other works. This reaffirms the nature of historical perspectives as well as how the author employs focal characters to ruminate on historical events.

Ananda Braxton-Smith opines, “*The Year It All Ended* is a heavily researched book, built on both primary and secondary source materials. The book delves into voices often overlooked in narratives pertaining to wars. These voices include those belonging to ‘enemy aliens’ and pacifists” (3). Murray adeptly depicts the estrangement experienced by German-Australians and the enduring consequences of war on mothers and children. The story portrays the process of ostracising individuals who are considered others within the nation. The novel explores the unfortunate reality of discriminating against individuals deemed racially ‘different’ in a society. Braxton-Smith says that the “notion of an enemy within” flourished during the “First

World War” in Australia, and “this notional enemy may plainly be anyone, anywhere, anytime, dependent on a state’s particular conflicts in any given period” (7). The ‘enemy inside’ metaphor is prominent in the literature that deals with national construction. People often view immigrants who maintain transnational ties as “enemies within” or “traitors abroad” (Dunn 26). “Regardless even of multi-generational settlement and contribution to a state. In Australia during WWI German-Australians became this perceived ‘enemy within’. After 9/11 throughout the West, people of Middle Eastern descent (or appearance) took on that notional role” (Braxton-Smith 7). In contemporary context, Pauline Hanson’s address in parliament, where she warned Australia that Asians were “swamping” it, is a notable manifestation of this internal enemy fabrication (Martino). Such subtle images of ‘enemies within’ in literature and everyday discourses might serve as a catalyst for ostracising people based on their national identity.

Murray’s methods of writing include deep levels of research, new historical approaches and direct visits to the locations to collect data and facts for the historical novels. Murray is a “total pedant when it comes to research,” and she does “masses of research for every aspect” of “historical fiction, including visiting the settings” (Eugenia). A direct visit to the regional locale of her novels is another method she adopts in writing novels. For instance, she spent a significant amount of time in “India and Southeast Asia” conducting research for her novel, *India Dark*. Likewise, “to research *The Year It All Ended*,” Murray “spent time in the Barossa Valley, many weeks in Adelaide and travelled across Europe, including visiting the war graves in the Somme and Belgium and then travelling to Berlin” (Eugenia). Murray believes that actual travel and experience of the backdrops can strengthen the plot and details of the stories by bringing factual accuracy. This conviction manifests in the form of

personally embarking on transnational flights to the settings of her novels, where she actively seeks to immerse herself in the local culture and interact with the people, thereby infusing her writings with a natural essence.

Murray's literary works predominantly explore intricate subjects like migration and diaspora, offering young readers an insightful perspective into Australia's notable history of immigration. Murray's historical novels offer a unique viewpoint on storytelling through history by featuring characters who are migrants from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds, thereby ensuring that each book has a distinctive voice and perspective. For example, *The Year It All Ended* centres on German-Australian protagonists, whereas *Children of the Wind* focuses on Irish-Australian characters, enriching her storytelling by weaving the complexities of migration into the fabric of historical narratives.

The deliberate selection of focal characters from diverse ethnic backgrounds provides a varied perspective for examining historical tales. For instance, *Strangers on Country* (2020) tells each story from the perspectives of two focal characters: an Indigenous person who befriends a stranger on their land and a lost person or prisoner who finds a place to stay ("Strangers on Country"). By imagining events from the perspectives of both Indigenous Australians and Europeans, Murray brings real stories to life, fostering connections and empathy. By narrating the same event through the eyes of two main characters, the story achieves a multi-voiced quality that helps readers grasp different points of view.

*Eat the Sky, Drink the Ocean* (2014) is an anthology of stories that resulted from the "cross-border confabulations" of the contributors (Murray et al. viii). In this

work, Murray collaborated with one of the most popular writers from India, Manjula Padmanabhan. The book's introduction articulates the motivation behind the work:

We asked our contributors to reimagine the world, to mess with the boundaries of the possible and the probable. Then we threw them another challenge. They were to work their magic in collaboration with a partner from the other country. Over Skype and e-mail they shared stories about the challenges of being a girl or woman, and speculated how the world could be otherwise. Our cross-border confabulations produced seventeen works of fiction-six graphic stories, one play script, and ten short stories. (Murray et al. viii)

*Eat the Sky, Drink the Ocean* is a product of "cross-border confabulations" and connections between India and Australia. The editors of the book say, "Ultimately, this is a book about connections-between Australia and India, between men and women, between the past, the present, the future, and the planet that we all share...everything's connected" (ix). This book serves as a transnational literary creation because it involves literary construction, distribution, or collaboration between authors from other nations via co-authorship.

Apart from the aforementioned novels, Kirsty Murray has written several texts for children and young adults. Her works include *Man-eaters and Bloodsuckers* (April 1998), *Howard Florey Miracle Maker* (October 1998), *Tough Stuff: True Stories About Kids and Courage* (June 1999), *Zarconi's Magic Flying Fish* (November 1999), *Market Blues* (February 2001), *Walking Home With Marie-Claire* (October 2002), *Bridie's Fire* (November 2003), *Becoming Billy Dare* (December 2004), *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* (September 2005), *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* (September 2006), *A Penny to Remember* (September 2007), *The Red Camel*

(February 2009), *Vulture's Gate* (August 2009), *The Four Seasons of Lucy McKenzie* (August 2013), *The Clever Cats' Bookclub* (March 2013), *Topsy Turvy World* (2013), *Puddle Hunters* (2018), *When Billy was a Dog* (2019), *Kids Who Did* (2019), *Shadow Catchers*(2023).

### **Children of the Wind Series**

Children of the Wind series encompasses four historical novels, *Bridie's Fire* (2003), *Becoming Billy Dare* (2004), *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* (2005) and *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* (2006) chronicling the Irish-Australian saga. *Bridie's Fire*, the first book in the Children of the Wind series, chronicles the story of Bridie, a little girl of Irish descent who is compelled to leave her homeland and relocate to Australia due to the dire repercussions of a famine. "Bridie's world is torn apart when her parents and baby brother die in the Great Hunger. She leaves Ireland and strikes out alone to claim a life for herself in Australia, on the other side of the ocean" ("Bridie's Fire"). Upon arriving in Australia, Bridie experiences the discrimination and social exclusion that the Irish community faced throughout the colonial era in the 1800s. Like many immigrants, Bridie encounters challenges in adapting to a new environment, particularly when she must maintain her faith and cultural identity as an Irish individual. The protagonist's refusal to assimilate into British society, as imposed by external forces, leads to a state of identity crisis, which is ultimately resolved harmoniously towards the end of the narrative. In the successive book, *Becoming Billy Dare*, Bridie assumes the role of an adult character, mentoring Paddy Delaney, the central figure in the second novel. *Bridie's Fire* has achieved several awards, such as the NSW Premier's History Awards (Shortlist for the Young People's History Prize) in 2004, the CBCA Notable Book (Children's Book Council of

Australia) in 2004 and the WAYRBA Shortlist in 2005 (West Australian Young Readers Book Award).

*Becoming Billy Dare*, the second novel in the series explores the narrative of Paddy Delaney, who migrates to Australia following the passing of his mother, driven by the belief that there are no compelling ties to keep him in Ireland. Under the impersonation of Billy, Paddy enrolls in a theatrical ensemble to investigate his prospects and professional trajectory. Billy develops a close friendship with Bridie during his time in Australia, gaining valuable insight into the experiences of migrants and the complex dynamics of different cultures. The narrative concludes with Billy attaining recognition and approval within his social circle and theatrical community, bolstering his self-assurance to establish a permanent residence in Australia. In the subsequent novel of the series, *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, Billy re-emerges as an adult character and companion to Colm McCabe. *Becoming Billy Dare* achieved the CBCA Notable Book award in 2005.

*A Prayer for Blue Delaney* (2005) depicts the story of Colm McCabe, a young individual raised as an orphan within the confines of a British orphanage. As an integral part of the child welfare initiatives in Britain, Colm and other orphaned children are involuntarily moved to Australia. Due to the maltreatment and torment experienced throughout his time in the orphanage, he absconds alone and during his expedition, Colm encounters an elderly individual named Billy, who assumes his role as a mentor. As a result of their close bond, Blue Delaney, the daughter of Billy, decides to adopt Colm formally. Colm struggles with an initial identity crisis, ultimately finding a resolution as the novel progresses. In the subsequent work, *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* (2006), Colm McCabe assumes the role of a mentor to the central character, Maeve. *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* won the WA Premier's

Book Award in 2005 for Young Adult Writing and the CBCA Notable Book Award in 2006.

*The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* (2006) explores the story of Maeve, a “fourteen years old girl caught in a moment in time, between two sides of her family and two worlds. Connected to generations of immigrants from around the world, Maeve’s story is intertwined with characters from each of the novels in the Children of the Wind series and brings the series to a close” (“Secret Life”). Maeve investigates her ancestral roots, enabling her to understand the whereabouts of her estranged father, who had abruptly severed contact with her mother during Maeve’s early childhood. To re-establish her connection with Ireland, she embarks on a journey to the country accompanied by Colm McCabe, who now assumes the role of her instructor. Meanwhile, she also recognises her Chinese cultural roots, which first instilled a sense of resentment due to cultural biases. Ultimately, Maeve successfully navigates her identity crisis by acknowledging and comprehending the multifaceted nature of her being. In 2007, the Western Australia Young Readers Book Award included *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* on its shortlist.

### **Intersections of Transnational and Migration Literature**

Transnational literature and migration literature are two mutually interconnected literary studies dealing with concepts such as displacement, mobility, identity and cultural exchange. Both fields of study deal with human movements, but transnational literature focuses on capturing the socio-economic and political implications of these movements on a global scale. Migration literature, on the other hand, narrows its focus on people’s experiences when they migrate, highlighting their emotional and cultural crises. Both migration literature and transnational literature

help to comprehend how people navigate through the experience and complexities of migration by shedding light on concepts such as home, identity and belonging in a fast-changing world. The *Children of the Wind* series embodies the qualities of both transnational and migration literature. The intersection manifests in the series in the form of multiple cultural perspectives, the experience of diaspora, identity formations and the belonging and experience of migrants, adding transnational dimensions to the narratives. This intersection helps readers understand the complexities of movements, cultural exchanges and the formation of identities in a globalised world.

Transnational literature, to propose a minimal definition, are “literatures that implicitly or explicitly transcend the nation-state and/or national language” (Bionda). In that way, transnational literature is the literature of interconnectedness established through economic, socio-cultural, political symbolic dimensions between nations through the ties maintained by migrants (Portes et al. 221; de Jong 496; Jay, *Transnational* 62). Paul Jay in *Transnational Literature: The Basics* (2021) asserts that transnational literature places “emphasis on transit—on mobility, migration, travel, and exchange, forms of experience that create bonds between people, while fostering a sense of national unity, also connect people and their cultural practices across, over, and through geographic and human made borders” (10). A transnational approach to literature is a “critical method, not a description of inherent cultural forms,” and it is “relatively easy to take a transnational approach to Australian or indeed any other kind of literature” (Giles 1-4). A singular national perspective or methodological nationalism would otherwise be a parochial point of view, fitting literature that explores transnational themes into the “rubric of Australian literature,” thereby “drastically diminishing the range” of literature and compressing its “planetary scope” into a much more “restrictive domestic circumference” (Giles 4).

To encapsulate characteristics, the term transnational literature encompasses a diverse spectrum of literary works that surpass national boundaries through numerous features and processes such as co-authorship, cross-border publications, translation potential, and thematic investigation of identities and notions of belonging in multiple countries.

There exists a panoply of mechanisms by which a book ascends to transnational status, transcending boundaries in terms of its thematic elements, “intercultural and linguistic understanding, translation, production, publication, distribution,” imagery, readership, as well as its circulation (Morgan 13). For a text to have a transnational character, it must incorporate a conflux of elements, including form, content, or theme, that combine with “literary production in liminal spaces and border zones, characters and stories marked by mobility, texts that explore the experience of migrancy and the formation of new, hybrid identities” (Jay, *Transnational Literature* 53). Consequently, transnational literature is fundamentally concerned with migration and mobility. Transnational literature probes into the thematic exploration of the immigrant experience and the construction of identity within the framework of transnational migration. Transnationalism as a literary approach “leads to a better understanding and explanation of migration and integration and the interrelations between them” (Pries 242). Another notable characteristic of transnational literature is the text’s genesis within a singular national context, followed by its subsequent dissemination and reception by a geographically dispersed readership. An additional aspect of transnational literature involves the potential for investigating co-authorship, as exemplified in Kirsty Murray’s *Eat the Sky, Drink the Ocean*.

Two distinct modalities engage a text with a transnational approach. First, a text’s production, authorship and circulation involve transnational dimensions through

form. Secondly, through content, the narrative employs images, characters, ideas and literary tropes related to transnationalism. Romain Bionda, in “‘Transnational’: Potential and Limitations of a Concept in Literary Studies,” identifies several dimensions that make a text transnational: “the identity and self-perception of literary characters; the identity and self-perception of authors”; “trans- and multilingual works”; “the reception of texts (similar to ‘world literature’ as defined by David Damrosch and others: as literature circulating beyond its place of origin)”; “the identity of characters and authors” (Bionda). Hence, factors such as the way characters and authors perceive their identity, the presence of multiple languages in the texts and the circularity of the text that goes beyond its nation of origin can contribute to the transnational nature of texts. *Children of the Wind* as a series is truly a transnational endeavour, considering criteria such as (i) crossover in readership and over-reaching popularity of the author, (ii) the identities of the characters, and (iii) the theme of migration. An overview of the aforementioned aspects will substantiate the transnational approach implicit in the *Children of the Wind* series.

A significant way in which a text can become transnational is through the crossover in readership. When the text surpasses the boundary of implied readers, it means that the text was able to entice a wide range of audiences by disrupting national and social boundaries. Quantifying the readership and quota sampling based on the nationality of readers is an impossible task. The presence of books in curricula is an evident manifestation of the popularity of the book and the wide spectrum of readers it engages. This engagement often leads to a richer dialogue among readers from different backgrounds, fostering a greater understanding of diverse perspectives. This inclusion not only signifies educational value but also reflects the text’s relevance in contemporary discussions. Besides the inclusion in the syllabus, the awards texts

garnered are also evidence of the overarching influence of books. Awards often highlight themes that resonate across cultures, further amplifying the book's transnational appeal. When a book gets itself included as a learning material, it reaches a diverse audience, toppling the actual intended audience. So, in a text that embraces a transnational approach, the text inherently possesses the potential to expand its implied audience and reach a broader readership.

For instance, Murray's *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* is studied in secondary institutions in Germany. "German schools use" an "abridged English-language edition of the novel as a required text in Year Nine and as a study of Australian history and landscape" ("Prayer"). Another peculiar example is the incorporation of *Bridie's Fire* on the EN422-Elective Course syllabus for the MA English Language Literature program at Calicut University, Kerala (Syllabus). The incorporation of a text into the curriculum of a foreign nation's educational system transcends the author's metric, providing evidence of the author's popularity across borders. Such inclusions serve as a potent indicator of the text's ability to resonate with a geographically and culturally distinct audience. This phenomenon underscores the text's capacity to navigate cultural boundaries, fostering intercultural understanding and propelling it into the realm of transnational literature. However, the mere fact that an author has achieved international recognition and that the text has been incorporated into syllabi doesn't make a text fit into the category of transnational literature. The confluence of transnational themes, transnational identities and transnational approaches imbued in the text makes it a truly transnational endeavour.

The creation of characters possessing transnational identities serves as another significant criterion for classifying a text within the realm of transnational literature. In *Children of the Wind*, the characters' racial and national identities range from Irish,

British, American, Chinese, Aborigines, Australians, Irish-Australians, Shamrock Aborigines and Africans. The focal characters, however, are all of Irish descent, either first-generation migrants or successive generations of migrants. *The Children of the Wind* depicts a diverse array of characters, thereby prompting an inquiry as to whether it qualifies as a multicultural text. One could argue that the text identifies multiculturalism as its ideology, but a close examination of the focal characters reveals that all other characters, except for Irish-Australians, are subdued or marginal. The mere presence of multicultural characters cannot make a text truly multicultural, as the narrative consistently focuses on Ireland, Australia and the transnational formation of the migrants. When questioned about the emphasis on Irish focal characters in the interview, Murray states:

Nearly 40% of Australians have an Irish ancestor somewhere in their family tree. Many Irish political prisoners were transported to Australia during the convict era and their ideas of political rebelliousness informed Australian ideas of nationhood. Ireland was brutally colonised by the British and there are parallels between their history and that of Indigenous Australians. Irish values and Irish culture are deeply entwined in our national consciousness. (E-mail)

The series thus constructs Irish-Australian identity by intricately weaving its characters' transnational experiences into a broader narrative of intersections of history and culture.

The third and final criterion that establishes *Children of the Wind* as a representative of transnational literature is the narrative's inscribed concept and portrayal of migration. The idea of migration, mobility and displacement is vital to transnational literature. According to Paul Jay, transnational literature "focuses

attention on the alternately liberating and disruptive effects of mobility of all kinds—demographic, cultural, technological, informational, and economic” (*Transnational* 62). Transnational literature encompasses not only human migration and mobility but also concepts such as the dissemination of ideas and the transfer of culture across national boundaries. However, the movement of people across national boundaries remains the crux of transnational literature. In transnational literature, migration or displacement can refer to either the character’s journey or the writer’s experience as a transmigrant. Thus, the persistent phenomenon of human movement, migration, and displacement remains a prevalent topic in transnational literature.

Thematic explorations of migration and diaspora are linchpin aspects of transnational literature. Transnational literature is “characterised by an engagement with the experience of the migrant and the refugee, with people who have embraced new forms of mobility as a way to escape poverty, war, and injustice, or who have become displaced by these forces” (Jay, *Transnational* 62). As a result, contemporary migration and transnational studies focus on the inextricable link between migration and transnationalism (Lauer and Wong 1054). Though the migration described in *Children of the Wind* is from older times, it still has relevance. Murray states in the interview that during the writing of *Bridie’s Fire*, the “Australian political discourse surrounding refugees revolved around the phrase ‘these are not the people we would choose; these are not the sort of people we want in our country’, a sentiment that paralleled the 1840s arrival of Irish orphan girls under the Earl Grey Famine Orphan Scheme” (E-mail). The rhetorical similarities between the current refugee crisis and historical Irish migration, along with the consistent political loathing and biases against migrants, allow readers to connect and contrast the experiences of first-generation migrants with contemporary migration, making the theme universally

appealing despite its focus on Irish migration. The transnational dimensions of history and culture make it simple for readers across the nation to understand the narrative in a fresh light rather than through the traditional lens of methodological nationalism.

The emergence of migration as a pivotal interdisciplinary subject in social sciences and literary studies coincided with a juncture where the existing lexicon for describing contemporary nuances of migration became inadequate. Critics of the field contend that prior terminology describing immigrants “no longer suffices” because migrants arrive in their “new country of residence with practices and concepts formed at home,” belonging to “politicised populations” and holding “specific class affiliations,” and subsequently engage in “complex activities across national borders that create, shape, and potentially transform their identities” (Glick-Schiller 1-4). The existing theoretical and critical glossary’s inadequacy in categorising literature dealing with the notion of migration has become problematic. For example, in the literary domain, the term migration literature evolved as a necessary replacement for the existing term migrant literature.

The term migrant literature was employed in a broad sense to encompass the literary expressions of migrants, which manifest as memoirs, autobiographies, or fiction. However, academia has deemed the phrase inadequate in encompassing elements of migration-related writings that are authored by individuals who are not migrants themselves yet still delve into the diverse intricacies of migration and the experiences of immigrants. The term migration literature refers to a collection of works that thematically coalesce around the phenomenon known as migration and the diverse experiences associated with migrants. “Contrary to the case of migrant literature, a text is classified as migration literature according to its thematic content and narrative perspective, not according to the biography of its author” (Petersen).

Many critics, such as Frank Soren and Sandra Vlasta, have pondered the necessity of distinguishing between migration literature and migrant literature when it comes to narratives concerning migration and migrants, emphasising the significance of the emerging category of ‘migration literature’.

Frank Soren, in *Migration and Literature: Gunter Grass, Milan Kundera, Salman Rushdie, and Jan Kjaerstad* (2008), suggests a replacement for the word *migrant literature*, which was previously used as an umbrella term. Therefore, critics “propose a shift in terminology from ‘migrant literature’ to ‘migration literature’—that is, a move away from authorial biography as the decisive parameter, emphasising instead intratextual features such as content and form as well as extra-textual forces such as social processes” (Soren 3). To encompass diverse experiences and nuances, it is necessary to replace or add terms to the existing glossary on migration. Authors have transferred the term migration, once seen as a biographical trait, to their fictional characters’ experiences. According to Soren, migration as a central theme in migration literature refers not only to the “life of the author but also to the lives of the fictional characters as well as to the overall thematic framework and the discursive strategies of the novels” (15). This is how migration is interpreted in works pertaining to the category called migration literature, thereby paving the way for a diverse range of experiences pertaining to migration to be recognised within the canon of literary works.

In *Contemporary Migration Literature in German and English: A Comparative Study* (2015), Sandra Vlasta defines the term *migration literature* as the “corpus of texts,” distinguished by its subject matter, that is, “by the fact that it deals with the experience of migration” through demonstrating “similarities in the themes and motifs that occur in the texts” (41). However, different authors present these

themes and motifs in varied creative ways, which makes all the difference. Similarity criteria that bind migration literature as a coherent corpus include discussions of “homeland, generational ties, and alternative national histories” (Kessler). Therefore, critics consider ‘migration literature’ to be a better terminology than ‘migrant literature’ because this classification can accommodate numerous narratives about migration that are not biographically linked to the author’s ethnicity or origin.

Australian children’s literature is a rich repository of narratives about migrants and the history of migration. In “Migration and National Identity,” Maureen Nimon says, “migration, central to the history of Australia since 1788 and the most powerful force in shaping its present society, is integrally related to definitions of being Australian... It is, therefore, not surprising that the conscious decisions of people entering citizenship either as immigrants or as native-born... are explored in fictional realms” (36). Therefore, migration is a national theme in Australian children’s literature, although perspectives on migration have varied over time in response to political events. In a similar vein, Pat Pinsent asserts that “contemporary children’s fiction tends to a greater extent than in the past to make readers more aware of the migrant community than in the past” (181). Thus, migration has undeniably emerged as a dominant theme in modern children’s literature.

There is a zoomed-in focus on the different aspects of migration in Murray’s *Children of the Wind* series, which is a prime feature of migration literature. When child migrants leave their homeland, the emotional agony and dilemmas they face are vividly portrayed in her narratives. For example, before her voyage to Australia, Bridie dreams about the journey. The dream is described as “That night, Bridie dreamed of the journey,” lying on the cold floor of the workhouse (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 69). She dreamed, “She was walking between great columns of water, red as

blood and towering hundreds of feet above her...She could just make out the figure of a boy...And then behind him, the sea began to fold back in on itself...The roaring of the sea filled her ears as waves crashed down upon the small figure, sweeping him from her” (69). The imagery of ‘sea’ in the dream metaphorically signifies the impending loss of connection with her surviving brother, Brandon. Once she crossed the sea, her only connection with her homeland was severed. Another poignant instance in *Bridie’s Fire*, which portrays the pain of migration, is depicted when the orphan girls migrating to Australia weep for their homeland while going through their belongings in boxes, which reminds them of their family. Margaret O’Shea, one of the orphan girls “holding a locket from her mother with tears in her eyes,” says, “Ah, but it’s a harsh thing to be sent away from your own loved country and all your own folk” (85). She starts wailing, and all the other girls soon start to cry because the pain they felt from leaving their homeland is heartbreaking.

Similarly, a conversation between Colm and Sister Mercia in *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* portrays the hopes and dilemmas involved in the experience of migration. In between the journeys, Colm wishes to return to England, as he reflects, “How could Australia ever be his home? His home was with his mother” (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 17). So, when Colm throws a tantrum about returning to England, Sister Mercia says, “Perhaps, when you grow up, you’ll go back for a visit” (17). Migration-related discourses instill this theme of returning to the homeland. As the story unravels, we see that Colm visits his homeland many years later. Paddy Delaney also reflects on whether people who migrate “happily leave” or if it is the “grief and loss” that drives them to sea (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 62). When Paddy thinks about his homeland and a return, he is dismayed by the idea that “there would be no welcome for him” at his home, as nobody wants him there (84). Murray’s novels

portray the multifaceted apprehensions and dilemmas of migrants and deciphers migrants' experiences from psychosocial perspectives.

In *Children of the Wind*, the author does not use her own migration experience but instead explores the characters' migratory experience by combining fiction and fact through a compelling narrative. The experience of child migrants is not the author's direct experience, as Murray was never a part of child migration schemes. However, with the help of historical documents and testimonies, she mapped the idea of child migration by combining historical facts with those of imaginary characters. For instance, Murray says, "This is a work of fiction, and Bridie O'Connor is an imaginary girl, but her experiences are based on fact" (*Bridie's Fire* 251). Other novels extend a similar approach, embedding the imaginary migrant characters in historical contexts. The *Children of the Wind* series cannot be considered a representative text of migrant literature because the narrative does not originate from the author's personal experiences; instead, it falls under the category of migration literature. As a representative text of migration literature, this series not only narrates the experience of migration of focal characters but also that of others with varied socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. The persistent focus on the theme of migration makes this series a proper fit into the migration literature.

The issue of migration is important in children's literature because it facilitates the development of empathy and comprehension among young readers regarding the challenges faced by people who relocate to unfamiliar territories due to a range of socio-political reasons. Additionally, it has the potential to foster cultural understanding, empathy and acceptance of diversity while simultaneously addressing the obstacles and psychological barriers associated with migration. In an age where the burgeoning of nationalism marks the era, it is intriguing to examine what

children's authors portray in their narratives about migrants. Robin Cohen, in *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, says that "the sudden proliferation of diasporas and similar phenomena has triggered a considerable degree of apprehension among Western academics and commentators. There has suddenly been a heightened consciousness that diasporas can represent a threat to the nation-state and the liberal-democratic order" (192). A nation's literature, at its best, reflects such apprehensions. In an era where 'Asian exclusion', 'Islamophobia', 'Kung flu', and 'wog' are trending hashtags to represent immigrant prejudice and discrimination, it is essential to examine the depiction of migrants in children's stories critically.

To conclude, *Children of the Wind* stands at the intersection of transnational and migration literature by blending traits of both. This series has a transnational appeal because of its wide readership, themes and characters that transcend national boundaries. Its place within migration literature is defined through a vivid portrayal of the myriad nuances associated with migration and the psychosocial aspects of migrants. This achievement was not derived from personal migratory experiences, but rather from meticulous research and study of historical migration patterns in Australia. The series combines the distinctive traits of both transnational and migration literature, presenting a narrative embedded in historical context and resonant with the personal stories of its characters, thus offering a comprehensive exploration of identity, belonging and mobility across borders.

### **Motives and Outcomes**

The objectives or desired outcomes that Murray aims to accomplish with the *Children of the Wind* series are: (i) fostering historical consciousness; (ii) projecting subsumed past or historical events; (iii) redefining the national paradigm typical of

historical novels for children; and (iv) highlighting marginalised focal characters.

Pioneers in the field view the celebration of the transnational approach as a response to nationalism, as “transnational perspectives often challenge or contest notions of purity and exclusivity often associated with nationalism” (Jay, *Transnational* 9).

Murray’s *Children of the Wind* could be the best example of how children’s writers negotiate nationalism in the transnational era.

### **Fostering Historical Consciousness**

Historical novels, by nature, have the scope of providing multi-faceted perspectives on past events, leading to multiple interpretations that could arise from diverse cultural and social viewpoints. Hence, historical novels offer political room for revisionist perspectives on history due to their inherent scope of variability within the prose universe. Perry Anderson makes the significant claim that historical novels have “intrinsic heterogeneity” (“From Progress”). It is evident that writers approach historical events from a multitude of perspectives, influenced by a range of factors encompassing the prevailing political climate, ethnic influences, and adeptness in research methodologies governed by historical consciousness. Historical understanding is a critical insight into the underlying historical contexts of “discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limit, series, and transformation” (Foucault 24). Foucault disrupts the notion of history as a smooth, linear progression and argues for a view of history marked by “ruptures and discontinuities,” which emphasise temporal orientation. Foucault asserts that distinct sets of rules, ideas and power structures govern different historical periods. Thus, the diverse array of viewpoints engenders the emergence of varying storylines and narrative threads woven around a singular event, as exemplified in the varied perspectives on Australia’s discovery or foundation myths. While British authors embark upon the account of the British

fleet's arrival in 1788, the Indigenous populace recounts a narrative laden with conquest and massacre. This contrast highlights the varying interpretations of historical events based on cultural perspectives and experiences, underscoring the importance of considering multiple viewpoints for a comprehensive understanding of history. The landscape of Australian literature is replete with manifold interpretations and analytical explorations of a plethora of historical junctures. These varied interpretations, or "intrinsic heterogeneity," are often the result of historical consciousness interacting with collective memory and temporal orientation.

*Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (2004), edited by Peter Sexias, explores inclusive notions of historical consciousness and the intricate interplay of collective memory, context, and temporal orientation in fostering historical understanding. Academics often use the terms "historical consciousness" and "historical understanding" interchangeably, but these terms belong to two distinct pedagogical traditions: "historical consciousness," which originates from "Germany" through the philosophical writings of Jorn Rusen and his colleagues and "historical understanding," arising from "Anglo-American tradition," which adheres to a more pragmatic and empirical educational agenda (Sexias, "Historical" 59). Essentially, historical consciousness and historical understanding are terminologies that represent distinct perspectives on comprehending the temporal orientation of individuals and societies.

Historical consciousness is defined as a "trans-generational mental orientation to time. Such an orientation is based on the human aptitude to think back and forth in time. Moreover, historical consciousness means an interaction between making sense of the past and constructing expectations for the future" (Ahonen 699). The journal *History and Memory* defines historical consciousness as the "area in which collective

memory, the writing of history and other modes of shaping images of the past in the public mind merge” (qtd. in Sexias, *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* 8).

However, many people equate “collective memory” with “historical consciousness” (8). It is possible to think of collective memory as an integral part of historical consciousness or a prerequisite for historical awareness. The ability to foresee the past with complete awareness of the historicity and relativity of all narration requires a certain level of expertise to acquire or impart historical consciousness.

Jorn Rusen divides the general competence of making sense of the past into three sub-competences: (i) “competence of historical experience,” (ii) “competence of historical interpretation” and (iii) “competence of historical orientation,” which are associated with “form, content, and function” of historical narratives (69). These sub-competencies interact and interrogate the reader’s schema and repertoire to instill historical consciousness through narratives. The convergence of interpretation, experience and orientation produces this awareness, which authors of historical novels convey through the form, content and function of their stories. Writers use genre conventions such as linear, autobiographical, biographical and expository to portray a specific milieu in form, thereby projecting a historical experience. Form and content converge to enhance the function of providing historical orientation through “historical sensitivity” (69). This historical orientation is the “mirror of past actuality into which the present peers in order to learn something about its future” (67). A text’s subject matter, structural elements and function interact to form historical consciousness, which in turn creates an awareness of the “web of temporal change entangled in our lives and the future perspectives towards which this change is flowing” (67). The intersection of sub-competencies and the core principles governing

historical consciousness interact to form historical understanding through a text's subject matter, structure and function.

Historical consciousness operates primarily through and with the assistance of historical memory by (i) "affirming," (ii) "negating," (iii) "transforming" and (iv) "identifying patterns" (Rusen 71). Historical consciousness constitutes an apprehension and comprehension of antecedent times, profoundly intertwined with memory, history and culture. Its exploration of individual temporality is underpinned by historical memory, governed by "four core tenets" as delineated by Jorn Rusen, such as "affirmation, identifying patterns, negation, and transformation" (71). Predominantly, historical consciousness serves to imbue "present actualities" with a "temporal" perspective derived from the past (66). This cognitive endeavour transpires at the nexus of history and culture, fostering an interpretative framework for comprehending the past, present and future. Firstly, the foundational pillar of this cognitive process is the "affirmation of a given orientation," guiding its trajectory (71). Secondly, the recognition and contemplation of the "regularity of cultural patterns and life patterns" facilitate heightened self-awareness and a deeper comprehension of one's milieu. Thirdly, "negation" and fourthly, "transformation of topical orientating patterns" are operative constructs (71). These principles primarily serve to guide pragmatic existence through an enhanced understanding of historical underpinnings.

Jorn Rusen asserts that "affirmation of a specific orientation" is the first principle in fostering historical consciousness. The principle of affirming a specific orientation asserts that specific socio-cultural perspectives and contexts fundamentally shape and influence historical consciousness. Subjective viewpoints, cultural contexts, and a variety of other factors shape historical narratives, making them more than just

an objective rendering of past events (Rusen 71). *Children of the Wind* employs the historical understanding of Irish-Australian history to affirm a specific orientation. Young readers understand the challenging circumstances and unique context of the Irish diaspora in Australia. In *Becoming Billy Dare*, the author uses the paratext to affirm the demarcation between history and fiction and how entangled they are in the narrative: “This is a work of fiction, but in writing it, I hoped to shed some light on an important era in Australian history. Although I had to use my imagination to create Paddy Delaney, the world in which he lived was a real one, and the events of his life are based on fact” (253). Each book includes such notes along with research references, which aids the reader in comprehending the book’s blend of reality and fiction. These reflective pieces provide a space for confirmation or refutation of the desired direction.

To develop historical consciousness, another key principle that operates along with historical memory is the ability to recognise cultural or life patterns. Identifying cultural or life patterns helps to connect seemingly disparate events and phenomena, revealing underlying continuities and broader historical trends. The ability to use history as a mirror to make informed decisions in the present in order to create a better future is a function of historical consciousness. *Children of the Wind* series effectively captures an exotic era and successfully connects its social atmosphere and culture to the present day. The history of discrimination against Chinese and Irish provides context for current complaints about Asian exclusion. In order to connect the stories from the past and the present and to think about historical continuity, a reader must recognise these patterns in narratives. One of the outcomes of *Children of the Wind* is to foster such awareness in young readers. Despite their “persecution and expulsion,” Murray claims that the Irish and the Chinese have significantly

“contributed to Australian culture and history” (Murray, *Secret Life* 251). Identifying the discrimination and expulsion themes within Murray’s story can aid young readers in gaining a better understanding of historical contexts.

Negation, another operating principle of historical consciousness, involves critically engaging with and challenging established narratives, thereby fostering a more nuanced understanding of history. Negation as a principle encompasses several skills such as identifying gaps and biases, critical engagement with affirmation of orientation and rejection of simplistic views. For instance, Hamish Dalley describes how critics and historians examine particular works for anachronistic and fabricated details. Hamish Dalley brings up the example of the novel *The Secret River* (2005) written by Kate Grenville, which was awarded the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2005. In *The Postcolonial Historical Novel: Realism, Allegory, and the Representation of Contested Pasts* (2014), Dalley writes on the contentious nature of history:

While some of those texts have been feted as important contributions to national literary traditions, others have been excoriated as opportunistic, aesthetically flawed, or even dishonest in their blending of history and fiction. In 2005–6, for example, Kate Grenville’s Commonwealth Writers Prize-winning *The Secret River* (2005), which depicts frontier violence in nineteenth-century Australia, was attacked by historians, cultural critics, and political commentators, who described it variously as racist, unpatriotic, implausible (yet predictable), and anachronistic. (3)

Negation is crucial for developing historical consciousness as it prevents the uncritical acceptance of dominant historical narratives. It fosters a more dynamic and dialogical

approach to history, where established views are constantly questioned and re-evaluated, leading to a richer and more inclusive understanding of the past. Although not all historical novels provide room for negation, those that do typically include a space for both affirmation and negation. In *Children of the Wind*, for instance, there are no focal native characters, even though miscegenation between Irish and natives was historically widespread. Negation is the initial phase in the construction of alternative histories; to put it another way, historical consciousness is the driving force behind counter-narratives and alternative histories.

The concept of negation as an operating principle that fosters historical consciousness signifies the complex interplay of perspectives, revisions and interpretations involved in understanding history. Negation entails understanding how histories are contested through continuous reinterpretation in light of new interpretative frameworks and evidence. It is the principle of force in questioning and revising existing narratives. It is crucial to develop a critical approach to history and understand the role of power, ideologies and perspectives in constructing history. The shift in perspective towards perceiving earlier European explorers as heroes is one of the best examples of negation in constructing historical consciousness. Many hail them as great explorers who expanded geographical knowledge and carried the burden of the white man's emancipation of the Eastern world. However, as revisionist perspectives on history emerged, nullifying earlier heroic sagas, the narratives surrounding these sailors have come under scrutiny. Historians have brought to light the devastating aftereffects of the confrontation between explorers and the indigenous tribes, which include widespread diseases, forced enslavement, destruction of the ecosystem and disruption of indigenous cultures. Instead of celebrating the voyages,

many now recognise the traumatic experience of colonisation imposed on the indigenous people.

In *Children of the Wind*, there is a space for dialectical interaction between affirmation and negation. For instance, the Irish famine has given rise to various anti-Irish jokes, including the stereotype that the Irish can't even grow potatoes properly despite the crop devastation caused by the blight in Ireland. However, the narrative highlights how potatoes became a crucial crop in Ireland during the British colonial era. In *Bridie's Fire*, Bridie observes the loading of "great sacks of meals and grains" onto ships destined for England (Murray 46). This fact challenges the simplistic narrative that the famine was solely the result of crop failure. Instead, it points out the role of British economic policies in aggravating the famine. Irish farmers did not have enough purchasing power to buy the food they produced and the British government's reluctance to stop food exports worsened the condition. Negation illuminates the neglected economic and political dimensions of famine, revealing the Irish famine not solely as a natural calamity but also as a narrative of colonial exploitation.

Within the theoretical framework of historical consciousness, the principle of "transformation of topical orientating patterns" governs how people understand and organise historical information (Rusen 71). According to Rusen, "transformation of topical orientating patterns necessitates a reorganisation of the selection and interpretation criteria for historical events" (71). A young reader contemplating *Children of the Wind* will unquestionably investigate similar patterns in other cases. Each group's historical and narrative portrayal of the out-group shapes readers' identities, and this topical orientation paves the way for the telling of multiple stories from various perspectives. Susan C. Brantly in *The Historical Novel, Transnationalism, and the Postmodern Era* (2017) elucidates the formation of group

identity and the role of narratives in reinforcing identity among the group. According to Brantly, “a group’s identity is defined by the story it chooses to tell about itself. They present a picture of the past and project it into the future in order to coax their constituents to present action” (53). The validity of such a political or historical narrative rests in its “persuasiveness, whether or not the community to whom it is addressed holds the narrative to be true” (Brantly 53). Every community has a distinct narrative to pass on to the next generation, yet minority perspectives remain under-represented, and only one perspective of history endures. Everyone believed the *terra nullius* (nobody’s land) narrative of the British, who claimed that Australia was a barren and uninhabited territory before the Aboriginals’ voices gained a platform. Only the accounts of the Indigenous people shed light on the situation, revealing how the frontier conflicts led to their massacre. Alternative narratives challenge the nation’s foundational narratives, exemplified by Australia’s “‘history wars’ over the degree of violence during British settlement” (Curthoys and Docker 4). In these debates, nationalist historians aim to justify and praise the nation by presenting a specific version of its past (4). Even though there are numerous historical narratives available, the average person prefers to learn about history through historical novels and films. This is a fact, and as such, historical novels significantly contribute to the development of a sense of identity and historical consciousness. The alteration of the topical pattern allows young readers to recognise that there might be other stories similar to the Irish in Australia. The product of historical consciousness is the ability to think critically about the plausibility that a Scottish, Greek, or German rendition of history in Australia could reveal additional facets of historical events. Historical consciousness enables one to grasp the multifaceted point of view inherent in historical narratives.

## Projecting Subsumed Past or Historical Events

Children of the Wind recounts the experiences of child migrants in Australia, drawing attention to historical events subsumed in mainstream narratives. Previously, broader migration narratives viewed child migration as a subordinate category, with negligible regard for its intricate political and psychosocial dimensions. For an extended period of time, both British and Australian authorities remained elusive about acknowledging the harshness and psychological distress endured by migrant children during the colonial era. In 2009, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd “apologised to thousands of impoverished British children who were shipped to Australia in past centuries with the promise of a better life, only to suffer abuse and neglect thousands of miles from home,” and he called child migration an “ugly chapter” in Australian history, apologising to “forgotten Australians” for what they had to endure (National Museum “National Apology”). Murray’s series portrays the tragic history of child displacement, which left lasting scars on those affected.

The historical roots of child migration can be traced back to the year 1618, when economically disadvantaged and destitute children were dispatched to “American colonies,” primarily to serve as “apprentices and labourers” (Gill 51). “Alongside these early forms of officially sanctioned child migration, notorious cases also came to public attention of the abduction of children from Britain who were then put to work in American colonies” (Lynch, *Remembering Child* 11). Various organisations, such as the “Children’s Friends Society,” individuals like “Annie Macpherson and Maria Rye,” and renowned institutions like “Barnardo’s and the Fairbridge Society”, further institutionalised and expanded upon this practice in a more organised form ( Gill 15–16). Alan Gill argues that “King James I of England” played a pivotal role in initiating juvenile migration from Britain to various colonies.

Gill highlights the existence of a letter authored by King James I addressed to the treasurer of the Virginia Company, in which the monarch beseeches the company to take responsibility for the welfare of “illegitimate children” while expressing his earnest desire to “clear the court of idle youth” (50). Regrettably, the historical records pertaining to the early endeavours in child migration remain rather scant and vaguely documented. However, the existing records suggest that child migration was a long-standing practice that persisted throughout the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

Another significant stream of child migration occurred during the post-war era, when a substantial influx of youngsters migrated from Britain to Australia as part of Britain’s organised child migration policies. The British Empire transported a large number of British and Irish children to distant regions from the eighteenth century to the late 1960s, with approximately “one-third of them” making their “way to Australia” (Gill 15). In the article “Convict Transportation Ends,” published by the National Museum of Australia, it is documented that on “January 9, 1868, the convict transport Hougoumont arrived at the port of Fremantle,” delivering “269 convicts to Western Australia” and signifying the conclusion of 80 years of continuous penal transportation to the Australian continent (National Museum). The convict transportation system to Australia ended as early as 1868, but child migration still persisted until the end of the twentieth century. Gordon Lynch states that “UK child migration schemes persisted well past the Second World War, with small numbers of child migrants continuing to be sent to Australia until 1970” (*Remembering Child 2*). Hence, in practice, organised child migration persisted, continuing until relatively recently.

British authorities forcibly uprooted impoverished children from their country of origin, primarily because of their perceived status as a significant burden and transferred them to colonies such as Australia. As a result, these orphaned children forced to migrate involuntarily to the colonies, faced a life akin to that of indentured labourers or slaves. Analogous to the discourse surrounding the slave trade and the forced relocation of slaves, these young participants in child migration programmes were akin to white captives subjected to compulsory displacement. The parallels between juvenile migration and the ignominious history of the transatlantic slave trade are striking, with the only divergence being the hue of the victims' skin and the invisibility of their metaphorical chains. While these children were not physically bound by shackles, the cruelty and inhumanity they endured resonated with the narratives of enslaved individuals, thus positioning child migration as a modern iteration of the historic slave trade.

Despite the passage of time, there persists a lamentable dearth of public awareness in Britain and Australia regarding the motives, historical underpinnings and traumatic ordeal endured by the migrant children (Parliament of Australia). The glaring void of historical awareness overshadows the nascent expressions of apologies and remorse that have begun to surface in the public sphere. Except for a limited number of memoirs and exhibitions, scholarly research and literary representation on child migration remain conspicuously inadequate. The historical legacy of child migration, characterised by its intricate web of motivations and repercussions, continues to demand comprehensive exploration and scrutiny in academic discourse and the wider societal consciousness. In contemporary times, characterised by both a lack of historical awareness surrounding child migrations and the persistence of contemporary child refugee crises, the significance of historical novels assumes

paramount importance in shaping the discourse on migration for present and future generations. Gordon Lynch explicates on the intricate relationship between child migration schemes and the broader narrative of out-of-home care, highlighting how these historical practices have shaped contemporary discussions around accountability, reparations and the enduring impact on affected individuals and communities:

Remembering these child migration schemes is important not only for trying to understand their place in our recent history and their ongoing legacies, but because these schemes form part of a much wider modern history of out-of-home care for children that has become the focus of critical re-assessment, apologies and, in some cases, official redress schemes.” (*Remembering Child* 2-3)

A retrospective examination of history can offer valuable insights into the errors of the past, facilitating the development of informed perspectives. As Georg Lukacs aptly asserts, the lessons derived from history furnish us with rational principles for “governance and societal conduct” (20). The *Children of the Wind* series deals with a critical examination of the discourse on child migration, a topic that receives little representation in mainstream literature, thereby fostering historical consciousness among its readers.

The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, reflects on the rhetoric surrounding the contemporary refugee crisis and its parallels with emigration stemming from the Irish famine. He poignantly asks, during the annual commemoration of the Irish famine, “Is there not a lesson for all of us, as we face the largest number of displaced people since World War II, as the Mediterranean

becomes, for many, a marine grave, as European nations fail to respond to their humanitarian obligations?" ("Irish famine"). In drawing parallels between the prejudice encountered by Irish emigrants during the potato famine era and the contemporary refugee crisis, President Higgins underscores the shared tribulations and challenges experienced by refugees, identical to the historical struggles of Irish immigrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Higgins emphasises the imperative of not repeating past mistakes, stating, "We shall not be condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past" ("Irish Famine"). In this regard, history serves as a guiding light, on the path towards avoiding the errors and injustices that have characterised migration experiences in times gone by. The past, far from being a static entity or a concluded narrative, possesses the capacity to shed insights into the future. The contemporary refugee experience bears a disconcerting resemblance to the hardships endured by the Irish population during the famine years and the ensuing decade. In both epochs, prejudice and hostility towards immigrants served as a disheartening backdrop against which the displaced sought refuge and solace.

Children of the Wind effectively portrays two forms of child displacement, such as organised child migration and stolen generation. The third chapter of the thesis elaborately discusses child migration and the resulting displacement. Stolen generation, however, is another form of displacement portrayed in the series, particularly in the book *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*. During the 1900s and 1970s, an assimilation effort forcibly removed the Aboriginal children from their homes. White families placed Aboriginal children in foster homes to eliminate their Indigenous background and assimilate them into British culture. The article "Defining Moments: National Apology" discusses a speech of apology to the stolen generation, which bears similarities to the national apology to child migrants: "On February 13, 2008,

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued a formal apology to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, particularly to the Stolen Generations, whose lives had been blighted by past government policies of forced child removal and assimilation” (National Museum of Australia). People regard Australia’s history of child migration and the stolen generation as a grim chapter. Like Aborigines and several subaltern groups, children occupy a marginal position and historical narratives have subsumed their representation and voice. Antecedent to the national apology, children’s writers, way before, understood the precarious position of Australia’s internationally celebrated history of child migration. In 2003, Kirsty Murray published the first book of her Children of the Wind series, *Bridie’s Fire*, prior to Kevin Rudd’s national apology. Murray’s series sheds light on a historical event previously suppressed in mainstream narratives, bringing attention to the topic of child migration to Australia.

### **Redefining the National Paradigm**

Historical novels for children can either reflect or challenge the prevailing national paradigm, offering readers a richer and more complex view of history. The redefinition of national paradigms through historical narratives occurs in two dimensions. First, it challenges the conventional notion that historical novelists’ national identities and the national narratives they depict must intersect. Writers and historians have recently become “increasingly restive with history’s old and resilient national framework”, thereby adopting “new ways to write transnational history” (Curthoys and Docker 235). Historical novelists typically write about their own country because they understand its language, culture, geography and history more easily. Cultural differences can pose a challenge for them. However, there are instances where authors break free from this nationalistic pattern and write stories that cross boundaries and redefine traditional national paradigms in historical fiction.

Jerome de Groot poses the question of whether historical writers can only write about their history if they possess an “ethnographic, sociological, nationalist, or geographical claim to the past” (95). This tendency to limit a writer’s “claim to the past” arises from factors such as their access to relevant source materials, challenges with language and concerns that historical novelists might stray beyond their national historical contexts, which leads to appropriations and misinterpretations. Jerome de Groot states that these typical limitations historical novelists confront are due to “access to source material, language difficulties, or a lack of confidence that historical novelists will stay within their own national historical boundaries” (95). Nonetheless, it is evident that authors have persistently engaged in the reconfiguration of this national paradigm by articulating the historical narratives of other nations.

Secondly, a transnational approach to historical novels redefines the national paradigm, as historically, these novels have served as a tool for national construction. Paul Jay in *Transnational Literature* (2021) affirms that “transnational perspectives are often transgressive in the sense that they either challenge or contest notions of purity and exclusivity often associated with nationalism” (9). From a transnational perspective, borders are “historically and existentially porous,” whereas typical studies examine national literature within nation-state boundaries (10). Therefore, a transnational approach to literature assumes that “individual subjectivity” is always “intersubjectivity” (10). This implies that cultures and identities are not isolated and pure. Understanding the transnational nature of Australian history means comprehending the interconnectedness, or “intersubjectivity,” and multiple facets of a transnational society.

According to Jerome de Groot, some historical fiction authors write about historical topics without a patriotic stake, which indicates a disinterest in nationalistic

narratives. Conversely, some historical novelists are tethered to their home ground because they have an inherent connection to their homeland (94). Today, historical novels serve as a “transnational tool” for contemplating our understanding of “nations and nationalism” (Brantly 16). Murray masterfully uses *Children of the Wind*, a historical novel series, to champion and celebrate transnational identity, redefining Australian nationalism.

Australian nationalism and national identity are two intertwined concepts. Through several phases, Australian nationalism has evolved from an early, stark loyalty to the British Empire to contemporary multiculturalism. However, Australia’s change into a federation in 1901, as well as Australia’s participation in the First World War, resulted in the evolution of a unique national identity separate from that of British allegiance or loyalty. Recognising Australia’s great Indigenous heritage was also critical to forming a distinctive Australian identity. The dissolution of the assimilation policy in 1973 was a recognition of the rich Indigenous heritage of Australia. Immigration and a culturally diverse society had a profound influence on Australia’s adoption of a multicultural policy in the twentieth century. Hence, the celebration of diversity became an integral feature of Australian national identity.

Redefining the national paradigm also entails redefining Australian nationalism and national identity through storytelling. The series embraces transnational approaches in various ways and it primarily negotiates nationalism by celebrating transnational identity and transnational formations in its narratives, a topic further explored in Chapter Four. Historical novels traditionally disseminate national ideals, reinforce national identity and promote nationalism. Therefore, any change in their paradigm necessitates a redefining of nationalism and national identity. This

redefinition challenges conventional notions of belonging and heritage, allowing for a more inclusive understanding of identity.

To illustrate how this redefinition of nationalism manifests in specific narratives, consider the example of *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, which effectively normalises transnational identity within the context of the 1956 Olympics hosted by Australia. The conversation between Keith and Colm is an excellent example of how sports are an essential element in promoting nationalism: “Are there any Chinese athletes in the race?” he asked abruptly, turning to Keith. Keith shot him a smoky look. ‘Why would I care if there was? My family’s been in Australia since the gold rush. I’m barracking for Landy.’ Keith is of Chinese descent, and Colm believes that he is Irish. Colm is confused: “Was he Australian or Irish?” (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 222). When the Irish athlete won the gold medal, Colm “could feel tears stinging his eyes” because he was overwhelmed with happiness. At the same time, Colm is also in a dilemma about whether “he should barrack for Ireland or Australia or whether they should go for both” (223). With the narrative strategy of exploring the interconnection of sports and nationalism in the narrative, Murray is trying to show the evolving nature of Australian identity. Towards the novel’s end, we see Colm McCabe successfully navigating a transnational identity by accepting his Irish and Australian identities. The conversation between Blue Delaney and Colm at the novel’s end is a metaphor for transnational identity. Colm asks Blue, “You want me to stay with you?” and Blue replies, “I don’t want you to go thinking I can be like your Mom. But if you can put up with me, I’d like it if...if we could work things out” (241). This conversation suggests that, despite Australia not being Colm’s homeland, he can establish a similar level of intimacy with the country by forming a transnational identity.

Sports are typically used in narratives to build national pride and reinforce national identity by evoking a sense of unity and solidarity. By not focusing on a singular national perspective, Murray tries to bring out the complexities of the evolving Australian national identity by redefining it through projecting a transnational identity. In the 1956 Olympics, John Landy won the bronze medal and Ron Delaney, an Irishman, won the gold medal. Murray is normalising the barracking and applauding for the Irish winner through the lens of a transnational approach. By creating a transnational identity, Colm could appreciate both Ireland and Australia. On the other hand, Keith had already transitioned from her native identity to a new Australian identity, as demonstrated by her perspective on the athletes.

Throughout the *Children of the Wind* series, Murray interrogates the national paradigm in specific ways. She specifically redefines paradigms by celebrating transnational identity and transnational formations. Chapter four of the thesis delves elaborately into the concepts and strategic applications of transnational identity and formations.

### **Highlighting Marginalised Focal Characters**

*Children of the Wind* cast a light on an overlooked facet of Australian history by foregrounding the history and contributions of the Irish diaspora in shaping Australia. Sophie Cooper argues that Patrick O'Farrell's *The Irish in Australia* (1987) was the first academic publication to address the Irish in Australia meticulously (Cooper). However, Elizabeth Malcolm and Dianne Hall's *A New History of Irish in Australia* (2018) marked a significant milestone in documenting the history of Irish people in Australia. Cooper observes that Elizabeth Malcolm and Dianne Hall extended and made several revisions to O'Farrell's work by focusing on the role of "race, stereotypes, and politics" in the formation of Irish Australian identity (Cooper).

Kirsty Murray's series, *Children of the Wind*, is a literary work that reflects on the intersections of culture and history for Irish Australians. Murray undertook the task of bringing attention to overlooked stories and experiences in Australian history by weaving them into historical narratives for children, with the clear goal of highlighting these forgotten parts of history and giving them a narrative voice.

In *Children of the Wind*, Murray strategically employs characters from the societal periphery as the principal conduits to illuminate Australia's historical narrative. The figures of Bridie, Paddy and Colm, of Irish origin, assume the role of protagonists within the initial three books, having traversed to Australia as immigrant children. In stark contrast, the central character in the fourth book, Maeve, embodies a mixed ethnic lineage, her parentage stemming from both Chinese and Irish ancestries. The focal characters confront a dual marginalisation, along two dimensions: firstly, their status as minors and secondly, their ethnic affiliations. As minors, they were not privy to the agency in instances of involuntary displacement, resulting in the deprivation of their innate rights throughout the entire course of their migratory trajectory. Secondly, hindered by their Irish heritage, these juvenile migrants faced distinct hardships when juxtaposed with their British counterparts, enduring exclusion and maltreatment.

Writers emphasise the centrality of marginalised communities by making them focal characters in narratives. Comparatively underrepresented, the experience of Irish immigrants in Australia often merges with the broader Anglo-Celtic immigrant experience, leading to a loss of the nuanced dimensions and multifaceted nature of immigration. There must be a larger corpus of historical texts for children in terms of adequate representation and inclusivity because an inadequacy in representation leads to a significant gap in historical knowledge. Moreover, historical narratives have a

prevalent tendency to portray what the nation wants its citizens or young generation to know regarding its historical past. Historical events that may cause a nation to feel ashamed are frequently downplayed or glossed over in the telling of its history, as the country may not take pride in these darker aspects of its past. In “On Being Australian: The Gallipoli Legend” (2005), Maureen Nimmon asserts, “For most of Australia’s past as a European settlement, the history taught in schools and celebrated in public was that of British imperial expansion” (11). Most historical texts at the time celebrated the *terra-nullius* fiction, and only the British perspective on history was prominent then. Nonetheless, during the last decades of the twentieth century, the so-called “history wars” erupted among academics” as alternative versions of history were presented (11). This interrogation of history paved the way for more inclusive historical narratives that emphasised non-British Australians’ history, experience, and memoirs. As a result, children’s literature, predominately British in origin, covered the experiences of Aboriginal and Asian people in Australia.

This inclusivity of representation in historical narratives is essential for young readers, as a true representation of ethnicity will help them feel included in a multicultural society. If not, “children may grow up to accept not only the language but also the culture of the dominant group while rejecting their own” (Pinsent 175). In a plural society characterised by multiculturalism, the dominant group asserts its power and hegemony over other groups, resulting in assimilation. This is an almost “inevitable consequence of liminality”; marginalised individuals on the cusp of a more powerful group may aspire to join it (175). Alternately, they may seek to elevate the status of their community through subversive means while attempting to retain traces of their own identity (175). This is why minority voices and characters are essential in children’s narratives.

Children of the Wind series by Kirsty Murray narrates history using Irish-Australian focal characters. The term *Irish-Australians* refers to a racial or ethnic group in Australia that asserts they have some connection to Ireland through their family tree. This ethnic group's ancestors were Irish refugees, free migrants, convicts, and accompanied children (from orphanages in England and Ireland) who settled in Australia and raised the first generation. The Irish occupy a liminal space and a complicated position among other Western ethnic groups. The Children of the Wind series is an Irish-Australian saga with a special focus on the transnational history of Australia. All the focal characters in the series have Irish roots, and through the narrative, Murray sheds light on the notable history of Irish immigration to Australia.

During the Irish famine, Irish people migrated to seek a new life in Australia, and this was the first significant wave of migration from Ireland to Australia. Additionally, until convict transportation was stopped in 1868, several other Irish convicts landed in Australia. The Second World War brought forth the next substantial wave of immigration to Australia, which altered the country's demography. The increase in population brought on by the immigration drive improved national development and met labour demand. White assimilation laws were relaxed after the 1950s, making it easier for non-Brits to petition for citizenship. Some immigrant groups were consistently the targets of suspicion and discrimination during each wave of immigration. They were occasionally accepted, sometimes criticised and from time to time not welcomed by other migrants already living in Australia. Irish immigrants hold a complex position among the immigrants who have arrived, and historians contend that this complexity allowed Australia to become a multicultural nation rather than a country subjugated by British cultural supremacy.

In *A New History of the Irish in Australia* (2018), Malcolm and Hall state that the “diaspora was a complex space” and the “Irish who moved through it were complex people” (5). Irish immigrants faced numerous prejudices due to their complexity and the persistence of “anti-Irish jokes” in Australia is a testament to these historical prejudices (347). For example, Australian politician, Graham Morris in 2015, mentioned “Irish people as loveable but stupid” (qtd. in Malcolm and Hall 347). Malcolm and Hall say that these kinds of comments and caricatures signify the undercurrents of prejudice against the Irish still thriving deeply in contemporary society. Malcolm and Hall elucidate the prejudices and negative stereotypes against the Irish:

Racially and ethnically based stereotypes and caricatures are not the stuff of innocent good humour; they reflect real contemporary or historical prejudice and discrimination-usually a bit of both. The challenge then is to recognise what these stereotypes meant in the past and to try to understand why they remain comprehensible and potent in 21st-century Australia, more than a century after the end of large-scale Irish immigration. A nation of immigrants, like Australia, was in the 19th century and is today, cannot afford to take such humour lightly: jokes, and the negative stereotypes they perpetuate, are a serious matter. (349)

Racism and bigotry is engrained in latent forms, such as jokes and caricatures in literature and everyday discourse. As a result, it is necessary to critically investigate children’s historical novels for latent stereotypes and racial antagonism, as this genre is packed with national constructs. The significance of historical novels in illuminating the Irish experience in Australia becomes apparent within this particular context. Historical narratives are effective instruments for cultivating empathy and

consciousness, enabling readers to actively interact with the intricacies of historical events and their ongoing impacts in contemporary times. Thus, examining Irish-Australian history presents itself as an essential avenue for uncovering the roots of biases against immigrants and understanding their lasting consequences, thereby providing valuable perspectives on present-day concerns about cultural exclusion.

To conclude, this chapter discusses three key subtopics in depth. First, this chapter introduces the Australian writer Kirsty Murray and her books that fall under children's historical novels. Next, this chapter looks into intersections of 'transnational and migration literature' in the *Children of the Wind* series. Finally, the chapter discusses the composition of *Children of the Wind* and its purposes or outcomes as a text for children. Instilling a sense of historical consciousness in young readers is one of the primary outcomes or motivations implicit in *Children of the Wind*. Cultivating historical consciousness empowers youngsters with the analytical ability to recognise the correlations between previous biases and present-day barriers, thereby facilitating a more enlightened and fair future. Other discernible motives include the projection of marginal history and characters and the redefinition of the national paradigm in historical fiction. Understanding a bygone period's socioeconomic and historical-cultural context is critical for reconstructing migrant experiences and forming characters with transnational identities. Fostering a more profound historical awareness through critically understanding socioeconomic and historical-cultural constructions in *Children of the Wind* is a powerful method to promote reflection on previous biases and their lasting consequences.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Unravelling the Past: Socioeconomic and Historical-Cultural Constructions in the Children of the Wind Series**

This chapter examines the complex layers of socioeconomic and historical-cultural constructions within the Children of the Wind series. The overlapping economic, social, cultural, and historical aspects of a specific period intertwine and interconnect, making it complex to disentangle for differential analysis. For example, historical events can create long-standing imprints on socioeconomic systems and can even shape cultural identities. Therefore, it is difficult to identify and segregate socioeconomic and historical-cultural constructions as separate entities due to their inclusive and overlapping nature. Socioeconomic constructions signify how social and economic factors shape the characters in the narratives and how the characters grapple amidst disparities. Historical-cultural constructions in the narrative indicate the specific historical contexts and cultural specificities that shape the plot, characters and contexts. In Children of the Wind, socioeconomic and historical-cultural construction is more than just a backdrop; it is a central theme that shapes the characters' journeys and the society they inhabit. It can serve as a lens through which readers can reflect on real-world inequality, a lack of opportunity and social injustice against migrants. In the case of Children of the Wind, socioeconomic and historical-cultural constructions act as catalysts for either increasing the rate at which a migrant integrates into a host country or their resistance to fit in. The chapter delves into constructions such as the Irish diaspora, the Irish ethnic status and their socioeconomic status (SES), exploring their implications for the characters and the broader narrative.

Before examining the relevance of socioeconomic and historical-cultural constructions in the *Children of the Wind* series, it is crucial to understand the characteristics that define children's historical novels because historical novels give insights into intricate components of "economics, social relationships, and political experience" (Davin 165). Understanding children's historical novels and their features provides insight into how writers transmit complex ideas about history, culture and society to young readers in an engaging way while simultaneously providing historical knowledge.

### **Defining Children's Historical Novels**

A comprehensive examination of the definitions of historical novels necessitates critically delineating the standards and norms advocated by proponents and critics of this literary genre. The attempt to define children's historical novels is intricate in nature due to the inherent divergence observed within perspectives, each definition encapsulating distinct facets of the quintessential characteristics attributed to historical novels. To elucidate, certain critics and scholars direct their attention towards the formal attributes, while others concentrate on the thematic content, and yet another faction emphasises the treatment of historical events embedded within the narrative framework. Hence, specifying and compressing the parameters and standard norms of children's historical novels into a single definition is often a daunting task.

Definitions of children's historical novels generally focus on three core aspects such as striking the appropriate balance in the fusion of fact and fiction in the narrative, the incorporation of the relevant historical context and the overall purpose or function. For instance, critics such as Anna Davin, Alfred Sheppard, Herbert Butterfield and Alessandro Manzoni focus on one of the integral components, the

amalgamation of history and fiction, in their definitional construct. On the other hand, Leland Jacobs emphasises aspects such as the time portrayed and the child character embedded in the narrative. On the contrary, Kathy Nawrot brings attention to the functional role of children's historical novels in the literary domain. Therefore, an overview of the definitions by Sheppard, Manzoni, Butterfield, Jacobs and Nawrot will give insights into the divergences and coherences regarding the genre conventions.

The peculiarity of children's historical novels lies in their ability to seamlessly integrate historical elements into an engaging narrative, thereby captivating young readers. The purpose of such an integration is "to deepen understanding about men and society, not merely for its own sake, but in the hope that a profounder knowledge, a profounder awareness will help to mould human attitudes and human actions" (Curthoys and Docker 33). Anna Davin in "Historical Novels for Children" (1976) underscores the amalgamation of fiction and history as a central component in children's historical novels:

Formal history seems alien to most people, the province of specialists and experts; even those who are studying it often see it as ground to be conquered rather than explored or enjoyed. Stories are very different. They don't make anyone feel alarmed and inadequate: they invite interest, they are easy to remember and perhaps to pass on; they are common property, everyone's right. (155)

The primary focus of Anna Davin's deliberations is on striking the right balance in integrating fictional and historical content into the narrative. By skilfully incorporating historical facts with narrative details, this approach mitigates the

potential for monotony and difficulty typically associated with studying history as an academic discipline. The “potential strength of the historical novel” lies in its capability to bring in subjective viewpoints on history “enabling it to impart a richer historical understanding than formal history books can usually give” ( Davin 165). Kathy Nawrot, another critic in the field, strongly agrees with Anna Davin’s view on the meritorious status of historical novels, comparing them to monotonous history textbooks. According to Nawrot, a story presents history in a “subjective form that is closer to the way young children explain themselves and understand the world,” and a story is easier to understand than an “expository” history textbook (343). Anna Davin’s view of the genre is consistent with the long-running discussions about how literature is better than history. In a similar vein, Susan C. Brantly also observes that the “dispute over the boundary between history and fiction is as old as Aristotle, and the border has proven to be highly flexible over the centuries” (39). When it comes to historical novels, the question is not whether one discipline is superior to another but rather how well the writer strikes a balance between the integration of fiction and history.

In *Children of the Wind*, one finds an impeccable blending of history and fiction, which makes the narrative endearing and knowledgeable. For instance, *Bridie’s Fire* portrays the plight of Earl Grey Orphans, the impoverished girls of Ireland shipped to Australia by “Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies.” The immigration scheme was “advantageous from the perspective of the British government, as a way to relieve the workhouse overcrowding in Ireland resulting from the overwhelming need created by the famine” (McHutchion 20). In *Bridie’s Fire*, Bridie is a fictional character representing the Earl Grey orphans, who were displaced to Australia from Ireland. Similar to Bridie, the real Grey’s orphans were

victims of the Irish famine and lived in overcrowded workhouses. Murray says, “Famine orphans like Bridie lived through the heady days of the goldrush, and they bore witness to huge changes in Australia’s history” (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 252). Correspondingly, Colm, Tommy, and Dibs are imaginary characters in *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, “but their experiences are based on those of boys who were participants in those orphan migration schemes” (Murray 247). Murray adeptly blends history and fiction in the series, offering the pleasure of reading through fictional elements while disseminating knowledge through historical information.

In *The Art and Practise of Historical Fiction* (1930), Alfred Tresidder Sheppard states that “historical fiction deals imaginatively with the past and can follow paths where Trespass Boards confront the pedestrian historian. The historical novel must of necessity be a story of the past in which imagination comes to the aid of facts” (15). Sheppard’s definition sheds light on the integrated nature of fact and fiction in historical novels, forming a confluence of the author’s imagination, historical facts, and historical accuracy realistically. Similar to Sheppard’s perspective, Alessandro Manzoni notes that simply blending history and fiction fails to achieve the intended outcome, as the perfect fusion of history and fiction is akin to adding flesh to the bones of history (67–68). The history interspersed should contain authenticity and the narrative should be able to evoke the socio-cultural essence of a bygone time.

Herbert Butterfield’s definition, similar to that of Manzoni, Davin, and Sheppard, also focuses on the aspects of blending imagination and fact as the primary criteria of a historical novel. According to Herbert Butterfield, a historical novel is something that “fuses the past into a picture and makes it live” (23). The creative strength of a novelist lies in how realistically they can incorporate fiction and history

using imaginative faculty embellished with historicity. An insightful point of view by Manzoni on the blending of history and fiction is that “the historical novelist is required to give not just the bare bones of history but rather something richer and more complete” (Manzoni 67–68). Therefore, it is not only a combination of fiction and truth; rather, it is a synthesis of both, with hues of imagination preserving historicity.

Infusing real-life historical personages and historical sites of memory into the storyline is a strategy to achieve the unblemished blending of history and fiction. French historian Pierre Nora introduced the concept of “sites of memory” in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, a series of seven volumes published from 1984 to 1994 (Nora 7). Jay Winter in “Historians and Sites of Memory” (2009) defines “sites of memory” as “places” or “people” engaging in “social” space to evoke “a collective shared knowledge ... of the past, on which a group’s sense of unity and individuality is based” (252). The “sites of memory” encompass physical places “represented by a material aspect of reality, from a spatial-temporal perspective,” such as “monuments or museums – but also by a mental and abstract construction – a specific symbol or motto” (Mitroiu 2). In *Children of the Wind*, there is an infusion of both physical places and personages in the storyline.

The specific historical references in works like *Bridie’s Fire* and *Becoming Billy Dare* further illustrate this strategic blending of physical places and personages in the narrative. While describing the death of her baby brother, *Bridie’s Fire* mentions the “famine cemetery” (Murray 33). Many locations in Ireland commemorate the Famine Graveyard today as a historical site. Similarly, in *Becoming Billy Dare*, there is a depiction of “Jim Crilly,” a famous showman who exhibited a “living skeleton” on Swan Street (Murray 85, 254). There is also mention of Dan

O'Connell when Paddy sees the "statue of a man who stood watching over Sackville Street" (8). The statue was built in memory of nationalist leader Daniel O'Connell for his contributions to Ireland. There are mentions of similar sites of memory throughout the series, which serves as a strategic way to blend fiction and history.

Leland. B. Jacobs' definition of children's historical novels introduces two additional constructs, such as the antiquity of time in the novel and the concept of child character, while delineating components of children's historical novels. Jacobs contemplates the materiality and components of children's historical novels:

Looked at broadly, historical fiction for children can rather well reconstructs the life of an age, period, or moment other than that of the present generation. It recaptures realistically the spirit, atmosphere, and feelings of such age, as that time was experienced by children as well as adults. It deals imaginatively with the reconstruction of life, with verisimilitude. It utilizes historical setting events, and personages not for their own sakes but as a framework for the creation of a picture of the past that comes to life a significant study of a child character's realization of life. (186)

Jacob's definition posits that the era or backdrop mentioned in the novel should be antiquated to its readers, and historical "moments of the present generation" are not material for the historical novels (186). A significant added element in the definition is how Jacobs brings into the construct the "child character" and his understanding of the "world or life" as an essential component of the genre. The outcome of such novels is that "through the illumination of the past, the child reader should gather courage, conviction, and insight for living in the present" (189). While the goal and function of history and historical novels are similar, historical novels have the ability

to enhance engagement and humanise historical events through the art of storytelling. The purpose of studying history is “to master and understand” the past as the “key to the understanding of the present” and thereby to “increase our control over the present; and that control is gained through learning relevant lessons from the achievements and failures that have been made in the past” (E.H. Carr 26). The synthesis of past and present, as well as its comprehensive analysis, is a major outcome of children’s historical novels.

Another distinguishing feature of contemporary children’s historical novels is the narrative’s relative openness with regard to the time or period depicted. For the period to be considered history in historical novels, it must have occurred at least “fifty years” in the past, and the author must conduct research to investigate as much detail as possible rather than narrating their personal experiences. According to the Historical Novels Society, “to be deemed historical (in our sense), a novel must have been written at least fifty years after the events described. Or written by someone who was not alive at the time of those events, and therefore approaches them only by research” (“Guide”). However, critics in the modern day argue that to classify a text as historical fiction, the text should employ any historical events that happened about “twenty years” ago in the plot as a backdrop, pointing out that even events that occurred in the past decade “exist outside of a child’s living memory” and can therefore be considered “historical” (“Historical Fiction for Children”). On the contrary, Leland B. Jacobs’s perspective on time or period in historical novels should “explore times which their writers never knew except through research and the use of their creative imagination” (Jacobs 191). As a result of their study and inquiry, the writers will be able to approach historical narratives objectively and conscientiously recount their version. In modern times, everything that takes place in the past but is

not within the living memory of young readers might be considered history or fodder for historical narratives written for children.

In *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong*, Murray has subverted Jacob's definition of historical novels by portraying a contemporary period as a backdrop. Jacob asserts that the writers of a historical novel should consider the period they mention as archaic, and they should only learn about it through research and study (191). In contradistinction, Murray says, "Although this novel is contemporary in its setting, it connects to three earlier novels set in the 1850s, 1890s and 1950s" by bringing historical continuity to the narrative (Murray, *Secret Life* 251). The novel's contemporary period connects with an earlier period in the other novels, reflecting on how things have changed up until now. The contemporary period depicted in the novel *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* projects the vibrant Australia that has changed from previous periods and portrays how it adapts to new ideologies and influences. Murray highlights the significant changes that have swept through Australian social life:

The lives of Australian children have changed immeasurably over the course of the last 100 years. Children today have more consumer power and yet are much less likely to be employed than children of earlier generations. They are more likely to be well-travelled and have more privilege and yet, in many ways, less freedom. Their families are smaller but often more complex.

Maeve's life reflects these complex changes. (Murray, *Secret Life* 251)

In sharp contrast to previous books in the series, in *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong*, Murray attempts to reflect on the social, economic, and cultural changes that

have occurred in Australian culture rather than utilising a historical backdrop to evoke nostalgic emotions.

Kathy Nawrot's definition of historical novels focuses on the critical role that children's historical novels play in the literary realm. According to Nawrot, historical novels, in general, focus on the "human consequences of events and on the implications of human behaviour" (343). Young readers get a glimpse of the "cause and effect" nature of human actions, which "gives them the opportunity to explore human problems and human relationships" by making them "aware that outside events force personal choices, and provides them with a safe context to explore extremes of human behaviour" (343). Readers of historical novels possess a comprehensive understanding of the complex network of relationships between the past and present, as well as how these dynamics shape future outcomes. Kathy Nawrot explains the complex relationship readers form with the past through reading historical novels. Nawrot states that "readers of historical fiction realise that they are not alone; they are part of a larger world in which others have felt fear, faced difficulties, and triumphed over problems," emphasizing the profound connection that readers make with the past through these narratives (344). By deeply understanding the links between the present and the past, readers can comprehend how actions taken will have repercussions in the future.

Sarah Waters discusses an interesting perspective on the responsibilities of authors who work with historical tales. According to Waters, authors should not only use history as a "backdrop or for nostalgia"; they should take history "seriously" and write about it (qtd. in de Groot 10). Waters' statement sheds light on the challenges of fabrication and falsification in this genre, raising questions about authenticity, reinvention, and appropriation that may or may not find their way into a historical

narrative. While engaging with historical novels, readers appear to “acknowledge the authenticity of historical fiction and utilize it as a benchmark for evaluating other information” (Levstik, “Research Direction” 850). However, the issue is that the historical novels convey a “sense of truth that overpowers the reader’s concern for historical accuracy. A [positive] story appears to outweigh historical accuracy” (Levstik, “Historical Narrative” 118). The possible dangers or limitations of children’s historical novels revolve around this aspect of accuracy and appropriations, thereby problematising their authenticity and historicity.

Although historical novels hold significant potential, they are also accompanied by notable limitations. In a corollary to the viewpoints expressed by Sarah Waters, Anna Davin has also posited her assertions regarding the inherent capacities and limitations of historical novels targeted at children:

The personalizing of history is the potential strength of the historical novel, enabling it to impart a richer historical understanding than formal history books can usually give. Economics, social relationships, political experience and opinion, come alive because they are lived, by characters whom the child can envisage and hear. But the relationship between the particular and the general is crucial. The writer must comprehend it, integrate it into the novel, and transmit it to the reader. Otherwise the storyteller may succeed, but the historian fails. (165)

There is a possibility that children’s writers may “interpret, rewrite, or indeed fantasise and come up with alternative versions of history,” which could be falsified or fabricated (Copson). All the aforementioned limitations and pitfalls make children’s historical novels a contested site of criticism.

The paradoxical position of children as end users in the creation and distribution of children's historical novels, often driven by adults who prioritise commendable objectives such as entertaining and teaching young readers and transmitting cultural values, presents another significant limitation. Perry Nodelman and Mavis Reimer observe that the children's books industry thrives for a "range of noble reasons to please and educate young readers, to pass on the torch of culture, and so on. Those factors may be operative, but it's worth remembering that, for those who produce it and sell it, children's literature is primarily a business" (110). Publishers and creators have the objective of maximising financial gains, implementing efficient marketing strategies, and engaging in competitive activities within the commercial market. Children, the genre's titular reader, are passive consumers; adults select the contents, concepts, images, and even the implied reader. Consequently, through plots that include chosen ideologies, beliefs, and cultural elements, children's literature is a tool adults use to tap into the brains of young people.

Typically, consumers, such as parents, instructors, and librarians, choose books based on the accolades they have received. For example, books that have won the "Newbery Medal, the Caldecott Medal, the Kate Greenway Medal, the Canadian Governor General's Award, or the Big Little Book Award" typically experience an explosion in sales. The books that receive such accolades are in high demand by schools and libraries, whereas those that do not are typically "soon out of print" (Nodelman and Reimer 121). Other factors than the books' literary and educational value affect the sales of children's books because publishers are "deeply aware of the fact that the real audience for these books is not children, but rather adult professionals who actually purchase them" (120). Publishers tailor the books to the preferences and interests of adult professionals, specifically catering to their common

assumptions about what children require or enjoy. At this paradoxical point, where the titular child readers occupy the lowest rung of the consumer pyramid, the discourse surrounding children's historical novels becomes problematic.

Despite the overshadowing limitations of children's historical novels, they have shown robust growth and demand in the contemporary book market (Nawrot 343). Children's historical novels allow young readers to consider the intricate interplay between socioeconomic factors and historical-cultural contexts. By critically examining and analysing the socioeconomic and historical-cultural constructions depicted in these narratives, young readers can reflect on what history may teach us at present about the past and guide human societies' progression in the future. Historical novels are pivotal in creating knowledgeable individuals with keen historical awareness who appreciate cultural diversity and human history. As a genre, it blends factual history with fictional elements to immerse readers in its narrative. However, these novels are not just about historical events or their periods; they are also about people, culture, and societal norms that help to recreate the pulse of a bygone era. By delving into socioeconomic and cultural constructions, the readers can examine the historical context of the narrative, reflect on societal norms and values, develop empathy and cultural sensitivity, and enhance historical knowledge. However, while analysing the definitions of the genre, a lack of focus on the integral component of socioeconomic and historical-cultural construction in the definitional construct was evident. The thesis argues that more than depicting historical locales and historical figures, an ideal historical novel should be an active reconstruction of the then-socioeconomic and historical-cultural aspects.

An analysis of socioeconomic and historical-cultural constructions in the *Children of the Wind* series will shed light on their implications in depicting a specific

period in history. The following analysis explains the constructions that revolve around the Irish diaspora, ethnicity, sectarianism, and socioeconomic status (SES).

## **Irish Diaspora**

The Irish diaspora refers to people either born in Ireland or descendants of Irish who migrated and settled across the Irish border for social, economic, political, or personal reasons. The Irish diaspora comprises migrants from all four provinces in Ireland, namely Munster, Ulster, Leinster and Connacht, and today, around “70 million people worldwide (Irish-born and those of Irish ancestry) now claim Irish heritage” (Devlin and Pierse 20). Elizabeth Malcolm and Dianne Hall state that the Irish were “a diverse group divided by gender, class, religion, language, identity, loyalties and historical antecedents” (5). Their experience in the host country mainly depended on whether they were convicts, free settlers, Anglo-Irish elite, Catholic, or middle class.

Everywhere they migrated, the Irish encountered prejudice and discrimination. However, in each region, the context of discrimination and reasons for exclusion had unique nuances. For example, while discussing Irish-American characters in literature, Christopher Dowd states that “Irishness became a literary figuration of something at once familiar but at the same time foreign; it became a symbol of essential difference” (3). To elucidate, “Irishness was not a “shadow” of white Americanness. Instead, the Irish-American character was imagined as a deviation or perversion of the Anglo-American” (3). Hence, the Irish occupied a border position where they were neither white nor coloured in immigrant societies. In the American context of Irish immigration, the social exclusion the Irish faced was mainly due to inequity in opportunities in the “labour market” (Marston 419). For example, Noel Ignatiev, while examining the labour history of America, points out that, in America,

Irish people competed with “African-Americans” for jobs (qtd. in Malcom and Hall 26). The conflict for jobs created tensions among the immigrant communities, resulting in prejudices and discrimination against the Irish. In addition to this, the Irish also encountered prejudiced attitudes and discrimination from the British in America, a legacy of the long-standing animosity between Britain and Ireland.

The primary reason for Irish discrimination in Britain was purely religious and sectarian. In Britain’s context, historians argue that “religion and class” were significant factors that promoted “anti-Irish sentiments” (Malcolm and Hall 27). “Racialization of the Irish in Britain involved focusing on differences in three overlapping arenas, namely religion, class and race” (Garner 115). Additionally, the English conquest of Ireland and successive rebellions led by the Irish have resulted in hostility between England and Ireland. In Britain, the conflict primarily arose between the British and Irish working classes over job opportunities.

In the context of Irish immigration in Australia, critics assert that, unlike the context of immigration in Britain and America, everyone in Australia was a recent immigrant. Hence, Irish racial stereotypes came to Australia through “British and American media,” creating prejudices and negative images against the Irish (Malcom and Hall 30). The “transnational context” of “anti-Irish sentiments” includes “negative English attitudes towards the Irish arising from their long and brutal conquest of Ireland, which English immigrants took with them as mental baggage to all parts of the British Empire” (31). Ethnicity, sectarian grounds, and SES were the main bases of discrimination against the Irish in Australia. Though attitudes toward the Irish have changed over time, society still carries a hangover from past prejudices, as evidenced by the caricatures, stereotypes, and jokes pervasive in everyday discourse.

In the past, people viewed Irish immigrants as the most undesirable group among other European immigrants. Several cultural and historical factors have contributed to the persistence of such attitudes in contemporary times. The historical animosity between Britain and Ireland has led to cultural and societal tensions between the Irish and British populations. In 1788, when the initial British fleet arrived in Australia to establish a penal colony, they brought with them the burden of preconceived notions and biases towards the Irish. During Australian colonisation, there was a notable prevalence of anti-Irish attitudes, which persisted in the form of anti-Irish jokes and stereotypes. Nevertheless, the overarching group known as Anglo-Celtic Australians frequently includes individuals of Irish descent. However, it is essential to note that their position and societal standing vary significantly from those of individuals of British, Scottish, and Welsh descent. The British subjected the Irish population to negative perceptions of uncivilised and unintelligent, leading to discriminatory practices based on religion, social rank, and race. In contrast to their European counterparts, the Irish needed more acceptance upon their arrival in Australia during the initial phases of colonisation. The longstanding antagonism between Britain and Ireland closely intertwines with the historical context of prejudice and discrimination against the Irish. Wherever Britain established colonies, they propagated the Irish bias as a transnational endeavour. An overview of some overt examples of prejudice towards the Irish will highlight how these prejudices continue to permeate everyday life.

Dr. Alexander Thomson of Geelong, addressing immigration policies, remarked before a committee in 1843 that Irish people were “useless and inferior to aborigines” (qtd. in Malcom and Hall 41). Similar to this, an advertisement for a “nursery maid” in “Sydney” in early 1840 featured the phrase “No Irish Need Apply,”

which quickly gained popularity and appeared in advertisements multiple times in various contexts (179). Likewise, Donald Horne, author of *The Lucky Country* (1964), wrote that his Irish neighbourhood was perhaps “not quite human,” reflecting the imbibed prejudices and negative attitudes (National Museum “About the Irish”). A more recent example of such negative stereotypes still prevalent would be the former chief of staff to Prime Minister John Howard, “Mr Graham Morris in 2015,” who dismissed the Irish as “people who can’t grow potatoes,” signifying the misconception that the Irish Famine was the fault of Irish farmers (Flaherty). Another example is when politician Tony Abbott made jokes about the Irish in 2015, concluding with the line, “Today we celebrate our Irish heritage.” I’m sorry I can’t be there to share a Guinness or two, and maybe even three. But like you, I do rejoice on St. Patrick’s Day” (Begley). In a similar manner, Australian journalist Josh Massoud posted a photo of storm damage in a suburb of Coogee, a popular Irish hangout, and commented that “Coogee demolished over the weekend, and for a pleasant change, the Irish aren’t to blame,” reflecting the prejudice that Irish are wild drunkards (McAuliffe). In 2017, Victoria state minister Marlene Kairouz suggested on local TV that people should ask anyone with an “Irish accent who knocks on their door to leave”, thereby reinforcing negative stereotypes about the Irish (“Australian Lawmaker”). The aforementioned remarks on the Irish shed light on the marginalised status of Irish individuals in Australia, a fact often overlooked in discussions of racial discrimination. The Irish case highlights the diverse experiences within the white demographic, emphasizing the significance of Whiteness Studies.

Generations of Irish immigrants have made their home in Australia, a country that has gone through many stages of assimilation, integration, diversity, and shifting national policies. First-generation immigrants’ perspectives on homeland, identity,

and host land differ significantly from those of current-generation immigrants, and the dilemma of identity formation varies depending on the socio-cultural elements of each era. The dilemma surrounding an individual's self-identification as either Irish or Australian represents a complex challenge within the context of their ongoing identity development. Murray's series effectively addresses this quandary by portraying how young migrants navigate and ultimately reconcile their identity crisis.

Irish immigrants in Australia faced discrimination primarily on three grounds: their ethnicity, their sectarian beliefs, and their SES. This pattern of discrimination is discernible in the *Children of the Wind* series. Migrants' experiences varied based on whether they were convicts transported to penal colonies, free settlers, Anglo-Celtic elite, or working class. Ethnicity, sectarianism, and the SES of the immigrants act as a conflux in determining the experience of Irish immigrants who came to Australia.

### **Ethnicity**

The term Irish encompasses both political and socio-cultural aspects, incorporating national identity and ethnicity as its fundamental components. Politically the word refers to nationality, signifying that the person is an Irish citizen with a unique history, culture, and government. In the socio-cultural dimension, the word can be read as an ethnic group referring to individuals of Irish descent with similar cultural traits, including language, history, and culture. Some critics define ethnicity as an "emotion-laden sense of belonging or attachment to a particular kind of group" as "embeddedness in a web of significant symbols" or as a "social construct or a choice to be made" (Hale 458). Irish ethnicity refers to the self-identification by the Irish diaspora, descendants of Irish and those born in Ireland to a common ancestry and history.

While race focuses on a group's physical traits and biological markers, ethnicity examines the cultural commonalities within a group. Timothy Baumann defines ethnicity as a "dichotic relationship with race" and distinguishes it from race by associating "racial stratification with birth-ascribed status based on physical and cultural characteristics defined by outside groups" (12). Birth simultaneously assigns ethnicity, but the ethnic group typically establishes its own "cultural traits" (12). Malcolm and Hall argue that in an earlier period, the Irish were considered to be "racially different from the English and from other Europeans" (25). During the colonial period, there was a conscious attempt to racialise Irish people. Malcolm and Hall cite the examples of several race theorists, such as Robert Knox, Alfred C. Haddon, and John Beddoe, who racialised the Irish in their narratives as the most uncivilised and primitive race (31-35). Therefore, there was a conscious attempt to describe the Irish as a separate subset of the Mediterranean race distinct from Anglo-Saxons.

Several racial discourses were perpetuated to prove that the Irish were different and low in racial hierarchy compared to other white races. For instance, Robert Knox, a Scottish physician and anatomist, conducted several studies on Celtic races and concluded that the Irish were the lowest in the hierarchy in terms of the superiority of races. According to Knox, "The Celtic race presents the two extremes of what is called civilised man; in Paris we find one, in Ireland, at Skibbereen and Derrynane, the other. Civilised man cannot sink lower than at Derrynanr" (qtd. in Malcom and Hall 31). Similarly, in *The Races of Britain*, John Beddoe compared the Irish to Africans in terms of racial traits. Beddoe wrote about the Irish that they were a primitive race with "low intelligence" (10). These discourses stereotype Irish as savages and as the lowest in intellect among the white race. The inference from such

studies was that though the Irish are an ethnicity among the white race, they had very different traits than the Mediterranean white people.

Such discourses of racialisation disseminated the negative stereotyping of the Irish, among others, resulting in the Irish being pushed to a liminal category. Irish “were accepted by most people, although not by all, as ‘white’, yet at the same time, they shared characteristics with groups who were not European and definitely not ‘white’” (Malcolm and Hall 41). The liminal position gave the Irish a ground of commonalities with Indigenous people because Aboriginals were an excluded downtrodden group in the then Australia. Hence, in Australia, the Irish are said to have a “positive relationship” with Indigenous people based on “recognition of shared injustice, dispossession and colonial oppression” (51). Additionally, “there was no race law preventing Irish marrying non-Europeans”, but “such laws were often applied to people of colour” (43). The flexibility of rules and norms shows that Irish were not targeted like coloured people or other non-Europeans because “Irish, despite their perceived racial inferiority, were still generally considered to be white and thus not targeted by laws intended to control non-white race” (43). At the same time, the Irish were compared to Indigenous people in many contexts. For example, French anthropologist Armand de Quatrefages thought the Irish reminded him of the “very lowest tribes of Australia” (qtd. in Malcolm and Hall 41). Such discourses that compared the Irish to Aboriginals, distanced the Irish further from the white hierarchy and placed them in a liminal position.

In *Bridie's Fire*, when Bridie first encounters Aboriginals, she draws a comparison between them and her plight. The instance is vividly described as:

One day a whole family of black natives walked past the fence. Their clothes were ragged, as Bridie's and her family's had been when they lived in the hut on the edge of Dingle, and they had a lean and hungry look about them. Their big, dark eyes and the sharp angle of bones reminded her of the hungriest time in her life. (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 94)

Bridie could comprehend their shared experience of oppression and inflicted injustices, so she was able to understand the parallel plights of the Irish and natives. Another example that shows the liminal position of the Irish is when the authorities come to take away the children of Doreen and Nugget, as a part of sending them to foster homes, the elder child says, "they don't mess with us when Dad's home. I wish Dad was here" (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 108). If Nugget Malloy, the Irish one, had been at home, it would have been difficult for the authorities to take the kids, highlighting the fact that the government mistreated the Aboriginal people while not treating the Irish with the same brutality.

In *Children of the Wind*, Murray uses several symbols and imagery to illustrate the biases and injustices that the Irish people in Australia had to endure. The disguise theme is one of the tropes used in the series to illustrate the pressure placed on Irish migrants to give up their ethno-national identity and integrate into the larger group of Anglo-Celtic Australians. The *Children of the Wind* contains an implied motif on the art of disguise and the text's use of the trope plays a crucial role in reflecting and characterising how the Irish ethnic status shapes their experience. An essential part of reading the text is interpreting the implications of disguise tactics and their insinuations.

Disguise tropes are the most conventional and established storytelling device in children's literature serving the purpose of suspense, transformations, revelations and adventure in complex plots. The disguises employed in the *Children of the Wind* series indicate certain latent implications. Though the disguise undergone by child protagonists superficially seems to be a stock or ubiquitous device, several underlying implications are found in a critical overview. The guise intersects with the ethnicity and national identity of the child protagonists, and it implies the political, social and cultural transformation of the characters.

According to Christina Wald, disguise tropes in literature serve as "powerful plot elements," aiding in the creation of "narrative suspense" by entertaining readers with "dramatic irony or sudden turning points" and exploring the "selfhood" of characters. (8). In the case of children's literature, disguise is often an adventurous and playful element intensifying the reader's imagination. The disguise is used to portray the internal transformation of the character or to imply the theme of the plot through dramatic irony. In the *Children of the Wind* series, the disguise serves as a trope to exemplify and signify how ethnicity moulds the Irish experience in Australia. However, one would discern that the disguise is not integral to the plot and could have been easily avoided in the narrative structure. For instance, the first two books of the series explicitly portray disguise as a component of the story. In contrast, the last two books lack any kind of disguise undergone by child protagonists. Firstly, this asymmetric distribution of disguise as a narrative technique could have been a choice made by the author without any tacit implications. Secondly, this asymmetrical distribution signifies a more significant implication substantiating the theme by serving the purpose of a motif.

*Bridie's Fire* portrays Bridie disguised as Billy Dare when she flocks through the Australian goldfields. Similarly, Paddy Delaney disguises himself as Billy in *Becoming Billy Dare*. Both Bridie and Paddy, as soon as they entered the host country, were forced to change their identity. Murray portrays this disguise as a storytelling device that excites the readers, but there are several implications to adding complex layers to the narrative. Unlike the first two books, Colm and Maeve in the last two books are not involved in any kind of disguise, and throughout the plot, they remain in their own identity. In Australia, "migrants have been judged, welcomed or treated with suspicion, even hostility, according to the degree to which they have been perceived to fit national expectations of them" (Nimon, "Migration" 23). The reality of prejudices towards immigrants was also reflected in literature, and narratives forced migrant characters to abandon their former identity as soon as they entered Australia (28). Therefore, the *Children of the Wind* series asserts the historical pressure on migrants through the disguise trope, which directly implies the persuasion to give up their native identity in order to assimilate into the dominant culture.

Judith Crewe in "Images of Ethnic Minorities in Australian Children's Literature" (1983) states that whenever foreigners or non-white migrants are portrayed in Australian literature "they are variously depicted as villainous, crafty and simple-minded; 'good' and sensible immigrants are depicted as wishing to become as much like Anglo-Australians in as quick a time as possible, by learning the language, and behaving in the Australian way in all matters" (qtd. in Nimon, "Migration" 28). Though the Irish are broadly classified as a subset of Anglo-Celtic Australians, their position is unique and liminal because the Irish were perceived as one of the most despicable categories of immigrants in Australia and other British colonies. The

animosity between Britain and Ireland resulted in Britain parcelling the negative stereotypes of the Irish into their imperial dominions.

The position and status quo of the Irish among European immigrants were problematic in many aspects and many scholars compared them with the native tribes of Australia (Malcolm and Hall 40-43). All these narratives on the Irish race as inferior distanced them away from the white hierarchy. Moreover, miscegenation among the Irish was not questioned by any social norms, whereas social policing was imposed on other white Anglo-Celts in America and Australia (43). Therefore, the position of the Irish was liminal. They were mutually excluded from the Anglo-Celts and Aborigines, which in turn made them in the category of neither white nor colour. Liminality is problematic in a progressive society because “children may grow up to accept not only the language, but also the culture of the dominant group, rejecting their own. This is the almost inevitable result of liminality” (Pinsent 175).

Contemporary writers like Murray are trying to foreground the marginalised groups in their historical narratives by conferring narrative voice and adequately representing the community in the literary world.

This liminal categorisation of the Irish directly correlates with the disguise trope employed in Murray’s historical narrative. Given that Bridie O’Connor and Paddy Delaney were born to and raised by Irish parents in Ireland, the first two books explicitly portray them as Irish. However, the portrayal of Colm and Maeve presents more problematic dimensions; despite Colm McCabe’s upbringing in an orphanage in England, he appears to have forgotten his ancestral roots. In a similar vein, Maeve, who represents contemporary Australians with mixed heritage, acknowledges her Irish-Chinese heritage, but she neither belongs to Ireland nor China deep inside, perceiving herself as an Australian. The narrative illustrates the host society’s

pressure on Bridie and Paddy to relinquish their homeland identity, compelling them to adopt a new identity for survival in their new land. In comparison, Maeve and Colm do not possess the Irish stigma, which enables them to uphold their native identity in the host country. Consequently, these migrant dynamics serve as the latent motive behind the disguise technique and its asymmetrical distribution in the series.

A keener analysis of the disguise technique in the *Children of the Wind* series will reflect the inner transformation and negotiation of national identity in Murray's narrative of Bridie and Paddy. Bridie feels that changing herself into a different identity would give her more opportunities and allow her to escape ethnic stigma. The description of her attire effectively articulates her transformation, as she sheds her identity as Bridie O'Connor, an Irish waif from Dunquin, by donning rough boy's clothing. In this moment, she transcends her former status as an orphan girl at sea and an unwelcome newcomer in a foreign land. Moreover, she no longer identifies as a servant of the De Quinceys; instead, she embraces the possibility of becoming a wholly new version of herself (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 168). So the disguise is directly connected with ethno-racial dimensions, and it is visible when she states the relief from being an Irish scullery maid. As Bridie served the British family of De Quincey's imbibing all the racial slurs, so was Ireland under British rule. The image of Bridie as a 'low and morally impure' resonates with the racial repercussions of Ireland espoused by Britain. Most of the Protestants of English and Scottish descent "perceived Irishness very differently: to them, it denoted disorder, disaffection, poverty and religious oppression and constituted an existential threat to Australia's Protestant British identity" (Malcolm and Hall 3). In the novel, the others verbally disparage Bridie's ethno-national identity. When Gilbert first addresses Bridie, he asks, "You must be the new girl. The Irish one" (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 104). So her

identity as a girl and as an Irish decides her predicament in the narrative. Billy Dare is no more an Irish but a representative of the New Australian. Bridie, who never wanted to leave Ireland at any cost, all of a sudden shows a dramatic change in her connection with her homeland. After the disguise, Bridie feels that whatever misery she endured in Ireland and “bleak times had happened to someone else. The memory of Brandon was the only thing that bound her to her past” (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 168). The disguise and negotiation of national identity serve as metaphors of immigrant assimilation in the host land throughout the narrative.

A critical look at Paddy Delaney's disguise in the narrative pinpoints the latent implications. The moment Paddy reaches Australia, he becomes a different person who wants to completely shut his homeland's memory. Paddy feels that “the past was a dark place that he didn't want to visit, even in a letter” (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 133). He feels the discrimination towards the Irish when one showman shouts at him, “No dogs, no Irish” (87). So when Paddy reinvents himself as “Billy”, he repeats what Bridie did soon after reaching Australia. Paddy says, “I don't feel as if I'm Paddy Delaney anymore. I need to start all over again” (163). Murray says that “despite the depression of the early 1890s, by the time Paddy Delaney arrived in Australia, the colonies were soon to become a federation. It was the era of Henry Lawson and the awakening of a distinctive sense of national identity. Just as Paddy Delaney reinvented himself as Billy Dare, Australia was inventing itself as a nation” (253). Here Paddy felt the need for change, so he completely let go of the ‘Ireland’ in him to assimilate into his Australian identity.

Conversely, the storyline of *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* lacks a personal disguise trope. On the surface, it appears that the disguise is not present, as it plays a minimal role in the story's progression. However, a deeper analysis of the narrative

sheds light on the underlying implications of the narrative's absence of the disguise trope. Colm, unlike Bridie and Paddy, was brought up in England in an orphan institution. As per Colm's memory, he was disposed of in England's orphan institution at the age of five (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 2). Colm strongly believes that he and his mother are Irish and constantly consoles himself with the conviction that his mother is in England. Colm sighs, "Somewhere in England that same sun was shining down on his mother" (3). Also, when he departs from England, he is consumed by grief. "His ribs were aching and inside, he felt a new pain, as if something was being torn away from him as the distance from the shore grew further"(8). Everyone mistook him for a Pommy, a British person or an English immigrant, which helped him get away from the racial stigma of being an Irish. Colm thus a representative of British boys needs no change at all because he is undisputedly welcomed in Australia. Bridie, in order to escape the stigma of being Irish, swapped into a disguise which finally helped her to find her way through the goldfields of Australia. Paddy Delaney, the young Irish seminary boy, transformed into "Billy Dare" to find existence in Australia, whereas Colm was welcomed without any need for transformation ( Murray, *Becoming Billy* 163). Both Bridie and Paddy were forced to deny and shut off their Irish identity to survive in Australia. In contrast, the British identity of Colm helped him to assimilate into an immigrant country quickly. The narrative thus signals the subtle assumption that to absorb and assimilate into multicultural societies, one needs to ultimately negotiate their national identity. Thus, the narratives of Paddy Delaney and Bridie underscore the profound struggles faced by Irish immigrants in negotiating their identities within Australia, often necessitating a complete renunciation of their heritage. Colm's experience, in stark contrast, highlights the disparities in the perception and value of national identities in

multicultural societies, as his British identity grants him immediate acceptance. Ultimately, these stories illustrate the complexities of immigrant integration, suggesting that while some must reinvent themselves to survive, others benefit from an unchallenged sense of belonging.

In *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong*, Murray says that children today are “more likely to be well-travelled and have more privilege and yet, in many ways, less freedom. Their families are smaller but often more complex. Maeve’s life reflects these complex changes” (Murray, *Secret Life* 251). Maeve’s girlhood and agency are metaphorical of the contemporary Australian identity, and Murray says that “the lives of Australian children have changed immeasurably over the course of the last 100 years” and Maeve is a true representative “Australian character” (251). Bridie and Paddy struggled to exist in their Irish identity as ethno-national stigma made their lives problematic. However, Maeve’s mixed heritage creates a dichotomous identity, causing her to struggle with belonging. Gradually, she resolves this crisis by understanding her unique sense of identity, which is simultaneously Irish, Chinese, and Australian. Maeve, while on tour in Ireland, says, “I had this weird feeling in Hong Kong, that there was a part of me that belonged there. And I get it here too, but I think, deep down, where I really belong is with you guys in Sidney” (249). She accepts her mixed heritage and identifies herself as an Australian with a transnational connection to Ireland and China.

Murray’s *Children of the Wind* series projects tacit implications through the disguise technique as it is crucial in the narrative structure paralleling the historicity of the the culture and migrant dynamics. More than an adventurous element in the story, the disguise implies the pressure imposed on immigrants to assimilate into the dominant culture.

## Sectarianism

In *Bridie's Fire*, Bridie is cornered and targeted by many people in Australia for being Catholic Irish. When the British came to Australia with the project of the penal colony, they also brought with them deep-seated suspicion and prejudices against Catholics. Britain was predominantly Anglican, while Ireland was largely Catholic, and this sectarianism caused many religious tensions and conflicts between Britain and Ireland. People often view Catholics with distrust because of their pious loyalty to the Pope, not the Crown. "Working-class Catholic Irish" faced discrimination due to their social status, religious affiliations, and ethnicity, placing them at the bottom of the social hierarchy in host society (Ignatiev 34). In *Bridie's Fire*, numerous individuals repeatedly coerce Bridie to convert to Protestantism. Verbal abuse and threats met her whenever she refused or showed resistance to conversion. Bridie's perspective on souperism and conversion is an example of resistance in the face of discrimination and ostracization. Bridie's status as a Catholic Irish girl has complicated her path forward, as she has been resistant and stubborn in her conversion to Anglicanism.

Breda Gray, in *Woman and the Irish Diaspora* (2004), discusses the concept of "cultural Catholicism" among Irish women, emphasising how Catholic practices and beliefs are deeply interwoven with their "sense of Irish identity," even for those who may not strictly adhere to Catholic dogma (47). The cultural Catholicism is seen as a marker of belonging and forms a significant part of their identity, influencing their experiences and perceptions in Ireland and the diaspora (47-48). For Catholic women, identity negotiation occurs within cultural expectations, while non-Catholic ones are constantly reminded about their otherness (48-49). This is because cultural Catholicism encompasses more than just church rituals; rather, it encompasses a

shared ethnic background that perpetuates exclusion. Therefore, Catholicism is a strong identity marker in the lives of Irish women.

During the famine, Protestants set up schools that fed starving children and people in the hope that they would convert and follow Protestantism, and similarly, Protestant societies fed soup to famished people on the condition that they would convert to Protestantism. The entire act of feeding soup under the pretext of charity, but with a latent goal of sectarian conversion, is called “souperism,” and people who converted to Protestantism for food came to be known as “souters” (Clarkson 59). *Bridie’s Fire* depicts the popular Irish attitude towards soup-taking at that time. Bridie’s mother says, “No matter how hungry we get, we’ll never stoop to take the soup” (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 25). On the other hand, Bridie replies, “But it’s Quakers, Mam! They are not asking anything of us” (26). She continues, “I wouldn’t go over to the devil for a bowl of soup, but I’ll not watch my brothers die for want of it” (26). This conversation between Bridie and her mother shows their attitude towards conversion.

Similarly, when Bridie arrives at the De Quincey household, parlour maid Dora tells Bridie, “You are a papist!” What would you know about being a Christian?” (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 101). Dora, the parlor maid at De Quincey House, was an orphan and a Catholic who converted to Protestantism after arriving in Australia. When Bridie came to De Quincey House as a maid, Dora started nagging her and tried her best to torture Bridie. In another instance, Dora tries to get on the nerves of Bridie by saying that “the bottom dropped out of Purgatory and all the papists fell straight into Hell” (102). Moreover, Dora tells Bride that “the reason Irish had a famine is that God willed it so that they could see the error of their ways, and England will always be victorious because God wills that too” (111). On one

occasion, when the household maids try to force her into conversion, Bridie resists with all her might. Mrs Arbuckle, the kitchen in charge, told Bridie that her mother might be “burning in hellfire” because of her sins (111). To which Bridie retaliates by saying, “If my mother is burning in Hell, then it’s Hell I’m bound for, cause I’d rather burn with them I love than bask in Heaven with likes of you and Dora!” (111).

Bridie’s experience would have been different if she were a protestant; as a Catholic, she had to face discrimination from her master’s family.

Furthermore, Irish girls were despised for being carried on to Australia as a part of orphan schemes, and they were ostracised mainly on sectarian grounds. Bridie was referred to as “Bog Irish,” “useless,” and “a slovenly lot” (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 102). The historical context of these slurs stems from the perception of Irish women immigrants as lacking in character and status in colonial Australia. *The Argus*, Melbourne newspaper in 1850, called Irish female immigrants “worthless characters” (“Story of Irish Famine”). *The Argus* had similar articles about Irish men and women, particularly Irish people with “poor rural backgrounds,” comparing them to “hordes of lawless savages” (Malcom and Hall 5). In *Bridie’s Fire*, the supervisor in charge of orphans shipped to Australia tells Bridie, “There’s not much favour for you Irish girls in Port Philip. The whole town’s crying out against you, so consider yourself lucky for whatever you get and be grateful” (Murray 98). There was a widespread prejudice towards Irish Catholic girls, saying that they were wild and characterless. As a result, the Australian host society resented Irish girls’ immigration as part of migration schemes.

*Bridie’s Fire* vividly depicts sectarian discrimination, but other books in the series do not focus much on it. In other words, sectarianism as a socio-cultural construction is employed mainly in the first book of the series to depict the experience

of the Irish in Australia and the socio-cultural context of the nineteenth century.

Another construct that is intricately connected to sectarianism and ethnicity is socioeconomic status, which plays a major role in determining the Irish experience in Australia.

### **Socioeconomic Status (SES)**

SES is a parameter assessing the combination of social and economic factors that determines an individual's hierarchical position in society. According to the *American Psychological Association*, "Socioeconomic status (SES) encompasses not only income but also educational attainment, occupational prestige, and subjective perceptions of social status and social class. SES reflects quality-of-life attributes and opportunities afforded to people within society and is a consistent predictor of a vast array of psychological outcomes" ("Socioeconomic"). This definition provides an understanding of various categorical divides in a society based on the economic and social factors that impact an individual's quality of life. *Oxford References* defines SES as "a descriptive term for the position of persons in society, based on a combination of occupational, economic, and educational criteria, usually expressed in ordered categories" ("Socioeconomic Status"). In brief, SES determines the quality of an individual's standard of living in a society based on components such as income, class, education, and acceptability.

High SES, middle SES, and low SES are three major classifications based on a hierarchical structure that takes into account several components such as standard of living, income, class, education, and social acceptability. People with a high SES have a consistent income, a high standard of living, shelter in the form of a house, and are members of the most elite class. They belong to society's top strata and hold the

highest position in the social structure. Middle SES has restricted access to resources and a lower level of living than high SES, but it is more socially acceptable and has a higher standard of living than low SES. The third category, low SES, has the most limited resources and acceptance compared to people with high and middle SES.

SES is a significant construct in *Children of the Wind*, determining the circumstances and experiences of Irish migrants and their descendants. Murray has diligently woven the characters' SES throughout the narrative, making it more than just a backdrop but a critical aspect influencing Irish migration to Australia.

Characters' migration experiences vary in proportion to their SES. For instance, the SES of a refugee or illegal migrant, in contrast to that of a skilled labourer, can significantly influence their overall migration experience once they become immigrants. Similarly, the range of experience between a professional and a domestic maid will differ based on their SES. In *Children of the Wind*, the SES of child migrants plays an essential role in their experience in the host country.

When Bridie O'Connor arrived in Australia as a child migrant, she had a low SES because she belonged to the peasant working class, and in Ireland, landlordism perceived peasants as the lowest category. The severe famine that hit Ireland took away farmers' minimum economic standard and plunged them into poor food security. The rural working class suffered greatly as a result of the famine because the destruction of their only source of income left many families unable to pay rent to their landlords. Consequently, the mass evictions that followed caused many people to lose their homes, which, for the most part, meant having to live on the streets. Many fled their homesteads to surrounding villages in need of food and shelter; some, like O'Connor's family, undertook perilous journeys to adjacent cities or hamlets in search of assistance.

In the nineteenth century, Australia actively recruited immigrants to boost its population and labour force. The nascent colonial society usually regarded migrant children like Bridie as ideal subjects for assimilation. Upon arrival, child migrants had to adapt to an exotic culture and society that was sometimes indifferent and, at other times, hostile to their predicament. Nonetheless, many Irish migrants, including Bridie, remained defiant against these challenges, thus making significant contributions towards shaping the cultural and economic identity of their new country. Bridie O'Connor's story exemplifies the unwavering determination of those who, despite immense hardship, sought alternative paths in a foreign land. Bridie's predicament illustrates how a complex interplay of economic hopelessness, social unrest, and enduring aspirations for better life prospects has influenced the larger picture of Irish migration.

In exploring the socioeconomic contrasts within a narrative setting, the lives of Paddy Delaney and Colm McCabe, hailing from middle-class backgrounds, starkly diverge from Bridie's existence, marked by poverty and struggle. This divergence is not merely a matter of financial disparity but encompasses a broader spectrum of opportunities, education, and societal integration that benefits those from more affluent backgrounds. Paddy Delaney's narrative is particularly illustrative of how SES can shape an individual's life trajectory in profound ways. His relocation to Dublin under Uncle Kevin's care due to his mother's illness marks a pivotal turn towards stability and comfort, a luxury unaffordable to many. Uncle Kevin, a long-time Dublin resident, provides Paddy not just with a roof over his head but a home that signifies security and a promise of a better future. This act of guardianship goes beyond mere accommodation, reflecting the privilege of having a support system that can afford to prioritise education and well-being.

The provision of a carriage for Paddy's commute from home to the seminary is a further testament to the family's means and the importance placed on Paddy's education and social standing (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 7). The convenience of a better standard of living, likely unimaginable to the likes of Bridie, not only facilitates Paddy's educational journey but also insulates him from the hardships of the daily commute faced by those less privileged. It's a vivid illustration of how SES affords certain individuals the luxury of focusing on their education and personal development, unencumbered by the logistical and financial challenges that plague those in lower socioeconomic categories.

Moreover, Paddy's literacy, particularly his proficiency in reading and reciting English, stands as a significant marker of his middle-class status. Literacy, in this context, is not merely a skill but a gateway to social integration and upward mobility. Paddy can easily navigate social spheres, gain respect from peers, and access educational and professional opportunities that are often unavailable to those with less education. In contrast, Bridie's difficult path through poverty highlights the barriers faced by those at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum, and the obstacles encompassed extend beyond financial hardship to include education, social exclusion, and limited access to opportunities. Bridie's lack of learning becomes a disadvantage at many moments in *Bridie's Fire*. Even when attempting to write a letter to her home, Bridie had to seek the help of others. For instance, their low SES meant Bridie had no formal education. Thus, when Gilbert, her master's boy, writes a letter to Brandon, Bridie optimistically notes, "Perhaps he's learned his letters in English now and can write to me himself" (116). Similarly, when Bridie hears English, she perceives it as an "ugly language" because she struggles to comprehend

what is being said (55). Hence, education and literacy became an advantage to Paddy and his ability to read and write was an additional benefit of his middle SES.

Paddy's middle SES background thus not only provides him with a cushion against the economic uncertainties that Bridie faces but also equips him with the requisite financial standard necessary for social mobility. The middle-class status, exemplified by living conditions, access to transportation, and education, places them in a position of advantage, highlighting the profound impact of socioeconomic background on individuals' life paths and opportunities. Paddy Delaney's SES illustrates the multifaceted nature of socioeconomic advantages, which encompass not just financial stability but also access to education, social networks, and opportunities that collectively contribute to a higher standard of living and greater societal integration compared to his less privileged counterparts like Bridie.

When examining Colm McCabe's journey from an orphanage in England to his life as an instructor in a school in Australia, his initial ambiguous SES plays a critical role in his societal positioning and eventual success as an immigrant. Despite being Irish by birth, Colm's upbringing in England and his lack of a discernible Irish accent cause others to mistake him for British. When Colm came to England at a young age, he had no Irish flavour in his English, and because of that, people failed to see that he was an Irish lad. When he reaches Clontarf orphanage, the boys say to Colm, "You don't sound like Irish to me. You sound like a bleeding whinging pom" (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 21). The confusion is evident in a conversation between Tommy and Colm, where Tommy says, "So you're Irish. Of course, you had to be Irish—none of the lousy English can think as fast as lads like us." (10). Colm pondered his identity for the first time: "Colm had never thought to question whether he was English" (10). As a result, Colm's ambiguous status as a "Pom or Brit"

provided him with an advantage over the Irish stigma, facilitating his integration as a migrant. In a new environment, his ambiguous identity provides him with a form of social camouflage. Others perceive him as unique, distinguishing his experience from that of other immigrants, including Bridie and Paddy, who struggle to ascend beyond a lower SES despite their efforts.

The nuanced portrayal of immigrant identity illustrates how subtle aspects of one's background, such as a dialect, slang or perceived ethnicity, can significantly influence one's ability to navigate and succeed in a new host society that was predominantly British. Colm's journey underscores the complex interplay between identity, perception, and societal acceptance, highlighting that insignificant details of SES can heavily influence the road to integration and acceptability in a new country. Colm's story suggests that the challenges and opportunities immigrants face are not solely determined by their abilities or intentions but also by socioeconomic and historical-cultural factors.

Maeve had a different SES than other focal characters, such as Bridie, Paddy, and Colm, as she came from a family with a high SES. When Steph, Maeve's friend, asks about Maeve's grandparents, she admits they are rich. Maeve says, "They live in Surfers and travel a lot" (Murray, *Secret Life* 53). Also, the restaurant where grandparents hang out is luxurious. She says her grandparent's favourite restaurant was "way fancier than anything" (69). Additionally, mentioning her grandparent's luxury car, Maeve says her grandfather's "BMW was like an icy refrigerator" (95). All these textual shreds of evidence prove her high socioeconomic affluence. Maeve received expensive gifts, such as a "laptop" as a "Christmas gift" (98). Therefore, unlike the other child migrants in the series, Maeve never faced any ostracisation

except for some cultural gaps she experienced while being with her Chinese grandparents.

Maeve's SES sets her apart from Bridie, Paddy, and Colm, as Maeve does not encounter the same types of challenges others experience, like being left out or bullied, but she does experience some cultural differences, especially when she spends time with her grandparents, who are from China. This could suggest that despite possessing numerous material possessions, Maeve still faces challenges in adapting to and understanding diverse cultural practices. In short, Maeve's story shows that she comes from a wealthy and luxurious background, which is quite different from the experiences of her counterpart characters, such as Bridie, Paddy and Colm. Her family's ability to travel, dine in fancy restaurants, own luxury cars, and give expensive gifts highlights their high SES. Despite these advantages, Maeve's interactions with her culturally diverse family also present unique challenges for her to overcome.

When Maeve's Chinese grandparents arrived for the funeral ceremony of Maeve's mother, Sue, Maeve and her brother Ned were wearing white dresses. Maeve thought wearing white was a Chinese tradition, whereas, in English tradition, the funeral colour code was always black. *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* details these cultural differences and norms, which Maeve finds confusing and surprising. One such instance before the funeral ceremony for Sue is brilliantly described as:

‘Maeve, if you and Ned get dressed, we could take you to the church with us.’

‘I am dressed, Por Por,’ said Maeve.

Goong Goong frowned even more severely and Por Por pursed her lips. ‘But shouldn't you be wearing black?’

Maeve glared at Andy. He had told her that she and Ned should both wear white because it was a Chinese tradition. Suddenly her new dress felt tight and uncomfortable. ‘But you’re in white, Por Por,’ said Maeve.

‘Isn’t white the Chinese color for mourning?’ asked Andy.

‘For Adults. Very disrespectful for children to wear white at the funeral of their mother.’ Said Goong Goong, turning away and walking towards the gate.

(Murray, *Secret Life* 59)

As a New Australian, Maeve had no idea about her ancestral traditions and cultures, so the subtleties of cultural norms are beyond her grasp.

Maeve’s high SES has protected her from discriminatory approaches towards people with Asian heritage. Chinese were discriminated based on skin colour and race, which made them unwanted in host countries. For instance, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, “White-Australian publications portrayed Chinese residents as depraved, self-interested, menial, unhealthy, and generally despicable characters who had no place alongside free white settlers under the Australian sun” (Fitzgerald 220). Despite facing several prejudices and discriminations in colonial Australia, the Chinese, just like the Irish, have made significant contributions to the nation. Sharyn Pearce notes that the Chinese were the “largest non-European group in Australia,” and due to their distinctiveness in “appearance, language, religion, and customs,” they “encountered great hostility” (242). Chinese in Australia were condemned as a “social and economic threat (as sweat workers and debauchers of white women) and had to pay special entry taxes that applied solely to them” (242). Murray acknowledges that “Like the Irish, the Chinese have made an enduring contribution to Australian history and culture, despite

persecution and exclusion. Both diasporas have helped build immigrant nations across the world” (*Secret Life* 251). Maeve, on the other hand, lives at the nexus of both cultural spheres; her affluent background shields her from the sting of explicit racial or ethnic discrimination.

Moreover, several times, Maeve was assertive about her Australian identity. When her friends commented on her Asian traits, she said, “I’m not Asian. I am Aussie’ (Murray, *Secret Life* 109). Sophie Couchman reflects on the complexity of being Chinese in Australian society:

This scholarship does not argue that Chinese Australians were the same as other Australians or even that they were fully accepted into Australian society. Instead, it demonstrates that despite white Australian attempts to exclude Chinese from Australian life and efforts of some Chinese Australians to maintain a strictly Chinese identity, being culturally Chinese and looking Chinese was, and is, a part of the complexity of being Australian. (8)

Being culturally and physically Chinese adds to the nuanced aspect of Australian identity. This challenges more homogeneous or exclusionary views of national identity by acknowledging the diversity of Australia’s population as a core component of what it is to be Australian. It implies that the Australian identity is not monolithic but rather made up of various cultural origins, including Chinese, with each providing its layer to the general social framework.

Unlike Maeve, her grandparents followed a strict Chinese tradition. Her grandmother talks about the cultural reconciliation of the Chinese diaspora while discussing it with Maeve. Por Por (grandmother) says,

‘It’s so hard for your grandfather,’ she said softly. ‘Not like for you and me. Siu Siu, I’m like you. I grew up here in Australia, so I know you can have things of the old world and of the new. All your grandfather wanted was for Sue to belong to his world and his traditions. Is that so terrible? To be frightened of losing the child you love?’ (Murray, *Secret Life*, 67)

Maeve’s Goong Goong (grandfather) wanted his daughter Sue to follow Chinese tradition. However, Sue first married an Irishman and later married another white Australian. Additionally, Sue settled permanently in Australia, shedding her Chinese culture. At one point, Maeve laments, “Mum should have told me about all the Chinese traditions. But she never did” (57). Hence, Maeve was completely ignorant of Chinese culture, which made her life with Chinese grandparents challenging.

Maeve’s high SES also enables her to move to and from Australia. In the meantime, she travels to Ireland and Hong Kong without facing any barriers, such as financial or cultural restrictions. Bridie, Paddy, and Colm faced challenges in returning to their homeland due to the financial crisis, as their socioeconomic status was lower than Maeve’s. Furthermore, advancements in transportation and telecommunications made it easy for Maeve to trace back to her ancestral roots and her Irish father. Paddy, Bridie, and Colm depended on letters as the only means of communication with their homeland. Maeve’s affluent background allows her to chart flights to travel anywhere she wants.

To conclude, socioeconomic and historical-cultural constructions in the *Children of the Wind* series are more than just a backdrop; they are a crucial component in weaving historical and fictional threads. Ethnicity, sectarianism, and socioeconomic factors, which pivot the Irish diaspora, complexly intertwine in

character formation and the plot's intricacies. Prejudices and cultural stereotypes revolving around the Irish have played a significant role in determining the migration experience and integration into the host society. The construction of the Irish diaspora in the text, with components such as ethnicity, sectarianism, and socioeconomic constructions, determines the experience of child migrants in the series. These constructions are also pivotal in the push-pull factors that determine migration, which is discussed in the next chapter that explores child migration and its various aspects, as represented in the *Children of the Wind* series.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Push-Pull Factors, Displacement and Nostalgia: The Subtexts of Child Migration in the Children of the Wind Series**

The chapter begins with a historical overview of child migration, its definitions and the underlying economic, sociopolitical and philanthropic reasons that guided child migration schemes in Britain. It examines various push-pull factors that influenced child migration to Australia, as well as its representation in the Children of the Wind series. Furthermore, the chapter probes into the displacement experienced by child migrants in the series and establishes nostalgia as a coping mechanism employed by child migrants to be resilient in times of displacement in an exotic landscape. Murray's Children of the Wind imparts knowledge of the distressing phenomenon of child migration, fostering a significant understanding of this often overlooked aspect of Australia's history. Children of the Wind provides substantial insights into child migration and a historical era that promoted different forms of child displacement under the facade of child welfare.

#### **Child Migration: An Overview**

Child migration in Australia is a complex phenomenon that involves a delicate balance between positive and negative factors, as well as a clash between ambitious aspirations and disappointing outcomes. During the period spanning from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, the practice of organised child migration resulted in the relocation of a substantial number of British, Irish, and other children to Australia, often executed without the explicit authorisation of their respective parents or legal guardians. The positive aspects of child migration include the increase in population

in Australia and the new sets of opportunities offered to children who had been malnourished and abandoned in institutions in Britain. The negative outcomes include the trauma of displacement endured by child migrants, as well as the abuses children had to suffer as a result of displacement from parental care. Well-intentioned objectives and regrettable consequences mark child migration in Australia's history. The primary justification for child migration schemes was to provide a new beginning and improved opportunities for socioeconomically deprived and orphaned children. These schemes assured many youngsters of a more promising future, enhanced educational prospects, and possibilities lacking in their countries of origin.

Contemporary child migration entails sociological dimensions that defy a single description, given their intricate patterns and many forms. In contemporary settings, the concept of child migration encompasses various aspects of child mobility, such as children who migrate for educational reasons, children who migrate across borders for legal adoption, children who are victims of child trafficking, children who accompany their parents as migrants across borders, refugee children, minor asylum seekers, and other instances of children migrating either with or without adult companionship. However, child migration has a specific historical-cultural context, making it a subset of organised child migration, which was also a long-standing practice in Great Britain to relieve its overcrowded orphanages and urban premises.

Organised child migration refers to a long-standing practice in a bygone historical era where the practice of child migration persisted, resulting in the significant relocation of children from Britain, Ireland, and other territories under Great Britain. The state's role in forming a regulatory framework, providing assistance, and coordinating the migration of children is what gives it its organised

form. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, British sociopolitical policies facilitated the organised migration of impoverished and orphaned children from various imperial dominions to Great Britain's colonies. Britain devised child migration as a strategy to employ "assisted migration as a way of dealing with social problems associated with poverty" (Lynch, *Remembering Child 7*). However, the history of child migration remained ignored and subsumed until authorities finally addressed the errors of the past, which took almost a century. According to Paul Ashton and Jacqueline Wilson, parliamentary investigations into "forgotten Australians" and "lost innocents" have just recently taken place (IX). Therefore, the phenomenon of organised child migration in earlier times has not received due recognition in academic and literary spaces, and there is a dearth of historical information available on this subject.

According to Barry Coldrey, child migration to Australia is the sending of impoverished and abandoned children and adolescents from "orphanages, workhouses, and child care homes" in the United Kingdom to overseas "colonies" (*Scheme 124*). Child migrants were individuals "under the age of sixteen who resided in institutions within the United Kingdom" and were subsequently "transported to Australia" through various initiatives, devoid of any "familial connections" or affiliations in the Australian context (Parliament of Australia). Alan Gill defines "child migration" as the movement of "young unaccompanied minors (not accompanied by parents or relatives)" (16). According to Gill, a child migrant was an "institutional child" who resided in the care of one of the main "charities" before and following migration (17). Thus, in Australia's context, the term child migration specifically refers to the historical displacement of orphan children from the United Kingdom to Australia, under the guise of charity and their welfare.

Critics perceive the history of child migration as a brutal episode of forced exile, imposed on the most vulnerable and powerless group of children. Outwardly, UK child migration seems like a “form of welfare intervention” that solely focuses on the betterment of children (Lynch, *Remembering Child* 12). Coldrey explains in *Child Migration to Catholic Institutions in Australia* the social engineering motivation underlying child migration schemes. It was a social policy that involved the transfer of abandoned youth from the United Kingdom’s orphanages, homes, workhouses, and reformatories to overseas British colonies and then to self-governing dominions (Coldrey 1-2). Britain relieved the overcrowded workhouses and orphanages by relocating the children to overseas colonies. The Maritime Museum in Sydney held a retrospective exhibition in 2010 that illuminated the profoundly distressing journey these child migrants, categorised as institutional kids, endured. A report aired by ABC News during the exhibition showcased the narrative of Stuart Lee, a child migrant from the United Kingdom who was placed in the category of institutional kids upon admission to Fair Bridge Farm School in New South Wales (“Exhibition Reveals” 00.31: 1.08). This news story highlights the unsettling transformation of an ostensibly benevolent initiative for children into a deeply distressing and traumatising experience for the individuals involved. Thus, the issue of child migration is understood as a multi-faceted phenomenon driven by a complex interplay of underlying causes and motives that were outwardly charitable, while other motives were more hidden in their character. Hence, the underlying motives behind child migration can be divided into three categories, namely, (i) socio-political reasons, (ii) economic reasons and (iii) philanthropic reasons, which played a major role in determining the policies adopted by Britain and the receiving countries.

The economic reason for the emergence of child migration schemes in the UK includes the financial burden the state faced in providing care to orphaned children because of the rising population and peak demands. Lynch underscores this context by pointing out that the population growth of the nineteenth century, when combined with rapid industrialization and changing approaches to agriculture, population movement to cities, insecure employment, and fluctuating cycles of economic growth and recession, resulted in a growing class of urban poor (*Remembering Child* 32). This quote underscores how the pressures of industrialisation and urbanisation led to a significant rise in the urban poor class, prompting the government to seek alternative solutions like migration schemes. Thus, “between 1815 and 1830 a series of publicly funded initiatives were developed that provided free passages for emigrants wishing to travel to British colonies in North America, Australia and South Africa” (32). Assisted and organised migration was a perceived solution to Britain’s economic issues as well as a social project to spread the Anglo-Celtic population in the colonies in order to enhance governance and rule.

The goal of populating the colonies with individuals of “British” descent was a central socio-political reason behind child migration (Bean and Melville 33). This preference for British stock stemmed from the prevailing perception of its superior quality and civility in comparison to individuals from Eastern Europe, Asia, or Indigenous communities. Furthermore, the mounting opposition to convict transportation had already permeated the public consciousness, creating unrest among the populace. In this context, children, particularly those of British origin, appeared as an appealing choice. Child migration is thus a consequence of “imperialist plans to consolidate the white, Anglo-Saxon population in imperial territories” (Parliament of Australia). The agenda behind child migration, as illuminated by Bean and Melville,

sought to bolster the “European stock,” particularly of “British” origin, within colonial territories (33). Despite the charity facade of rescuing impoverished and underprivileged children from destitution and offering them newfound prospects, the historical overview of child migration reveals a darker, ulterior motive permeating these migration initiatives. The underlying motive, hidden beneath the veneer of humanitarianism, was the strategic accumulation of white populations within colonial domains. They devised this strategic approach in a variety of destinations, including Australia, Canada, Zimbabwe, and New Zealand, assigning these child migrants certain roles such as domestic servants, apprenticeships, labourers, and for some migrants, a foster care home as shelter.

The receiving nations, particularly Australia, Canada, and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), eagerly embraced these young, malleable European children for two primary reasons: their ethnicity and their docility. These child migrants were, firstly, white Europeans, and secondly, impressionable juveniles susceptible to moulding without resistance. As Gill observes, “the desire of the Dominions... to increase their white, preferably Anglo-Saxon populations coincided with the desire of the mother country to get rid of itself of excess children of the lower social orders” (15). However, racial and ethnic criteria eventually infiltrated the screening process for child migrants. For instance, Australia deemed Irish girls as undesirable migrants, thereby subjecting the Irish population to an additional layer of prejudice and racial discrimination. Irish child migrants faced dual oppression, first as child migrants and second as Irish individuals, magnifying the discrimination they encountered in Australia in comparison to their British counterparts. When Bridie declines the opportunity to work as a domestic maid in *Bridie’s Fire*, the matron remarks, “There’s not much favour for you Irish girls in Port Philip. The whole town’s crying

out against you” (Murray 98). This statement highlights the discrimination the Irish faced, being perceived as a low and undesirable category. Similarly, Bridie’s account of the churches’ efforts to prove the decency of Irish girls, “A thousand Irishmen and the Bishop was in the Town Hall to let it be known that we’re decent girls”, underscores the unfairness of the situation (125). In *Becoming Billy Dare*, there is an instance where Paddy is thrown out of a show, and the showman yells, “Reckon, I oughta put a sign up: No dogs, no Irish. (Murray 87). These excerpts further illustrate the discrimination the Irish endured based on their SES, ethnic backgrounds and sectarian grounds in Australia. The preceding chapter has already detailed the status of Irish in Australia, with a particular emphasis on ethnicity, sectarianism, and SES in the context of migration and immigrant belongingness.

Another key sociopolitical rationale behind the initiation of child migration schemes was a concern about potential unrest in the colonies. There was a prevailing belief that young children, if appropriately moulded, could evolve into exemplary “colonial citizens,” effectively averting the possibility of “rebellion” or social upheaval (Bean and Melville 33). “The Royal Commission fully endorsed child and juvenile migration as the most advantageous forms of emigration for supporting the future development of Britain’s overseas Dominions, given the ‘youth and adaptability’ of such migrants” (Lynch, *UK Child* 24). Consequently, children emerged as the most coveted demographic among immigrants due to two primary reasons: their inherent submissiveness and their capacity to rapidly acclimatise to new environments. A multitude of other influential elements shaped the strategic implementation of child migration programmes. The creation of these efforts aimed to bolster the labour force in the colonies, expecting young migrants to contribute their work and expertise to the progress of the colonial territories. Furthermore, the

perception was that these youthful migrants held the potential to bring progress to the colonies, as they might shape into industrious individuals who would persistently enhance the economic expansion and stability of the colonial regions.

The prevailing notion of the white man's responsibility to rescue people from suffering and hardship deeply influenced the philanthropic impetus behind child migration. "In the nineteenth century," child migration "began to be seen not simply as a useful means of reducing the financial demands of poor relief or meeting the labour needs of underpopulated colonies but as something that would benefit child migrants themselves" (Lynch, *Remembering Child* 11). Bean and Melville articulate this sentiment succinctly, stating that "ostensibly for philanthropic reasons in the nineteenth century," British authorities "shipped off child migrants to protect them from the evils of their environment" (78). Many philanthropists deemed it not only appropriate but imperative to transport these children to foreign lands as a means to uplift their lives. Gill aptly articulates that philanthropists ostensibly conceived child migration as a vehicle to afford disadvantaged youth a "new start" in foreign lands while simultaneously addressing social issues within Britain (15). Gordon Lynch states about the contradictions in motives behind child migration:

"The ways in which migration was believed to benefit children varied across the organisations carrying out this work. Various claims made in support of it were that migration would remove children from the social and moral privations of poverty, break the bonds of corrupting family ties or the influence of degrading Poor Law institutions, safeguard their Christian faith, and provide them with greater opportunities for building successful, independent lives." (*Remembering Child* 12)

However, child migration essentially served as a mechanism to expand the empire, a form of demographic colonialism, executed with unwavering missionary zeal.

The unaccompanied child migrants found themselves compelled to seek new homelands, driven by a maelstrom of complex social, political, and economic factors, akin to the motivations of adult migrants who often fled their native lands due to natural calamities, political persecution, or economic turmoil. However, the involuntary uprooting of most juvenile migrants casts doubt on the notion of genuine informed consent, particularly among the younger children (Gill 18). Coercion played a significant role in deceitful promises and persuasion, rendering the supposed consent of these children largely inconsequential in the face of their forced displacement. Margaret Humphrey's *Empty Cradles* provides a comprehensive depiction of the intricate manipulation tactics employed in the trafficking of child migrants. A child migrant highlights the methods used to coerce children into agreeing to migrate:

Although it seemed a silly question, I asked, 'Did you want to come to Australia?

She looked at me incredulously. 'I thought I was going on holiday. They told me I was going on holiday. Said I would be away for six weeks. I didn't know where Australia was. (Humphrey 15)

Child migrants, under pressure to participate in schemes, lacked knowledge of their destination and the underlying reasons for leaving their homes. When Humphrey asked why they think they came to Australia, one of the child migrants said, "It must have been that nobody wanted us. I've never forgotten England. It's my home. It's my

birthplace, but they just didn't want me" (17). These child migrants were not at an age to understand the socio-political system that drove them away from their homeland.

Murray portrays a poignant instance in *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* in which delusional and fake promises entice innocent children, blissfully unaware of the harsh realities of child migration schemes. False hopes lead them astray, and their journey bears testament to the exploitation of their innocence. The novel describes an instance in which three men show up to inform the children about their opportunity to migrate to Australia:

'What do you know about Australia, lads?' Asked a big red-faced man in a dark suit.

No one put up their hand.

'Well, I'll tell you about it. It's a marvellous place. There's Kangaroos and horses to ride, and fruit simply falling from trees. There are families that want boys like you, families with farms where they have their own milk and cream with breakfast every day. No one's ever hungry in Australia. It's a land of plenty and the sun shines every single day of the year. So now, who'd like to go to Australia?' (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 5)

As the stark contrast between the promises and reality becomes apparent, Colm, in a moment of clarity, warns Dibs not to be naive. The children were led to believe in a utopian life in Australia, only to be cruelly manipulated into a journey that would shatter their illusions.

Alan Gill in *Orphans of the Empire* narrates some terrific experiences of child migrants in Australia and the cruelty done to them in the name of charity:

Some now consider the whole child migration experience to have been a crime in the name of Christian charity. With hindsight many of the children themselves now look upon it in this way. According to Sheila Pearce, founding president of the Child Migrant Friendship Society: ‘We were treated like convicts—taken from our mums and dads and shipped like cargo to Australia.’ (20)

Those juvenile migrants who arrived in Australia through diverse assisted initiatives, as well as unaccompanied means, endured a protracted period of anguish and maltreatment within a foreign land, despite their initial aspirations for an enhanced standard of living. The predominant factor that precipitated this outcome lay in the children’s exposure to precarious and solitary migration circumstances.

In *Children of the Wind*, Murray portrays numerous instances of the abuse the children suffered. In *Bridie’s Fire*, Bridie hears the story of Honor Gauran, who lives in a traumatic situation because her master sexually abused her (Murray 9). Gauran explains why she wet her bed in the night. She says, “I was dreaming of the master...The mistress was out one night and I was in my little bed and master come in and took off his trousers and climbed into my bed with me...I knows I should have gone to the water closet last night...I feel scared all the time now” (93). Bridie, later hears from her friend Bidy Ryan that Honor Gauran “ran away and drowned herself” and “her belly swelled with the baby she never birthed” (125). Emily Leiffers illustrates the desperate circumstances the child migrants encountered, often leading to their involvement in criminal activities or vulnerable situations, and emphasising the harsh realities of their lives after migration. Leiffers point out that, during the period of sustained child migration, “half of Adelaide’s prostitutes were Irish orphans, while thirty-two orphans had been brought before the magistrates for various crimes,

and others were living in the bush in adulterous relationships or with illegitimate children” (26). These statistics highlight the perilous conditions that child migrants faced. *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* describes another instance of abuse and corporal punishment. In the orphanage in Australia, Colm’s friend Tommy was beaten to death, and they shaved his head as a punishment (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 42-43). Murray keenly portrays the intensity of abuse that the children under the migration scheme had to suffer in Australian institutions that aimed at the welfare of children.

In *Lost Children of the Empire*, Philip Bean and Joy Melville delve deeply into the intricate facets of child migration, raising poignant questions regarding the harrowing experiences endured by these young souls thrust into the unknown. They inquire, “What was it actually like to be a child migrant? To be shipped overseas to a country you knew nothing about for reasons you did not understand” (Bean and Melville 9). The emotional resonance of their question underscores the magnitude of the challenges faced by these vulnerable children, who, at a tender age, found themselves severed from the familiarity of their homelands, cultures, and families, thrust into an alien environment fraught with uncertainties and devoid of a comprehensible rationale. The *Children of the Wind* series encapsulates the overarching theme of migration, alienation, and the profound sense of displacement that permeated the lives of child migrants during this tumultuous period in history.

The exploration of push factors, such as poverty, family breakdown, and limited opportunities in the home countries, alongside the appeal of pull factors like the promise of a better life and family reunification, provides a comprehensive understanding of the driving forces behind these young migrants’ journeys in the *Children of the Wind* series. Moreover, the series portrays the profound sense of displacement experienced by these children as they navigate a foreign land, grappling

with identity, culture shock, and a longing for their homeland. Nostalgia, in particular, emerges as a subtext, highlighting the enduring emotional struggles faced by child migrants. Analysing these subtexts not only enriches our understanding of child migration, but also reveals the intricate social, economic, historical, and cultural constructions embedded in the Children of the Wind series.

### **Push-Pull Factors**

Everett Lee proposed a comprehensive migration theory and identified a cluster of factors that affect a population's mobility, which became a milestone in migration-related discourses. Lee notes that both the destination and the point of departure contain several positive and negative factors; the "negative factors act as push factors" in the origin country, and the "positive factors" in the destination act as "pull factors" (50). According to Lee, this conceptualization of migration involves a "set of factors at the origin and destination, a set of intervening obstacles, and a series of personal factor's influencing the process of migration. Despite its simplicity, Lee's push-pull model provides a "framework" for understanding migration and its intricacies (52). Robin Cohen, in *Theories of Migration* (1996), also emphasises the importance of push-pull factors in understanding the migration process and asserts the significance of "push-pull factors" as an integral "dyad" of migration (xi–xii). In line with Cohen's arguments, Peter Scholten et al. also highlight the significance of "push-pull" variables in the migratory process (6). The application of Lee's push-pull theory to the concept of child migration will highlight the push-pull forces that played a pivotal role in child migration.

Lee's push-pull theory consists of four core factors in the context of elements affecting migration, such as (i) "factors associated with place of origin or push

factors”, (ii) “factors associated with place of destination or pull factors,” (iii) “intervening obstacles,” and (iv) “personal factors” (Lee 48). These four factors, according to Lee, determine the complete migration process and motivation behind it. Accordingly, migration involves two distinct selection criteria: migrants who prioritise the “positive factors” of their destination tend to be “positively selective,” while those who prioritise the “negative factors” at their origin tend to be “negatively selective” (Lee 56). Lee states, “Some of the migrants who leave are responding primarily to plus factors at their destination and therefore tend to be positively selected, while others are responding to minus factors and therefore tend to be negatively selected” (56). In *Children of the Wind*, push factors to propel Bridie, Paddy, and Colm’s migration can be categorised as “negatively selected” because these child migrants do not journey to Australia for the positive factors at their destination. Maeve, on the other hand, is not part of any child migration scheme, though she travels widely to and fro from Australia to Hong Kong to Ireland. However, the personal motivations, individual stories, and unique circumstances of Bridie, Paddy, Colm, and Maeve make their journey more than just a response to negative or positive factors.

A critical overview of the *Children of the Wind* series provides critical insights on push factors that affect child migration into three categories: economic, social, and physical. Employment opportunities and financial benefits are directly related to economic push factors, while political communalism, sectarianism, and racial conflicts, which make life in the homeland challenging, are linked to social push factors. Physical push factors include natural disasters, personal issues, and various other psycho-physical factors. An examination of push factors that acted as a driving force for child migrants in *Bridie’s Fire*, *Becoming Billy Dare*, and *A Prayer*

*for Blue Delaney* will shed light on the historical context of child migration during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In *Bridie's Fire*, the Irish Famine acts as a solid push factor, pushing Bridie from Ireland to Australia in search of a better standard of living. The Irish famine of the 1840s was a pivotal event that triggered a significant wave of migration from Ireland to the United States, Australia, and Canada. In *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*, Takaki provides a statistic, stating, "Between 1815 and 1845, one million Irish came to America" (Takaki 134). This figure illustrates the scale of Irish migration after the famine and the resulting Irish diaspora. In his work "The Long Shadow of the Great Hunger," Kevin Whelan further emphasises this point, noting that "one in two individuals born in Ireland "during the nineteenth century "emigrated" (Whelan). This underscores the fact that the famine led to the formation of multiple migration routes to the United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia.

The gripping story of *Bridie's Fire* traces an Irish immigrant who must flee her homeland due to a potato famine. Bridie's displacement begins when the famine hits Dingle, forcing everyone onto the roads in a desperate quest for food and shelter. By the 1800s, the potato had become Ireland's primary source of sustenance and most important crop, making the blight's impact on agriculture and society devastating. As a direct result of the famine, "many resorted to begging in the streets; others began wandering from town to town looking for food and shelter" (Prawer 6). Bridie has seen the "gaunt and desperate men and women, turned out of home when their crops failed and they had been unable to pay rent-they drifted begging at every door driven by the hungry wind" (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 10). The famine forces Bridie and her sibling Brandon onto the streets and compels them to find new shelter. Bridie's

mother and little brother, Paddy, perish, leaving Bridie and Brandon as orphans. After abandoning Brandon in a workhouse, she immigrates to Australia under an assisted migration program in search of economic stability. Though famine acts as a physical push factor, its main consequences include economic instability in the social sphere. Thus, famine is both a physical and economic push factor that led to Bridie's migration in the novel.

During the famine, Australia offered three kinds of assistance to emigrants: "emigrant remittances, poor law-assisted emigration, and the orphan emigration scheme" (Parliament of Australia). *Bridie's Fire* depicts the benefits of the Orphan Scheme, as well as the plight of orphan females sent to Australia. The programme was responsible for the departure of "4,175 females from Irish workhouses. Sydney received 2,253, followed by Port Philip with 1,255, Adelaide with 606, and the Cape of Good Hope with the remaining 61" (Cummings). The Earl Grey orphans are named after Lord Grey, the British secretary of state for the colonies. The Earl Grey Scheme was a historical event that involved sending young girls from Ireland to Australia. The Earl Grey Scheme selected "4175 Irish orphan girls" from workhouses and orphanages in various parts of Ireland between "1848 and 1850" to send them to Australia (Casey 26). The British developed this scheme for two main purposes. Firstly, the British made "concerted efforts" to "address the enormous gender imbalance in Australia" and, secondly, to allocate orphans living in workhouses to the "public exchequer" for "good use" in the colony as "domestic servants" (26). Grey's orphan scheme may look like a positive pull factor that attracted child migrants because of the free travel expenses and job opportunities that were waiting for them in Australia. However, many found the voyage to Australia to be a harrowing experience, as it was a "gruelling voyage on overcrowded, disease-ridden hips" (26).

Additionally, the harsh living conditions of Australia only “attracted the most desperate of women” (26). As a result, the orphan migration scheme was not a strong pull factor in child migration.

Bridie, an eleven-year-old Irish girl, embarks on an emigrant journey as part of the Earl Grey Orphan Scheme. Murray, commenting on the historic nature of Bridie’s experience, states:

Between 1848 and 1850, over 4000 girls were shipped out to Australia as part of the ‘Earl Grey Orphan Scheme’. Earl Grey was secretary of state for the colonies, and the girls were victims of the great Irish potato famine. The famine Or An Ghorta Mor, as it was known in Ireland, was a terrible event in Irish history that left more than a million Irish dead and drove almost two million people away from their homeland, I am not descended from one of the orphan girls, but more than 30,000 Australians are, and their influence has echoed down the generations. (*Bridie’s Fire* 251)

Bridie enters a workhouse as a result of the 1840s famine that ravaged Ireland. Because there were no “jobs” in Ireland, the English-style workhouses were useless to the Irish poor law system (Leiffers 3). At the same time, Australia’s labour market was ravenous due to a labour shortage. The covert desire to increase the Anglo-Celtic population in Australia led to the enactment of several immigration policies. Thus, the Earl Grey orphan scheme brought starving Ireland and labour-hungry Australia together, sending destitute children from Ireland to Australia to alleviate their distress and achieve a standard of living.

Historian Patrick O’Farrell’s observation that “the emigration was seen by the British as a cure for Ireland’s ills and by Irish nationalists as a disaster, induced

something akin to pertinence in many, certainly confusion” is a testament to the complex nature of this historical event (O’Farrell 62). The orphans, who were minors and lived in ignorance in the workhouses, also deeply felt the confusion, not just at the societal level. *Bridie’s Fire* vividly portrays the selection of girls for the scheme as the appointed officer walks up and down the row, scrutinising each girl (Murray 65). The officer announces, “You will have free passage, and the board has agreed to pay the expenses to outfit each of you for your new lives in the colony. Upon arrival, you will be indentured to employers” (66). Thus, the Earl Grey Orphan Scheme forced even young girls in their early childhood to become apprentices, domestic maids, and labourers.

According to Lee’s theory, the positive factors at the destination attract the migrant, whereas the negative factors at the origin act as a pushing force (Lee 56). Here, the children, unaware of the positive factors in the host land, are illiterate and have little exposure to the scenarios of the outside world. In the case of Bridie and other Grey orphans, the push factors act as a solid driving force. Factors that affected Bridie’s migration include Irish famine and related misery, death, and starvation. Ireland had nothing to offer, as the workhouses smelled of death and disease. For them, Ireland was a wasteland, a place of despair and hopelessness. The opportunity to migrate, however, shone like a beacon of hope, promising a better life ahead. The hope is evident when Bridie consoles Brandon by saying that one day she will send him to live with her in Australia and tells him they will have their house in Australia (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 73). The narrative consistently portrays Ireland as a wasteland, instilling in the migrant child a sense of hopelessness. Bridie feels that “there is no one to call her name and bind her heart” to the old world, nor was there for any of the other orphan girls” (74). Many saw migration schemes as a way out for economically

disadvantaged women, praising migration as a fresh opportunity. Anne Casey, in “Rags and Boughs’—Daughters of the Irish Great Hunger in Australia”, asserts that only the most “desperate” and downtrodden women of Ireland chose assisted migration schemes to Australia (26). Negative aspects, such as harsh environments and perilous voyages, overshadowed positive components like free travel expenses and new jobs.

Intervening variables such as distance and cost of travel had a negligible effect on migration as the entire scheme was aided. Caitlin tells Bridie, “You’ll never get this chance again. Free passage! You know there are girls lining up to get into the workhouse just to be offered a prize like this” (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 66). The orphans are provided with assistance regardless of how far they have to travel or how much money it would cost them to get there, which is one of the appealing aspects of the scheme. Several benefits attract juvenile migrants. The cost of passage is a significant barrier, as the cost of passage to Australia at this time is “five times higher than that to the United States,” making emigration to the colony unthinkable for most “labourers” or “workhouses.” However, the willingness of Australian authorities to pay for the transportation of women makes the scheme much more attractive (Leiffers 8). Despite the appealing pull factor of the free cost of passage, many deemed child migration a deliberate, cruel action from the British authorities. Philip Bean and Joy Melville in *The Lost Children of the Empire* (1989) observe that the “history of child migration in Australia is in many ways a history of cruelty, lies and deceit” (111). Children were led to believe that the migration would benefit them, with their well-being frequently cited as the primary impetus for their journeys across international borders. However, undisclosed political, social, and philanthropic motives were the true driving forces behind juvenile migration throughout history.

The death of her family and the famine's misery were personal factors that influenced Bridie's relocation to Australia. Bridie's entire family had perished from starvation or starvation-related diseases, but her younger sibling, Brandon, survived the havoc of the famine. Bridie believes that to assist Brandon in achieving a certain standard of living, she must seek a better life. She says, "If I stay here. We'll never have anything" (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 72). She has no one to hold her back, and there is nothing to look forward to except fatalities and disease. Her love for Brandon's welfare acts as a push factor, and with the death of her other family members leaving her with no one in Ireland, she feels the urge to escape a place that adds misery to her life.

Similarly, Bridie's profoundly negative view of migration stems from the migration stories ingrained in her throughout the course of the novel *Bridie's Fire*. As a result, Bridie despises the concept of migration. The story contains a number of repeated instances of characters having ambivalent feelings about migration, and Bridie detests the prospect of moving to a new location away from her family and friends. Bridie's mother sings about the "story of a beautiful girl with a broken heart, whose love had gone across the sea to America and was never heard from again" (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 6). Following the song, the children contemplate migration to the United States, relying solely on imprecise information about the final destination. Bridie's younger brother, Brandon, reflects on his plans: "One day I'll be going across the sea to America, just like Uncle Liam" (6). Uncle Liam is a problematic metaphor in the story, and his story acts as a pull factor, leading many to assume that he has achieved wealth in America. Roisin, a young girl who lives next door to Bridie, challenges the truth of the narrative that "No one's ever heard from your Uncle Liam" (7). Roisin subverts the idea of eulogising migrant destinations as the home of

prosperity by asking about the lived experience of the migrant. Before Roisin asked the question, no one had directly heard about the migrant's experience. However, Brandon perceives Liam as wealthy and believes he resides in a magnificent home (7). Therefore, personal factors also play a role in influencing migration. However, in *Bridie's Fire*, famine serves as a significant push factor, thereby making her migration less selective.

In *Becoming Billy Dare*, personal factors and internal compulsions drive migration, in contrast to the typical narratives of migration that revolve around push-pull factors. Unlike *Bridie's Fire*, which portrays an organised migration, Paddy's displacement occurs without any assistance or organised schemes; instead, he sneaks into a ship and travels to Australia. Moreover, in *Becoming Billy Dare*, personal factors drive migration, not negative factors at the origin or positive factors at the destination. Therefore, Paddy's migration is solely emotional, impulsive and personal. This stark contrast between Paddy and Bridie's underlying migration motivations highlights the complexity and idiosyncrasies of migration decisions. Personal factors can also act in the same intensity as solid exogenous push factors, like the positive and negative factors influencing migration.

Personal factors significantly influence migration and migrant dynamics. Some of these are more or less constant throughout the individual's life. In contrast, others are associated with stages in the life cycle and, in particular, with the sharp breaks that denote passage from one stage to another" (Lee 51). Similar to push and pull factors, personal factors such as personal contact with the destination, melancholy, intelligence, and psychological resistance to relocating also influence the migration process. Additionally, there are "personalities that are resistant to change—change of residence and other changes—and personalities that embrace change for its

own sake. For some individuals, migration requires compelling reasons, whereas, for others, a relatively minor provocation or promise suffices” (51). When analysing the push-pull factors that influence migration, personal factors are just as important as political and social factors. The frequent intertwining of personal, political, and social factors makes it challenging to distinguish and classify them.

In the case of Paddy Delaney, the personal push factor was the death of his mother and the ensuing grief, which acted as a powerful driving force. However, as the decision to migrate is not always rational, even fleeting emotions or accidental events can play a significant role. According to Lee, the decision to migrate is never entirely rational, and for some individuals, the rational component is much smaller than the irrational (51). This unpredictability, a fundamental aspect of migration studies, adds a layer of complexity to the topic. Sometimes, the reasons for migration are too predetermined and incidental. Therefore, Lee states that in the case of motives for migration, there will be “many exceptions to our generalisations since transient emotions, mental disorders, and accidental occurrences account for a considerable proportion of total migrations” (51). *Children of the Wind* also explore some of these irrational motivations for migration. Some juvenile protagonists, for instance, leave their country of origin impulsively due to emotional turmoil; the best example would be the case of Paddy Delaney. The reader may find the reasons too personal or irrational, but as the critic Lee points out, transient emotions and unforeseen circumstances can sometimes act as powerful driving forces (51). In this way, the *Children of the Wind* series not only sheds light on the complex and often irrational motives behind migration but also invites readers to empathize with the deep personal struggles that propel these young characters toward uncertain futures.

Paddy Delaney's decision to migrate to Australia was entirely accidental and impulsive, suggesting that the factors at his destination had little influence on his decision. Paddy initially desired to travel to Africa but ended up boarding the barque Lapwing, bound for Australia (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 63-64). This indicates that the appeal of opportunities in Australia did not play a significant role in his decision. Instead, his decision to leave was impulsive, devoid of any rational or push-pull factors. However, Murray has woven the narrative with what can be interpreted as anti-Irish sentiment, a portrayal of Ireland that emphasises its "misery" and lack of home for Paddy. For instance, Paddy is depicted slipping aboard the Lapwing, hoping the ship will carry him away from the "misery of the place" (64). Nevertheless, no socio-political reasons or cultural sectarianism have caused him to dislike Ireland. As another piece of evidence to support the plausibility of the motivation, Murray asserts that Paddy Delaney was aware that "he had no home in Ireland" (84). However, we can see that a disagreement with Uncle Kevin prompted Paddy to leave (56). So, his issues were personal and had nothing to do with his country of origin, but the discourse on Ireland in the novel nonetheless demonstrates his disdain for the country.

The push factor that initiates migration of Colm in *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* can be categorised as a social push factor. Australia has historically supported juvenile migration programmes, and the majority of these children endured unimaginable suffering and cruelty at the hands of those entrusted with their care. Murray says, "Australia has had a long history of endorsing child migration schemes. After World War II, thousands of children were taken from institutions in the UK and Malta and shipped to Australia, often against their will. Many of these children suffered unspeakable hardship and cruelty at the hands of those who were meant to care for them" (*Prayer for Blue* 247). Like *Bridie's Fire*, the third book, *A Prayer for*

*Blue Delaney*, focuses on organised child migration and its defining characteristics. The child migrant programmes of the “1950s” served a dual purpose: reducing the burden on British orphanages and “increasing the population of the colonies” (Davies). Officials deemed it charitable to ship children to countries like Australia and Canada, promising them a better life. Between the “1920s and 1960s,” the United Kingdom sent an estimated “150,000 young children to foster homes” and institutions abroad so that they could live happier lives in the underpopulated commonwealth (Bowcott). Thus, Colm McCabe, the protagonist of *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, is unquestionably a victim of organised child migration.

Colm McCabe considers himself to be of Irish descent, and his fragmented memory depicts his “red-haired” mother abandoning him at an orphanage (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 1). When the other lads first inquire about Colm’s whereabouts, he contemplates his national identity:

‘Right then, he said to Colm.’ Tell us your name.’

‘Colm McCabe’.

Tommy slapped the table harsh and laughed.’ So you’re Irish. Of course, you had to be Irish-none of the lousy English can think as fast as lads like us.’

Colm had never thought to question whether he was English. Did that mean his mother was Irish too? If tom Cassidy was Irish, perhaps it was a good thing to be. Maybe his luck was turning. (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 10)

The Irish government’s strong opposition to child migration schemes did not deter the majority of child migrants to Australia, who were, in fact, Irish. Barry Coldrey in *Child Migration to Catholic Institutions in Australia* (1995) states that the “Government of the Republic of Ireland, unlike that of Britain, strongly disapproved

of child migration and refused to participate in the practice. However, a large number of British child migrants were, in fact, Irish. They were born to Irish mothers living in England” (53). This historical context further solidifies the probability of Colm’s Irish heritage.

In *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, the orphanage authorities impose the migration plan on the boys, leaving them with no choice but to comply. Colm despises the migration to Australia, so when Sister Clothilde informs him that he has been chosen for the assisted migration scheme, it induces a state of perturbation in him. Colm says he does not want to go because he is perplexed, but Sister Clothilde consoles him by saying that Colm’s perplexity is “nonsense” and “every boy wants to go” and explore such an opportunity because it “will be like a grand holiday” (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 6). Despite the reluctance of many children to migrate to Australia, these institutions’ boys, like the Grey orphans, felt compelled to travel. The child migration policies, similar to Bridie’s situation, influenced Colm’s migration through both push and pull factors. The programme had two effects: it forced children to leave Britain or their home country, and it presented them with a distorted and falsely positive image of their destination. For instance, the authorities, while manipulating the children into migration, celebrate the Australian landscape as an abode of riches and pleasantness: “It’s a marvellous place. There are kangaroos and horses to ride, and fruit simply falls from the trees, families, who own farms and serve their own milk and cream for breakfast every day, yearn for boys like you. No one’s ever hungry in Australia. It’s a land of plenty, and the sun shines every single day of the year” (5). The pull factor, though it had a negligible role in child migration, had the potential to entice children because of the ideal way of life depicted before them.

Therefore, push factors are the negative conditions that propel people to leave their home countries, while pull factors are the positive conditions that attract people to new destinations. Organised child migration is a specific type of migration in which children are sent to another country without their parents' consent or knowledge. In this type of migration, the push factors are typically more significant than the pull factors. For example, in the novel *Bridie's Fire*, the Irish famine is a major push factor that compels Bridie to leave her home country. In the novel *Becoming Billy Dare*, personal trauma and factors such as the death of parents are the push factors that set the action in motion. In contrast, the pull factors of organised child migration are often less specific and more idealistic. For instance, the new destination may promise children a better education, better job opportunities, or an overall better life. In the novel *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, Colm McCabe is sent to Australia as part of the twentieth-century organised child migration. Similar to Bridie O'Connor in *Bridie's Fire*, Colm McCabe's decision is made as a result of push factors rather than pull factors. Overall, the push factors are typically more significant than the pull factors in child migration, as represented in the Children of the Wind series.

Indeed, the journey of child migrants was fraught with a higher probability of multiple displacements occurring before they reached their intended destination or host country. These displacements often manifest as interruptions in their migration routes due to border restrictions, detention, or shifts in political and socio-economic landscapes. Each such displacement further exposes these young migrants to perilous dangers and unsafe environments, increasing their vulnerability to physical harm, exploitation, and psychological trauma. The cumulative impact of these experiences can result in profound grief and emotional distress as they grapple with the loss of their homes, communities, and often their families. The complex interplay between

displacement, danger, and trauma highlights the urgent need for robust academic inquiry and policy responses to address the multifaceted challenges faced by child migrants on their arduous journeys towards safety and stability.

## **Displacement**

Displacement is commonly referred to as forced displacement due to its inherent connection to a component of coercion or force involved in the process of movement. This emphasises that displacement occurs as a consequence of an external force, compelling an individual to involuntarily move away from their original location. Forced displacement happens when “individuals and communities have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of events or situations such as armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights abuses, natural or man-made disasters, and/or development projects” (“Forced and Unlawful” 164). Hence, the “defining factor” of any displacement is the “absence of will or consent” involved in the movement of individuals (164). To briefly explain, all displacement contains migration as a subset, but not all migration is considered displacement.

There are two kinds of displacement, internal and external, based on the border as a parameter. An individual undergoes internal displacement when they relocate within the boundaries of a country or its borders. Conversely, external displacement happens when an individual relocates across a national border. Forcibly displaced individuals from their home countries typically fall into distinct categories such as refugees, asylum seekers, expatriates, and immigrants. Even though internally displaced persons (IDPs) possess numerous characteristics similar to refugees, they are treated as a separate entity distinct from refugees. The existing glossary about migration makes a clear distinction between individuals classified as refugees and

those classified as IDPs. A refugee is defined as a “person who has fled their home country out of fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, beliefs, or membership in a particular social group” (“Refugees and internally”). In contrast to refugees, IDPs have not traversed a national border and remain within the confines of their own country. Although the underlying motivations for their flight may remain consistent for IDPs and refugees, they are perceived as distinct categories.

The *Children of the Wind* series explores two forms of displacement experienced by child protagonists, thereby demonstrating a consistent displacement pattern and frequent location changes in the series. The main characters are internally displaced before crossing international borders and subsequently displaced to new destinations. The series frequently explores the theme of transitioning from local to global contexts, often depicting ongoing displacement and highlighting the significance of various routes. The internally displaced child is compelled to evacuate the residence to find a pathway within the nation or homeland, where they are transported to different sites in search of shelter and sustenance. After a series of internal displacements, the child finds its way across borders, either independently or through organised child migration programs. The series demonstrates a consistent pattern of child displacement, marked by a series of internal and external displacements, each of which undergoes a continuous relocation process.

*Bridie's Fire* explores the theme of displacement, examining both internal and external manifestations of the phenomenon. The beginning of the novel centres on Bridie's internal displacement, whereas the latter part centres on her external displacement. As a consequence of the famine, Bridie and the entirety of her local community are compelled to evacuate their residences. The novel describes the mass internal displacement caused by crop failure due to the famine: “There were no

children's voices anymore, not even the low, whining sound of the dying. Nearly everyone was gone" (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 24). In Bridie's town, the famine wreaked havoc, forcing every family to beg for food and sustenance on the streets. The mass internal displacement of people is vividly depicted as an ominous stillness and quietness where all the alleyways and "houses lay empty, as if the people had gone for an evening walk but then never returned"(24). Bridie's decision to leave her residence in the aftermath of her father's demise stems from her unwillingness to witness her siblings succumb to starvation. Consequently, she, along with her mother and brothers, embarks on a journey to Dingle. Unfortunately, during the course of the trip, Bridie's mother and unborn sibling tragically succumb to a distressing demise, and furthermore, her youngest brother Paddy dies due to the combined effects of starvation and fever. Bridie and Brandon are currently without companionship and have been forced to relocate to the streets of Dingle. They undergo a process of displacement from Dunquin to Dingle, followed by their subsequent displacement to a workhouse. Even though the novel centres on Bridie, a fictional character, the historical context is apparent when Murray says, "It seemed as though the whole of Ireland was on the move" (43). This demonstrates the enormous scale of internal displacement that compelled the Irish population to abandon their places of residence.

*Bridie's Fire* depicts Bridie's internal displacement as an instance of catastrophe-induced displacement. Displacement due to a disaster is defined as "the movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard" (Sironi et al. 51). During the famine of 1848, Ballyickeen, a town in Ireland experienced significant devastation, resulting in the displacement of a large number of individuals who were unable to meet their rent

obligations due to the destruction of their agricultural land. Bridie, along with her siblings and mother, departs from their residence in search of sustenance and refuge. Bridie and her sibling Brandon experience a second instance of internal displacement and abandonment when their mother tragically passes away during their travels. This situation arises as both Bridie and Brandon, being minors without guardians, are compelled to flee their village due to famine and a severe food shortage. Both Bridie and Brandon undertake a journey through Ireland, first traveling from Dunquin to Dingle, then continuing on to Tralee, and ultimately arriving at a workhouse. This path exemplifies their persistent movement within the confines of the region. The displacement of children is a consequence of a catastrophic event, such as a severe shortage of food, compelling them to undertake migration as a means of ensuring their survival. The narrative surrounding Bridie's internal displacement serves as a symbolic representation of the experiences endured by children in Ireland during the period of the Great Famine. The Irish famine initiated a significant surge in migration, with one of its most conspicuous consequences being the phenomenon of external displacement. "About 1 million" of Irish are "estimated to have emigrated in the immediate famine period, with the depression that followed continuing the decline until the second half of the 20th century. These migrants largely ended up in North America, with some in Australia and in Britain" ("Effects of the Famine"). In *Bridie's Fire*, Bridie's is externally displaced from Ireland to Australia, with several push factors such as famine, the Orphan Scheme and economic depravity acting as catalysts in her displacement.

*Becoming Billy Dare* portrays the phenomenon of internal displacement, where Paddy's relocation from Burren to Dublin is motivated by his aspiration to pursue a vocation in the priesthood and enrol in a seminary. Paddy's sense of self is

deeply connected to his geographical identity, and Consequently, any displacement within this territory causes him to experience a sense of bewilderment and unease. In reference to Burren's arid and stony terrain, Doherty, the cart driver, makes a reference while talking with Paddy. Paddy then proceeds to express his deep affection for his village and the vibrant nature of his existence within it:

'Ain't it bleak, all that stone and wind on the Burren? Sure this soft green is sweeter,' said John.

'No, it's not what you think. The granite is grand to climb, and the wind blows off the sea and round the grey hills, and you can run wild across the stone. On a clear day, you can see the Arran Isles and they look like fairy kingdoms. It's not bleak at all.' (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 9)

In Dublin, Paddy is overcome by sentimentality and "a melancholy longing for his home" when Doherty sings a Yeats poem (10). Paddy experiences a strong sense of nostalgia towards his place of origin, Burren, and expresses profound sorrow over the absence of his mother's love and affection.

Following the demise of his mother, Paddy expresses a desire to escape from Ireland, as he experiences a sense of displacement and states that he no longer perceives Ireland as his place of belonging (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 84). Paddy perceives Ireland as a region lacking in happiness and regards his journey to Australia as an avenue to escape the prevailing "misery of the place" (64). Paddy developed a strong aversion towards Ireland due to the distress he experienced from the internal displacement. However, the external displacement he experiences when he stows away in the Lapwing barge creates tumultuous tensions in him. Despite Paddy's assertion that he wants to leave Ireland because he has no family there, he has many deep-seated connections to his native country. When Paddy reappears as Billy in *A*

*Prayer for Blue Delaney*, readers find how proudly he sings about Ireland while being with Colm McCabe. Paddy sings about “MacDonagh, MacBride, and Connolly” and says that “they all died for Ireland, a “terrible beauty” (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 76). The phrase “terrible beauty” in Paddy’s singing refers to the paradoxical nature of Ireland’s struggle for independence, which is both tragic and inspiring which demonstrates Paddy’s complex emotions towards his homeland. So even though Paddy has a new life as Billy in Australia, he has a deep connection with his homeland.

In *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, Murray employs the narrative of Colm McCabe’s abandonment at a young age and subsequent placement in an orphanage to portray the issue of child displacement subtly. In this novel, internal displacement and child displacement intersect because Colm’s displacement to orphanage is both an instance of child displacement as well as internal displacement. The novel describes the possible consequences of displacement on a young individual, such as instances of violence, mistreatment, and uncertainty that persistently afflict them, intensifying their feelings of anxiety and despair. As an illustration, a particular instance from the novel provides a comprehensive account of the harshness and brutality inflicted upon the children residing within the orphanage, vividly portraying the extent of their suffering. In *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, Colm experiences a form of suppression from the authorities, who employ the method of forcibly placing heated potatoes into his mouth. Consequently, this traumatic event has a lasting impact on Colm, as he can never consume potatoes without evoking memories of the distressing sound he emits during the incident (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 2). In addition, the individual responsible for overseeing the orphanage, known as Sister Clothilde, engages in physical abuse toward him. The incident is recounted as follows:

Sister Clothilde swept the other boys aside and bore down on him, her fist clenched hard, her knuckles white. She struck, and Colm's neck snapped backwards, his head hitting the balustrade behind. He saw the folds of sister's habit swirling around him as he crumpled, felt the tang of blood in his mouth, and then the darkness swallowed him. (5)

All the aforementioned physical punishment and torture Colm endures is a direct result of displacement which throws him into perilous conditions.

The emotional impact of separation and displacement deeply traumatises Colm, as evidenced by his reflection on feeling abandoned in the orphanage. Murray captures Colm's sentiment as he seeks solace in imagining that the "same sun" shines on his mother elsewhere in "England" (*Prayer for Blue* 3). Colm's daily contemplation revolves around memories of his time spent with his mother before their separation, highlighting the profound influence of the maternal bond. However, an assisted child migration scheme that relocates children from orphanages to foster families, farming schools, and colonies changes Colm's trajectory. This shift marks a pivotal moment in Colm's narrative, reflecting the complex dynamics of external displacement and its repercussions.

Colm is externally displaced to the Bindoon Boys in Western Australia, an institution in town run by Christian missionaries. However, "it is ironic that in an age that celebrated the ideal of the family unit, so many children should have been forced to grow up in institutions" (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 247). Children displaced to such orphan homes were inflicted with physical violence, malnutrition and abuse. Colm and other children had to suffer punishments. Tommy, another orphan boy, greets Colm in front of Bindoon, saying, "You don't want to be here, mate. This place, this is hell" (35). Kevin Rudd, then prime minister of Australia in 2009, made a formal

apology to all the child migrants who lost a good childhood by being a part of child migration (“National Apology”). This apology demonstrates the systemic abuse suffered by children like Colm. The displacement of children into various orphanages and institutions resulted in life-long, enduring traumas for children.

In contrast, Maeve, the protagonist of *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong*, endures a different form of displacement-related suffering than Bridie, Paddy, and Colm. First of all, Maeve has never been a victim of any kind of forced displacement; furthermore, her economic status is quite distinct from that of other significant characters such as Bridie, Paddy, and Colm. Together, these factors shape her experience of migration, making it not an instance of displacement. The novel portrays Maeve’s separation from her family after her mother’s death, forcing her to live with her Chinese grandparents, resulting in a significant cultural clash. Despite being in Australia, this cultural divide makes Maeve feel out of place with her elders. Unlike the displacement from parental care in other novels of *Children of the Wind*, her separation is more like a temporary relocation. Maeve is so accustomed to her home that her relocation causes some emotional difficulties. As a result of socioeconomic factors that acted as an advantage, she had not been subjected to any form of maltreatment during her period of displacement from parental care.

The idea of nation has frequently been connected with the maternal and, thus, the child’s familiar environment, and this association is often found in patriotic rhetoric, where the nation is metaphorically considered a nurturing mother. As a result, being uprooted from home can cause severe anxiety in child migrants experiencing external displacement. The intricate relationship between home, nation, and childhood is underscored by the idea that the home is often viewed as a maternal

space, providing a sense of safety and belonging for the child. As such, the following observation highlights the implications of leaving this familiar environment:

Home/nation, often associated with the maternal, is frequently represented as the natural space of the child. Any transgression out of this space, any move 'away' from 'home,' is marked by deep anxiety because it is the space of the unknown, a terrain laden with the anxieties of adolescence and entry into adulthood, and the accompanying loss of childhood innocence. (Naghibi 135)

During the internal displacement, child migrants, however, remain inside the geographical boundaries of their home nation, mitigating the potential for distress as they are still in the maternal boundary. However, when individuals are subjected to "forcible relocation across national borders," a term indicating the movement of people across international borders against their will, they experience a simultaneous displacement from the "known to the unknown, resulting in heightened tension and anxiety" (135). The strategic utilisation of nostalgia as a method for managing stress and problematic apprehension towards unknown terrains of displacement amplifies the interconnectedness with the past.

The external displacement of child migrants is characterised by sorrow and confusion, as it entails transitioning from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from the known to the unknown. The act of migrating alone, whether by planned or unorganised means, exposes children to heightened vulnerability in terms of anxiety. In the case of child migrants, "displacement from a sense of home nation was layered onto the sense of displacement from family, creating an even more profound sense of lack of identity" (Lynch, *Remembering Child* 95). The transition from late childhood to adolescence further compounds the distressing nature of the journey. Initially, the narrative surrounding the sexual abuse of orphaned girls exposes Bridie to mental

agony, causing her to become confused and worried about the predicament she faces in the new land. Paddy Delaney experiences a profound sense of shock in response to the physical torment inflicted upon Violet, and, overwhelmed by helplessness, he chooses to flee into the surrounding wilderness alongside her. Similarly, Colm endures severe acts of torture and punishment in orphanage facilities. During their displacement, each individual faces abuse and exploitation, and the experience of uprooting from their place of origin eliciting feelings of worry, prompting them to revisit their memories of home to navigate their state of confusion. The longing for the past provides individuals with a sense of affiliation and self-identification during a period characterised by disorder and unpredictability.

## **Nostalgia**

Nostalgia is an overpowering longing to return to a period or place from the past due to the positive emotions and recollections linked with that time or area. Collins Dictionary defines *nostalgia* as a “sentimental longing” for past experiences, particularly those associated with more “joyful periods” (“Nostalgia”). It can be further defined as “a wistful desire to return in thought or fact to a former time in one’s life, to one’s home or homeland, or one’s family and friends; a sentimental yearning for the happiness of a former place or time” (“Nostalgia”). On the other hand, the term memory is defined as the “faculty of encoding, storing, and retrieving information” (Zlotnik and Vasintjan 2). Children possess within themselves the memory of their nation, encompassing both subjective and collective memories. Both memory and nostalgia have a significant role in the formation and evolution of migrant subjectivity.

The term *nostalgia* originates from the “Greek”, derived explicitly from the combination of two fundamental words: “*nostos*,” meaning “return home,” and

“*algia*,” referring to a “state of pain or discomfort.” Contrary to its present-day semantic sense, nostalgia initially had a “medical” or clinical connotation (Santesso 13; Boym 3). Hofer, a medical student from the United States who lived in Switzerland during the “seventeenth century”, introduced the term nostalgia (J. Wilson, *Nostalgia* 21; Boym 3). Initially used as a medical term to describe an ailment, its focus gradually expanded to encompass psychological and cultural dimensions. Due to its clinical connotation, the term nostalgia has historically been associated with a negative stigma. According to Nima Naghibi, people initially viewed nostalgia as a “curable medical disease,” later considered it a “form of psychological trauma,” and later “recast it as an emotional wound” in cultural and literary contexts (76). The Children of the Wind series interweaves the word nostalgia with concepts such as home, migration, and displacement, making it not only a trope but also a crucial subtext.

In the Children of the Wind series, nostalgia’s personal and social aspects are explored through the nostalgic yearning of child migrant characters. Fred Davis argues that while nostalgia is often private, it can also be a “felt intensely personal character” (vii). Critics perceive nostalgia as a “cultural phenomenon” rather than a “subjective personal one” (J. Wilson, “Remember” 299). Thus, the series inextricably links and overlaps the social and personal nature of nostalgia. Janelle Wilson states that “Nostalgia may padlock the path between then and now. Or, nostalgia may give us a key to the gate connecting the lessons of the past and the needs of the present” (“Remembering” 303). Hence, analysing nostalgia as a subtext is not a mere explanation of personal dimensions of homesickness; it has complex layers of socio-cultural aspects.

In the Children of the Wind series, displacement of children to an unfamiliar landscape induced a sense of chaos and bereavement in child migrants, and nostalgia for the home gave these children a sense of self in chaos. *Nostalgia* is a “temporal escape” and “indicates an individual’s desire to regain some control over their lives in uncertain times” (Aden 21). Each child migrant in the series employs unique methods to communicate nostalgically. For instance, Bridie, an individual of Irish descent, after getting externally displaced to Australia, tries to retain her memories by constantly recollecting and sharing stories of her homeland. Brandon deeply admires Bridie’s storytelling prowess, asserting that her ability to captivate an audience through stories is unparalleled among anyone in Ireland. Similarly, Paddy Delaney can memorise and recite poetry in *Becoming Billy Dare*, enabling him to comprehend literature and preserve memories. Likewise, Colm, in *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, holds within his memory the diminishing and indistinct image of his mother as a commemoration of her. Bridie, Paddy, and Colm bring memories in the form of narratives, verses, and cognitive representations to Australia, intending to forge novel experiences. The series’ portrayal of child migrants clinging to memories as a form of solace resonates with the idea that “the adoration of the past triumphs over the lamentations for the present,” highlighting how nostalgia shapes the new lives of these migrants and influences their perspectives as they navigate their future (Davis 16). So, nostalgia, a powerful tool, helps these child migrants triumph over the difficulties imposed on them by displacement, instilling hope in their hearts. Nostalgia thus serves as the cure for lamentations of the present induced by migration and displacement.

Bridie is depicted as a proficient narrator, captivating her brothers and friends with her repertoire of folktales and myths, garnering popularity among her

acquaintances. Stories in her repertoire evoke nostalgia for her home, and her brother Brandon asserts that she possesses exceptional storytelling abilities, making her the most accomplished storyteller in the region of Dingle (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 7). Stories play a crucial role in her recollections and memories, evoking a sense of nostalgia as she narrates tales pertaining to her homeland. Bridie's stories are integral to her memories and serve as a fictional link to Ireland; thus, she derives immense delight from sharing them. She learned these tales from her father, so they were similar to the collective memory they had absorbed. Her father got those stories from his parents, an instance of intergenerational transmission of oral literature and culture. When Gilbert, the boy of her master, questions how she obtained so many stories, she responds, "My dad was the finest storyteller from Sleah Head to Tralee" (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 105). This statement not only reflects Bridie's admiration for her father but also the importance of oral storytelling in Irish culture. Thus, the tales were ingrained in their collective memory and transmitted orally from generation to generation. Bridie explains that neither she nor her family can read or write, so the stories were handed down orally through the ages. The stories form a vital part of Bridie's private nostalgia as well as collective nostalgia imbued with cultural essence. The stories are a part of collective nostalgia as they incorporate Irish myths and legends. They are also a part of private nostalgia, as they always remind her of her father, who used to ignite her passion for storytelling.

In *Yearning for Yesterday*, Davis distinguishes between "collective nostalgia" and "private nostalgia" (122-123). The term collective nostalgia refers to the "condition in which the symbolic objects are of a highly public, widely shared, and familiar character, those symbolic resources from the past that, under proper conditions, can trigger wave upon wave of nostalgic feeling in millions of people at

the same time” (122-123). Sometimes, widely shared public symbolic resources, like the national flag, can induce sentiments of collective nostalgia while simultaneously evoking sentimental feelings in millions of people. On the other hand, private nostalgia refers to those “symbolic” images and allusions from the past that are more “idiosyncratic, individualised, and particularistic” in their reference, for example, the “memory of a parent’s smile” (Davis 123). Sometimes, collective and private nostalgia intertwine in complex ways, making it difficult to distinguish because of “much overlapping, interweaving and transmutation of nostalgia’s symbolic material at every level of subjective generality and specificity” (124). Thus, nostalgia can fade into a very “private reminiscence” and simultaneously “suffuse evocative memories” of an era, culture, or nation (124). Ultimately, the interplay between collective and private nostalgia demonstrates how personal memories are frequently affected by larger cultural settings, expanding our perception of identity and connection to the past.

Furthermore, *Bridie’s Fire* explores stories’ significant role in evoking collective or private nostalgia and the intertwined nature of it. Narratives encompass a culturally inherited recollection that Bridie got from her paternal figure, perhaps tracing back to preceding generations. The stories told by her father also contribute to her sense of nostalgia, as the resonance of her father’s voice echoes in her recollections of them. Murray powerfully portrays her engagement with each story: “Bridie shut her eyes and let the sound of his rich, deep voice wash over her. She loved the way she could hear his words with her skin, not just her ears” (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 14). Bridie experienced a profound connection with her father, perceiving his words not only via auditory means but also through a tactile sensation on her skin. The private nostalgia created by the stories is facilitated by the voice and

kindness exhibited by Bridie's father. Given their intricate interconnection within collective and individual memory, narratives serve as a dynamic element of nostalgia, thereby intertwining collective and private nostalgia in her stories.

Similarly, Bridie's stories, viewed through a national lens, are deeply embedded in the Irish context and reflect elements of patriotism. Consequently, each story becomes a celebration of a national character or legend, serving as a testament to the shared sentimentality and cultural recollection of a specific group or community. Each time Bridie recounts a tale, it stirs a sense of collective and personal nostalgia. The assertion that "nostalgia is commonly nationalised" is vividly illustrated in the literature (Santesso 15). Bridie's collective nostalgia, therefore, plays a significant role in shaping Irish national consciousness and cultural memories, instilling a sense of pride in Bridie.

Bridie's stories have a solid national flavour, as Queen Medb, Ossian, and Cu Culain were all Irish champions from Irish mythology and folklore who fought for their land. Bridie was delighted to share the stories with Gilbert, the master's kid she cared for, because the Irish stories brought sweet memories of her homeland. She eagerly anticipated the pleasure of sharing the next story with Gilbert Clarence Arthur Bloomfield De Quincey (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 108). Each day, she waited excitedly for the chance to tell a story, a wistful reminiscence of her native land and family, as they were transmitted to her by her father. Therefore, telling stories was a discreet method by which she revisited her past, homeland, and deceased family and maintained an imaginary connection with her homeland. During the nineteenth century, the only long-distance communication accessible to the average person was lettering because technology had not yet made its way into everyday life. Therefore,

the stories remained an instrument for nostalgia and assisted her in becoming an imagined transnational.

When Bridie moves to Australia, she constantly revisits the stories by telling tales to others, which becomes an essential element of her sense of collective nostalgia, maintaining an imaginary connection to her homeland. As a staunch believer in myths and legendary lore, the tales serve as mentors or guiding principles for her; therefore, they serve as a guiding light in times of uncertainty. In *Bridie's Fire*, an excerpt demonstrates a glimpse of Bridie acting out the part of Queen Medb, a legendary figure in Irish mythology known for her strength and independence. Bridie's portrayal of Queen Medb reflects her understanding of her identity as a strong and independent woman. Later, she rides a pony with her brother and believes that she rode a 'Pooka', a creature from Irish folklore that brings ill luck, and therefore believes that the famine resulted from her riding a Pooka. She says, "I rode the Pooka, with Brandon... It's an evil sign, isn't it?" (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 13). Irish mythology and myths form the core of Bridie's collective memory, and when confronted with chaos, she adheres to these stories to find logic and reason.

In addition, right before she leaves for Australia, she tells Brandon the story of Ossian, and telling the story allows her to recall Brandon's memories and the promise she made to him (72). Ossian, a legendary Irish hero, came across the beautiful Niamh while hunting and ultimately moved to Tir na nOg, the land of eternal youth. However, as the years progressed, Ossian experienced feelings of isolation and desired to return to Ireland. According to the legend, he returned to Ireland because he was devoted to his brothers and his homeland. Bridie connects the tale of Ossian to her current predicament:

‘Brandon, you know I will come back for you. You remember the story of Ossian? Remember how our dad used to tell it? How even though the most beautiful fairy princess in all the worlds took him beyond the ninth wave to the land of wine and honey, and loved him forever and kissed him with honeyed kisses, still he never forgot his brothers. And remember how the love of them brought him back to Ireland? I’ll be like Ossian, but I’ll bring you to me. To the Land of Forever Young, like in the stories except it will be Australia, and there’ll be sun-bowers and maybe palaces and we’ll have a home there together. (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 72)

In the story of Ossian, the “ninth wave” symbolises a boundary between the mortal world and the realm of the fairies, and Ossian’s return from beyond the ninth wave represents a return from the realm of the fairies to the mortal world. Similarly, Bridie anticipates coming back to her homeland one day, like Ossian returning from a faraway land.

In *Becoming Billy Dare*, Paddy Delaney’s ability to write and appreciate poetry enables him to discover a source of income as he joins a theatre troupe in Australia. The verses or poetry always evoke a sense of national belonging; for example, when John Doherty, the cart driver, recites Yeats’ poem, he feels homesick for Burren. When Doherty sings, “The words filled Paddy with a melancholy longing for his home. He thought of his mother and their last conversation” (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 10). Paddy’s nostalgic longing for his home and mother, a sentiment marked by both a comparison to his present reality and a desire to return to the past, exemplifies the emotional depth that Janelle Wilson associates with nostalgic thinking. Janelle Wilson asserts that nostalgia encompasses both “comparison to the present and a desire to return to the past,” as nostalgic

thinking necessitates an “emotional valence” (*Nostalgia* 26). Janelle Wilson’s observation on nostalgia effectively captures its essence as a complex emotional state that goes beyond mere recollection or reminiscence. Nostalgia involves a longing for the past, a desire to return to a time perceived as happier. Poetry, music, and art are just a few of the artistic and literary forms that can express this powerful force of nostalgia. For instance, Paddy’s heart instantly feels lighter when he reads an invocation from the Blessed Bishop Patrick (Murray, *Becoming Billy Dare* 46). Following this verse, he dreams of a landscape where he runs uninhibited through the wilderness. This dream represents the landscape of Burren, where Paddy prefers to be outdoors, under the open sky, and where the sea breeze blows (9). Therefore, poetry connected Paddy to his ‘home’ and mother’s memories, triggering a constant yearning to revisit the past. Just as Bridie’s nostalgia helps her maintain a fictitious connection with Australia, Paddy Delaney effectively employs nostalgia to sustain an imaginary connection with his homeland.

In *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), Svetlana Boym distinguishes between restorative and reflective nostalgia (41-49). According to Boym, “two kinds of nostalgia characterize one’s relationship to the past, to the imagined community, to home, to one’s own self-perception: restorative and reflective” (41). Boym elucidates on the dichotomous relationship between restorative and reflective nostalgia:

Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. The first category of nostalgics do not think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe that their project is about truth. This kind of nostalgia characterizes national and nationalist revivals all over the world, which engage in the antimodern myth-

making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths and, occasionally, through swapping conspiracy theories. Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time. (41)

Hence, “restorative nostalgia” is concerned with the transhistorical reconstruction of a lost “home” through “symbols and rituals of home”, while reflexive nostalgia focuses on the “ambivalence of human longing and belonging” (“Nostalgia: Svetlana”). Hal McDonald asserts that Boym’s typology of nostalgia reveals profoundly different attitudes towards the past (McDonald). Thus, “reflective nostalgia” deals with the past as irretrievable, and the process of nostalgia becomes a “pleasurable activity comparable to reading a book or viewing a movie” (McDonald). McDonald asserts that restorative nostalgia relates in part to its pathological meaning. According to him, restorative nostalgia is a type of homesickness for the past that more closely resembles the original pathological definition of nostalgia than our current understanding of the term (McDonald). Whereas Boym sheds light on the overlapping but distinct nature of restorative and reflective nostalgia:

Restorative nostalgia evokes national past and future; reflective nostalgia is more about individual and cultural memory. The two might overlap in their frames of reference, but they do not coincide in their narratives and plots of identity. In other words, they can use the same triggers of memory and symbols, the same Proustian madelaine pastry, but tell different stories about it. (Boym 49)

While restorative and reflective nostalgia may seem distinct, they often intersect. For instance, broader national or cultural narratives may intersect with an individual's personal memories. For instance, a nostalgic longing for childhood might connect to a broader nostalgia for a specific historical period or cultural tradition.

Paddy's nostalgia can be characterised as reflective nostalgia, which acknowledges the past as irretrievable. At the same time, Bridie's nostalgic communication can be categorised as restorative nostalgia, a type that seeks to recreate the past. Unlike Bridie, who clings to a futile hope of reclaiming her past, Paddy acknowledges its irrevocable nature. As soon as he leaves Ireland, Paddy comprehends and contemplates his connection to Ireland. Paddy's "past was a dark place", and he "knew he had no home in Ireland" (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 135). Paddy reflects on his nostalgia and says, "I was thinking about home, about my mam, but I can't be thinking about everything that's lost. I can't be living in the past" (165). Paddy's nostalgia fits unquestionably into the category of reflective nostalgia because it does not pretend to "rebuild the mythical place called home" (Boym 50). Reflective nostalgia concentrates not on the absolute truth but on the meditation on history and the passage of time (Boym 41). In contrast, Bridie clings to recollections of her homeland throughout her life, as nostalgia is an act of recreating the past. Despite the pain it brings, Paddy's acceptance of his past offers a sense of closure and understanding.

Bridie reappears in *Becoming Billy Dare* as an adult and Paddy Delaney's mentor. Bridie continues to use nostalgia to establish an imaginary connection with her homeland, and her yearning for the past is more akin to homesickness. Bridie's homesickness and yearning for the past align with the concept of restorative nostalgia. As Janelle Wilson points out, "restorative nostalgia is characterized by a focus on the

departed home and a desire to fill in memory gaps. Individuals who experience restorative nostalgia do not consider themselves nostalgic. Instead, they believe they are seeking the truth.” (*Nostalgia*31). Bridie and Paddy’s discussion of the significance of memories and nostalgia substantiates the signified typology:

’But the past is always living in you, and it’s only lost if you won’t remember it.’

‘It hurts to remember.’

Bridie reached out and rested her hand on Paddy’s arm. ‘You can make a new life for yourself, Billy. Lord knows, to survive in this world, we all make our lives over again and again. But one day, when you’ve made your new life, those old memories will be precious. Precious as gold.’ (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 165)

Bridie clings to the past and views it as an immutable truth, a perspective that evokes empathy. In contrast, Paddy, with his analytical lens, views the past critically, a stance that commands respect for his intellectual approach.

The critical outlook on nostalgia helps Paddy embrace the past and revisit memories, or he finds nostalgia to be a pleasant experience. Even the sound of birds chirping evoked recollections of his native country, but he does not lament the irretrievable past. For example, when Paddy heard the birdsong, ”he lay back in the long grass and thought of the Burren, of the way the wind moved across that landscape, how the air was always full of rain, not like this dry, light wind full of sun”(Murray, *Becoming Billy Dare* 177). He does not mourn or weep for his homeland or the past, nor does he bear a profound sense of loss like Bridie, who laments the lost past incessantly. Bridie’s homeland remains in her “heart like a long-

lost love” (194). According to Fred Davis, nostalgia is an internal conversation between the past and the present, and a positive approach towards nostalgia is seen as a “triumph” over the uncertain present (16). Bridie considers the past a perfect world, and she does not wish to tarnish it by returning to Ireland, despite Brandon’s efforts to persuade her to do so. Bridie states, “No matter how much you love your family and country, there are always other loves and other places that become a part of you over the course of a long life” (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 237). The contrast between Paddy and Bridie’s experiences of nostalgia and its nuanced outcomes aligns with Janelle Wilson’s observation that nostalgia can evoke a “sense of loss” in individuals (*Nostalgia* 22). Paddy’s balanced perspective allows him to appreciate the past without obsessing over it; Bridie’s idealized and obsessive nostalgia becomes a source of sadness and longing. This divergence in experience of nostalgia aligns with Wilson’s assertion that nostalgia, even when positive, can trigger sadness and a sense of loss due to the inherent gap between the idealised past and the present reality.

Janelle Wilson reflects on the idealisation and mystification of the past:

While one’s nostalgic memories may connote a pleasant or good time in the past, the fact that the individual is removed from that ideal situation can trigger sadness and a sense of loss. If nostalgia is a sickness, there is no cure. If it is a problem, there is no solution. Even when one returns to a place he or she longs for, neither the individual nor the place is the same as the nostalgic recollection. If one is nostalgic for a particular “time, “there is no way of going back. Even if one could go back in time, the life experiences and subsequent changes in the self would make the nostalgic recollection inapplicable. (*Nostalgia* 22)

Paddy understands this problematic status of nostalgia because he acknowledges that there is no going back, and even if he did, reality might strike him, unlike romantic idealised nostalgia. This understanding of the problematic nature of nostalgia not only deepens Paddy's character but also invites the readers to reflect on their own perceptions of the past.

Nostalgic communication is a means to cope with uncertainty and chaos because nostalgia fosters a sense of identity and belonging in the individual. Nostalgia is a "means of symbolically escaping cultural conditions that they find depressing and/or disorienting. Using communication to move through time allows individuals to situate themselves in a sanctuary of meaning, a place where they feel safe from oppressive cultural conditions" (Aden 21). Colm McCabe, in *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, never misses an opportunity to revisit his mother's memories. At the age of five, his mother abandoned him at the orphanage and never returned for him. He recalls his mother's "red hair" glinting in the "morning sunlight" beneath her blue cap (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 1). At the beginning of the novel, he is ten years old, and he is continually reminiscing about his mother; even sunlight makes him miss her. Hence, Colm McCabe uses nostalgia as an escape from oppressiveness and chaos.

Colm McCabe uses nostalgia as a coping mechanism to deal with uncertainty and chaos in his life. The thought of his mother and an active reconstruction of the past provides him with a sense of identity, so he frequently employs nostalgia as a means of self-soothing amid the orphanage's traumatic existence. Whenever he has the chance, he dashes into the sunlight and calmly pines for his past. His recollection of the memory is unquestionably nostalgic because it entails an active reconstruction of the past, as opposed to a passive remembrance. Murray vividly describes Colm's nostalgic communication:

But Colm wasn't about to let go of this chance, after weeks without a sunny day. When the yard was empty, he ran to the patch of light and bathed his upturned face in the thin winter sunshine. Somewhere in England, that same sun was shining down on his mother. He remembered the day they'd gone to Brighton and sat side by side on the cold beach. He could still see the pebble arcing through the air and splashing into the sea, and the way the sun sparkled on the water. He could feel the warmth of his mother's blue coat. It had a white fur collar. He remembered how it had tickled his cheek when she picked him up and hugged him, and how red her hair had looked against the soft fur.

(Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 3)

Standing in the sunlight column allowed him in some way to initiate the process of actively reconstructing the past; as a result, he engages in this activity consistently.

The sunlight reminded him of his mother's red hair and their last encounter, during which her hair shone in the sunlight. Colm's friend Dibs taunts him about his habit of standing in the column of light. Dibs says, "So five years, nearly every lunch hour, you've been standing, waiting for your turn. Ain't you ever gonna give up?"(3).

Statement of Dibs demonstrates that Colm's nostalgic behaviour was a regular occurrence and that he attempted to elicit memories on purpose.

After arriving in Australia, Colm began to add an imaginative element to his nostalgia by continually re-creating his mother's arrival. On certain mornings, Colm would virtually "see his mother walking along the driveway, her blue coat slung over her arm, her red hair a flame against the yellow grass" (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 28).

This demonstrates how nostalgia is projected into the present and future and is not a limited act of the past. Colm "imagined his mother coming to Clontarf to take him away and finding her boy dressed in a uniform, playing brass trumpet. She would clap

her hands and glow with pride at the sight of the boy she had travelled to Australia to be with” (29). In his nostalgia, the past, present, and future intertwine, expanding the notion of the past as evading presence in the present and future. During his punishment time in the orphanage in Australia, Colm had to imagine his mother’s arrival repeatedly, particularly at the end of each day. Colm employed nostalgia as a means of coping with his anxiety and despondency by combining elements of the past, present, and future. Although nostalgia is often associated with yearning for bygone times, it can also serve as a source of comfort, as it involves longing for an ideal future, as seen in the nostalgic communication of Colm. Although “nostalgia frequently points to the past,” it can sometimes point to the future because it occasionally includes a “longing for something we have not yet really known, but only dreamed about” (Howland 203). Therefore, in contrast to Bridie’s and Paddy’s nostalgic communication, Colm’s nostalgic communication combines elements of the past, the present, and the future.

On the other hand, Maeve, the central character in *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong*, embodies a different perspective of nostalgia. She aligns herself with Vanderbilt’s concept of “displaced nostalgia,” a longing for a period yet to be encountered (Vanderbilt 155; J. Wilson, *Nostalgia* 32). Displaced nostalgia is described as “nostalgia for a time not known first-hand” (Mollet 140). Maeve, a contemporary Australian girl with a mixed racial ancestral background, maintains a profound and personal connection to the sentimental past that her ancestors once experienced. This “displaced nostalgia” is a unique lens through which she views her identity and her place in the world. For descendants of migrants, who have never experienced homeland culture personally, displaced nostalgia plays a complex role in shaping their identities. Born and brought up in Australia, Maeve’s nostalgia for her

ancestral homeland is “displaced”, as she has no first-hand experience of it. Whatever she knew, she knew it from what her parents had told her. Her memory of her homeland is cemented by stories she hears from her parents and grandparents.

Maeve while playing the Ouija board game with her friends talks about “hungry ghosts” from the past (Murray, *Secret Life* 2-5). She talks about how dead Chinese people with their little mouths would come for the people who disturb them. Maeve has no idea about her Chinese ancestors or their cultural life as she grew up in Australia as an Australian girl. Similarly, she has no idea about Irish culture, though her father is from Ireland. Maeve’s knowledge about her ancestral culture comes entirely from the stories she has heard from her mother, ranging from the Ouija board to the story behind her name. Maeve says that she has a “weird feeling” that she belongs to both Chinese and Irish cultures even before visiting these places (249). This weird feeling of yearning for a past can be categorised as “displaced nostalgia”, a longing for the memories that are unknown to her. Maeve’s Irish father assures her that she can “always come back” to Ireland and that she has “roots” there (242). However, Maeve says to her friends that in her yearning for her father, she always thought she would move with him straight away to Ireland. Despite her sense of belonging in a transnational world, Maeve consistently refers to “Australia” as her “home” and tells her friends that they all “call Australia home” (249). It is the displaced nostalgia that helps Maeve to bridge her roots with her route and guides her between multiple cultural identities in search of a cohesive sense of self.

Nostalgia has a profound impact on individuals and their identity formation. Janelle Wilson explores the inherent capacity of nostalgia to influence humans. Wilson argues that “while nostalgia can, on occasion, be dysfunctional for an

individual (e.g., keeping one from facing the present and doing what is needed for proper functioning in the here and now), it is also possible that nostalgia can be quite beneficial”(*Nostalgia 7*). Nostalgia is often deemed romantic, as it is always perceived as a sentimental yearning for the past, showing an inability to process the present. However, Janelle Wilson says, “Placing oneself—in the past, present, and projecting into the future—is vital to each of us. The experience and expression of nostalgia need not be merely an escape, nor does the past need to be viewed as static” (*Nostalgia 7*). The *Children of the Wind* series explores nostalgia as a trope, symbolising the characters’ longing for their homeland and their struggles to adapt to their new environment, and specifically focusing on its dynamic ability and manifestation within the context of child migration. For certain child migrant characters, it serves as a means of escape, while for others, it is a mechanism for connecting the present with the future. Using nostalgia as a recurring motif within the series extends beyond mere reminiscence and attachment to the past, instead serving as a mechanism for synthesising and processing the past, present and future.

The meaning of the term nostalgia has shifted significantly from clinical or medical terminology to cultural terminology. However, the term nostalgia is now a cultural concept, as it is intertwined with individuals’ cultural and collective memories. In *Children of the Wind* series, migrant children employ nostalgia as a coping mechanism against displacement, effectively maintaining their connection to the homeland. Bridie, for instance, engages in a degree of ‘restorative nostalgia’, whereas Paddy Delaney’s nostalgia appears to pertain to the terrain of reflective nostalgia. Colm McCabe engages in private nostalgia effectively, but unlike Bridie and Paddy, he can combine the past, present, and future in his nostalgic longing. Child migrants unquestionably utilise nostalgia as a coping mechanism during times of

uncertainty. Thus, nostalgia provides transient relief from the anxiety and desperation that child migrants experience as a result of displacement, and it assists these children in regaining their psychosocial stability in the face of uncertainty. The inclusion of nostalgia in the narrative is crucial as it fulfils a dual role. Firstly, it aids in the formation of the transnational identity of child migrants by constantly connecting them to their homeland. Secondly, it facilitates the process of acknowledging and embracing the increasingly diverse and transcultural environment surrounding them. The integration of components from both the homeland and the host land enables nostalgia to facilitate the restoration and preservation of individuals' transnational essence. Hence, the term nostalgia serves as a subtext in the context of migrant politics in the series, as it effectively portrays the transnational spirit and attitude of all migrant characters, stemming from their frequent inclination towards nostalgia.

To conclude, the chapter discusses child migration in the context of Australia and its representation in Murray's *Children of the Wind* series. For several economic, sociopolitical, and philanthropic reasons, a civilised society has accepted child migration as a beneficial and benevolent act. Murray brings light to the often ignored perspective of child migrants involved in these schemes and their predicament. The chapter commences with an overview of child migration in Australia and its historical context. The chapter then explores themes such as push-pull factors, displacement, and nostalgia, which serve as a substantial supporting element for the theme of migration. The chapter analyses various push-pull factors of migration, focusing on the socio-historical factors that lead to migration. Additionally, the chapter analyses both internal and external displacement, shedding light on the impact of displacement on the child migrant characters. Murray employs nostalgia as a narrative motif to illuminate the identity formation of child migrants, and he employs it both as a coping

mechanism to deal with uncertainty and as an imaginary link to their homeland. The next chapter deals with transnational formations and transnational identity of child migrants in the *Children of the Wind* series.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Negotiating National in the Era of Globalisation: Transnational**

#### **Identity in the Children of the Wind Series**

The chapter delves into the characters' transnational formations and identities in the Children of the Wind series. It opens with an outline of Australian nationalism and examines its historical development. The chapter then examines the theoretical perspectives on diaspora and transnationalism, identifying four types of transnational formations in the Children of the Wind: (i) localised diasporic; (ii) localised mobile; (iii) transnational mobiles; and (iv) transnational outsiders. The study critically examines the connections between the characters' transnational identities and these transnational formations. Furthermore, the chapter probes into the various identity statuses those child migrants go through in the formation of their identity.

#### **Nation, Nationalism and National Identity**

Nation, nationalism, and national identity are intertwined but distinct concepts and complex terms due to their fluid and dynamic nature, which can take on different forms and variations in distinct political contexts. A *nation* can be defined as a large group of people with shared historical and cultural attributes, often residing within a territorial boundary. The term "nation" originates from the Latin noun "natio," which stems from the Latin verb "nasci," meaning "to be born from" (Grosby 44). Thus, the definition of a nation entails a component of kinship, which connects an individual's roots to the paternal or maternal nativity. Steven Grosby defines a nation as a "community of kinship, specifically a bounded, territorially extensive, temporally deep community of

nativity” (14). Therefore, basically, the concept of nation refers to an imaginary or existing place from which an individual traces his ancestral origin or cultural roots.

The Collins Dictionary defines a nation as “an individual country considered together with its social and political structures” and states that it can also refer to all the “people living in a particular country” (“Nation”). Benedict Anderson calls a nation an “imagined political community”: “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion . . . all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined” (6). Therefore, a nation is a political unit where people feel psychological and cultural belonging to shared aspects such as common history, culture, linguistic and ethnic commonality.

Nationalism, on the other hand, is the feeling and expression of pride in being part of a nation, as well as a political construction that often strengthens the formation of national identity for individuals and groups. Eugene Kamenka states that concepts like “nationalism express and act as ideologies; they hold together disparate, logically separable, beliefs and attitudes, weld them into a unity, often by reference to something outside themselves” (18). Thus, nationalism fosters a sense of solidarity and collaboration among individuals, facilitating the achievement of national goals and the realization of strategic national objectives. However, nationalism can lead to both positive and negative consequences, such as fostering unity and solidarity or, conversely, promoting division and conflict. Steven Grosby expounds on the multifaceted nature of nationalism:

Many wrongly use the term 'nationalism' as a synonym for 'nation'.

Nationalism refers to a set of beliefs about the nation. Any particular nation will contain differing views about its character; thus, for any nation there will be different and competing beliefs about it that often manifest themselves as political differences. Some may view their nation as standing for individual liberty, while others may be willing to sacrifice that liberty for security. Some may welcome immigrants, and support policies that make it easy for them to become citizens; while others may be hostile to immigration. (5)

Grosby provides the example of India, a nation with a rich history of diverse religious and cultural practices and a complex political landscape. He illustrates how political differences manifest in this context, stating that "some members of that nation have a narrow, intolerant view of their country by insisting that it should have only one religion, Hinduism; while others think that there should be freedom of religion such that Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians are rightly members of the nation" (5). This diversity of views, influenced by historical and political factors, is a common feature in many nations, where the views of the majority of its citizens become the ideals and shared values that form the crux of nationalism. Moreover, "nationalism often asserts that other nations are implacable enemies to one's own nation; it injects hatred of what is perceived to be foreign, whether another nation, an immigrant, or a person who may practise another religion or speak a different language" (6). Another example is Australia, a country with a long history of immigration that led to multiculturalism and a unique sociopolitical landscape. In Australia, there are plenty of people who agree and disagree with Asian immigration, and some are hostile towards immigrants, whereas others uphold multiculturalism as the banner, reflecting the diverse political views within the nation.

Nationalism is defined as a “political creed that underlies the cohesion of modern societies and legitimises their claim to authority. Nationalism centres the supreme loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the people upon the nation-state, either existing or desired” (Kohn 63). Nationalism aims to secure the unwavering loyalty of its citizens to the nation, as well as their solidarity in achieving national goals, thereby reinforcing a sense of patriotism. The distinctive characteristic of nationalism is the strong conviction that the “nation is the only goal worthy of pursuit—an assertion that often leads to the belief that the nation demands unquestioned and uncompromising loyalty. When such a belief about the nation becomes predominant, it can threaten individual liberty” (Grosby 6). Hence, extreme nationalism can force individuals to view foreigners as adversaries, fostering hostile attitudes towards immigrants.

According to Joshua Searle-White, “Nationalism, in its broadest definition, is simply a sense of identification with a group of people who share a common history, language, territory, culture, or some combination of these” (3). Searle-White’s definition of nationalism is in a similar vein to Benedict Anderson’s definition of a nation as an “imagined political community.” According to Searle-White, Benedict Anderson’s use of the term “imagined” does not imply an “unreal” nature of a nation; rather, he implies that “nations are communities where individuals perceive a connection with their fellow members, even if they haven’t actually interacted with them” (53). Therefore, nationalism involves the politicisation of a shared identity, such as a nation, to enhance the effectiveness of governance.

On the contrary, national identity is a subjective and psychological construct that describes how an individual connects with a nation, taking into account the commonalities and unique cultural features. The subjective nature of national identity

and the degree of identification vary from individual to individual. National identity is a subjective sense of belonging to a nation through connection to its culture, traditions, history, and symbols. Thus, national identity is not mere “racial or territorial or economic or political; it is also psychological” (Searle-White 52). A nation is the psychological identification with a larger community, and national identity is the sense of belonging an individual feels to that community. According to Searle-White, “people identify themselves with national groups, and that is part of what makes those national groups real. We envision connections between ourselves and the rest of that national group. These connections do not have to be historically true; they simply need to be psychologically real” (53). In short, the nation is a larger community with commonalities, such as a shared historical-cultural past and national identity is how an individual perceives oneself as part of a nation, thereby being a part of a collective identity, while nationalism is a political movement that seeks to promote the collective national identity of a group.

Australian nationalism is defined as the pride and belonging that Australian citizens feel about the country’s cultural heritage, sports, landscape, and unique national achievements. Australian nationalism is the “belief that citizens of an Australian nation will share a common understanding of being Australian, and that this understanding—seen to have historical roots—bonds them together in a common love for their shared nation” (Martin et al. 23). There are several historical, political, and cultural milestones that have impacted the formation and evolution of Australian nationalism. Romila Thapar asserts that the “origin of nationalism is among the foundational moments in modern history. It is a time when existing communities, generally constituting a kingdom or a colony, gradually shed their previous characteristics and morph, as it were, into a society that transforms into a nation-state”

(13). Thus, the transition from a colonial setup to a federation marked a pivotal moment in the emergence of Australian nationalism. Up to the period from colonisation to post-World War, “ethnic minority groups did not figure prominently in the national psyche at the time. With the advent of multiculturalism as official government policy, ethnic minority communities proliferated, and multiculturalism became a key feature of Australia’s national identity” (Martin et al. 21). As Australia evolved from a collection of British colonies to a unified nation, a distinct sense of Australian identity began to take shape, and the literature of the period reflected distinctive Australian nationalism by projecting the landscape’s people, culture, and unique characteristics to emphasise national consciousness. Overall, the diverse and vibrant nation one sees today has evolved from the pivotal moment of transition from the colonial setup.

In seventeen eighty-eight, the British fleet arrived on Australian shores to set up a penal colony. During the colonial period, “Australia’s national identity has been largely shaped by its colonial past, its ties with Britain, as well as the myths and symbols that have arisen from its colonial and British past” (Martin et al. 25). Moreover, “originally based on the doctrine of terra nullius, Australian identity was founded on the subjugation of the Indigenous land owners and an overwhelming desire to distance itself from its Asian neighbours and other non-Europeans” (25). At that time, nationalism was primarily an imperial allegiance and loyalty to the British Empire. “Until the end of the Second World War, Australia’s population was predominantly Anglo-Celtic in origin, with 99% being ‘white’ and 96% claiming British ancestry,” and thus, “Australia’s mainstream population was relatively homogeneous” (21). However, the mid-nineteenth century Gold Rush brought a mosaic cultural phase to Australia because goldfields in Australia attracted

immigrants from all over the world, transforming Australian society's Anglo-Celtic demographics. Later, in 1901, the formation of the Australian Federation marked a significant stage in Australian nationalism ushering a unique sense of solidarity and unity distinct from British identity, while simultaneously maintaining strong ties with Britain. After the Second World War, Australia adopted immigration policies, which transformed it into a multicultural nation. The recognition of indigenous heritage also played a significant role in Australian nationalism. In 1972, Australia officially adopted multiculturalism as a solid feature of Australian nationalism.

The literature of a nation stands as an effective tool to comprehend evolving phases of distinctive nationalism and provides narrative impressions on zeitgeist moments in an emerging society. The history of Australian literature is a cluster of several overlapping but distinct phases, such as (i) the colonial period, (ii) the federation formation and twentieth century, (iii) the post-Second World War period, and (iv) the contemporary period. This classification delineates distinct features as well as the evolution of nationalism through different phases. British supremacy in Australian literature marks the colonial period, while the federation phase and the early twentieth century mark the formation of a distinct Australian identity. The multicultural approach to literature reflects the significant stream of migration into Australia during the post-war period. The contemporary period marks a more nuanced approach through revisionist histories, as well as a re-emerging focus on the transnational nature of society and history.

A similar classification is expounded in "Images of Ethnic Minorities in Australian Children's Literature" (1983), dividing Australian literature into three phases: (i) "from colonial times to World War II," (ii) "from the Second World War to the sixties," and (iii) "the seventies and eighties" (Judith Crewe qtd. in Nimon,

“Migration and National”, 23). Dominant ideology projected in the colonial period includes “class, racism and paternalism” (Nimon, “Migration and National” 23). The colonial literature then saw the Australian landscape and life from an outsider European perspective. In “The Origins of Australian Children’s Literature,” Maureen Nimon identifies certain plot features, such as “repeated motifs of struggles against a harsh environment and battles with the ex-convict bushrangers and fierce ‘black fellows’,” as the chief distinguishing features of most children’s books written about Australia until the end of the nineteenth century (4). From World War II to the 1960s, the literature was brimming with concepts of “white Australia and assimilation,” reflecting the growing number of immigrants who posed a threat to the then dominant white population of Australia (23). Fear, prejudice, and hostility towards migrants forced them to shed their native identity and identify themselves as truly Australians. In the context of migration, nationalism can impact how migrants negotiate their identities and influences how migrants perceive themselves in relation to their home country, host country, and transnational connections, shaping their sense of self and belonging (Nowicka 2). However, as the seventies and eighties embraced multiculturalism, literature began to reflect the pertinent “responses to multiculturalism” (Nimon, “Migration” 23). Thus, the multicultural policy of 1972 became a vital foundation for the production of multicultural texts in the field of children’s literature.

However, multiculturalism is not without its perils. Multiculturalism promotes the coexistence of diverse cultures in a society where the state accepts and encourages the language, culture, and traditions of communities while setting up educational policies and home laws. Nevertheless, many critics opine that multiculturalism can lead to fragmentation and ghettoisation in a society. An examination of multicultural

texts reveals that most texts projecting multiculturalism are merely costume displays, showcasing a multitude of characters from different cultural backgrounds without a deep exploration of these characters. One of the limitations of such texts is that the characters often remain marginal and merely serve as namesakes. Critics of multicultural literature label the superficial nature of multicultural texts for children as “superficial or cosmetic fashion” (Pearce 238). In many Australian children’s books, multicultural aspects can sometimes feel side-lined or not fully explored because writers might not delve deeply into the diverse backgrounds of characters or the complexities of multiculturalism in Australian society. Furthermore, these multicultural texts portray the identity formation of characters as rigidly ethnic and self-contained, as they uphold the autonomy of their culture as the essence of multiculturalism.

In contrast, in transnational literature, the identity is not rigid but rather fluid. Multiculturalism often emphasises recognising, preserving, and celebrating cultural diversity within specific political and geographical boundaries. In the context of multiculturalism, identities are often perceived as fixed and rigid within the conventional parameters of nation, ethnicity, and culture. There is acceptance and tolerance of varied cultures, but the emphasis is on maintaining the autonomy of cultures, which can lead to ghettoisation and fragmentation of a unified society. On the other hand, unlike the fixed cultural identities in multiculturalism, transnationalism views identity as fluid and evolving, shaped by cross-border interactions and influences. Transnational perspective acknowledges that individuals can navigate and embody multiple cultural identities, often creating new, hybrid forms of identity.

### **Diaspora and Transnationalism: Theoretical Perspectives**

Diaspora and transnationalism emerged as a theoretical discourse during the latter part of the twentieth century, and the primary reason for such an emergence was the stream of migration that resulted after the World Wars. People migrated to host countries, both voluntarily and involuntarily, in search of better opportunities and to escape political persecution. Theorists such as Stuart Hall, Robin Cohen, William Safran, Kachig Tololyan, Steven Vertovec, Gabriel Sheffer, Avtar Brah, Will Klymlicka, Paul Gilroy, Arjun Appadurai, Nina Glick-Schiller, and Linda Basch contributed to the evolving diaspora discourses. Though Diaspora Studies is a well-emerged and established field, it continues to evolve and respond to the changing migration patterns and dynamics of migrants. Understanding the diaspora is essential as one moves towards a more cosmopolitan world of “multicultural citizenship” (Klymlicka 295). Moreover, more than a theoretical discourse, diaspora is a sociocultural space and practice encompassing cultural preservation, hybrid identities and transnational networks. In a world where hyphenated identities are susceptible to suspicion and distort national homogeneity, it is essential to sensitise people to the diaspora’s historical and cultural significance.

In literary theories, the term diaspora describes the dispersion of individuals across national borders as a result of socioeconomic or cultural factors. Etymologically, the word diaspora combines the Greek words “*dia* and *spiro*,” which mean “across and to sow or scatter,” respectively (Naimou 3). In the evolving phase of diaspora theory, the word diaspora was very rigidly confined to the case of Jewish displacement. However, in its evolving stage, diaspora, as a critical term, began to encompass numerous other sets of displaced people. In its early stages, diaspora

discourses encompassed three significant sets of scattered people: (i) the dispersion of Jewish people; (ii) the dispersion of African people as part of the slave trade; and (iii) the dispersion of indentured laborers during the colonial period. However, when globalisation emerged, many new migration patterns resulted, leading to the more extensive definition of the term 'diaspora'. For instance, during the 1950s, skilled labourers migrated to several countries for better job opportunities. Unlike the forced or involuntary diaspora movements, such as the Jewish, Armenian, and African diaspora, this voluntary migration stream represented a paradigm shift. Globalisation, along with the ensuing shift in migration patterns, led to a redefinition of the term "diaspora," previously limited to instances of forced migration. Presently, the term diaspora signifies a global group of individuals with a strong ethnic identity connected to their homeland.

William Safran defines *diaspora* by elucidating its characteristics, which bind them as a distinctive group. According to Safran, diaspora is defined as "people dispersed from one centre to one or more peripheral places" (37). While in their host countries, this group of dispersed individuals retains strong memories and visions of their homeland, yearning to return at the appropriate time. Throughout their stay in the host country, they maintain connections with their homeland. However, Safran says the diaspora cannot wholly assimilate in the host land (37). Furthermore, these characteristics are exclusively based on the case of the Jewish diaspora, because "for many generations, the phenomenon of diaspora was dealt with only in connection with the Jews" (36). Nevertheless, some radical perspective changes happened in Diaspora Studies, which extended its scope and interdisciplinary nature. The shift of focus from Jew was one such alteration; diaspora, as the term now, is not just confined to the case of Jews. In *Israel and the Diaspora: New Perspectives* (2005),

Natan Adrian and Gabriel Sheffer shed light on this expanded scope of diaspora discourses:

In recent years, the term diaspora has been re-defined. A capitalised “Diaspora” is defined as the dispersion of the Jews from Palestine and Jewish communities living outside Israel. A non-capitalised diaspora, on the other hand, is defined as dispersion of a people, language, or culture that was formerly concentrated in one place. The first definition is used exclusively for Jewish dispersed persons, scattered all around the world. People of any ethno-national or cultural origins who have dispersed from a former territorial location, each with their own cultures and languages, fall under the second definition. (v)

Thus, the diaspora now as a term constitutes a group of displaced people with a shared cultural background, history, and ancestral homeland.

Robin Cohen, in *Global Diaspora: An Introduction*, identifies different types of diaspora, such as “trade diaspora” (31), “victim diaspora” (57), “imperial diaspora” (83) and “cultural diaspora” (127). As per this classification, expansion or dispersal of people in search of work, trade and imperial ambition is considered diaspora whether they were displaced traumatically or not. Cohen also establishes nine analogous characteristics of diaspora:

(i) dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically; (ii) alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions; (iii) a collective memory and myth about the homeland; (iv) an idealisation of the supposed ancestral home; (v) a return movement; (vi) a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long

time; (vii) a troubled relationship with host societies; (viii) a sense of solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries; and (ix) the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in tolerant host countries. (180)

Critics use these characteristics as parameters to identify and locate diaspora, and it is evident from these traits that diaspora have a solid ethnic consciousness sustained over a long time based on a sense of distinctiveness, a shared history, and a belief in a common fate.

The nineteen nineties saw the emergence of transnationalism as an academic paradigm, an offshoot of diaspora studies and its forerunners investigated various facets of migrant inclusion, integration, social cohesion, and transnational behaviour (Pries 223). Pioneers of earlier transnational approaches focused exclusively on the cross-border socioeconomic relationships between multinational corporations and political parties, which is termed as transnationalism from the above. Early proponents of transnational study thus concentrated on global enterprises, revolutionary movements, and scientific networks. The concept of transnationalism has begun to focus more on the routines of migrants, a practice known as transnationalism from below. This practice focuses on how migrants contribute to the maintenance of strong links across boundaries.

Transnationalism as a socio-cultural phenomenon is not a novel aspect of migration, as migrants have tried to maintain contact with their homeland either by visiting or by sending remittances or by sending intimations via letters to their country of origin. "Transnationalism is not new, even though it often seems as if it were invented yesterday" (Dunn 25). However, transnationalism only emerged as an academic discourse during the latter half of the twentieth century (Pries 233). In 1916,

Randolph S. Bourne used the term transnational to critique existing migrant integration models (86). Transnationalism as a concept was an “explicit critique of the assimilation theory and, most importantly, its focus on the nation-state” (Laubenthal 84). Complementing this idea, Alejandro Portes et al. also assert that theoretically, transnationalism “represents a distinct form of immigrant adaptation to those described in past literature” (227). At a late juncture, “Linda Basch, Nina Schiller, and Christina Blacn” popularised the term transnational through the seminal text *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (1994) (Ziyanak 220). Discourses related to transnationalism began to emerge almost at the same time that Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller, Blanc, Appadurai, Vertovec, and Kearney conducted rigorous intellectual explorations of the topic.

Transnationalism, as a theoretical perspective, focuses on cross-border activities and the diffusion of socio-cultural and economic processes that extend beyond nations’ boundaries. According to Linda Basch et al., transnational ideology supports the “continuation of multiple ties for immigrants in order to help them maintain contact with their society of origin” (8). Transnationalists are generally defined as individuals who establish their residence in a host nation while simultaneously preserving strong connections with their country of origin, often through the remittance of resources and regular communication (Parker 5). Therefore, the subset of transnationalism includes three significant players, such as migrants, their homeland, and their host land, where the interconnectedness between these three components makes the endeavours of migrants transnational.

Steven Vertovec cites the studies done by Gustavo Cano by examining the keyword “transnationalism” in the Abstract Database and states, “Cano examined

publications that were key worded ‘transnational’ or ‘transnationalism’ in the Social Science Abstracts Database and saw an increase from a mere handful of articles across the social sciences in the late 1980s to nearly 1,300 such key worded articles by 2003; almost two-thirds were published between 1998–2003” (*Transnationalism* 1). Cano’s analysis of the statistics illustrates the significance and new interest revived in transnationalism in recent times. Vertovec examines “transnationalism as social morphology, as type of consciousness, as mode of cultural reproduction, as avenue of capital, as site of political engagement, and as (re)construction of ‘place’ or locality” (*Transnationalism* 4). In the past, academia solely concentrated on transnational players from above, like institutions, organisations, and networks, but today, it equally emphasises transnationalism from below, which includes migrants and their everyday activities. Migrants are perceived as active social agents, creating transnational ties and transcending national borders.

Transnationalism is defined as the “process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that linked together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch et al. 8). However, even though transnationalism is discussed as a “processes of the construction of identities that reflect transnational experience, individuals, communities, or states rarely identify themselves as transnational” (8). “Living in a world in which discourses about identity continue to be framed in terms of loyalty to nations and nation-states, most transmigrants have neither fully conceptualised nor articulated a form of transnational identity” (8–9). Today, transmigrants operate and live in two or more national spaces simultaneously; their affiliations and interconnectedness cannot be measured in old norms of singular national perspectives and loyalties.

People often use transnationalism and diaspora interchangeably to describe the movement and establishment of individuals across borders. According to Laura Briggs et al., “transnationalism is a much abused word” (625). The term “transnational” lacks “precision” due to its multiple interpretations among scholars and its diverse use across various disciplines and sub disciplines (David-Fox 903). Despite their intertwined nature, these concepts have unique characteristics that sometimes intersect. William Safran explicates the overlapping notions of diaspora and transnationalism:

Some scholars, diaspora is too vague a concept, and they prefer to focus on transnational relations. However, these two concepts, although related, are distinct. Diaspora refers to the movement or voluntary of people from one or more nation-states to another. Not all transnational relations are diasporic.

Transnationalism speaks to larger, more impersonal, specifically, globalisation and global capitalism. (50)

Transnationalism focuses on how people maintain connections and interconnectedness with their homeland while living in a host country.

“Transnationalism is grounded in the daily lives, activities, and social relationships of migrants” which transcends the boundaries of nation in multiple ways (Glick-Schiller 5). Critical theories related to transnationalism include the idea that people can have multiple identities and allegiances and that transnational community are formed by maintaining social, political, and economic ties across borders.

Though the phenomena of transnationalism existed earlier, the academic focus was laid upon only during the twentieth century (Portes et al. 218, 223). However, globalisation has intensified interconnectedness, thereby proportionally amplifying the transnational ties of the migrants. Transnationalism articulates the “view that

within emergent migration processes, people live their lives by being stretched across national borders. However, technological developments and transportation, applicable air fare and telecommunications make transnationalism easier” (Ziyanak 220).

Globalisation has brought visibility to transnationalism by breaking down barriers that existed in the earlier period. Technological exuberance increased the visibility of transnational activities and connections, leading to fresh insights and inquiries in academia.

While transnationalism has only recently become a popular term in critical and theoretical discussions, the practices it encompasses existed long before it emerged as an academic field. Robert Smith asserts that “if transnational life existed in the past but was not seen as such, then the transnational lens does the new analytical work of providing a way of seeing what was there that could not be seen before” (Smith 725). Begona Simal-Gonzalez, in “Disrupting Globalisation: Transnationalism and American Literature” (2018), ponders the intriguing query of how critics can integrate older texts into the potential archive of transnational analysis. Simal-Gonzalez reflects: “How can critics incorporate older texts to the potential archive of transnational analysis? How can we de-anchor transnationalism from its frequent identification with current globalising trends?” (282). Again, Simal-Gonzalez answers the aforementioned question by providing examples of retroactive reading practices from various fields of study. “Retroactive reading practices are common in other critical schools such as ecocriticism, postcolonial, gender or queer studies” (282). Therefore, transnational literary studies should also incorporate retroactive reading practices. Simal-Gonzalez reflects that “it may well be our own mimetic preconceptions when approaching literary texts that forestall the possibility of locating and reading transnationalism *avant la letter* (“before the concept or word

existed”)” (282). Simal-Gonzalez’s argument points to the fact that our preconceived notions about literature might hinder our ability to recognise and interpret transnational themes in texts that existed before the emergence of transnational studies as an academic and literary concept. In other words, our existing frameworks may limit our capacity to see transnational elements within older texts.

What makes transnationalism as a theoretical perspective unique is its openness and wide scope compared to diaspora discourses. Patricia Clavin elucidates on this “open” nature of transnationalism:

The value of transnationalism lies in its openness as an historical concept.

Transnational history also allows us to reflect on, while at the same time going beyond, the confines of the nation. It sheds new, comparative light on the strengths and the fragilities of the nation-state and underlines the ways in which local history can be understood in relation to world history. ...The history of transnational communities is not just about how relationships are created, but how they are sustained and changed. (438)

Diaspora Studies focussed on how diaspora identity is created historically and culturally, whereas transnationalism looks deeper into how the interconnectedness is maintained and sustained for a longer duration via everyday activities in the social field.

Transnationalism encompasses a broader range of dimensions compared to the concept of diaspora which is intrinsically associated with the notion of a collective experience and a collective memory of displacement, as well as a profound ethnic awareness that serves to unite those displaced. Diaspora discourses primarily concern the experiences of marginalised collectives who have undergone involuntary displacement from their native land. In contrast, transnationalism is a broader concept

encompassing any group sustaining connections over national boundaries. Diaspora communities frequently exhibit a profound affinity towards a particular ancestral country. Transnational communities tend to possess a more malleable sense of identity that is not contingent upon a specific geographical locale. The Diaspora theories places significant emphasis on the preservation of cultural heritage and the perpetuation of cultural traditions. In contrast, transnationalism places substantial emphasis on establishing global networks and facilitating access to resources and opportunities that transcend national boundaries.

Thomas Faist states that “transnational communities encompass diasporas, but not all transnational communities are diaspora” (21). When examining the migrant characters in the *Children of the Wind* series, they are on par with Cohen’s identification of diaspora characteristics. British child migration schemes dispersed Bridie and Colm, two Irish child migrants, from their “original homeland” in a “traumatic” manner. Cohen asserts that the identification of diaspora migrants necessitates their dispersion “from an original homeland, often traumatically” (*Global Diasporas* 180). They all share a collective memory of their homeland. Additionally, they all experienced a difficult relationship with the host society for a significant period of time, but ultimately, they lead a life that is “distinctive and enriching” (180). For example, Bridie, Paddy, Colm and Maeve lead a distinctive life that enriches their belonging in the host society. It is visible that their social status and standard of living have improved considerably compared to the life they had when they arrived as immigrants in Australia. At the same time, as adolescents, they are involved in cultural transnationalism, leading to the formation of transnational identity. Analysing continued interconnectedness reveals two significant products: transnational identity and transnational formations in child migrants in *Children of the Wind*.

The sustained interconnectedness between migrants and their homeland, whether imaginary or based on continuous mobility across boundaries, significantly shapes transnational identity. The narratives and discourses on migrant identity and dynamics were firmly based on methodological nationalism, which means that, in the past, critics often framed migrant dynamics through a singular national lens. The nation served as the primary focus of migrant politics, with scholars of the field shaping discourses in a manner that celebrated a single national loyalty. Anna De Fina and Sabina Perrino in “Transnational Identities” (2013) observe that “transnational identities are often characterised by the use and appropriation (at time conscious and at time just enacted in practice) of cultural resources that belong to different communities and places” (511). “Cultural resources” include the languages, customs, rituals, and culture of a distant outgroup perceived as exotic by an existing in-group. Migrants often maintain economic interdependence with their homeland and host country, which helps them establish local anchorage and a high degree of mobility in both countries. However, these migrants maintain strong connections to their roots and routes on an economic, cultural, and emotional level. Furthermore, the dynamics between in-group and out-group are also significant in influencing identity formation among migrants, as identity is not something fixed but constantly evolving within the cultural forces at work. Celebrating hybridity, fragmentation, and plurality, critics such as Homi Bhaba, Steven Vertovec, Thomas Faist, and several others have pondered the concept of identity in a transnational world.

Mobility also significantly shapes cross-border relations, similar to the dimension of identity in transnationalism. Janine Dahinden argues that transnational formation arises from different degrees of the combination of both migrants’ mobility and locality in the sending or receiving country. Dahinden in “The Dynamics of

Migrants' Transnational Formations: Mobility and Locality" examines the significance of mobility and locality as vital components in transnational formations:

Mobility is to be understood here as the physical movement of people in transnational space. Locality means being rooted or anchored – socially, economically, or politically – in the country of immigration and/or in the sending country; it means developing or having a set of social relations in specific places. Looking at transnational formations as the effect of the combination of these two dimensions – mobility and locality – provides interesting insights into the multiplicities of forms of existence. (51)

Degrees of mobility play a significant role in establishing transnational identity among migrants to a certain extent, so it is crucial to analyse the migrant identity in the dimensions of mobility and locality to get deeper insights into the transnational identity engrained in the narrative of *Children of the Wind*.

Through its intricate and latent narrative structure, the *Children of the Wind* series explores the complex themes of migration, transnational formations, and transnational identity. Murray's portraits the child migrant and the adult version of the same child migrant character in the series to show the subtleties in transnational formations. The child and adult versions represented by Murray display an excellent example of changing migrant politics and dynamics in the context of transnationalism. A critical analysis of various transnational formations in the *Children of the Wind* series will shed light on the diaspora's transnational dynamics.

### **Transnational Formations**

Janine Dahinden, in "The Dynamics of Migrant's Transnational Formations: Between Mobility and Locality," argues that "transnational formations result from a combination of 'transnational mobility', on the one hand, and 'locality in the

sending/receiving country', on the other" (51). Dahinden examines migrants' transnational practices, spaces, and ways of being by focussing on "mobility" and "locality." Furthermore, Dahinden asserts that social scientists have not sufficiently incorporated the concepts of "mobility and locality" into the theoretical framework of transnationalism hitherto (51-52). Both "mobility and locality" profoundly impact migrants' durable ties with their homeland/host land, and any flux in the dynamics of diaspora politics can bring a proportional change to transnational formations. For instance, the politics of migrants who stay in the host land and those who have returned to their homeland vary considerably; they do not possess the same degree of connections, networks, and ties with the homeland and host land. Therefore, Dahinden focusses on two elements, such as transnational mobility and locality, in classifying ideal transnational formations. Using the dimensions of mobility and locality, Dahinden identifies four types of ideal transnational formations: (i) "localised diasporic transnational formations," (ii) "localised mobile transnational formations," (iii) "transnational mobiles," and (iv) "transnational outsiders" (53). Each category of transnational formations projects different degrees of mobility and locality in the formation of transnational identity in migrants.

Dahinden's first classification, called "localised diasporic transnational," is characterised by "low physical mobility and a high degree of local ties" (53). Their networks in the host country are more intense than in their homeland, probably because they do not often move between their homeland and the host country. Migrants, diasporas, or their offspring, who have resided in the host country for a significant period and successfully assimilated into the local community, typically exhibit this type of formation. Dahinden has combined words like "diaspora" and "localised" to show their low mobility and a high degree of locality. For instance, they

are termed “localised” because they are “socially and economically integrated in the new country” (54). Furthermore, they are labelled as “diasporic” because they have developed “a diasporic subjectivity or a ‘diasporic way of belonging’, and are characterised by an orientation to a real or imagined homeland, while maintaining their ethnic, national, or religious boundaries over generations” (54). Hence, this ideal transnational formation has a high local anchorage in the host land, as well as an intense homeland subjectivity, which they maintain through religious, ethnic, or cultural practices in domestic or community spaces. However, because they rarely circulate between their homeland and host country, their actual connection with their homeland may be imaginary.

Dahinden expounds on the first type of ideal transnational formation called “localised diasporic transnational”:

This first type combines low levels of transnational mobility with high levels of local anchorage in the receiving and low levels of local anchorage in the sending country. Groups of people who develop this kind of transnationality have experienced one-way migration in their family from a place of origin to a new country, and perhaps also a secondary migration to a third or fourth country. However, they do not circulate between the new country and the homeland; they – and their offspring – are settled in the new host country and may have been there for generations. (53-54)

This ideal formation integrates well into the host land economically, socially, and psychologically. Some characters, such as Bridie and Paddy Delaney, in the *Children of the Wind* series fit into this ideal type of transnational formation by possessing solid local anchorage in the host land and maintaining low levels of mobility between the host and their homeland.

Grey's Orphan Scheme displaced Bridie to Australia in her late childhood, and she never returned to her homeland, Ireland, after migrating to Australia, though made several plans in the early days of her settlement. Later in the narrative, Murray depicts a complacent Bridie, sixty years old, living peacefully in Australia. From Bridie's story, it is clear that she never tried to get back to Ireland and still has no plans to return to her homeland. Bridie says of Australia, "Fifty years I've lived in this colony. I've seen the best and the worst of it. I belong here now" (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 237). This statement shows that she preferred low mobility and high locality as a diaspora subject, though her love for her homeland remained in heart. Bridie belongs to the typology known as localised diasporic transnational formation because of her limited mobility between her country of origin and destination.

Similar to the aspect of mobility, locality also plays a significant role in the ideal transnational formation called localised diasporic. Bridie's local anchorage is evident in her relationships with Eddie, Gilbert De Quincey and Paddy Delaney. Regarding the vital role of sustaining local connections in the host country, Dahinden argues that to "develop and maintain such diasporic 'groupness', the main actors of the diaspora must interact closely with institutions, governments, networks and key persons in the host country. Sometimes they also build up networks with international or transnational institutions in order to lobby and do other political work" (53). Instead of finding a route back to her homeland, Bridie creates a network with the diaspora around her. For instance, in *Becoming Billy Dare*, Bridie had a warm relationship with Bidy Ryan, an Irish girl stowed away as a part of the Grey Orphan Scheme. Bridie cares for Bidy's son Eddie as if he were her own, and upon learning that Eddie will become a father, she exclaims, "How can I ever leave Australia if I am to be a grandmother?" (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 236). In terms of her relationship

with the local components, Bridie's locality signifies her local anchorage in the host land, and the local networks she established have helped her adapt to the host land.

Similarly, Bridie creates a warm rapport and relationship with Gilbert De Quincey, "a powerful man in the colony," and her childhood friend in Australia (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 183). Her connection with key persons in the country has helped her socially support the diaspora group around her. It is clear from conversations with Gilbert that Bridie sought help from Gilbert for her wards, Eddie and Billy, many times (184-185). Therefore, Bride established strong social, economic, and political ties with the diaspora groups around her, as well as with other local components and social players like Gilbert.

There is a popular misconception that transnational formation is possible only when the individual travels to and fro from the host land to the homeland in a circular manner. Migrant mobility or the ability to cross borders is only one aspect of transnationalism. Everyday practices in the lives of migrants and diasporic subjects create transnationalism or transnational formations, even without physically crossing the border. This perspective aligns with Dahinden's argument that "the appearance of transnational formations depends not only on the physical mobility of the migrants. People who are not physically mobile can develop transnational practices as well" (Dahinden 52). Similarly, Bridie's mobility was limited due to her lack of movement between her homeland and the host land. As she settled in Australia and established more connections in the host land, her mobility became sedentary, while her networks in her homeland declined. According to Dahinden, degrees of mobility have a vital influence on the myriad ways in which one can be a transnational migrant. Dahinden asserts that migrants who "settle in their new country create unique forms of transnational space, distinct from those who engage in continuous transnational

circulation” (52). However, transnational practices are also intricately connected to the “constraints and opportunities of the contexts, the localities in which they find themselves” (52). Bridie’s SES made it impossible to travel back to Ireland, thereby limiting her mobility across borders. However, Ireland remains within her heart, and this is evident when she says to Billy, “One day, you’ll find that your homeland stays in your heart like a long-lost love” (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 194). Nevertheless, later, when she gets a chance to return to Ireland, she chooses not to travel, which classifies her as the ideal type of transnational formation called localised diasporic.

Similar to the transnationality of Bridie, Paddy Delaney, the central character of *Becoming Billy Dare*, also falls into the category of “localised diaspora.” Paddy Delaney runs away from Ireland to never return, and his decision remains consistent throughout the narrative. Paddy’s “past was a dark place that he didn’t want to visit, not even in a letter” (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 134). According to Paddy, Ireland was “terrible and beautiful at the same time” (76). However, over time, Paddy’s connection to his homeland weakened, resulting in zero mobility in terms of transnational formation. However, his interaction with locality and connection with local components deepened his local anchorage. For instance, in *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, readers find how he has maintained his connection with Nugget and his native wife, Doreen. Paddy’s mobility is within the territory only, and his love for the roads is explicit when he says, “Home is where the heart is, and my heart feels easy on the open road” (72). To have local anchorage, migrants must be able to sustain connections and networks in the host country, which Paddy was able to make. As Dahinden explains, “Bounded groups or ‘groupness’ come into being through conscious and organised efforts by generations and networks of people, and especially by their cultural, social and political elites. Such efforts involve an attachment to

place and a grounding in place; they also require necessary resources in terms of linguistic, financial and other forms of capital” (54). This suggests that Paddy’s ability to form connections and networks in his new home allowed him to become part of a larger community, providing him with a sense of belonging and support. Therefore, Paddy’s transnational formation aligns with the ideal type called localised diaspora, with low mobility and high locality.

Localised mobile, Dahinden’s second category of ideal transnational formation, is defined as having “high levels of mobility and high levels of local anchorage in receiving and sending countries” (Dahinden 55). This category often travels to and fro from the sending country to the receiving country. “This moving back and forth is one criteria that distinguishes this ideal type from the previous one” (55). Compared to the first category, their local anchorage is less long-lived (56). Also, unlike the first category, this one has a “distinct family character” (55). This ideal formations reside in their homeland and host land, and their families will reside with them in the new country while their transnational space has actors from both.

Localised mobile transnational formations “move regularly back and forth between the new country and the place of origin: for holidays, family obligations, business and so on” (Dahinden 55). Localised mobile have high levels of mobility and local anchorage, and the “transnational patterns” are constructed upon the “simultaneity of mobility and sedentariness in two different geographical spaces,” which signifies that this ideal type of transnational formation is well “integrated in networks within both sending and receiving countries” (56). The sedentary aspects are also important in this formation because their networks in the host country are mainly focused on capital or vocation. One of the best exemplifications of this type of

formation is evident in the development of the character Brandon, Bridie's brother, who appears in both *Bridie's Fire* and *Becoming Billy Dare*.

Brandon's degree of mobility and locality as a migrant is an instance of localised mobile transnational formation, which combines high mobility and locality. Brandon is depicted as economically robust in the state and as an older man in *Becoming Billy Dare*. He came to Australia from California and again plans to return to California after spending some time with Bridie. So his route is non-linear because his journey is a continued de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation. The novel portrays Brandon as a person with high mobility and local anchorage, as evidenced by his unwavering decision to extend his stay in Melbourne with his sister Bridie. Those migrants represent this category that regularly moves across international borders. The novel clarifies Brandon's transnational nature when two strangers recognise him in Melbourne and request his assistance with their horses (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 226). Brandon's familiar social network reveals that he's already visited Melbourne and never denies having been to Ireland, unlike Bridie. Janine Dahinden states that "moving back and forth" is one criterion that distinguishes this ideal type from the previous one. They are often "naturalised in the new country, earning their money there, so their children grow up with them in the new place" (Dahinden 56). Brandon and his daughter settled in America and are planning to move to Australia, which implies their flexibility of mobility and greater degree of locality. In *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, one can see that Annie, daughter of Brandon, settled in Australia as the boss of a pump and pub house (147). Therefore, Brandon and the next generation settled there in Australia, which is illustrious of the localised mobile transnational formation.

Colm McCabe and Maeve also belong to the localised mobile transnational formation due to their high degree of mobility and high local anchorage. Both Maeve and Colm travel to their ancestral country, Ireland and they have also established strong local ties in the destination country. Dahinden states that in the formation called localised mobile, the aspect of “locality” is “less-long-lived,” unlike the localised diasporic transnational formations exemplified by Bridie and Paddy (57). However, the “locality” aspect in the transnational formation of Colm and Maeve is high and stable in the narrative. Colm reconnects with his mother in Ireland and Maeve with her father, which will lead to both of them moving back and forth from Australia to Ireland. Additionally, both Maeve and Colm have deep connections with Australia, which makes them say that they are “Aussie” (Murray, *Secret Life* 175). Hence, both Maeve and Colm are representatives of the classification called localised mobile transnational formation.

Transnational mobiles are the third ideal category among transnational formations, characterised by high levels of mobility and low levels of local anchorage. Dahinden defines transnational mobiles as “people who are more or less permanently on the move, with low levels of local anchorage in the receiving country” (56). Therefore, mobility becomes a crucial and indispensable part of migrant dynamics. The shuttle migration pattern among Polish women and the suitcase trading of Tunisian women serve as examples of this ideal transnational formation (57). This formation primarily focuses on “mobility capital,” as their social capital is not founded on ethnic relations (57). However, to maintain mobility, they must establish networks and local ties with local actors or bodies in their respective fields. Their networks and connections will be in professional domains rather than familial systems or ethnonational boundaries.

The Lilliputians theatre depicted in *Becoming Billy Dare*, where Violet joins, represents the third type, “transnational mobiles”. This theatre group travelled widely through Australia, New Zealand, and later the Orient and North America.

“Transnational mobiles possess a high degree of mobility and low levels of local anchorage, so “they are more or less permanently on the move” (Dahinden 56). They have continuous and constant circular mobility from one country to another and back to the homeland. In *Becoming Billy Dare*, Murray states that “the Lilliputians theatre troupe that Violet joins was a genuine children’s company. It was run by the Pollard family and for many years toured Australia, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia” (254). Dahinden states that these migrants do not leave their homeland with the “aim of settling in another country, but they tend to stay mobile for economic reasons” (56). Thus, Lilliputian Theatre Company is an instance of transnational mobiles as they practice a kind of shuttle migration.

Moreover, Maeve’s Chinese grandparents, whom she calls Por Por and Goong Goong, fall into the category of transnational mobiles due to their high degree of mobility and low level of locality. Maeve’s Chinese grandparents move from Australia to China in a circular manner, though they had made their home in China. Even though they travel to Australia frequently, they have no solid network or connections there, which reflect the low intensity of local anchorage. Transnational mobiles do not immigrate with the “intention of settling in another country, but tend to stay mobile in order to maintain or improve their quality of life” (Dahinden 56). Maeve’s grandparents embody the concept of transnational mobility because they were continuously moving between Australia and China in a way that highlights their connection to both places while not fully settling in either. Although Por Por and Goong Goong established their home in China, their frequent travels to Australia

signify a desire to maintain ties without forming deep local roots there. This underscores the notion that their mobility does not stem from a desire to permanently relocate, but rather from a desire to improve their quality of life through the exploration of diverse cultural environments. Dahinden's perspective reinforces this, emphasizing that their movement is more about sustaining connections and opportunities than immigration in its traditional sense. Maeve tells Colm that for her grandfather, "everyone who isn't Chinese is a foreigner," and her grandfather's family is still in China (Murray, *Secret Life* 93). The mobile nature of their transnational formation is evident when they mention about how their family members have settled in China and their frequent visits. Moreover, although Maeve's grandmother and Colm McCabe shared a warm relationship during their childhood, their current lack of connection highlights the grandparents' limited local network connections. The novel vividly describes the meeting between Colm and Maeve's grandmother:

Por Por turned to Maeve and put an arm around her.

‘Siu Siu, when I was younger than you are now, I used to play cat's cradle and hopscotch and chasey with your friend, Mr. McCabe! You wouldn't believe it, would you? Fifty years! Colm, I still feel like that little girl.’ (158)

From the conversation between Colm and Por Por, it is evident that Por Por had negligible connections in the host country, and because of that, she was not able to maintain local ties with her friends, which is evidenced by the fact that there was no connection between Colm and Por Por, though both resided in Australia for a long time. Moreover, both Por Por and Goong Goong express a desire to relocate Maeve to Hong Kong, where she can settle down and make occasional visits to Australia. Por Por says to Maeve, "We will take you to Hong Kong with us" (70). Additionally, both Por Por and Goong Goong were occasional visitors, as is clear from the statement that

“that house was never in your mother’s name. It belonged to us” (71). Furthermore, there is mention of Goong Goong travelling to Singapore as part of business (103). Hence, their degree of mobility is high, akin to constantly moving from one place to another, but their local anchorage in the destination countries is relatively low. However, they have strong ties to their homeland, even though their degree of local anchorage is minimal in the host country. For example, when Por Por learns about the tidal tsunami in Southeast Asia, she experiences a sense of fear and despair (104). The sense of despair and pain Por Por experience underlines how the minute things, which are social or political in nature, that affect home land can trigger a series of emotions in migrants, revealing the depth of connection they have with the homeland. Thus, the transnational mobiles are like “the strangers that come today and stays tomorrow- but with continuous circular mobility” (Dahinden 56). Therefore, Chinese grandparents of Maeve belong to the category, transnational mobiles, because mobility is an integral part of their transnationalism.

The fourth ideal type, transnational outsiders, stands out for their “low transnational mobility and, at the same time, a low degree of local anchorage” (Dahinden 57). According to Dahinden, “asylum seekers, recently arrived migrants from non-EU countries, and sometimes even legal refugees” belong to this ideal transnational formation (57). These migrants have restricted mobility in their homelands and host countries due to their refugee status. Socio-political issues prevent them from entering their homeland, and their immigrant status complicates their integration into the host country. For instance, many asylum seekers in Switzerland, even after many years of residing there, find it difficult to integrate into Swiss society (57–58). Transnational outsiders are characterised by this type of “weak transnationalism,” and they are unable to “build up stable transnational fields between

the country of origin and the new country, as they have neither the resources nor the capital to do so, and sometimes they are not even in a position to send remittances” (59). Therefore, the fourth category exemplifies weak transnationalism, as the migrants have limited access to mobility, capital, and locality in both their host land and homeland.

Transnational outsiders, such as Nugget Malloy, a character in *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, do not circulate between their homeland and host country due to restrictions imposed upon them. Nugget married a native woman called Doreen, putting his and his children’s lives at stake. The vulnerable condition of natives is evident when Billy tells Colm, “The thing is, the authorities reckon it ain’t right for a black woman to raise a white man’s kid...the black fellas...they’re not like citizens in the way white folk are” (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 113). Nugget, married to a native woman, experiences social restrictions due to the ongoing fear of the white assimilation policy stealing their children away from their homes. They run from one place to another to escape the surveillance of authorities, similar to the condition of refugees and asylum seekers.

Geordan Dickinson Shannon says, “Without anywhere that is home, Indigenous people have been without a physical space to reinvent themselves and their culture in modern Australia” (Shannon). The doctrine of *terra nullius* (“land belonging to no one”) has removed the cultural ownership of the land by Indigenous Australians from the collective consciousness of Australia. The policies that built the stolen generation are an explicit example of the dispossession of natives and a way to purge the Anglo-Celtic homogeneity. Elizabeth Malcolm and Dianne Hall, in *A New History of the Irish in Australia*, state:

By 1912, the policy of removing lighter-skinned children from their indigenous families and sending them to schools on missions and reserves was widespread throughout Australia” as part of white assimilation ideologies. Child displacement was “carried out in the belief that the ‘full-bloods’ were doomed to disappear and that the ‘half castes’ needed to be assimilated into the white community by being trained for menial employment as servants and labourers. (61)

Such policies reveal the deeply entrenched racism of the time, highlighting the destructive impact of assimilation efforts on Indigenous communities and the lasting trauma they have caused. The perception about natives and miscegenated offspring as undesirable members of society led to their status as refugees in their own country.

The transnational formations represented in the *Children of the Wind* series celebrate the transnational identities of child migrants. This exaltation of transnational identity is a counter-narrative to the worldwide rise of nationalism. Murray attempts to subvert the methodological nationalism embedded in children’s historical fiction by celebrating transnational narratives. The series’ child protagonists experience two displacements: from late childhood to adolescence and from their native nation to a host country. Both displacements involve travel on a physical and a mental plane, which combines to produce a snowball effect in the process of transnational identity creation.

### **Transnational Identity**

Adolescence, characterised by significant physical, emotional, and psychological changes, is a critical stage in the human life span where identity formation plays a crucial role in shaping an individual’s sense of self, esteem, and autonomy.

Adolescence is a critical phase for identity formation “as young people are developing

cognitively and begin to enter public life, which increases concerns with individual and social appearances” (Lauer and Wong 1056). This period aligns with Erik Erikson’s fifth stage of psychosocial development, “Identity vs. Confusion,” where individuals grapple with their sense of self and navigate the complexities of social identity, ultimately shaping their path toward adulthood (Erikson 94). Erik Erikson identifies eight stages of the psychosocial development of an individual over a life span: “(i) Trust vs. Mistrust (ii) Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (iii) Initiative vs. Guilt (iv) Industry vs. Inferiority (v) Identity vs. Confusion (vi) Intimacy vs. Isolation (vii) Generativity vs. Stagnation and (viii) Integrity vs. Despair” (94). Erikson mentions adolescence as the fifth stage, marked by identity crises. In a similar vein to Erikson’s emphasis on the importance of identity formation during adolescence, James Marcia further explores this developmental stage by examining how young people navigate commitment and exploration. James Marcia extended Erikson’s theory by examining identity development during adolescence in terms of commitment and exploration of ideologies, gender roles, politics, religion, and career (Marcia 161). Adolescent children who migrate experience dual displacement in psychosocial and geographical dimensions, as they not only leave their homeland but also transition from childhood to adulthood.

Avtar Brah, in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (2005), ponders the elusive and complex nature of the concept of identity:

The idea of identity, like that of culture, is singularly elusive. We speak of ‘this’ identity and ‘that’ identity. We know from our everyday experience that what we call ‘me’ or ‘I’ is not the same in every situation; that we are changing from day to day. Yet there is something we ‘recognise’ in ourselves and in others which we call ‘me’ and ‘you’ and ‘them’. In other words, we are all constantly changing but

this changing illusion is precisely what we see as real and concrete about ourselves and others. And this seeing is both a social and a psychological process.

Identity then is an enigma which, by its very nature, defies a precise definition.

(20)

Identity has several dimensions, like cultural, religious, racial, ethnic, and national, and these strata sometimes intersect to form a homogeneous entity where the ethnonational and cultural identifications are contained under a singular category. Furthermore, identity is the amalgamation of the “memories, experiences, relationships, and values that create one’s sense of self” while reinforcing a “steady sense of who one is over time, even as new facets are developed and incorporated into one’s identity” (“Identity”). Basically, identity refers to the sense of self, identifying oneself in cultural, political, and social contexts. According to Erikson, identity is “a subjective sense of an invigorating sameness and continuity” and also a process “located” in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture, a process which establishes, in fact, the identity of those two identities” (19-20). These definitions point to the profound understanding that identity and culture are inextricably linked in individuals. As Avtar Brah puts it, “The world is not experienced by everyone in exactly the same way, however; nor is it experienced by the same person in the same way all the time. But there are connecting threads running through these multi-realities, which provide an individual with an on-going sense of self” (20). As a result, there will be intersections of collective and individual identities, as well as contestations of both, because they are culturally rooted and dynamic.

In the era of transnationalism, a person’s identity is an intersection of multi-faceted socio-cultural components. Steven Vertovec asserts that “transnationalism and

identity are concepts that inherently call for juxtaposition” because many people’s “transnational networks of exchange and participation are grounded upon some perception of common identity; conversely, the identities of numerous individuals and groups of people are negotiated within social worlds that span more than one place” (“Transnationalism” 573). Though extreme latent nationalism tries to homogenise the identity of a nation’s citizens, the complex migration patterns of the past and present eras make it impossible to tag its people as an identical entity. The contemporary era is characterised by two “opposed” socio-political forces: on the one hand, there is a “comeback of nationalism,” and simultaneously, there is the “emergence of powerful movements of transnational solidarity and connectedness” (Triandafyllidou 207). Propagandist literature tries its best to construct a homogeneous nation through its narrative in the hands of nationalists. However, counter-narratives to nationalism are also gaining momentum in the contemporary transnational world. These transnational narratives, which celebrate transnational identity, essentially serve as a counter-narrative to the burgeoning nationalism of the present.

In “Transnationalism over the Life Course” (2010), Sean Lauer and Queenie Wong argue that the “transnationalism of adolescents is primarily a social and cultural transnationalism.” This is because “adolescents are not likely to be involved in economic or political transnationalism” (1056). The exchange of cultural elements between nations or across borders, known as cultural transnationalism, challenges the notion that culture remains confined within national boundaries. When immigrants migrate across national borders, they simultaneously bring their cultural backgrounds, blending and integrating different cultures. Laura and Wong examine “young people forging new independent identities when transnational activities such as regular visits to a home society, membership in religious and social groups, and orientations

towards a home society are a part of the context of immigrant life” (1056). A closer inspection of *Children of the Wind* reveals that the adolescents depicted in the series are actively involved in cultural transnationalism.

Identity formation occurs in a complex manner through several phases in the human life span. Erik Erikson defines identity as:

In psychological terms, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. This process is, luckily, and necessarily, for the most part, unconscious except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to aggravate a painful, or elated, “identity-consciousness. (22-23)

Therefore, both inner conditions and outer circumstances are crucial in the process of identity formation. In the case of migrants’ identity formation, both in-group and out-group consciousness will play a significant role in processing the identity of an immigrant or diaspora. Adolescence marks the “stage in the life span that Erikson designated as the first in which the task of identity formation becomes salient” (Archer 177). This stage is also characterised by individuals for the first time questioning “values, goals and beliefs of their significant other” (177). An immigrant’s sense of who one is and how the in-group perceives who one is forms the crust of diaspora identity. Adolescence, which is the bridge between childhood and adulthood, can cause radical physical and psychological changes in the individual.

Therefore, a displaced adolescent child migrant experiences two fold displacement: first, they transition from late childhood to adolescence, and second, they relocate to a culturally and socially unfamiliar location. This double displacement intensifies the “crises” in the identity formation of the individuals.

Erikson points out that the term “identity crisis” was first used during the Second World War for clinical purposes to refer to people affected by the exigencies of war, which triggered a “sense of loss” or loss of “historical continuity” in the individuals (Erikson 16-17). An identity crisis involves a conflict within or a turbulent inner negotiation of belongingness, where an individual questions their sense of self and may ponder self-exploration, often leading to inner conflicts induced by external challenges. Erikson asserts that “identity crisis as the psychosocial aspect of adolescence” (Erikson 91). According to Erikson, the fifth stage of psychosocial development, “identity vs. confusion,” happens in turbulent adolescence, and this stage is crucial in developing a sense of self or identity (95). Sometimes the pressure to fit into a predetermined identity can result in a negative identity, leading to despair in the late stages. In brief, the basic premise of identity development is that the “transition from adolescence to adulthood involves progressive strengthening in the sense of identity” (Waterman 42). Individuals at this stage will explore the available options and may find fidelity in successful identity formation or may find role confusion in failure to resolve the conflict.

Following the propositions of Erikson, Canadian psychologist James Marcia proposed a comprehensive theory on identity development in adolescence. Instead of Erikson’s chronological order of psychosocial development, Marcia proposed a non-linear structure or stages in identity formation among adolescents. Marcia divided identity formation into several statuses like (i) “Identity Diffusion” (ii) “Identity

Foreclosure” (iii) “Identity Moratorium” and (iv) “Identity Achievement” (Marcia 161). According to Marcia:

Identity Achievements are individuals who have experienced a decision-making period and are pursuing self-chosen occupation and ideological goals. Foreclosures are persons who are also committed to occupational and ideological positions, but these have been parentally chosen rather than self-chosen. They show little or no evidence of “crisis.” Identity Diffusions are young people who have no set occupational or ideological direction, regardless of whether or not they may have experienced a decision-making period. Moratoriums are individuals who are currently struggling with occupational and/or ideological issues: they are in an identity crisis. (161)

Adolescence is a stage where the individual experiences “crisis,” which leads them to enter a stage of exploration to reduce the crisis (Marcia 160). Adolescents view the crisis not as a negative trait, but rather as a positive one that significantly contributes to their identity formation. “What is important about identity in adolescence, particularly late adolescence, is that this is the first time that physical development, cognitive skills, and social expectations coincide to enable young persons to sort through and synthesise their childhood identifications in order to construct a viable pathway towards their adulthood” (160). An individual may go through various identity statuses, culminating in identity achievement where there is self-exploration and attainment of goals.

During her late childhood, the Earl Grey Orphan Scheme relocated Bridie O’Connor from Ireland to Australia. The Irish famine of 1848 was a decisive push factor in her displacement from her family and later from her homeland. In her narrative of Bridie, Kirsty Murray mentions Bridie’s age as eleven after reaching

Australia (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 98). Bridie's journey from late childhood to adolescence intersects with her displacement and migration from Ireland to Australia. Bridie is estranged not only from Australia's new exotic environment but also from her changing psycho-physical stages in adolescence, confronting double displacement and a double crisis in the migration process, with conflict arising from both her psycho-physical development and an identity crisis as an immigrant.

Moreover, Paddy Delaney and Colm McCabe in *Becoming Billy Dare* and *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* confront the double displacement similar to that of Bridie's. During their adolescence, Paddy and Colm experience a simultaneous double displacement as they relocate to Australia. Their psychosocial stages of identity formation intersect with their national identity formation through continuous negotiations. Socio-cultural ideologies impact their shift into transnational identity, with both their homeland and host land playing a significant role in their identity formation. Child migrants in the series go through several identity statuses and negotiations concurrent with Marcia's identity status theory.

In *Bridie's Fire*, Bridie O'Connor is in a state of foreclosure in the initial stages of being an immigrant. Adolescents who are committed to vocational and ideological positions are classified as foreclosures. Throughout her upbringing, her parents instilled an ideological or religious stance in her. However, rather than being "self-selected," these ideological notions and vocational interests were chosen by the "parents," and adolescents in "foreclosure" status do not display any "signs of crisis" (Marcia 161). Bridie's principal identity status as a foreclosure marks a blind adherence to her parents' religious and ideological principles. She had a belligerent approach towards the British, just like her father, and she had developed such antagonism only by imbibing the parental discussions on the British. For instance,

Bridie overhears the discussion between Mick and her dad over the reason behind famine. Mick accuses the easterly wind, whereas Seamus, Bridie's father, explains the role of the British in creating famine (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 11). Foreclosure status stems from blind adherence to authoritarian commands, such as commands from parents or guardians, thereby bringing stability and security for a limited period. Yet, this can hinder the growth of an individual by limiting their capacity for exploration.

Another example substantiating Bridie's foreclosure status is her preference to become a seamstress. Her mother was the finest seamstress in Dingle, and she pursued that path with blind persistence without exploring other options. When she was recruited as a domestic maid, she affirmed her foreclosure position by saying, "I don't want to be domestic. I want to be a seamstress, sir" (97). Hence, at the beginning of the novel *Bridie's Fire*, Bridie remains in the foreclosure identity status without confronting any internal conflicts or crises. Similarly, Bridie's mother has taught her, "No matter how hungry we get we will never stoop to take the soup" (25). Bridie asserts, "I'm truly my blessed dead mother's true daughter and a member of the Holy Catholic Church" (111). Bridie has blindly followed the option her parents gave without facing any crisis for a long time. However, migration imposed pressure on her foreclosure status in the dimensions of vocation, ideology, nationality, and religion. Therefore, there was a radical shift in her socio-cultural dynamics in the migration process, as revealed in her later identity status.

Bridie in Australia confronts several cultures, questioning her parochial ideologies, which sets her into a state of identity moratorium. Bridie's first encounter with Aborigines, in particular, triggers a confused reaction of cultural shock and curiosity. This confusion sheds light on her underlying conflict as she confronts her traditional mindset, likely stemming from her developing relationship with natives. In

this regard, her reaction toward the Aborigines is a manifestation of her struggles with identity. The moratorium entails the struggle to establish a sense of identity, where the individual remains uncommitted to a particular identity yet actively explores and reassesses their beliefs and values. Marcia asserts that “moratoriums” are adolescents in the midst of an identity crisis due to “vocational and/or ideological conflicts” (161). Through this lens, Bridie’s interaction with these unfamiliar cultural practices and her contradictory feelings toward them illustrate the psychological state of being in an identity moratorium—a period of self-exploration that can bring forth personal growth and transformation. Bridie meets Aborigines for the first time, simultaneously creating a sort of aversion and amusement. The instance is described as:

One day a whole family of black natives walked past the fence. Their clothes were ragged, as Bridie’s and her family had been when they lived in the hut on the edge of Dingle. And they had a lean and hungry look about them. Bridie had never seen such ebony skin. Their big, dark eyes and the sharp angle of their bones reminded her of the hungriest time in her life. When they looked back at her, staring at them through the fence, she turned away.

(Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 94)

For the first time, Bridie identifies herself with a community in the host land, and their rugged looks and physical weakness reminded her of her family’s struggle, signifying a microcosm of Irish people during the famine. Similarly, she meets many people with different cultural backgrounds on her journey through the Australian goldfields. Her aversion to other cultures later became a curiosity and respect over time. When the Aboriginal girl offered her the burnt snake as food, she remembered the words of Mrs. Arbuckle that “blacks were worse than Irish and not even baptism would save such heathens from hellfire” (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 195). But when she

looked at them, “she felt a swell of longing,” which is a metaphorical acceptance of other cultures (195). She took the snake meat from them and ate it; the act signifies how her foreclosure status was finally diffusing into experimentation and exploration. Bridie, the pious Catholic, begins to respect the plurality of existence and smoothly enters a stage of moratorium where she explores different options.

Bridie’s vocational choice also shifts from foreclosure to that of the moratorium. Bridie soon explores the theatre and stage as a vocation and feels comfortable in the space. Thus, after reaching Australia, her vocational orientation undergoes a series of explorations as a scullery maid, seamstress, gold miner, and theatre performer. This exploration reflects her moratorium status, where she actively explored available options, in contrast to the foreclosure status where she blindly adhered to a single choice. “Exploring options but having not yet made commitments” characterises the moratorium phase (Hoose). As the adolescents tries multiple roles and examines diverse views, this may be an uncomfortable and emotionally difficult time. The moratorium status is the first step in identity achievement. It is natural for adolescents to be rebellious and disobedient during the moratorium status to avoid dealing with problems, postpone them, have poor self-esteem, feel worried, and be unsure about making decisions. Here, Bridie achieves identity achievement in a later phase, which is mentioned in *Becoming Billy Dare*, where she is a fine seamstress in her adulthood. However, her decision was a result of resolving her crisis, which involved exploring and evaluating her options.

Similarly, Bridie’s notions of homeland undergo radical shifts, just like her vocational choices. Svetlana Boym describes the complexity of the word “home” in *Future of Nostalgia* (2001):

To feel at home is to know that things are in their places and so are you; it is a state of mind that doesn't depend on an actual location. The object of longing, then, is not really a place called home but this sense of intimacy with the world; it is not the past in general, but that imaginary moment when we had time and didn't know the temptation of nostalgia. (251)

Similarly, Janelle Wilson states that "diasporic subjectivity is...necessarily double: acknowledging the imperatives of an earlier "elsewhere" in an active and critical relationship with the cultural politics of one's present home, all within the figurality of a reciprocal displacement" (33). Irish culture, an "earlier elsewhere" in her "diasporic subjectivity," deeply rooted Bridie's concept of "home," leading her to treat any other cultural "other" with aversion. For instance, she firmly believed migration was a deathly curse and constantly reminded her brother about the predicament of Uncle Liam, who went to America and hadn't heard since then (Murray, *Bridie's Fire* 6-7). She even believed that crossing the sea, which signifies the process of migration, would bring death and misery to the people. This conviction is explicit when Bridie says the pony or Pooka might take them across the sea to the fairy folk (4). Such instances in the novel substantiate the fear of leaving the homeland and the perplexities surrounding migration. When Brandon, Bridie's brother, expressed his desire to migrate to America, Bridie objected by saying, "You want to go and be buried in America?" (47). For Bridie, migration was the loss of homeland, the loss of the familiar, and the loss of intimacy, which displaced her from foreclosure status, imposing a crisis on imbibed ideologies and attitudes.

Bridie's concept of national identity undergoes a paradigm shift to transnational identity over time. In the beginning of the novel, Bridie's identity is solely ethnonational, as she and others identify herself as an "Irish girl." Most

characters address her as an ‘Irish girl’ instead of calling her name. For instance, Mrs. Arbuckle introduces Bridie as “the new kitchen skivvy, the Irish girl” (Murray, *Bridie’s Fire* 99). Dora, the parlour maid, calls her “bog rish,” and Gilbert addresses her as “the Irish one” (102, 104). Identity development is influenced by both inner conditions and outside situations. In the case of migrant identity development, both in-group and out-group awareness play a significant part in the processing of an immigrant’s or diaspora’s identity. The crust of an immigrant’s diaspora identity and dynamics is formed not just by his perception of ‘who he is but also by how the in-group and out-group view who one is. Bridie’s national identity undergoes the stage of the moratorium and later reaches the stage of identity achievement. In *Becoming Billy Dare*, readers find Bridie, who is an adult peacefully residing in Australia, and she has developed a transnational identity where both Ireland and Australia are a part of herself. When Bridie says, “One day when you are as old as me, you’ll understand,” it validates her sense of transnational identity. No matter how much you love your kin and homeland, in a long life, there are always other loves, other places that become a part of you. The memories that you store up in a place are as precious as gold. For fifty years, I’ve lived in this colony. I’ve seen the best and worst of it. I belong here now” (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 237). Bridie thus understands her unique position in a transnational world where she is both Irish and Australian simultaneously without bearing the pressure to give weightage to either home land or host land.

Transnational identity often signifies possession of two distinct cultural realities, but this does not imply a preference for one over the other. The merging of two or more cultures into a single set of beliefs, values, and practices may not occur; rather, there is a synthesis and creation of a distinct identity. Howard Lune asserts that

“migrant communities create new transnational identities based on dynamic reconceptualisation of their home national identities” (5). This condition of “betweenness” defines migrants as a “new entity that is not truly a member of either the sending or receiving country” (5). Bridie’s identity achievement is that of the “in-betweenness,” and her identity overlaps with both Irish and Australia, which makes her belong to both worlds simultaneously. Just as Bridie puts it, her homeland would stay in her heart “like a long-lost love,” but at the same time, she wonders, “How can I ever be leaving Australia” (Murray, *Becoming* 194, 236). National identity involves an intense feeling of belonging to a nation through its shared experience and a commitment to the national goodwill, and in the wake of transnational identity, it is dynamic and flexible as the subject feels belonging to both the sending and receiving country. Similar to Bridie, all other child migrants, such as Paddy, Colm and Maeve, go through different stages of identity statuses and eventually, their identity achievement signify a transnational identity.

According to Alan S. Waterman, an identity achiever may revert or retain three probable statuses (43). Identity achievers may “continue as Achiever, adhering to the goals and values established during the identity crisis” or they may “revert to Moratorium status, re-entering crisis if the earlier resolution is found to be unsatisfactory in some way,” or they might “revert to identity diffusion status if the established commitments gradually lose their vitality without triggering a new crisis” (43). Bridie O’Connor, Paddy Delaney, Colm McCabe and Maeve continue as achievers. Adhering to the identity established during the crisis, they all sustain transnational identity throughout adulthood. In their adolescence, each character undergoes different phases of identity formation, such as foreclosure, moratorium,

diffusion and identity achievement in a non-linear way culminating in transnational identity.

At the beginning of the novel *Becoming Billy Dare*, thirteen-year-old Paddy Delaney finds himself in a state of identity foreclosure. Foreclosures are individuals who are “committed to occupational and ideological positions. However, their choices came from their parents, not their own will. They show little or no evidence of crisis” (Marcia 161). Paddy’s identity status shifts from identity foreclosure to identity moratorium which is an important psychological transition in the narrative. External forces, such as parental persuasion, shape his early identity, fitting him into the foreclosure status. However, with his mother’s demise, he has to face the internal struggle of creating his own identity. The change from reliance on a parentally chosen path to self-discovery embodies the aspect of Marcia’s theory on identity development that suggests or includes a period of crisis in order to obtain a self-determined identity. During this process, Paddy begins the transition from going along with someone else’s version of his life to learning to ask the necessary questions that lead to creating his own direction. Paddy came to Dublin as a seminary boy to fulfill his mother’s wishes, as she was ill, and he stayed at St. Columcille seminary solely for her benefit (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 52). After his mother’s death, Paddy enters a moratorium state because he confronts a crisis in his ideological and vocational position. In his conversation with friend MacCrae, the crisis is evident:

He swung out of bed and knelt on the cold boards...Why had God taken his mam? Why hadn’t anyone come for paddy? Why wasn’t there any comfort in prayer? Why couldn’t he hear God if MacCrae could? Why didn’t he know what he was meant to do?

‘Delaney’, came a small voice in the darkness. ‘I’m sorry for your news.’

Paddy looked across MacCrae.

‘It doesn’t make any sense, said Paddy.

MacCrae was silent for a while. Finally, he spoke in a low whisper.

“It’s God’s will. St Ignatius said that God has a plan for you. You have to believe that. If you surrender yourself into God’s hands, he’ll show you the way’.

Paddy lay his head down on the bed and let his hands hang limply by his side.

‘I’m not like you, MacCrae’.

‘No, but you have your own path to follow. (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 52)

A similar shift happens in Paddy Delaney’s ideological position pertaining to the homeland in *Becoming Billy Dare*. A dramatic change happens in Paddy’s attachment to Ireland after his mother’s death, where he firmly believes that “he had no home in Ireland” (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 84). The moment he sets sail in the barque, he feels that the ship is taking him away from “the misery of the place” (64). When he finally reaches Australia, he reflects on the mosaic culture he has been introduced to in the new land:

There were men from all over the world-some had skin so black and shiny that paddy found it hard not to stare at them. At dinner, an American man refused to sit at the same table as the black and yellow men and threw his knife down on the table in disgust. Paddy took his seat. He felt as different from the other sailors as the men of all colours. (83)

Paddy Delaney finally accepts his in-betweenness as a celebration rather than a crisis unresolved. The novel vividly portrays Paddy's crisis resolution: "He was no longer the shipwrecked Paddy Delaney nor even the runaway Billy Smith." It was as if he had shed his past and sloughed it off like an old skin. He was Billy Dare" (215).

Paddy's identity status then shifts from a state of moratorium or exploration to one of identity achievement. He successfully resolves the conflict between his homeland and host land by accepting both as integral parts of his identity. For him, Ireland becomes a terrible and beautiful memory (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 76). Paddy thus negotiates his older self for that of a new identity, thereby being Billy Dare instead of being Paddy Delaney or Billy Smith. The narrative celebrates this new identity, and Murray asserts, "Just as Paddy Delaney reinvented himself as Billy Dare, Australia was inventing itself as a nation" (Murray, *Becoming Billy* 253). Australia's journey into a multicultural society and Paddy's journey into a transnational identity become parallel in the narrative, where the personal and national journey entwines into a political formation.

Paddy Delaney, at the beginning of the novel *Becoming Billy Dare*, has a monolithic national identity in which he perceives himself as an Irishman. However, migration challenges his unique Irish national identity, forcing him to adopt the Australian identity and identify himself as an Australian. Therefore, the name change to Billy Smith symbolises Paddy's attempt to relinquish his Irish identity and transition into an Australian over time, a process known as assimilation. However, he experiences a period of moratorium that instills a sense of "crisis" in him, guiding him towards the achievement of his unique transnational identity. Thus, Billy Dare, the new name he adopts, signifies the evolving transnational identity where he doesn't have to choose between being Irish or Australian but can be both simultaneously.

Thus, Paddy Delaney's transformation into Billy Dare signifies the fluid and dynamic nature of identity construction in a transnational world.

In *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, Colm McCabe is in an identity diffusion status when the novel begins. Identity diffusions are defined as "young people who have no set occupational or ideological direction, regardless of whether or not they may have experienced a decision-making period" (Marcia 161). Identity diffusion is characterised as a status where the adolescent has neither explored nor committed to any ideologies, beliefs, or roles. In this position, called identity diffusion, individuals are relatively docile and have accepted the traditional system passed down by their family or society. They might experience a crisis but are not explorative about resolving the conflict. For instance, an individual born into a particular religion may believe in his family's faith. However, at a certain point, his rationale might conflict with his projected religious identity, persuading him to explore other options or commit to a particular religion in the process. Individuals in this identity diffusion status might experience a crisis in their religious identity. However, that individual might not have explored other options or might not have a committed religion. Briefly, this is a floating stage that later meanders into moratorium, foreclosure, or identity achievement. Sally L. Archer observes that "Identity Diffusion is more characteristic of younger adolescents who may sense the possibility of conflict but lack enough information or interest in either area to invest their energies in assessing potential conflicts. Apathy is the most prevalent form of diffusion expressed in this domain" (Archer 200). In the migration process, apathy plays a detrimental role in forming the immigrant experience in the lives of child migrants. They are confronted with two options, assimilation or resistance in asserting their identity in the host country.

In *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, Colm had no occupational or ideological directions initially, and he was even confused about his identity. His dilemma over whether to identify himself as an Irish or British signifies his diffusion status. Colm resolves his crisis by embracing a transnational identity. In the beginning, crisis surfaces in the form of reflection, where he ponders over his identity. Colm reflects, “If he had an Irish name, did that mean he should cheer for Ireland? Was he an Australian or Irish?” (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 222). Later in adulthood, Colm returns to Ireland and settles down there with his mother for a short period (Murray, *Secret Life* 246). This mobility across borders enables Colm to cultivate a set of transnational social fields that mirror the multiplicity of connections highlighted in transnational discourses. Colm maintains relationships, familial connections, and socioeconomic networks across borders, enabling him to occupy a hybrid social and cultural position. Colm fits into the category of transmigrant, which means that he is in continuous circular movement between homeland and host land. Immigrants are actively involved in building “social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated ‘transmigrants’” (Lilomaiva). Furthermore, transmigrants engage in developing and sustaining “multiple relations—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political—that span borders” (Lilomaiva 57). Thus, Colm establishes a social field in both homelands and host land through an actual circular movement, which befits him as a transmigrant.

Colm in the *Children of the Wind* series is displaced from Ireland to Britain and then later to Australia, thereby making his identity a confluence of the routes. Colm’s allegiance and connection to Britain are clear when he “carefully tore the picture of the Queen” to keep it with him, and he also argues that “I’d risk it for her;

she is our Queen” (Murray, *Prayer for Blue* 65). Colm later goes to Ireland, finds his mother and reckons that he has been missing everything all these years (217). He also asserts that Ireland is a “beautiful part of the world” and that he wants to settle in Ireland with his mother, Deirdre (246). These instances in the series substantiate Colm’s continuous movement from Australia to Ireland in a circular manner, as well as the complex formation of his transnational identity, which makes him Australian and Irish at the same time.

In, *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong*, Maeve, is a modern-day Australian girl with a mixed racial lineage. Maeve’s self-perception as an Australian diverges from others’ perceptions of her as an Asian living in Australia throughout the novel. In many instances, Maeve’s physical traits remind her of her racial lineage, but blissfully, she ignores her cultural background, adhering to a monolithic identity of being an Australian. Maeve reflects on her body as a “confusing mix of Asian and European features” (Murray, *Secret Life* 10). However, when Bianca, her friend, points out that the Asian freckles look good on Maeve, she becomes annoyed and says, “I’m not Asian, I’m Aussie” (109). So at the beginning of the novel, readers find Maeve, who is not ready to accept her complex identity. Later, Maeve enters a stage of moratorium, where she explores and reflects on her mixed racial identity. She later accepts her in-betweenness with a full heart. While on her tour in Ireland, Maeve says to her friends, “My dad talked about being blown around by the wind, and I know what he means. In Hong Kong, I had this weird feeling that there was a part of me that belonged there. I also experience this feeling here, but I believe that deep down, Sydney is where I truly belong (Murray, *Secret Life*, 249). She resolves her crisis by being an identity achiever, where her identity corresponds to the transnational. In a conversation with Mr. Keith, Maeve says that “I’m just as Irish as I’m Chinese,” and

she also asserts that she is a true “Aussie” (175). This statement highlights the transnational identity of Maeve, who identifies herself as an Irish, Chinese and Australian at the same time without the need to negotiate into a singular national identity.

Furthermore, Maeve embodies the essence of transnational communities in the modern era, unlike Bridie, Paddy, and Colm, who are unencumbered by the technological and transportation barriers that obstruct their connection to their homeland. In the case of Bridie, Paddy, and Colm, the lack of communicative technological advancements and readily available transportation facilities often hindered their circular movement between their homeland and host land. Successive generations of migrants have established themselves as representatives of transnational communities, signifying transnational connections. Thus, the entire series is a metaphorical representation of the movements, connections and identities of migrants and their descendants, shaped by diaspora transnationalism.

To conclude, the analysis shows that the characters’ identities are dynamic and constantly modified by their migration experience. Aspects such as mobility and locality influence the subjective formations of characters in the transnational dimension, thereby bridging homeland and host land in myriad ways. This fluid identity illustrates how transnational aspects challenge the traditional paradigm of nationalism. The chapter emphasises the value of transnational perspectives in comprehending modern identity forms by skilfully illuminating the continuing confrontation between the local, global, and homeland-host land. Additionally, the chapter examines the numerous ways in which the text embraces transnationalism via the identity formation of its characters. Beginning with an overview of the transnational turn in Australian children’s literature, the chapter then continues on to

the theoretical framework of transnationalism. The chapter analyses various transnational formations, classifying characters into four main ideal transnational formations: localised diasporic, localised mobile, transnational mobiles, and transnational outsiders. Based on the theoretical tenets of Marcia's discourse on adolescent identity development, such formations are correlated with the various phases of identity statuses, such as diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium and identity achievement, among child migrants leading to the formation of transnational identity.



## Chapter 5

### Recommendations

The study aims to provide insights into the narrative portrayal of child migration, explicitly focusing on the Irish experience in Australia and the construction of transnational identity portrayed in the Children of the Wind series. By redefining the traditional national framework prevalent in historical novels, the Children of the Wind series highlights the significance of transnational connections amidst the emergence of nationalism. By analysing the representation of transnational identity in the series, the study explores how transnationalism challenges our understanding of historical novels for children. Through its core chapters, the thesis sheds light on aspects of child migration, such as push-pull factors, displacement, and nostalgia. Additionally, it provides critical insights into the socio-economic constructions woven into the narrative, including sectarianism, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the study critically analyses the representation of transnational identity in the series. However, the Children of the Wind series presents several extended areas that warrant further recommendations for future research.

More than a prefix, 'trans' has become a trait of modern sensibility and a conceptual framework in understanding contemporary social, political and cultural dynamics. The depiction of transnational dimensions of history in children's historical novels and its significance in understanding the socio-economic and cultural systems of the world will be an essential area for future research. Transnational history can give insights into the interconnected nature of historical events rather than perceiving history through parochial methodological nationalism. It will be a pioneering effort to identify and trace such novels belonging to the category of transnational literature in

order to critically analyse how such narratives employ transnational history and transnational identity as a theme.

The ongoing research broadens its scope to encompass a comparative analysis of the literature on child migration, employing the methodology of comparative literature. Apart from Kirsty Murray's Children of the Wind series, several other texts, such as Margaret Humphreys' *Empty Cradles* (1994), Robert Dinsdale's *Little Exiles* (2013), and Liza Perrat's *The Lost Blackbird* (2020), portray child migration to Australia. A comparative analysis can illuminate child migration's intricacies and complex nature, which can bring forth varied perspectives pivoting around the topic. The analysis can incorporate research focused on aspects such as the psychosocial impact on child migrants, thematic analysis, case study approaches, and the role of technology in migration.

Similarly, the gender intersection in child migration and its unique experiences is another research scope of the study. Both females and males experience migration differently, with distinct repercussions and nuances; their experiences are never uniform. Both genders experience varying degrees of abuse and different types of trauma, leading to intersectionality. For instance, female children are more vulnerable to sexual abuse, early marriages, and trafficking when it comes to unaccompanied child migration. Conversely, child labor under hazardous conditions often exposes male children to malnutrition and strenuous physical work. Moreover, gendered experiences in domestic spaces often influence the decision to migrate, as many societies prefer male immigrants who can send remittances from their host land. Women remain in their home country to care for their children and household.

Applying the methodology of New Historicism to the Children of the Wind series will illuminate the cultural context, gaining insights from concepts like power and ideology that are inherent in the text. Similarly, by using other historical sources as primary materials, the methodology of New Historicism can reveal the integrity of historicity and anachronism that the writer incorporated into the text. This methodology can illuminate those aspects of fabrication, falsification, and misrepresentation in novels that deal with the theme of child migration. Given the widespread inclination to interpret historical novels as precise portrayals of historical events, the presence of subjectivity, biases, and misrepresentations can potentially distort the truth.

Another scope of the study lies in the critical analysis of the use of Irish myths and legends in the Children of the Wind series. The text employs numerous Irish myths and legends to decipher the storyline. A critical analysis of the myths and legends using the methodology of mythical studies and archetypes can shed light on the profound impact of such myths in the narrative. Myths can influence the way children understand shared experiences. Broadly, the function of myths in children's literature is an exciting area of study.

Transnational narratives for children, such as Kirsty Murray's Children of the Wind series, offer a powerful counter-discourse to conventional nationalist frameworks. By recovering suppressed histories like child migration, these narratives reshape collective memory, presenting a more inclusive and empathetic understanding of the past. They challenge rigid notions of nationhood by portraying identity as fluid, intersectional, and shaped by transnational connections. Moreover, they reimagine migration not as a process of assimilation, but as a space of negotiation, resilience, and identity formation. As such, children's literature with a transnational focus holds

immense pedagogical value in fostering historical consciousness, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship in young readers. Future research in this area can further explore how such narratives can be integrated into educational and cultural discourse to promote a more inclusive and critical engagement with history and identity.

In conclusion, Kirsty Murray's children's novels present significant potential for further research due to the intricate and multifaceted themes she incorporates into her works. Therefore, the study recommends further research using a comparative literature approach, gender studies, the New Historic approach, and mythical studies to deepen our understanding of Murray's literary corpus. Such studies not only bring light to Kirsty Murray but also critically analyse the broader aspects of contemporary Australian children's literature and the changing literary and societal paradigm. By incorporating various contemporary children's writers who address the theme of child migration and transnational identity, the proposed recommendations not only focus on Kirsty Murray but also broaden the scope, enabling the researcher to understand the nuanced approaches of these writers within the broader context of Australian literature.

## Conclusion

Kirsty Murray's Children of the Wind series includes *Bridie's Fire* (2003), *Becoming Billy Dare* (2004), *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* (2005) and *The Secret Life of Maeve Lee Kwong* (2006), four interrelated historical novels for children. The series portrays approximately one hundred and fifty years of Australian history, spanning from the 1840s to the 2000s. The series paints a landscape of Australian history, delving into the experiences of child migration and its related aspects. Furthermore, the series celebrates transnational identity and formations by delving into the complexities of migration, diaspora and transnational experiences.

Contemporary children's historical novels have emerged as a key component of twentieth-century literature, employing a revisionist, alternative, and counter-narrative approach to mainstream historical narratives as a consequence of 'history wars' that brought subversive shifts in approach towards history. The term "history wars" refers to the ongoing debates and controversies in Australia regarding the interpretation and representation of the nation's past, particularly with respect to Indigenous history, colonisation and national identity, which resulted in the emergence of counter narratives and alternative histories subverting the dominant Anglo-Celtic narratives on the foundational stories of Australia (Macintyre and Clark 13). Furthermore, children's historical novels often contain an abundance of national constructs, such as national heroes, national symbols and cultural tropes, because the genre has traditionally served as a tool for propagating nationalism, reinforcing national identity among its readers. Critics such as Jerome de Groot and Georg Lukacs argue that historical novels have traditionally served as a means of national definition (de Groot 94; Lukacs 25). Contemporary children's historical novels interrogate the notion of nationhood and national identity by establishing a literary

space for “political intervention and reclamation for innovation and destabilization” (de Groot 140). Using a variety of methods, contemporary children’s historical novels challenge the traditional national paradigm inherent in the genre.

The Children of the Wind series redefines the national paradigm inherent in children’s historical novels at the intersection of transnational and migration literature. Celebrating the transnational identities of migrants can create friction in nationalist ideals of homogeneity because nationalist movements often demand strict loyalty from immigrants and their descendants. Hence, contemporary children’s literature navigates between fostering inclusive identities and adhering to nationalist expectations. In an era fraught with prejudice and xenophobia towards immigrants, the Children of the Wind series champions the idea of transnational identity, directly challenging prevailing societal norms. This bold stance in the face of pervasive global nationalism is a remarkable feat, particularly in literature aimed at children. By embracing and celebrating transnational identities, the series not only educates but also empowers young readers to question and challenge the prejudices and discrimination against migrants.

Australian children’s historical novels have undergone a paradigmatic shift in the twenty-first century, moving from nationalist discourse to transnational discourse. Historical fiction from its early inception primarily served as a medium for national constructions. However, modern children’s historical fiction engages in conversations about transnationalism, challenging the conventional nation-centric perspective by incorporating transnational histories and cultures. This study asserts that Kirsty Murray’s Children of the Wind series addresses the intricate matters of diaspora and effectively demonstrates its transnational nature. By analysing the Children of the Wind using theoretical speculations of transnationalism, the study is not just looking

at the narrative strategies of a contemporary writer but also considering the challenges involved in problematising various issues related to migration, diaspora, and transnational identity.

Academic research has given limited attention to the genre of historical novels, despite their widespread use as pedagogical tools worldwide. The study acknowledges the under-representation of child migration in children's literature, comparing it to other historical events such as the Civil War and the Holocaust. Furthermore, the representation of Irish-Australian history and culture in Australian children's literature is notably limited, which poses challenges in accurately portraying Australia's transnational dimensions. The objective of the study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the intricate issues of migration and transnational identity portrayed in the *Children of the Wind* series.

The thesis explored the representation and negotiation of national identity within the context of child migration, as depicted in Kirsty Murray's *Children of the Wind* series. There is an inherent complexity in how historical novels for children portray nationalism, especially in an era increasingly defined by transnationalism on the one hand and surging nationalism on the other. The study's objective was to understand how such transnational literature reconciles or fails to reconcile the concept of a fixed national identity with the fluid and often multiple identities that characterise migrants. The research aimed to interrogate the depictions of migration, transnational formations and transnational identity to understand whether the narrative offered a perspective that embraces diverse identities or reinforces anachronistic notions of nationalism, thereby influencing young readers' perceptions of their place in an interconnected world.

For textual analysis, the methodology of the study relied extensively on theoretical perspectives from transnationalism, diaspora studies, and discourses on children's historical novels. Furthermore, the study used the personal interview method, specifically an email interview with Kirsty Murray, the author of primary texts. The thesis analysed the *Children of the Wind* series using theoretical frameworks and concepts, including Everett Lee's push-pull factor theory in migration studies, discourses on nostalgia, theoretical propositions on the concept of transnational identity, and Janine Dahinden's theory on transnational formations.

The "Introduction" of the thesis discussed major components of the study, such as the research problem, research aims, methodology, review of related literature, relevance of the research, and chapter divisions. The first chapter, "Critical Exposition: Journeying through Kirsty Murray's Narratives," began with an introductory overview of Australian children's writer Kirsty Murray and her literary works. The overarching theme of transnationalism unifies a distinct subset of Murray's works, such as *India Dark* (published in India as *The Lilliputians*) (2010), *The Year It All Ended* (2014), *Strangers on Country* (2020), *Eat the Sky, Drink the Ocean* (2014) and *Children of the Wind*. Furthermore, the personal interview with Murray provided insights into her writing process and literary strategies.

The subsequent section of the chapter explored the *Children of the Wind* as an intersection of transnational literature and migration literature. Transnational literature and migration literature are two mutually interconnected literary studies dealing with concepts such as displacement, mobility, identity, and cultural exchange. The term migration literature refers to a body of literary works that explore the theme of migration, and migration in this context refers not only to the direct life experience of the author as a migrant but also to the lives of the "fictional characters" as well as to

the overall “thematic framework and the discursive strategies of the novels” (Soren 15). The category of migration literature interprets migration in this way, enabling the recognition of a diverse range of migration-related experiences within the literary canon. The term transnational literature encompasses a diverse spectrum of literary works that transcend national boundaries, including components such as co-authorship, cross-border publications, translation potential, and thematic investigation of identities and notions of belonging in multiple countries. *Children of the Wind*, as a series, is a representative text of transnational literature, considering criteria such as (i) crossover in readership and the overreaching popularity of the author, (ii) the identities of the characters, and (iii) the theme of migration. The *Children of the Wind* series is an intersection of transnational and migration literature, incorporating multiple cultural perspectives, diaspora experiences, identity formations and migrants’ belonging. This intersection helps readers understand the complexities of movements, cultural exchanges and identity formation in a globalised world, while also examining the psychological and sociological dimensions of migration.

Furthermore, the chapter comprehensively examined the potential motivations or implications of the series *Children of the Wind*. Historical novels are not simply naive depictions of historical events; rather, they frequently contain explicit agendas or underlying ideologies embedded within their narratives. The study identified four motives or outcomes in Kirsty Murray’s *Children of the Wind* series: (i) fostering historical consciousness; (ii) projecting subsumed past or historical events; (iii) redefining the national paradigm typical of historical novels for children; and (iv) highlighting marginalised focal characters. Historical consciousness operates primarily through and with the assistance of historical memory by affirming, negating, transforming and identifying patterns in narratives. Additionally, Murray’s

series shed light on a historical event previously suppressed in mainstream narratives, bringing attention to the topic of child migration to Australia. British and Australian authorities historically under-represented child migration in migration narratives, refusing to acknowledge the political and psychosocial challenges faced by migrant children during colonial times. Historical novels for children challenge and reflect the national paradigm, offering a richer, more complex view of history. They challenge the notion that writers' national identities and national narratives intersect, thereby redefining the national paradigm through transnational perspectives, contesting nationalism's purity and exclusivity. Lastly, the chapter delved into how *Children of the Wind* illuminated a previously unnoticed aspect of Australian history, highlighting the history and significant contributions of the Irish diaspora in shaping Australia through their portrayal as central characters in the series.

Chapter two, "Unravelling the Past: Socioeconomic and Historic-Cultural Constructions in the *Children of the Wind* Series," delved into an examination of different social, economic, cultural and historical constructions found in the text. The chapter commenced by providing an overview of children's historical novels, including their definition, evolution and norms. This chapter functioned as a fundamental section from which subsequent chapters arise, specifically one focusing on child migration and another exploring transnational identity. The chapter investigated the Irish diaspora, Irish ethnicity status and socioeconomic status (SES), as well as their implications for the characters and the broader narrative. Additionally, the chapter examined how the author incorporates historical elements and cultural constructs to shape the narrative. The integration of socioeconomic themes within the *Children of the Wind* series offers a nuanced exploration of characters' struggles and

growth, highlighting the profound impact of economic disparities and social status on personal identity and community integration.

In addition, the second chapter sheds light on the complexities related to the Irish diaspora when subsuming it into a broader category called Anglo-Celtic. Wherever they dispersed, the Irish faced prejudice, adversities and discrimination, making them the most complex diaspora. However, in each region, the context of discrimination and reasons for exclusion had unique nuances. Irish immigrants in Australia faced discrimination primarily on three grounds: their ethnicity, sectarian beliefs and SES, and this pattern of discrimination is discernible in the *Children of the Wind* series. The experiences of migrants varied depending on whether they were convicts transported to penal colonies, free settlers, members of the Anglo-Celtic elite, or members of the working class. Moreover, the perception of the Irish as racially distinct from both the English and other Europeans during the colonial era led to a deliberate effort to denigrate their status among other white Europeans (Malcolm and Hall 25). The Irish's position and status quo among European immigrants were problematic in many aspects, and many scholars compared them with the native tribes of Australia, pushing the Irish to a liminal position in terms of racial superiority. Murray's historical narrative employs a disguise technique that directly correlates with this liminal classification of the Irish. Murray's *Children of the Wind* series implicitly projects implications through the disguise technique, as it plays a crucial role in the narrative structure that parallels the historicity of the culture and migrant dynamics. More than an adventurous element in the story, the disguise implies the pressure imposed on immigrants to assimilate into the dominant culture. Similarly, SES is a significant construct in *Children of the Wind*, determining the circumstances and experiences of Irish migrants and their descendants. Murray has meticulously

woven the characters' SES throughout the narrative, making it more than just a backdrop but a critical historical aspect influencing Irish migration to Australia.

The third chapter, "Push-Pull Factors, Displacement and Nostalgia: The Subtexts of Child Migration in the Children of the Wind Series," provided an in-depth examination of the socioeconomic and historic-cultural constructions that serve as the series' pivotal drivers of child migration. The chapter focused on child migration and its representation in the Children of the Wind series by exploring various push-pull factors that influenced child migration to Australia. Furthermore, the chapter probed into the displacement experienced by child migrants in the series and established nostalgia as a coping mechanism employed by child migrants to be resilient in times of displacement to an exotic landscape. The chapter began by examining the defining characteristics of child migration and delving into the economic, sociopolitical and philanthropic motives that underlie it. One of the economic reasons for strategising child migration is the state's increasing financial burden of maintaining orphanages and workhouses teeming with orphan and poor children. Rapid industrialisation, changing agricultural practices, population migration to cities, insecure employment, fluctuating cycles of economic growth and recession, and the growth of the nineteenth-century population all contributed to the emergence of a growing class of urban poor. In order to achieve economic stability and alleviate the burden, Britain decided to relocate impoverished children from its orphanages and workhouses to its colonies, where they could start a new life with a variety of opportunities. Sociopolitical motives included the ulterior goal of populating the colonies with British individuals to consolidate the white demographics, particularly the Anglo-Saxon population in Great Britain's colonies. The prevailing notion of the white man's responsibility to rescue people from suffering and hardship deeply influenced

the philanthropic impetus behind child migration. During the nineteenth century, people viewed child migration not only as a means to alleviate the financial burden of poor relief or to meet the labour needs of underpopulated colonies, but also as a welfare activity and charitable facade aimed at improving children's lives. Thus, child migration was a strategy to provide renewed opportunities and living standards for children who were otherwise leading a pathetic life in orphanages and poor urban premises.

Child migration has historically been a distressing period in Australia, shrouded in secrecy for an extended duration. In recent years, there has been an increasing acknowledgement of the profound suffering and inequity experienced by child migrants, resulting in public apologies from the Australian government and the establishment of compensation initiatives for those who have survived. The historical phenomenon of child migration in Australia serves as a poignant reminder of the imperative to safeguard the rights and well-being of children who are susceptible to harm, as well as the significance of recognising previous injustices in order to foster healing and reconciliation.

Additionally, the chapter probed the push-pull factors that served as catalysts in the context of child migration. The study found that while both push and pull factors are significant in migration, push factors played a prominent role in child migration. Forced displacement is the primary cause of child migration, both historically and as depicted in the series. This study examined the motif of displacement in the series and explored the strategies characters employ to cope with the emotional challenges associated with displacement. Child migrants used nostalgia as a prominent motif and strategy to cope with the grief associated with displacement. The study provided insights into different types of nostalgia, including reflective,

restorative, personal and collective. The chapter concluded that while Paddy's nostalgia is reflective, acknowledging the past as irretrievable, Bridie's nostalgia is restorative, seeking to recreate the past. Therefore, Bridie's sentimentality tormented her and exacerbated her melancholy, while Paddy's reflective nostalgia offered him a bittersweet solace. In contrast to Bridie's and Paddy's nostalgic typology, Colm combined elements of the past, present, and future in his nostalgic communication. On the other hand, Maeve embodied a different perspective of nostalgia by aligning herself with Vanderbilt's concept of displaced nostalgia, a longing for an unexplored period. The child migrants maintained a sense of imaginary connectedness with their homeland through the power of nostalgia.

Chapter four, "Negotiating National in the Era of Globalisation: Transnational Identity in the Children of the Wind Series," explored the notion of transnational identity and various transnational formations portrayed in the series. The central argument in this chapter focused on exploring transnational formations and identity through the lens of the Children of the Wind series, highlighting how child migrants' experiences contributed to the construction of a transnational identity. The analysis began with an overview of Australian nationalism and its historical evolution, setting the stage for a deeper examination of transnationalism and diaspora theories. The chapter provided a detailed theoretical framework for understanding transnational formations by delving into Janine Dahinden's categorisation to scrutinise characters' transnational formations in the series. The chapter highlighted the fluidity and complexity of transnational identities in the face of rigid nationalisms, highlighting the formation of these identities through interactions between the migrants' homeland and host land, as well as their personal experiences and societal influences. The chapter argued that transnational identity, unlike the fixed identities often associated

with multiculturalism, is dynamic and shaped by cross-border interactions. This perspective challenged the traditional understanding of identity within the confines of nation-states, showcasing how the child migrant characters in the *Children of the Wind* series navigated and negotiated their identities across cultural and national boundaries. The chapter articulated how transnational identity offered a counter-narrative to nationalism, reflecting the complexities of identity in a globalised world through the narratives of these characters.

*Children of the Wind* series embraces a transnational perspective, positioning itself as a critical response to nationalism by promoting a more inclusive understanding of history that transcends national boundaries. By embracing transnational perspective and highlighting the Irish Saga within the context of Australia, the author effectively challenges the prevailing national framework typically found in historical novels. Murray employs a counter-narrative strategy in historical novels, elevating transnational identity, which contrasts with the conventional portrayal of historical novels as a tool for fostering nationalism. Murray skilfully incorporated various narrative elements to highlight the historical authenticity of the plot. Moreover, the chapter proceeded to analyse Janine Dahinden's concept of different ideal transnational formations by considering the characters' level, or degree, of mobility and locality in the host land. The study aimed to identify and conduct a critical analysis of four distinct types of ideal transnational formations: (i) localised diasporics, (ii) localised mobiles, (iii) transnational mobiles, and (iv) transnational outsiders. The analysis concluded that Bridie O'Connor and Paddy Delaney, due to their high local anchorage and low mobility between their homelands and host countries, fall under the localised diasporic transnational formation category. However, Brandon O'Connor, Colm McCabe and Maeve Lee

Kwong fall into the category of localised mobile transnational formation, as they exhibit a higher degree of both local anchorage and mobility. The Lilliputian theatre and Maeve's Chinese grandparents, depicted in *Children of the Wind*, fall into the third ideal category of transnational mobiles due to their constant mobility, akin to shuttle migration. Due to the restrictions on their mobility, Nugget O' Malloy and Doreen fall into the fourth category known as transnational outsiders.

Additionally, the fourth chapter provided insights into the transnational identity of child migrants. The series' child migrants, displaced from their homeland to Australia, were in their late childhood. They had undergone a double mental and physical migration; one pertained to their journey from late childhood to adolescence, and the other is about their new destination. Following the propositions of Erikson, Canadian psychologist James Marcia proposed a comprehensive theory on identity development in adolescence. Instead of Erikson's chronological order of psychosocial development, Marcia proposed a non-linear structure or stages in identity formation among adolescents. Marcia divided identity formation into several statuses like (i) identity diffusion, (ii) identity foreclosure, (iii) identity moratorium and (iv) identity achievement. Child migrants in the *Children of the Wind* series go through all the above-mentioned identity statuses before negotiating their singular national consciousness and embracing transnational identity.

The major research findings reveal that the implicit motives behind the *Children of the Wind* series include: fostering historical consciousness by providing insights into historical events and their interpretations; highlighting subsumed past or historical events that are lesser-known or overlooked; redefining the national paradigm in historical novels for children; emphasising marginalised focal characters; and broadening perspectives on national identity. Additionally, *Children of the Wind*

embraces a transnational perspective, positioning itself as a critical response to nationalism by promoting a more inclusive understanding of history that transcends national boundaries. Furthermore, through a detailed analysis of the *Children of the Wind* series, the study demonstrates how literary characters embody different types of transnational formations as proposed by Janine Dahinden. These formations reflect the complex realities of migrants' experiences, highlighting how literature can serve as a mirror to the multifaceted processes of identity negotiation and formation in transnational contexts. Moreover, the examination of transnational identity in the series offers a counter-narrative to traditional notions of nationalism. It reveals how transnational experiences challenge and complicate the narratives of belonging and identity typically associated with the nation-state, suggesting that transnational identities can coexist with, challenge, or even transcend national identities. Finally, the thesis infers that identity is not static or confined within national boundaries. The continuous movement and interaction across borders shapes identity, highlighting its fluid and dynamic nature in the context of globalisation and migration.

The fifth chapter, "Recommendations," explored the further scope of the area of study. Incorporating texts that embrace transnational history and exploring its significance in comprehending global socioeconomic and cultural systems could expand the research. Another area of exploration is the comparative analysis of the literature on child migration, employing the methodology of comparative literature. Another scope of the study lies in the critical analysis of the use of Irish myths and legends in the *Children of the Wind* series. Thus, this chapter mentions a few areas of future research, indicating the extended scope of the field.

The research inquiry in Australian historical novels for children, particularly on issues of nationalism, migration and transnationalism, is a compelling area of

study. This study is not only highly relevant in the socio-political and cultural context of a specific country's literature, but it also holds global significance. The global context often sees a conflict between a country's sense of nationalism and its international policy. Moreover, critical readings have not fully explored Kirsty Murray's works, despite her influence on Australian children's literature. Murray's narratives make a significant contribution to the understanding and appreciation of Australia's complex migration history among young readers, fostering historical consciousness and a nuanced comprehension of the past. The study exclusively concentrates on Irish-Australian aspects in the narrative to ensure coherence and avoid deviating from the research objectives. The thesis has also narrowed down its focus to specific aspects of migration, with recommendations for future research mentioning further areas of study. As the area of study is interdisciplinary and overlapping in several dimensions, the thesis has limited its boundaries to specific aspects of migration and transnational identity only. The study's extended scope encompasses aspects of gender, trauma and several other nuances that warrant further research inquiry.

To conclude, children's writers have emerged as key players in confronting and subverting the stereotypes that are associated with migrants in an era that is defined by rising nationalism along with concomitant prejudice and hatred towards migrants. This thesis explores the narrative portrayal of transnational identity and migration, offering a critically nuanced framework for understanding global mobility. The study has brought to light how, through reality and shifting concepts, transnationalism modifies our understanding of cultural belonging, national identity and individual agency in an increasingly globalised world. In the era of globalisation, identity is not static or singular but rather a constant negotiation across borders,

enacted in multiple dimensions. Therefore, both transnational literature and migration literature serve as a repository for personal and collective histories and a platform for critical discourse that articulates the tensions between transnational and national identities. The perspective of such literature reveals the intricacies of identity formation and the complexities of belonging in diaspora, challenging hegemonic nationalisms and fixed conceptions of cultural purity. This implies that these literary works reveal the inherent paradoxes of transnational existence, including the experience of displacement and rootedness, the balancing of multiple allegiances and the search for meaning in the spaces between home and host cultures. In an era characterised by migrant mobility and refugee crises, the concept of transnational identity plays a crucial role in comprehending the agency of migrants, despite numerous structural forces attempting to define and limit their experiences. Contemporary children's literature uniquely positions itself to underscore these complexities, thereby reflecting and challenging prevailing paradigms of belonging, citizenship, and nation-state. The intersection of migration and transnational literature is a rich intellectual ground for systematic investigation, offering critical insight into issues related to globalisation, diaspora, and changes in how people think about their cultural and political identities today.



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## Appendix

### Email Interview with Kirsty Murray Received on 05 March 2022

1. Most of your narratives for children have a particular focus on history. How are historical novels for children a unique sub-genre, and how critical is it in creating a historical consciousness among young readers?

Historical novels for children have been popular since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The combination of narrative and fact is a great way to communicate history. Educators and children's authors both recognize this opportunity. As a child, I was a voracious reader of historical fiction. I love the work of the British children's authors, Rosemary Sutcliffe, Leon Garfield and E. Nesbit (particularly Nesbit's time-travel/timeslip adventures). I was also very influenced by the work of the American children's author and historian, Esther Forbes. There were several popular historical fiction series for children commonly available in my childhood including Lucy Fitch Perkin's Twins series and the Famous Childhood series published by Max Parrish (also known as The Young Biographies). None of these books featured Australian characters or Australian narratives. I felt the absence of stories that connected to my experience of my culture and its past.

2. History is what historians make. How do you ensure you do not tamper with your narratives' historicity, approximations, and anachronisms?

All historical fiction, like history itself, is subject to interpretation. In writing historical fiction, I always attempt to be as true to documented history as possible. The best way to avoid approximations and anachronisms is to resist presentism and to thoroughly explore as many primary sources as possible. But authors of historical fiction must always be sensitive to the bias of the era in which the primary sources

were documented. Contemporary understanding of racism, colonialism and imperialism should inform the author's interpretation of the primary sources.

3. How respected are historical novels compared with fairytales, fantasies, and science fiction?

This is an academic question. As an author, I can't offer an opinion on this question. I respect all forms. There are many ways to tell a story and each form and every genre has its merits.

4. Your historical narratives subvert the traditional national paradigm of historical novels. For Instance, in *Children of the Wind*, you establish a transnational history by reflecting on the particular Irish migration to Australia. How did you manage to cross the ethno national boundaries while narrating history? Usually, writers try to focus on their national space, but here you crossed boundaries to project the transnational nature of Australia.

Australia is a nation of immigrants and First Nations people. Less than 4% of Australians can claim Indigenous ancestry. The rest of us draw our history from around the world. Our stories of being Australian are intimately connected to many national narratives from elsewhere. When I decided to write *Children of the Wind* I wanted to understand what it means to be the descendent of multiple generations of immigrants. My ancestors came to Australia between the 1830s and the 1850s. Some were convicts, some were religious and/or economic refugees, some were soldiers, and some were shopkeepers. They came from Ireland, Scotland, England and Germany. They could trace their ancestry through most of Europe. I carry fragments of all their stories but I am deeply Australian. Australians are transnational by nature. Australians of Indian ancestry represent close to 3% of the population. In another five generations, how will these descendants think of their ancestors? Indian immigration

is the third largest group in Australia, growing by 11% per year. I am fascinated by how we become 'New World' citizens. When do we stop identifying with our ancestors' heritage and adopt the identity and values of the new land? And how are this identity (or multiple identities) and values formed? Historical fiction gives us a window into the past that helps us understand ourselves.

5. How did the subsumed history of child migration catch your attention? How much research did you do to track down the child migration scheme's history? What difficulties did you face while trying to narrate that experience?

Children have such small social, economic and political power that their histories are always subsumed by larger narratives. As a children's author, I have always been fascinated by the children in time and their agency and influence on world affairs. As an oppressed and marginalized group, the story and role of children in history is often overlooked and misunderstood. Since early settlement, colonizing nations have 'exported' children to Australia as cheap labour. From child convicts through to the mass child migration schemes of the last two centuries, Australia has had a unique and troubled relationship with child migration. The only country with comparable experience is Canada.

It was not difficult to trace the history of child migration in Australia. There were many excellent primary and secondary resources. The Australian Senate Committee's inquiry into child migration provided me with great resources as did the work of many Australian historians.

<https://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/research/ageofinquiry/biogs/E000001b.htm>

6. Did you find any parallels in rhetoric between the contemporary refugee crisis and the Irish migration of the past? In particular, the immigrant prejudices and hate politics about past and present migration.

Yes. At the time of writing *Bridie's Fire*, the Australian political rhetoric around refugees centered on the phrase 'these are not the people we would choose, these are not the sort of people we want in our country' which was exactly what was said in the 1840s when the Irish orphan girls arrived under the Earl Grey Famine Orphan scheme.

7. Do any descendants of child migrants get back to you after reading the Children of the Wind series? If so, what was their response?

Yes – particularly in relation to *Bridie's Fire*. I have had many emails and letters from descendants of the Irish orphan girls. When researching their family history, they often hit a wall when trying to find out about a particular female ancestor who appeared to arrive alone without family. There was much shame associated with being an orphan immigrant and the stories were often suppressed or simply not told by the children involved so their descendants would be bewildered when trying to piece together their ancestors' journeys.

8. Which of the quartet drained your research inquiry? Which novel was the most difficult to craft while maintaining historicity?

Each novel presented its own challenges. The abuse – both physical and emotional - that the orphans were subjected to in each era was confronting to research and to write. As the key ambition of the series was to celebrate the resilience and courage of the child migrants, I had to think deeply about how to shape the narratives in a way that would focus on their triumphs, not simply their suffering. *A Prayer for Blue Delaney* was particularly difficult as many of the children of that era are still alive. Their stories felt more visceral and required me to consider their feelings carefully, should they read the book.

9. Why did you focus on Irish focal characters in *Children of the Wind*? Why do you think Irish-Australian history is an integral element of our historical consciousness, particularly in the academic spaces of the Australian school curriculum?

Nearly 40% of Australians have an Irish ancestor somewhere in their family tree.

Many Irish political prisoners were transported to Australia during the convict era and their ideas of political rebelliousness informed Australian ideas of nationhood. Ireland was brutally colonized by the British and there are parallels between their history and Indigenous Australians. Irish values and Irish culture are deeply entwined in our national consciousness.

10. How well were the *Children of the Wind* received in other countries? Does this series enter into any school curricula apart from Australia?

The third title in *Children of the Wind*, *A Prayer for Blue Delaney*, is studied in secondary schools in Germany. An abridged English Language edition of the novel is used as a set text at Year 9 in schools in Germany and used as a study of Australian history and landscape.

<https://www.cornelsen.de/produkte/cornelsen-english-library-a-prayer-for-blue-delaney-lektuere-zu-english-g-21-9-schuljahr-stufe-3-9783060323913>

*Bridie's Fire* has been taught in courses on children's literature in the USA but I'm not aware of it being studied in secondary schools.

Dr Charlotte Beyer, an English academic, has written interesting essays on the *Children of the Wind* series.

11. As a children's writer, how do you feel about the didacticism involved in children's literature? Is it the pleasure or moral principle that weighs on your work? Didacticism in children's literature undermines children's engagement with the text. Children have a keen sense of justice and are often highly moralistic – even more so

than adult readers. Heavy-handed moral instruction can alienate young readers. Young readers are not so different to adult readers – they are perfectly capable of identifying bad behaviour. When children are given too many didactic stories they sense the disrespect. This is not to say that children don't enjoy moral tales. Young readers are diverse in their interests but everyone wants stories that engage their hearts and minds. In my work, I try to reflect the real world and leave space for children to make their own moral judgements. I trust young readers to recognise which characters are behaving well or badly and I try to avoid didacticism out of respect for my young readers.

12. What role or responsibility does a children's writer have, especially in putting oneself on the literary scene?

Like any author, children's writers have a responsibility to their readers to offer their best work. Children's writers do need to be more sensitive to their readers than those who write for adult readers. I don't believe that it is appropriate to include gratuitous sex or violence in books for children nor to burden them with the worst of adult behaviour. In terms of being a public figure that children may consider a role model, it's an honour to encourage young people to develop a love of books and to provide an example of how an author engages with ideas and stories.

13. What genres have you tried writing for children? In your opinion, among your works, which is the most challenging genre to construct?

I started my writing career as a non-fiction writer for children simply because I had the opportunity to break into publishing by writing commissioned non-fiction work. I moved towards writing fiction because it had the potential for a wider readership and I have always loved novels for the way they can both educate and enlighten through

parables. I've written contemporary fiction, historical fiction, speculative fiction, time-slip fiction, dystopian fiction, short stories, narrative non-fiction, conventional non-fiction, junior fiction (ie short chapter books for early readers), and picture books. Each form presents its own challenges. Historical fiction is very time-consuming because of the amount of research involved but in terms of craft, I find picture books the most challenging.

14. What exactly are the boundaries between children's literature and young adult literature?

The lines between children's literature and young adult literature have become blurred in the last decade, though I believe there is a distinction. Young adult literature focuses on rites of passage, whether it be romantic, cultural or economic. The protagonist in YA fiction is emerging into the adult world. In children's fiction, the protagonist tends not to engage with the adult world in the same way. The child protagonist operates under the constraints and limitations of childhood. The teen protagonist is breaking into the adult world.

15. How much have you evolved since your debut when assessing yourself as a children's writer?

After 25 years of working as a professional author, I have a much clearer understanding of the strengths and limitations of children's literature. I also have a much better understanding of how every nation wants their children to understand their culture and their history. I used to believe that a good story is simply a good story but I now understand that what we bring to a book in terms of our world view is as important as what the author offers us.

16. How unique is the Australian children's literature industry compared to its counterpart?

I'm not sure I understand this question as there is no 'counterpart' to Australian children's literature. The Australian children's publishing industry is innovative, adaptive and highly industrious. It strives to produce books that may receive international attention but is keenly focussed on the local market.

In 2019, 5564 different publishing entities in Australia produced 22,634 new titles, according to figures extracted from ISBN records added to Bowker's Books in Print.

17. Most of your works have a particular focus on history as a theme. What's your take on that?

We can't escape our past. It's intimately connected to our present circumstances.

18. What is your perception of your implied reader-children?

I have always enjoyed the company of children. I have spent most of my life living with small children: my own, my step-children, god-children and the children of friends and family. Every adult was once a child and the child within them never completely disappears. In writing for children, I write for every reader. I also write for the child that I once was – the child who wanted to understand the past and the future and how they are connected.

19. Which character from your novels is your most favourite? Why?

I don't have a favourite. The protagonists of every story are important to me and I am deeply fond of each of them.

20. What are your future endeavours?

In the last few years, I have become increasingly interested in the beauty of well-crafted picture books. A good picture book is like a poem and requires the author to ensure every word is perfect. I find picture books require a great deal of time and introspection. I love watching small children at play. To see the world through the

eyes of a small child is to share in their sense of wonder. I currently have several picture book manuscripts in progress and recently signed a contract for my third picture book. I hope to produce many more picture books in the years ahead.

I'm currently working on a novel for children that focuses on the industrial history of my hometown, Melbourne. Australia's industrial history and the history of its trade unions are poorly understood but rich with interesting anecdotes. The book has been slow to produce as it requires much research but I hope to complete it in the next year or two.