



Staged Representation of Indian Residential School's Trauma in both Harrison's Stolen and Loring's Where the Blood Mixes

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موقع المجلة الإلكتروني:

Staged Representation of Indian Residential School's Trauma in both Harrison's *Stolen* and Loring's *Where the Blood Mixes*

Abstract:

The history of Indigenous peoples has recently been the focus of numerous academic studies. These studies highlight the various challenges they face, including racism, discrimination, violence, human rights violations, and the destruction of culture. They have spread across different countries such as Africa, North America, Canada and Australia. Indigenous communities have faced a prolonged era of colonialism which has had a disruptive effect on their social structures, and cultures. The advent of white settlers, seeking to occupy Indigenous lands and destroy their cultures, has had a devastating impact on Indigenous populations. The paper examines the severe impacts of the European practices on both countries such as assimilation and racism. Substantially, this article studies the impact of Indian Residential schools in both Australia and Canada by examining Jane Harrison's *Stolen* (2014) and Kevin Loring's *Where the Blood Mixes* (2009). The study also analyzes the aspects of the Stolen generations in Australia and the forcible removal era in Canada. This study will adopt trauma theory as a critical lens to examine two dramatic works: *Stolen* by Jane Harrison, and *Where the Blood Mixes* by Kevin Loring. It also aims at proving how trauma became inheritance in the life of Indigenous populations. Furthermore, the study shows how the two playwrights utilize the past experiences and memory of pain to clarify the present acceptance and challenge. Ultimately, this study highlights the role of theatre in exposing the ongoing consequences of the assimilation policy as well as providing a voice to the survivors.

Keywords: Trauma, PTSD, abuse, Residential schools, White mainstream.

Introduction

The history of Indigenous peoples has recently been the focus of numerous academic studies. These studies highlight the various challenges they face, including racism, discrimination, violence, human rights violations, and the destruction of culture. Indigenous peoples are defined as “the descendants of the original inhabitants of a territory which has been overcome by conquest” (Coates 6). They have spread across different countries such as Africa, North America, Canada and Australia. Indigenous communities have faced a prolonged era of colonialism which has had a disruptive effect on their social structures, and cultures. The advent of white settlers, seeking to occupy Indigenous lands and destroy their cultures, has had a devastating impact on Indigenous populations. For instance, Indigenous populations were forcibly dominated by the British regime that “was looking for new convict colonies” (Bosnic 2). In addition to seeking to exercise control over Indigenous lands, Europeans also sought to control Indigenous cultures and traditions. This endeavor was accompanied by a concerted effort to eradicate Indigenous heritage and impose European cultural norms. Indigenous societies thus endured what is termed ‘settler colonialism’. This form of colonialism sought to exercise control over the lives of Indigenous peoples, and this process was accompanied by violent displacements, genocide, forced removals of Indigenous children, the erasure of Indigenous traditions, and the sexual violation of Indigenous women. So, the primary objective of settler colonialism was the eradication of Indigenous sovereignty, in contrast to other forms of colonialism, which primarily concentrated on economic exploitation. The eradication of Native peoples has taken various forms. At first, Aboriginal peoples were subjected to a high level of physical genocide. Then, the genocide policy was not solely concerned with

physical extermination; it also encompassed a systematic destruction of Indigenous cultures. A particularly tragic aspect of this process of cultural erasure was the implementation of ‘assimilation policy’. This policy facilitates the destruction of the beliefs and culture of Aboriginal peoples, and the imposition of new beliefs that align with the white mainstream. Subsequently, the European government decided to establish educational institutions “to assimilate Indigenous people within the white culture” (Jonas 34). These institutions were called ‘Residential schools’ or ‘Indian Boarding schools’. Indian Residential School is a government policy which sought “to assimilate Aboriginal peoples based on the assumption that White were inherently superior to the “Indians” they considered to be savage and civilized” (Bombay et.al 322). This research focuses on the era of the Indian Residential school in two countries: Australia and Canada.

In Australia, this era of loss and violence was named ‘Stolen Generation’ and it refers to the forcible removal of the Aboriginal children away from their families “between the 1900s and the 1960s, to be brought up by white foster families or in institutions” (Bosnic 1). Canada also faced the same issue of “kidnapping Indian children and sending them to boarding schools where they were forbidden to speak their Native languages on pain of punishment” (Cheyfitz 168). After establishing these institutions, the government decided that “every child between the age of five and eighteen was taken from his or her family and put in residential schools” (Unrau and Synder 285). These Aboriginal children were forced to separate from their families as well as forgetting their originality. Initially, the European government declared that these institutions were established for the purpose of education and civilizing the Aboriginal child in order to facilitate their integration into the mainstream. Recently, the survivors decided to break their

silence and commence the disclosure of their experiences within these institutions. Consequently, the facts about these schools began to come to light, thereby revealing a history characterized by considerable hardship and purposes beyond the realm of education. The survivors revealed that Indian Boarding schools were established “with the explicit goal of ‘taking the Indian out of the child’” (Matheson et.al 4). Subsequently, the experiences of the Aboriginal former Residential schools’ students uncovered that White officials utilized various methods to eradicate the Aboriginal culture within these institutions. At first, they forced each Indigenous child to “convert to Christianity” (Mokhoathi 4), because they believed that religion is the first step in changing the mind of Indigenous people. Then, they ordered the children to speak only in English and they were deprived of “using their language” (United States Senate 2). Additionally, they were “punished for speaking their native tongues” (United States Senate 2). Moreover, they sought to change the Indigenous child’s appearance and separated the children who belonged to the same group from each other. All these means were attempts to destroy the Aboriginal culture and traditions. The era of Indian boarding schools causes a deep and great struggles in the life of Indigenous peoples. It also caused their marginalization, depression and trauma. The present study sets out to explore and analyze the profound impact of historical trauma experienced by Indigenous communities in Australia and Canada by examining the issue of Residential schools in both countries. The study utilizes a critical lens by analyzing two selected plays: Jane Harrison’s *Stolen*, and Kevin Loring’s *Where the Blood Mixes*.

Theoretical Background

Trauma theory is a psychoanalytic and literary theory which examines the deep impacts of severe accidents. The term ‘trauma’ itself “is said to have originated from the Latin word ‘Trauma’ which is derived from the Greek word ‘Traumatikos’ which means a serious wound to body” (Abubakar 119). Indeed, the definition of the term was inserted in the dictionary in the 17th century. As Kathryn Basham mentioned that “In 1656, the word *traumatic* appeared in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. At first, the term ‘trauma’ was described as “an injury inflicted upon a body” (Shaker 3). ‘Trauma’, as a medical term, continued to describe physical injury till the appearance of the railway accidents which leads scientists to use this term to describe the mental and emotional injury. Subsequently, the term was inserted to be used in psychoanalysis and it gained another definition which is related to mental illness. This status of mental disorder made the scientists begin to utilize the term to indicate psychological and emotional damages. So, the effects of trauma on human beings were highlighted for the first time in the 1860s by the neurologist Jean Martin Charcot, a French physician working with traumatized women in the Salpetriere hospital” (Ringel 3). The issue of trauma emerged in mental illness in the 19th century in relation to the study of Hysteria as a consequence of women’s incidents of rape and sexual abuse. Subsequently, “During the late nineteenth century, a major focus of Charcot’s study was hysteria, a disorder commonly diagnosed in women” (Ringel 3). The study of trauma also continued after Charcot by his own students who also focused on the study of hysteria and its relation to the traumatic events, including: Pierre Janet, Breuer and Sigmund Freud. Then, trauma theory was widely spread and began to relate to the consequences of wars. In recent years, trauma theory become associated with the

phenomenon of 'Genocide' which received a particular attention in the field of psychoanalysis. This issue was strongly related to the Indigenous communities. The trauma of 'genocide' affected the whole community with all its generations and that led the scientists to focus on another type of trauma which is 'Historical trauma'. Historical trauma examines the psychological impacts of the historical incidents of a community or ethnic group. It is defined as "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma" (Heart et.al 283). Cathy Caruth explains the term 'historical trauma' in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and assures that "the historical power of the trauma is not just that the experience that is repeated after its forgetting, but that it is only in and through its inherent forgetting that it is first experienced at all" (17). Indeed, the term 'historical trauma' appeared to clarify the traumatic experiences of the ethnic groups such as "the traumatic experiences of holocaust survivors and the subsequent impact of those experiences on following generations" (Pihama 249). Therefore, historical trauma theory investigates the traumatic experiences of a whole community and how this trauma affects its history. One of the most well-known examples of historical trauma is the Native American one due to their various traumatic events such as genocide, forced removal, eradicating identity and culture and the forcible removal of their children. Subsequently, writers and critics directed to trauma theory to investigate the psychological issue of a society and individuals. This study will adopt trauma theory as a critical lens to examine two dramatic works: *Stolen* by Jane Harrison, and *Where the Blood Mixes* by Kevin Loring.

Historic Trauma of Indian Boarding Schools:

Residential school system caused a perpetual trauma that haunted the history of the indigenous people. Consequently, there has been a notable interest in this historical tendency, particularly within the domain of dramatic literature. This can be clarified in this research by two plays: *Stolen* and *Where the Blood Mixes*. Both Jane Harrison and Kevin Loring were certainly influenced by the historical events of their communities. Although they have not personally experienced Indian boarding schools, they are interested in examining the truth behind these institutions to reveal the indigenous communities' sufferings and pain. Harrison's *Stolen* and Loring's *Where the Blood Mixes* recount the experience of being raised in the residential schools clarifying the trauma associated with their existence. Harrison's play examines the era of the stolen generations in Australia, while Loring depicts the crisis of residential schools in Canada.

In her play, *Stolen*, Harrison depicts the reality of the boarding schools experience in Australia by tracing the life of five aboriginal children who are forcefully removed away from their families to be raised in a boarding school. Harrison conveys the traumatic past of the aboriginal children through examining the life of her protagonists. *Stolen* presents five different stories which take place within the Indian boarding school. The stories revolve around Jimmy, Ruby, Shirley, Sandy and Anne. Harrison traces the life of each one of them from childhood to adulthood to depict the life within these institutions besides clarifying their impacts even after leaving them. The protagonists reflect the suffering of the stolen generation by enacting their individual experiences throughout their life. Harrison presents a vivid representation of the life of the aboriginal children in the boarding schools; by depicting the daily

life of those children, and how they begin and end their own day. She also illustrates the mistreatment of the officials towards indigenous children in these Indian institutions. The play recounts separately the traumatized stories of each child. Harrison collects their different stories to highlight the devastating impacts of the residential school experience. Although the characters are all members of indigenous communities, they are compelled to integrate into each other's life which is completely different from the language and culture of their origins. Each one of the characters appears on stage and presents his own story, as well as explaining his tragic experiences and demonstrate what he misses in his life. All children share the same loss, which is family. The play shows how these children sleep on, "Five old iron institutional beds [that] alternate across the stage. The beds are the base of the five main characters, representing their home at various stages of their lives. At times they become: a children's home; a prison cell; a mental institution; and a girl's bedroom. The covers on the beds are old, drab, chenille bedspreads" (Harrison 24). Harrison uses the old iron beds to indicate the harsh living conditions in these schools. In her play, Harrison illustrates that these indigenous lineages do not experience a human life, but rather, their existence within these institutions is devoid of the fundamental aspects of humanity and appropriate treatment. Additionally, the children are awaiting the opportunity to be placed for adoption, hoping to obtain a simple toy that will allow them to experience the joy of childhood, which they have been deprived of as a result of the forcible removal policy. In her play, Harrison examines the experience of these stolen children and how it leads them to a deep trauma. She also emphasizes the torture, beatings, and malnutrition which these Native children endure in boarding schools. There are some reports which reveal that "Thousands of children have died in these schools, through

beatings, medical neglect, and malnutrition” (Smith 7). The play presents the subjection to humiliation in these residential schools through the character of Jimmy who “’s being beaten (we hear the sound of the strap being applied)” (Harrison 39) throughout the play. Jimmy highlights the harsh and brutal side of the Indian boarding school, he is punished and beaten badly for the most trivial things. This part of the play reflects the reality of these schools as indigenous “Children were frequently beaten severely with whips, rods and fists, chained and shackled, bound hand and foot locked in closets, basements, and bathrooms, and had their heads shaved or hair closely cropped” (Smith 8). Recent reports show that most of the time the children’s food was rancid even the fruits were “half rotten or something” (Mosby and Galloway 1043). Indian Affairs Branch employee, Russell Moses, described the children’s lunch as “water as the beverage ... one and half slices of *dry* bread, and the main course consisted of a ‘rotten soup’” (Mosby and Galloway 1043). Harrison examines this aspect in her play by presenting that the authority gives the aboriginal child only “A can of peas” (Harrison 49) which is described as rotten food. As a consequence, the impoverished aboriginal children express a desire for improved nutrition and they perceive adoption as a potential means of obtaining more nourishing food, as illustrated by Sandy’s inquiry about the adoption policy, “Oh. Do ya get more to eat than the rotten food here?” (Harrison 29).

The play addresses another dilemma: the adoption of aboriginal children by white families which is called an ‘open adoption’. During the period of the stolen generation, Native children “were placed in non-Indigenous institutions or foster and adoptive families” (Lavarch 10). Harrison’s play discusses an important and harsh aspect of the adoption policy which caused a deep trauma in the life of those Indigenous children. The dramatic

work portrays the abuse and violation experienced by Aboriginal children throughout their lives, as depicted by the character Ruby, who endures physical and sexual abuse on each occasion that she is adopted by a white family. Ruby is one of the main characters of the play who is presented as an innocent indigenous girl who was forcibly removed from her family when she was only a baby. She also knows nothing about her family, but at the same time she dreams of the day she can reunite with her real family. Ruby, as an innocent child, cannot afford and understand what she is going through and the reasons behind all her sufferings. As a consequence, she went insane. Ruby is forced to do various domestic chores at an early age, and she is also exposed to sexual abuse. In her work, Harrison draws attention to the prevalence of sexual and physical abuse among Indigenous children, portraying it as a significant traumatic experience that has a profound and lasting impact on their lives. Unfortunately, Indigenous children could not find peace in their adoptive houses rather they “were often forced to work in white homes where they were routinely sexually abused” (Smith 14). In fact, the issue of sexual abuse was not merely confined to the adoptive households; it also occurred within the boarding schools themselves. Andrea Smith mentions that “Many survivors report being sexually abused by multiple perpetrators in these schools” (6). White people dealt with this poor child as a ware who was existing to serve them and their desires.

Aboriginal children faced inhumanity and exploitation which led them to various psychological disorders. Harrison emphasizes that the abuse of aboriginal children is continuous and uninterrupted by narrating the story of Ruby who is always selected to go with a white family and when she returns, she appears weak and different. She also refuses to talk with the other children and she gives no answer except repeating the line “I promised not to

tell” (Harrison 32). Ruby is always isolated and she does not play or share any activity with the other children on stage. As the play depicts, “The children – except for Ruby – start to dance around singing to the tune of “We’re happy little Vegemites” (Harrison 48). These behaviors indicate that Ruby is experiencing trauma and they are certainly justified by the work of Hall and Joshua stating, “Childhood sexual abuse has been correlated with higher levels of depression, guilt, shame, self-blame, eating disorders, somatic concerns, anxiety, dissociative patterns, repression, denial, sexual problems, and relationship problems” (2). Then, Harrison highlights Ruby’s sexual abuse in the play “RUBY stands there, copping abuse. She gets a black eye smeared onto her, her dressed ripped and kneed in the stomach. Blood appears on her dress” (Harrison 53). As a result, Ruby’s isolation can be understood as a direct consequence of the despair and trauma caused by her experiences. Melinda Smith and Jeanne Segal also explain that “The trauma of being raped or sexually assaulted can be shattering, leaving you feeling scared, ashamed, and alone or plagued by nightmares, flashbacks, and other unpleasant memories” (1). The sustained abuse and subsequent humiliation cause a great burden for Ruby and lead to her collapsing and loss of her mental faculties.

Consequently, Ruby is taken to the hospital, where it becomes clear that she has experienced a significant psychological crisis. Despite her initial desire to reunite with her family, she is unable to recognize them and she does not exhibit any emotion when she finally encounters them. Instead, she is consumed by memories of her life within the boarding school, repeating phrases uttered by officials such as “Don’t want no trouble” (Harrison 65). As a consequence of the sexual abuse, Ruby experiences a complete loss of her mental stability. She is rendered confused and traumatized. She also rejects her family and refuses to return home,

as depicted in the play: "Sis, we've come to take you home. Her sister holds her hand, but RUBY pulls it away" (Harrison 65). Indeed, Ruby suffers from posttraumatic stress disorder. As there is a strong association between sexual assault and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is regarded as a typical psychological consequence of sexual trauma. As Yuan and others elucidate that "Survivors of childhood sexual trauma are at high risk of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)" (2). Ruby also sustains from hallucination that provides evidence of the impact of her traumatic experiences. Joan Kaufman clarifies that "Hallucinations are observed in association with multiple diagnoses including schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, bipolar disorder, major depression (MDD), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)" (1602). It is apparent that Ruby's mental instability is a result of the traumatic experiences and adversity she has endured throughout her life. As a child and even as an adult, Ruby "keeps hearing voices in her head" (Shukry 1225). Through the story of Ruby, Harrison conveys the misbehavior of those white houses; Indigenous children were succumbed to humiliation and abuse in homes that are supposed to be safe havens for them. Ruby is not the only child who is exposed to abuse; the assault extends to another character who is Jimmy.

Jimmy goes through a similar experience of Ruby; he undergoes sexual abuse within a white home. Jimmy is as eager to be adopted as Ruby, yet he is unaware of the circumstances that prevail in these white households. In his life, Jimmy suffers from both emotional and sexual abuse throughout his life. When he is adopted by a white family, Jimmy thinks that he will finally be among a family and have a suitable home. Then, Harrison clarifies that Jimmy's plight does not differ from that of Ruby. He is abused by the white abusers and he returns with disgrace and weakness. As

Ruby, Jimmy cannot give any details about his visit; he “can’t answer for shame” (Harrison 52,53). So, the stories of Ruby and Jimmy in the play uncover the heinous reality of the Indian boarding schools which is the sexual assault. Harrison also examines the psychological effects of this assault on these children and how “the abuse they experienced at the hands of the authorities or their delegates have permanently scarred their lives” (Lavarch 4). Furthermore, Jimmy is subjected to a distinct kind of abuse within the boarding school which is emotional abuse. As other Indigenous child, Jimmy has only one hope which is the reunion with his mother. The white officials decide to destroy his hope and they tell him that his mother is dead and he will never meet her again. When Jimmy refuses to accept his mother’s death, he is beaten and obliged to work neglecting his feelings and pain, as Harrison clarifies “He’s being beaten (we hear the sound of the strap being applied), he’s forced to clean shoes” (39). Over the years, Jimmy gets older and he thinks that his mother is dead till he knows the truth. One day, Jimmy discovers that his mother is still alive and those white officials lied on him and stole his only hope in life as they stole his soul and life before. Jimmy begins to practice how to deal with his mother whom he kept away for twenty-six years, “Do I say, “Hi, mum, what’s new? How have you been? Where have you been all my life?” Do I give her twenty-six Christmas presents and twenty-six birthday presents? Bloody hell, I don’t even know when her birthday is ...” (Harrison 64). He also cannot know what is the relationship between a son and mother.

Jimmy’s reaction demonstrates the chasm caused by the residential schools; white people destroyed aboriginal children’s sense of belonging and identification. As these aboriginal children were entirely separated from their own families when they were so young. So, each aboriginal child grew up and discovered that he

knew nothing about himself. For example, Jimmy does not “even know what having a mother feels like” (Harrison 64). Consequently, this stolen Native child feels loss and becomes without identity and that what White community sought for at that time. Jimmy is enthusiastic for seeing his mother and he repeats the line “I’m finally going to meet my mother” (Harrison 64). Then, all these enthusiasm and passion turn into a deep grief and melancholy; Jimmy appears weak and defeated, mourning “Oh Mum, if you’d just held on a little longer ...” (Harrison 66). This quotation and Jimmy’s deep grief after a joy show that Jimmy’s mother died before he can see her again. As a result, Jimmy loses his control and he fights with a white man. Jimmy’s words during his quarrel manifest his trauma after his mother’s death, the voice of the officials keep repeating in his mind, “Your mother’s dead” (Harrison 67), then he responds to this voice, “They kept saying she was dead” (Harrison 67). Jimmy cannot afford that his dream is stolen again. He cannot accept the reality that he will never be able to meet his mother. The words of Jimmy reflect his deep grief and trauma,

Mum was alive and I waited and waited for her to come and get me, to take me home. I was just a little tacker, for God’s sake ... Dear Mum, forgive me. I have sinned. I’ve been a thug and a thief – but I’ve never stolen anyone’s soul ... Oh, Mum, why couldn’t you have lived a bit longer just so I could meet you? I waited so long (Harrison 67).

In this part, Harrison provides a confirmation that Jimmy's mother passed away before he had the opportunity to meet her. The demise of his mother serves as the catalyst for his psychological distress. Jimmy becomes unable to bear the anguish that results in the ultimate demise of his dream. Jimmy censures the Whites of

stealing his soul, Harrison describes the forcible removal of the Native children as stealing of their souls. These Boarding schools killed these children by taking over their identity and life. They took them from their mothers' arms and force them to begin a new life without a family.

As a result, Jimmy suffers from a psychological disorder as a consequence of his trauma. He chooses to give up and put an end to his suffering by committing suicide, leaving a message includes, "They stuck a knife into me heart and twisted it so hard. Prison don't make you tough, it makes ya weak, ya spirit just shrivels up inside. I'm going now, to be with my mother. I can't fight. I'm punched out. My only wish is that we go to the same place. Willy Wajurri" (Harrison 68). His last message expresses his deep gloominess and bitterness. He describes the boarding school as a prison which weakens people and destroys their characters. Jimmy cannot stand and continue his life and he decides to reunion with his mother in the afterlife. He also signs his message with his real name, Willy Wajurri, the using of his real name indicates that Jimmy confesses his identity now but he cannot fight. According to the previous stories, it is clear that "Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse was rampant" (Smith 6) within the Residential schools in Australia. Committing suicide is a clear evidence of Jimmy's trauma; as "suicide behaviours amongst indigenous peoples may be an outcome of mass trauma experienced as a result of colonization" (Elias et.al 1560). As Ruby, Jimmy also suffers from a post-traumatic stress disorder as a consequence to his past traumatized events. This psychological disorder leads Jimmy to commit suicide. Conversely, the play presents the character of Anne who is selected to be adopted by a white family for her lifetime. Anne is one of the main characters of Harrison's *Stolen*. She is an Aboriginal child who is forcibly removed from her own family when she is a baby.

As a consequence, Anne does not remember anything related to her origin. Although Anne shares the same issue with the other children which is being stolen, she has an entirely different life. Anne can find a lot of interest, a warm home and parents who care about her. Harrison presents Anne as the one who has the best life comparing to the other children. She appears on stage and describes her life stating "My home's got lace curtains – and I've got a room of my own" (Harrison 25). Additionally, Harrison offers a further explanation regarding the description of the children's beds in the play. She states that the beds are old and damaged, "except for Anne's, which is much prettier; most of her story is taking place in her white adoptive parents' home" (Harrison 24). While the rest of the children appear in a state of loss and misery, the play presents Anne's life as a luxurious one; she lives in a house rather than a boarding school and she has her own room. In contrast to the other characters in the play, Anne does not experience prolonged periods of starvation, nor frequent relocations. She has the benefit of a stable upbringing within a beloved family. Anne owns a different life just because a white family has chosen her as she expresses, "The day Mum and Dad brought me home they gave me a doll that had white hair. I'd never seen such a doll. And I got my own room" (Harrison 30). The using of the doll with the white hair in the previous quotation is an indication of Anne's belonging to the white community. For the European authorities, this kind of adoption was "the best interest of the assimilation strategy rather than the stolen children themselves" (Shukry 1228). Through this way, the aboriginal child was completely assimilated into the white society and forget his Aboriginal origins. Anne also cannot remember a lot about the suffering of the boarding school, as she is adopted quickly as she declares in the play, "I mustn't have been in that children's home long, cos I can't remember it at all" (Harrison 30). So, Anne

never faces physical or sexual abuse unlike Jimmy and Ruby. The adoption of the white family rescues her from this humiliation. In this way, the play implies that the only potential way to help the stolen children at that time was through being selected by a white family.

Furthermore, Harrison presents an additional aspect of this forced removal, which is the consequences of the assimilation process. In the play, the character of Anne is never informed of her indigenous origin. Thus, she is shocked when she knows that she has an indigenous mother who is still alive as the play presents,

MOTHER: Anne, there's something else ... it's about your mother ... she's dying and she wants to see you and ... she's an Aboriginal lady.

ANNE: Why haven't you told me that she's -?

MOTHER: [tentatively] – Aboriginal?

ANNE: Alive! And that's she wants to see me?

FATHER: We thought it was for the best. You know we love you like our own daughter (Harrison 41).

The preceding dialogue illuminates the profound disrespect and disregard that white individuals hold towards the indigenous community. Anne's adoptive parents think that she is shocked because of discovering that her real mother is an Aboriginal woman. Furthermore, they believe that by adopting Anne they provide her with a better life and an opportunity to integrate into white culture. Anne herself faces an internal conflict and she cannot accept this reality; she has now a different life and she belongs to her adoptive white family. She is confused and describes the appearance of her real mother as "a nightmare!" (Harrison 41).

Anne is torn between her indigenous identity and her current family and she also knows that they consider her aboriginal community as inferior. This policy of assimilation causes Anne a psychological conflict; she cannot decide to which community she belongs. This psychological conflict is clear in the scene of 'To tan or not to tan'. In this scene, Anne admits that she uses coconut oil to get tan because she tries to live the same way as the white community. Then, she confronts herself with the reality that she is black and she does not need this oil, as it is clear in her soliloquy "Every summer I try and get suntan. I lie out there for hours smothered in coconut oil. Coconut oil! I don't have to – I'm black!" (Harrison 43). The usage of the oil in the play is a symbol for Anne's attempts to assimilate into the white mainstream. Anne escapes from meeting her real mother as she cannot accept her existence in her life now even after knowing her mother's illness, "My mother's dying and she wants to see me. My real mother. I just can't do it, not right now ... I've got exams. I'm flat out. Maybe some other time. Maybe when I get back from my holiday to Surfers" (Harrison 43). Anne tries to find a solution to this sudden discovery of her real mother's existence and she fears from this confrontation.

Anne confronts a significant internal dilemma. She is perplexed by her identities, simultaneously situated within the dominant social group and belonging to an alternative community. Harrison assures the idea of the assimilation policy was established to eradicate Aboriginal identity through the dispersal of Aboriginal children in residential schools. After meeting her real family, Anne is asked, "Who do you think you are?" (Harrison 63). This question puts her in a real confusion, she cannot choose between them. She feels that she is in the middle as a consequence of her traumatic experience with the forcible removal system. Thus, Anne chooses to be in the middle and keep both identities and she also decides to

“love them both” (Harrison 69). Anne tries to ignore her conflict and reality at first but then she chooses to live in-between. Muhammad Iqbal and others interpret this circumstance that “In such a strangled atmosphere, one is forced to assimilate the foreign culture which leads to the inbetweenness or third space identity” (631). So, Anne faces an identity crisis as a consequence of her cultural assimilation and she is “engaged with two opposite cultures at the same time” (Anwar et.al 1703). Her internal conflict results with an ambivalent person, as Wang clarifies that “Anne was largely ambivalent about her Aboriginality” (112). In short, Harrison’s play demonstrates that the policy of the residential schools has a detrimental impact on all indigenous children of Australia. All Aboriginal children experienced loss and adversity throughout their lives, which could result in the distortion of their personalities. While Harrison characterizes the trauma and suffering which experienced in the Australian boarding schools, Loring’s *Where the Blood Mixes* sheds light on the aftereffects and intergenerational trauma.

In his play, Kevin Loring presents the experiences of those who survived the residential school system. As a Canadian indigenous playwright, Loring is interested in conveying the issues faced by the indigenous community in Canada. In his play, he focuses on examining the consequences of the residential schools of Canada, which he considers as a significant historical event that had a profound impact on the country and the continent of North America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Kevin Loring, a member of the First Nations, attempts to document the historic trauma of the Native American people and clarifying their deep suffering. Loring’s *Where the Blood Mixes* presents four characters who represent the survivors of the Canadian boarding schools, as well as Christine who is another main character that represents the

intergenerational trauma of this issue. The dramatic work's main characters, Floyd, Mooch, June and Anna, epitomize the experiences of numerous survivors of Canada's forcible removal policy. Similar to *Stolen*, Loring's protagonists experienced a harsh childhood away from their families, as was common for Aboriginal children at the time. Upon leaving the boarding school, the protagonists anticipated the possibility of a new start. The play focuses on conveying the life after leaving the boarding schools explaining how those kind of institutions destroy the personality and mentality of the Aboriginal child. Contrary to Harrison who focuses on the life within the boarding school, Loring examines the psychological dimensions of the survivors as well as their generations. The play chronicles the experiences of four individuals who are now survivors of an Indian boarding school. The playwright presents the audience with the lives of these survivors after they have left the residential school. He intends to demonstrate that they are not survivors, but rather victims who have been psychologically and morally destroyed.

The plot of the play outlines the experiences of those who have survived and also chosen to embark on a new life, neglecting the challenges and suffering they have endured previously. The characters in the play collectively strive to establish a new family as a form of compensation for their loss. Subsequently, each one of them confronts the harsh reality that the consequences of those educational institutions persist and are embedded within their minds and souls. They recognize that they do not merely survive, but rather, they remain stuck within the confines of those institutions. In addition to presenting the ongoing conflict in the lives of these survivors, Loring discusses another aspect which is the consequences of the other generations as a result of their parents' turmoil, which prevents them from having a stable life. The

play presents this aspect through the character of Christine, who experiences prolonged distress as a result of her traumatic experiences of abandonment and the subsequent loss of her real family. Hence, the play aims at proving that these residential schools destroy the lives of an entire people, and their impacts are continuous and successive throughout years. As Ann Murray Haag explains that “Individuals who attended boarding schools are not the only ones affected. The problems that developed at the boarding schools were passed on through families and felt by tribal communities” (158). In the play, the characters of Floyd and Mooch are presented as alcoholics. Their first appearance in the play is at George’s bar and Loring clarifies that they spend most of their day at the bar when George tells Floyd, “Go home if you want to sleep” (Loring 12). Mooch is also a very bad alcoholic, he steals June’s money to drink as George declares in the play “No wonder she’s so miserable all the time. She was trying to save up for something nice and you go and drink it away on her” (Loring 16). Undoubtedly, their experience within Indian boarding school is a significant factor for their intemperance to alcohol. Schwandt and others explain that “Childhood trauma exposure has been linked to alcohol dependence” (2). They also use the consumption of alcohol as a method to suppress the memories of childhood incidents. For instance, when Mooch asks Floyd about their own past within the boarding school he replies: “George, get Mooch here a beer; he needs a drink” (Loring 57). Clearly, alcohol can be considered as a temporary escape from their childhood memories. Although Floyd and Mooch have survived the Indian boarding school, they have been unable to resume a normal lifestyle due to the traumatic experiences they endured there. Indeed, the residential schools’ survivors “are experiencing continued emotional trauma from beatings, hunger, physical and sexual abuse” (Lajimodiere 258).

Consequently, the memories of pain and fear chase their life and they try to escape from them by drinking alcohol as well as neglecting their past and present. Floyd and Anna are presented as two survivors who tried to escape their past and begin a new life. Unfortunately, they cannot overcome their past. Consequently, Anna endures a deep depression and she decides to end her life by jumping off a bridge leaving her daughter behind. Anna's suicide causes another trauma in Floyd's life and he fails hold on. Consequently, Floyd neglects his daughter, Christine. In his play, Loring seeks to prove that one of the most direct impacts of the Indian boarding schools is the inability of most of those "who were raised in boarding schools and subjected to systematic neglect and corporal punishment, to transition naturally into parenthood" (Haag 159). After Anna's death, Floyd loses his sense of life completely. He regrets his ignorance towards her. He feels that he is the reason behind Anna's death and he confesses, "I just let her go. I didn't do anything to stop her" (Loring 86).

After Anna's death, Floyd breaks down and he loses himself completely. He cannot afford this pain and sorrow, as June confesses "When your mother died, I think it was like your dad died too" (Loring 80). Anna and Floyd cannot overcome their traumatized past; as Cathy Caruth explains that "The Psychological trauma is belated and uncontrollable" (4). Floyd cannot control his pain and in order to escape it, Floyd chooses to indulge more in alcohol abuse and ignore his responsibilities even his daughter. When the official meets Christine, she that Christine lacks for caring. As Christine declares about the officer's words "She said I needed a bath. She said I looked hungry" (Loring 44). This line reveals the misery, hunger and lack of interest which the girl has faced. Consequently, the government decides that the girl should be raised away from her inconsiderate father, because he "was

unfit” (Loring 85). Floyd does not know how to bring up a child as well as he does not understand the meaning of parental responsibility since he was raised away of his parents. He leaves his daughter depends on herself despite her very young age. As a consequence of this slovenliness, the white authority decides that Christine should be adopted by another family. On the other hand, Floyd never fights to retain his daughter, and he abandons her without any sorrow. Hence, *Where the Blood Mixes* highlights another issue which is adopting Native children of Canada after the end Boarding school era. After “citing mental health problems, alcoholism, and “lack of parenting skills,” government officials often removed American Indian children from their homes and placed them into foster or adoptive homes” (Haag 161). Therefore, the official policy of assimilation is still continuous in the life of Canadian Indigenous communities. Although the removal policy may not have been enforced, “the spirit of the policy was still perpetuated” (Haag 161), and the government still take actions under what they called ‘child protection’. Loring demonstrates the aftereffects of the residential school through Floyd’s life and his relationships with people around him. He neglects his duties towards his wife at first which leads her to end her miserable life. Then, he iterates this ignorance with his daughter who does not find any auspices. Floyd’s escapism is a consequence of his traumatized childhood. Floyd is totally traumatized and he cannot give anything to anyone. As a result of what he has experienced since his childhood, Floyd becomes an empty person who cannot help anyone in his life and he only tries to escape from his real life.

Obviously, Floyd suffers from an intolerable mental disorder. He can neither accept the present nor forget the past. As Loring shows in the play, “I just couldn’t hold on. It was too much, too big for me, by myself” (85). Floyd chooses to give up and

escape from this reality. He accepts the decision of raising Christine with a foster family because he thinks that it is better for both of them. Anna's death ruins the life of Floyd completely as he admits, "After your mom died ... I had nothing, nothing to give to anyone ... You got took" (Loring 85). Loring depicts Floyd's trauma by describing the relationship between Floyd and his daughter. He even hesitates to meet her when she returns, "Get out! Get out of my house" (Loring 77). Floyd suffers from a deep trauma because of the forcible removal system in Canada as well as his wife's death and as a result he loses the meaning of life. He cannot afford the responsibility of a daughter as most of the survivors who were "unable to give their own children the nurturing they needed" (Haag 159). The psychological torment of Floyd makes him escape from the real world. Floyd's use of escapism is seen as a coping mechanism for his psychological disorder, whereby he avoids confronting his responsibilities and emotions. He also engages with addiction as a means of escapism. Floyd is unable to resume a normal life or relate to others. He also acknowledges that he cannot recover from all of his suffering. Loring emphasizes through his characters the extent of the deterioration and collapse of the mentality of these survivors. As Haag mentions that "The Indian Boarding School era has been described as "ideological and psychological" war "waged against children"" (151). After leaving these institutions, "the survivors of boarding schools were left with varying degrees of scars and skills, but most profoundly, psychological subordination" (Lajimodiere 261). In the play, Loring explains the hidden side of this forcible assimilation that results in an intellectually and culturally distorted person. As a matter of fact, Aboriginal survivors cannot survive and live normally among the outside world, as they cannot belong to a specific side due to the resulting cultural and intellectual distortion.

As Haag clarifies that “Feelings of alienation were common for young American Indian returning from boarding school” (157). So, these survivors are unable to integrate into regular life, even in the most fundamental aspects. Similar to Floyd, Anna is also another victim of the residential school.

Furthermore, the death of Anna can be attributed to the forcible removal system. Anna is depicted in the play as a survivor of the residential school system in Canada. She is stuck in a cycle of distressing memories associated with the Indian residential schools. One day, Anna jumps into the river in front of Mooch, leaving her baby in his care. She is unable to survive as Floyd. It is clear that Anna has suffered significant trauma as a result of her experiences within the residential school system, as Floyd elucidates., “She had that depression, eh ... I mean we all got stuff that ... hurts, you know, but she would get so stuck in it” (Loring 86). Consequently, Anna cannot continue in her life and “She killed herself. She jumped off the bridge at the end of town there, the one that sings when the wind blows” (Loring 85). As Jimmy in *Stolen*, Anna finds suicide the suitable solution to end her misery. Both Harrison and Loring indicates the crisis of suicide among the Aboriginal people as a consequence of the Indian boarding school; the two dramatic works reflect the risk of suicide in the aboriginal community as M. Spero Manson indicates, “Suicide rates among American Indians, especially adolescents, are higher than those for the general population” (609). Manson also clarifies through various reports that “risk of suicide for a sample of high school students attending an Indian boarding school are presented. Approximately 23 percent of these students had attempted suicide at some time in the past, and 33 percent reported suicidal ideation within the past month” (609). The psychological and nervous stress experienced by Aboriginal people resulted in the emergence of

suicidal tendency among these students, who were unable to think properly. Loring's *Where the Blood Mixes* demonstrates that the trauma experienced by Indigenous children at residential schools continued to impact their lives long after leaving these institutions. The deep-seated effects of these schools profoundly disrupted the lives of the Aboriginal children resulting in a person who is completely disoriented and unable to effectively handle their own life. Cowan also explains how "residential schools consequently left Indigenous students without their Indigenous culture, traumatized, unable to cope, unable to form relationships, among many damaging social outcomes for the Indigenous population in Canada" (27). Floyd, Mooch and Anne are examples of the Residential schools' survivors who lost their life because of being raised in such institutions. As Neil Funk- Unrau and Anna Synder clarify that "Some Communities lost entire generations to these schools- generations unable to pass on the ideals, parenting skills, and survival skills of their ancestors" (290). Loring depicts the life of those survivors and how they are victims more than survivors. They lost the meaning of life and they suffered a deep melancholy and trauma which destroyed their entire life. Furthermore, the trauma experienced in these Indian institutions does not merely affect the subsequent generations who are raised there; it can also be transmitted to future generations. Consequently, Loring examines the concept of 'intergenerational trauma' through the character of Christine.

Christine, the only daughter of Floyd and Anna, encounters significant challenges in her life as a direct consequence of her parents' experiences at a residential school in Canada. Her circumstances serve as a poignant illustration of the phenomenon of intergenerational trauma. As mentioned in Katie Cowan's article intergenerational trauma is "the effect of a previous unresolved

trauma passed on to subsequent generations of an individual's family, community, and culture" (27). Due to her father's negligence, Christine was raised in an adoptive family away of his real father. Despite the fact that Christine continues to pursue her life goals and could potentially establish a new family, she is unable to move on from her past experiences. So, she returns to uncover the truth behind her father's abandonment. Christine suffers in her life since she was taken from her father without any explanation. However, Christine does not coexist during the forcible removal system, she is also affected by it due to her parents' sorrow and trauma. Christine's ongoing search for an explanation for her father's actions, as expressed by her repeated question, "WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT TO ME?!" (Loring 77), reflects her profound sense of betrayal and abandonment. This question occupies Christine's mind from her childhood to adulthood. She is unable to accept her father's decision to disown her and cease all contact with her. Floyd's reaction has caused Christine's significant trauma. Loring proves in his play the fact that trauma in the life of indigenous communities can be considered as a rooted thing in their history and it is inherited as June states in the play, "Our kids are sick with it too. They got it from us" (Loring 80). Denise K. Lajimodiere also illustrates that "boarding school experiences may have not only interrupted the intergenerational transmission of healthy child-rearing practices but also instilled new, negative behaviors instead" (260). Christine is a victim of this inherited trauma, despite her parents are survivors, they are still stuck in the incidents of the Indian boarding school. Christine's mother committed suicide leaving her as a baby. Then, her father does not give her any interest. As a result of this neglect, the government takes Christine to be raised among another family.

Basically, the circumstances of Christine's parents drastically affected her childhood, and she had to bear the consequences of her family's struggles. As a consequence, Christine returns to discover her past and recover her psyche. She seeks to collect more information about her origin and family as she declares by her question "Who am I?" (Loring 29). Christine does not have many memories of her family, she also wants to know "... what was she like? [her] mother". (Loring 67). Although she feels nostalgic for her father, she does not have a picture of him even in her mind as she admits, "I just want to put a face to the feeling, you know?" (Loring 69). In this way, the play shows the suffering of the next generations, who do not witness the era of the residential schools in Canada, but at the same time they are deeply affected by it. As Cowan indicates "The trauma endured by Indigenous survivors of residential schools has been passed down to further generations, reflected by social problems, leading to additional issues within the family structure" (27). Christine inherited her parents' trauma and suffering. Upon her return, Christine may not receive all the answers she desires, but at least she can ascertain the truth. She finds out that her parents are not only survivors but also victims. Each of them is sick with what is called residential school. Ultimately, Christine opts to leave the past behind and move forward with her life. She now understands that the issue does not reside within her, but rather in the Residential school.

Conclusion:

In their dramatic works, *Stolen* and *Where the Blood Mixes*, Harrison and Loring provide a detailed exposition of the issue of Indian Residential schools in both Australia and Canada. The works elucidate the manner in which the forcible removal system engenders profound intergenerational trauma, ultimately resulting in the destruction of the lives of Native children. In essence, Harrison and Loring provide a comprehensive account of the historical trauma experienced by indigenous communities, emphasizing its significant impact on these communities in the present day. Furthermore, they direct their focus towards the establishment of residential schools and its repercussions on Aboriginal children and the broader community. Despite the similarities in their subject matter, Harrison and Loring meticulously document the histories of distinct indigenous communities. Consequently, their dramatic works ensure that the issue of trauma is unrelentingly embedded in the history of all indigenous communities across various geographical locations. Furthermore, both authors reveal the psychological consequences of the Residential School crisis and how it causes several traumatized memories in the mind of Aboriginal children. Loring's play also reveals that this trauma becomes an inheritance which passes down from generation to another among the Indigenous people. In addition, Loring demonstrates that even after leaving this Indian institution, Indigenous people are unable to live normally because of the traumatic experiences they have had within it.

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التمثيل المرحلي للصدمة الناتجة عن المدارس الداخلية للسكان الأصليين في

مسرحية Stolen لجين هاريسون ومسرحية Where the Blood Mixes

لكيفن لورنج

الملخص:

كان تاريخ الشعوب الأصلية في الآونة الأخيرة محور العديد من الدراسات الأكاديمية. وتسلط هذه الدراسات الضوء على التحديات المختلفة التي يواجهونها، بما في ذلك العنصرية والتمييز والعنف وانتهاكات حقوق الإنسان وتدمير الثقافة. وقد انتشرت هذه الشعوب في بلدان مختلفة مثل أفريقيا وأمريكا الشمالية وكندا وأستراليا. وقد واجهت مجتمعات السكان الأصليين فترة طويلة من الاستعمار الذي كان له تأثير مدمر على بنيتهم الاجتماعية وثقافتهم. وكان لمجيء المستوطنين البيض، الذين سعوا لاحتلال أراضي السكان الأصليين وتدمير ثقافتهم، أثر مدمر على السكان الأصليين. وتبحث الورقة في الآثار الوخيمة للممارسات الأوروبية على كلا البلدين مثل الدمج الثقافي القسري والعنصرية. وتدرس هذه المقالة بشكل جوهري تأثير المدارس الداخلية للسكان الأصليين في كل من أستراليا وكندا من خلال دراسة مسرحية "Stolen" لجين هاريسون (٢٠١٤) ومسرحية "Where the Blood Mixes" لكيفن لورنج (٢٠٠٩). كما تحلل الدراسة أيضًا جوانب الأجيال المسروقة في أستراليا وعصر الترحيل القسري في كندا. ستعتمد هذه الدراسة نظرية الصدمة كعدسة نقدية لفحص العاملين الدراميين لهاريسون ولورنج. كما تهدف إلى إثبات كيف أصبحت الصدمة موروثًا في حياة السكان الأصليين. وعلاوة على ذلك، تبين الدراسة كيف يستخدم الكاتبان المسرحيان تجارب الماضي وذاكرة الألم لتوضيح القبول والتحدي في الحاضر. وأخيرًا، تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على دور المسرح في الكشف عن العواقب المستمرة لسياسة الاستيعاب القسري بالإضافة إلى توفير صوت للناجين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصدمة، اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة، الإساءة، المدارس الداخلية، التيار الأبيض السائد.