

Ethnicity in Discourse: Geopolitics and Intersectionality in Jane Harrison's *Stolen*

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Abstract

Geopolitics is considered to be political form of social geo-adaptation. The geographic influences on foreign policy and international relations of the dramatic consequences brought about ideological, economic, sociocultural, and demographic changes in the context of Indigenous human and natural environments. This viewpoint suggests that the idealised geopolitical model categories of natural-geographical, socio-geographical, activity-related, and chrono geopolitical be identified and demonstrated with a broader logic. The natural-geographical refers a forced removal of indigenous from the light of conception and determination of the geopolitical traits brought on by natural phenomena as well as the pressure they put on geo-adaptation. The socio-geographical shows how socio-geographical factors such as economic, civilizational, and ethnic have an impact on the features of the indigenous children. Activity-related models describe geographical parameters that interact with the actions of specific geopolitical as well as the outcomes of this interaction, or the spatial manifestations of political occurrences. Chrono geopolitical implies not only knowledge about time but also the ability to compress, colonize, and commodify time. Jane Harrison's play *Stolen* has contributed to solving the political issue of children rights to spend time with their families, which makes having a family more meaningful. This paper examines how the models will overlap and reveal shared geopolitical and the tragic dimension of Indigenous history. It highlights the hardship faced by the Indigenous people due to the ethnicity of geopolitics which has unshaped the intersectional nature of stolen children identity.

Keywords: Chrono geopolitical, Geopolitics, Indigenous, Natural-geographical, Socio-geographical.

Geopolitics is considered to be political form of social geo-adaptation. Geopolitics explores how governments try to advance their political objectives by influencing geographical features on a massive level. The term geopolitics is substituted with the term

international system. It serves as a better technique for figuring out how the global system operates. Two things are assumed in geopolitics. First it begins with the premise that human nature is universal. People are more alike than one might expect from culture when it comes to physical reality. Secondly it concentrates on location where the community's demands and anxieties are determined by the features of the country or town where it is located.

Flint considers "Geopolitics, as the struggle over the control of spaces and places, focuses on power, or the ability to achieve particular goals in the face of opposition or alternatives" (16). Material, relational, and ideological power are three types of power that are crucial for understanding historical and modern geopolitical thinking. Power is determined by a nation's material might or ability to go to war. In a political network, the strong power of one state is determined in reference to the weak position of another. Finally, ideological power is the capacity or necessity to persuade people to follow agenda completely without considering alternatives, rather than exerting pressure on them to do what they want.

A close connection exists between geography and politics. When the geographic and political elements influence a country relations change, geopolitical risk tends to increase. Relationships between nations, including those at the political, economic, military, cultural and ideological levels, are at the centre of geopolitical risk. Each paradigm has its own expenses, gains, and compromises. Autarky, hegemony, multilateralism, and bilateralism are the four behaviour archetypes included in the geopolitical study.

Australian indigenous writing calls for a revision of Australian history as well as the notion of what constitutes Australian culture and identity. Playwrights like Jack Davis, Wesley Enoch, David Milroy, Eva Johnson, Jane Harrison, and many others, spurred by the agenda of declining the Aboriginal theatre, use the stage as a platform to voice a variety of issues concerning Aboriginal life such as marginalization, alienation, and withdrawal from the mainstream. Among these writers Jane Harrison, who has grown up isolated from the indigenous community, was attracted to the project out of a desire to explore her own heritage.

The battle over geography is also a struggle between contrasting images and imagination. A struggle of power and resistance that includes not only battles to represent the materiality of physical geographic objects and boundaries but also a right opportunity and, in a unique manner, the equally material force of discursive borders between an idealized Self and a demonized Others. This experience makes indigenous voices hold distinct roles in both

national and worldwide geopolitical arenas. Geopolitics has got intermingled with genocide or ethnic cleansing. It is difficult to separate geopolitics from genocide and ethnic cleansing. There is simmering distrust between Indigenous and Whites. Geopolitics also played a role in determining the destiny of the indigenous people. But presumably, politics did not have much impact then when ethnicity did play its part during colonization. Now both ethnicity and geopolitics have become intertwined.

Jane Harrison's play *Stolen* depicts how Child Welfare staff degrade indigenous children by intellectually removing them from their mothers, refusing them access to their culture and language, and subjecting them to persecution due to their ancestry. Depression is experienced as a result of removing children from their homes by government officials. Their removal has broken their hopes and smiles. Five Aboriginal half-caste characters life in the Cranby Children's Home are shown in *Stolen*. The entire cast of the play is made up of two men, Jimmy, and Sandy, three ladies named Ruby, Shirley, and Anne. In addition to playing the parts of the other characters, who may be onstage or be only heard as offstage voices, they also play their own roles. The play opens with them as children, and as the action progresses, they shift erratically between childhood and adulthood while narrating their own unique previous experiences.

The idealised geopolitical model categories as natural-geographical, socio-geographical, activity-related, and chrono geopolitical which are recognised and proved with a broader logic. First, the study of natural-geographical focuses on geographic locations as well as the interactions between people of indigenous and their surroundings. The physical characteristics of the Earth's surface and the various human societies that call it home are both investigated by geographers. In addition, they explore the relationship between human culture and the environment as well as the influence that environments and places can have on individuals. Indigenous Peoples are unique social and cultural groups with a shared ancestral connection to the lands and natural resources where they reside, are displaced from, or both. Their identities, customs, and means of subsistence, as well as their bodily and spiritual well-being, are intricately linked to the land and natural resources on which they rely. For representation that is different or unique from that of the majority community or culture, they frequently follow their traditional leaders and organisations.

In *Stolen* Sandy is the one who has a strong sense of responsibility for the land and the survival of their indigenous languages. Stolen children are not allowed to use their

Indigenous languages in a brutal effort to force them to forget their origin as part of the assimilation process. Sandy, however, insists on using words from her home language, such as “yurringa,” (10) (the sun) in defiance of such commands. He also narrates tales from the native people about “the bigbad Mungee.”(10) it appears in the dark and devours infants while telling the red desert fable. The elders had to use a spell to change Mungee into a pale, or rather white, colour in order to get rid of it, which has satirical connotations. The colour white now symbolises the hatred that white people have towards Natives. Sandy is bold and proceeds to tell the narrative, which he affirms was taught to him by his grandfather, despite Shirley’s warning, “But you're not permitted to say that”(10). Harrison uses this as evidence to show how Indigenous people keeps their history alive through oral storytelling that is passed down from one generation to the next and how they avoid the assimilation policy’s stated goal of eradicating their language and culture. Natives’ growth has entered a new stage by their native language. The voice of their nation is expressed in their languages, which are carried by indigenous people. According to Hamilton “The more that children have access to their language and hear their language then the more it becomes a part of their lives and that’s how language is continued across the generations. It’s so emotional to hear the languages and to know that that knowledge is not only still with the community but is also being passed on to children — it’s incredibly powerful.”

Secondly the study of socio-geographical is known as human geography, which focuses on the connections between society and space and is most closely related to sociology and social theory in general, examines the interconnections between social phenomena and their geographical components. Due to these interconnections the removal of Native children from their homes is a practice that is only acknowledged as being discriminatory and harmful intersection. Intersectionality helps to understand and respond to the individual and group effects of converging systems of power. It rejects the notion of inequalities being the result of single, distinct factors, and instead focuses on the relationships between overlapping processes that create inequities. The injustices that happened to the Indigenous societies by the white Australian government presents the picture of the past history of the country and its disastrous nature which not all Australians were aware of and also demands an apology from the Government to the native Australians. According to Carmel Bird “The past is not past. The past, the present and the future are, as they always are, part of each other, bound together. We cannot change the past, which cannot be undone; we may be able, by generosity

of imagination and spirit, to change the future for the better, to act in a more enlightened and more humane manner, with greater dignity and true compassion”.

In *Stolen* Sandy’s story is more closely related to his aboriginal identity than those of the other kids. He experiences the removal policy’s harmful effects, and, he has always sought to flee from the authorities. He does not have a stable childhood and a home of his own. Sandy’s mother used to send him off to hide at the houses of her relatives to avoid having him taken by the Welfare. He only remembers her shrieking, “Sandy, run!”(3) because she thought that was the only way to save him. The “A Can of Peas”(19) scene illustrates Sandy’s dissatisfaction with the government. Sandy constructs a pyramid out of cans before aggressively kicking it while screaming in a disgusted tone. This incident brings the escalating tension of welfare people’s allegation towards Sandy in the episode which focus his adult identity.

I hate peas. Always have. You want me to tell you why? When Mum was real desperate she’d scrounge shit like this from the Welfare. White flour, white sugar, white bread. No good. Instant mash potato. Stuck to ya mouth like glue. Tinned camp pie. The stink! Like bloody dog meat. But the can of peas I hated most. Just looking at the bloody can I can taste them. Slimy. Soggy. Yuk. A can of peas. A can like this one ruined my family. True, a can of peas. Destroyed my mother and us kids. Mum didn’t steal it or nothin’ like that. She wasn’t shoved in jail or anything. Destroyed my mother and us kids. Mum didn’t steal it or nothin’ like that. She wasn’t shoved in jail or anything. It was just when they finally caught up with us, a can just like this little one was sitting way at the back of the cupboard – past its used date – so they said she was just unfit mother and they took us kids away. All because of a use-by date. The bloody Welfare, who gave us the rotten can in the first place. A can of peas. (Harrison 18-19)

The government allows the suffering of the indigenous to happen and then uses it as justification to blame the locals of being unable to care for their children. Using this occurrence, Sutherland argues that Sandy’s point here “made the ‘white Welfare’ (an oxymoron in this context) largely responsible for replacing indigenous eating habits with ‘White flour, white sugar, white bread’, a diet with repercussions that are still causing havoc for Aboriginal health.” Sandy’s speech makes it clear that he hates or detests peas, which is a

symbol of his hatred for white Australian government and their brutal treatment of indigenous people.

Geographical characteristics interact with specific geopolitical individuals, and activity-related models describe such interactions and their results, or the spatial manifestations of political events. Activity-related describe the clusters of teenagers or children distinguished by patterns of physical activity and sedentary behaviour. The development of treatments for individuals who are most at risk can be aided by an understanding of both the characteristics of adolescents and the changeable correlates of these typologies. In *Stolen*, Ruby has no memory of her history because she was taken from her mother when she was very small. As a child, she experienced repeated sexual abuse. On the weekends, white adults come to the facility to choose youngsters and bring them to their homes where they are typically sexually assaulted for domestic labour. The kids are made to form lines based on their skin tone.

The discriminating line order, promotes a racial philosophy of going from lighter to darker to provide customers an option. Also, the children are instructed to straighten their clothes and sell themselves in their own particular way. It depicts the sensation of humiliation experienced by the abused youngster in three different scenes together labelled “Unspoken Abuse” (8), which show the kids coming home resulting weekend outings. They are unwillingness to speak a word about the weekend’s happenings. Native children are required to remain silent and are not even allowed to talk about their experiences. For instance, when Ruby comes home from her outings, the kids always see her sad and dragging something behind her, once a doll and again a book that was gifts from her white abusers. She is unable to discuss any instances of abuse. Shukry in a review expose that “Ruby also repeatedly undergoes abuse from the whites who are supposed to care for her at their homes. Such torture leads her to feel embarrassed and degraded. Not only that, but the act severely harms her mental health and eventually drives her to madness” (1225).

When Ruby’s biological family makes touch with her again, she has already completely disappeared into her own inner world. Ruby pulls back, exclaiming, “Don't need no trouble,” (31) because even her sister’s consoling words, “we’ve come to take you home,” (31) seem menacing to her. As Sharmila exposes, “*Stolen* seeks to tell the truth. The truth told by the Aborigines is different from the white version. These texts also become a place to preserve one’s family, history, and heritage” (27). Thus, *Stolen* emphasises not only the

history and tradition of indigenous cannot make a difference by the whites but also a loving home cannot make a difference in the life of the stolen children.

Chrono Geopolitical implies the capacity to compress, colonise, and commodify time examine the connections between time and foreign policy. In the post-colonial era, Indigenous children were forcefully removed from their families and communities without any permission, put in welfare institutions run by the government, the church, or charity, left in replacement or foster homes, or advertised for domestic work or adoption by white families. The majority of children were placed in Welfare institutions that did not grant them any rights. The National Museum of Australia gives a painful description of life in such an institution, stating that: "It was a dormitory system of child management with its concomitant mass feeding of a dull uniform diet and a rigid authoritarian form of schooling and training. Once the child became an inmate, parents were relatively powerless to assert their rights. The future destiny of their child was in the hands of the State".

Jimmy is a naughty kid who frequently causes trouble by stealing apples from the neighbour's garden when he was a child, getting stopped by the police, and being taken into detention. Despite this, he has a sense of humour and is hopeful and positive. Yet, his years of being an institutionalised, stolen child has eliminated that character by the racist Welfare authorities took him away from his mother. The removal policy has decimated the families and the children, leaving them with a total loss of identity that cannot be recovered. That is a negative result of the trauma Jimmy exposes to the audience. Together with all levels of security, he is robbed of himself, and in the end, he kills himself. The Welfare has no sympathy for those Indigenous children instead choosing to kill them.

Harrison's *Stolen*, demonstrates how native's rights have been badly disregarded by the colonial authority. Due to the political issues children do not have any rights to spend time with their families, which increases the value of having a family is more important than anything. The four models used to identify common geopolitical themes and the sad aspects of Indigenous history. The struggles encountered by Indigenous children as a result of the intersectional nature of stolen children's identities being unshaped by the ethnicity of geopolitics. The drama makes a political case against white Australians' racist and paternalistic assimilationist practises in an effort to elicit sympathy for the people who were hurt by these welfare measures that broke up Aboriginal families. The play honours the Indigenous people's resilience in the face of overwhelming hardship. In telling stories about

Indigenous people to other Indigenous people and using Indigenous history to define and unify a separate people, the play is also a statement of Indigenous nationalism. It aims to educate white people about a tragic aspect of aboriginal history in the hopes that this will help put an end to the oppression, prejudice, and suffering that aboriginal people endure at the hands of white people.

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