

# Memory, Identity and Consciousness in the *Sound of One Hand Clapping*—In a Diaspora Study

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**Abstract:** *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* is a representative diasporic work by Australian writer Richard Flanagan. It recounts the heroine's departure from European culture and the diaspora into Australian, revealing the difficult efforts of the European diasporic immigrants in Australian culture to wrestle with multiple memory forces in a new land, construct identity and forge a unified emotion under the collision and integration. The author explores the possibility of reconciliation with history through the efforts of two generations. From the theoretical perspective of some postcolonial and postmodernity, this paper examines how the protagonist struggle through dynamic multiple memories to realize identity clarification and consciousness reconstruction. Starting from the deconstruction of the grand narrative discourses from the perspective of the mainstream group in the host country, the paper found that the process of re-establishing a coherent identity of the diasporic, marginalized group are subject to the interaction among different memories, the hybridity and becoming of symbolic identities, the reconstruction and rationalization of in-depth consciousness. Flanagan's multi-dimensional attempts are at ethnic equality in the contemporary global context.

**Keywords:** Richard Flanagan, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*, Diaspora, Identity, Memory

## 1. Introduction and literature review

Richard Flanagan(1961- ), one of the most preeminent writers composing in a style of post-modernism, surrealism and magic realism, and *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) (abbreviated as SOHC hereafter) is a representative of diasporic literature. This narration is about Sonja's family reconstructing the coherent diasporic individual image, showing the readers how the European immigrant protagonist reshape and rationalize her identity out of the marginalized group in Australia in a post-colonial context. It tells the story of the Slovenians who fled the calamity of war and political persecution in Europe after World War II, migrated to Australia and rebuilt their homeland. This story was set in Tasmania, revolved around Bojan Buloh, his wife Maria and daughter Sonja. It is about the survival plight of diasporic group represented by the Buloh family in Australia. Most of them, came to this strange country to find a free shelter away from aftermath of war and trauma, only to helplessly find themselves still mired in the nightmare of history and have to confront the cruel and ruthless life in the present. Another implicit narration thread is with a series of flashbacks and interposed narration, as complement, about the nightmarish torture and trauma suffered because of Nazi. Without the normal narrative sequence, the unstability of belonging and identity is conveyed. The gist is about the portrayal of being disoriented, helpless and diasporic, through a series of connection and intimate relationship, Sonja, the heroine, ultimately regained the cultural consciousness reconstruction and clarified the significance of being of her identity featured with dual cultural background. An explorative route featuring new-historicist way is preferred here, which can disclose the diasporic narrative that are covered by the dominant narrative code. Featured with magical realism, this literature of postcolonial nations is a literature of loss, of lament for pure origins that can never be recovered, which can be interpreted from the struggle of multi-directional memories, fluid and indefinite identities, and the deconstruction and reconstruction of cultural consciousness.

James Clifford once defined diaspora as “a loosely coherent, adaptive constellation of responses to dwelling-in-displacement”<sup>[1]</sup>. Consequently, “diasporic literature” refers to literary works created by diaspora writers with intercultural or international experience or the narration of individual or group diaspora to express the exile life, artistically reflecting the phenomenon of diaspora culture as well as its generation and change.<sup>[2]</sup><sup>17</sup> Usually, it refers to such experience converted into literature written by

diaspora writer as the novel *The Weeds Are Singing* by the British writer Doris Lessing, and the critical autobiography essay *The Joy of Exile* by the Caribbean writer George Lamming; in a broad sense, it corresponds to those with diaspora as narrative theme, which contains the writer's own elaboration of diasporic thoughts and values without necessary migrant experience. Some masterpieces are exemplified by *Bible*, Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, *The Kite Runner* and this novel composed by Flanagan. This kind of works often place a focus on such certain concerns as homeland seeking, identity crisis and reconstruction and other dimensions under transcultural confrontation.

## 2. Analysis of Diaspora literariness in *The Sound of One Clapping*

### 2.1 Memory Struggle: Transcultural Forces Intertwined

The haunted, traumatic memory can be viewed as an indispensable core element threading throughout the whole narration. In diaspora literature, history is closely associated with different forces of memory. SOHC probes into how memory works and how it influences historical narratives. "Studying how memory works is a fascinating tool for deconstructing historical narratives"<sup>[3]103</sup>. It is undeniable that they complement and query each other. Since the history is written, narrated and to whom and by whom is decided by memory, it is necessary to inspect diasporic memory to interlace identity and embedded emotion. As for diasporic groups, their memory usually go through a process of interaction, trigger, and compromise, eventually formulating a mental panorama.

Post memory, transcultural and transgenerational memory are competing with each other on the subject, constituting the integrative force for Sonja and Bojan. The power of post memory in the temporal sense is presented distinctly from the first generation to the second generation. According to "post memory" by Marianne Hirsch, a scholar of Holocaust Literature, this term gives an incisive perspective for this inherited memory in the second generation of the victims of traumatic events, especially the Holocaust survivors. This pointed out that such traumatic memory are transmitted among generations as "shadows."<sup>[3]132</sup> In this story, the traumatic aftermath of World War II is transmitted intergenerationally to trigger complications in a dual way: on the one hand, the surface of the character's consciousness pretends a loss of trauma memory beyond the ability to understand and receive, forming an evasion towards it; while in the contrary, the past trauma becomes the "post-memory" of the family, which is unconsciously transmitted through generations in a tangible or invisible way.

At the outset of the novel, Sonja's mother Maria gave up striving for a "new life" in Australia after seeing her husband slaving away on a hydro dam project where they were treated as wogs and being continuously inflicted by the role as "exiles" due to the World War. She left without any kind of response towards life, which is an upshot that fails to compromise with the past and the current, signifying an anti-manipulation by the history. This spiritual exile symbolizes the debasement and a passive status in the first generation of diasporic group, leaving a trace for the second generation—the protagonist, Sonja, to be inscribed with the repercussion of the memory as a post one, vacillating between the the past and the present. Flanagan emphasized that the diasporic people can live not only in heterogeneous space narrative, but also through historical, diachronic narrative that breaks down the boundaries between the former generation with unemphasized representation and the later generation with underlying, obvious feeling of memory.

Anne Whitehead argues in *Trauma Fiction*: "Theories of transgenerational trauma suggest that emotions can transcend generations"<sup>[4]</sup> Although children are faraway from their parents traumatic events in time and they have not experienced them personally, painful memories are deeply inscribed in children's minds through parents' remarks, and the trauma is transmitted through generation, integrating in part of their own memories as a past one. "They grew up with these traumatic events, unable to understand or fully imagine the trauma of the previous generation, but their later lives were filled with them."<sup>[3]128</sup> Besides, lag in time accentuates the continuity of pain. This is a complete separation from their personal memories and the history of their homeland, the language, social cohesion, their culture and their identity. Therefore, Maria simply gave and chose to commit suicide. Bojan's "rage was absolute, impervious even to her shrill eyes...he had no choice but to continue searching that mute, inscrutable and of this girl's body with his punches and slaps for what he carried within himself."<sup>[5]11</sup>. This also for Sonja, for which she "divest herself of all things that were totally needed"<sup>[5]26</sup>, driving her to arduously reconstruct her injured personality but only to find herself was void of attachment, which foreshadowing a tough journey for her to clarify identity with a deliberate concealment of this "post memory". It is intermixed with trauma as a synergy, coming from different

directions as inconspicuous and scattered.

Most of memory fragments in narrative are scattered and little that have nothing to do with the “grand history” in the diasporic group, but they show a humble, marginalized yet different facet of historical landscape, which echoes Flanagan’s history views. As a real existence, these scraps do carry history; however, as historical heritage, they do not have the effect to prove the magnificent effectiveness of history but inspire the diasporic to reorient themselves in the history. They are complicated and intertwined, eventually leading “trauma has broken the memory of the victim and destroyed its continuity with the past, thus causing an individual's identity crisis.”<sup>[6]11</sup>

Besides, the mobility nature of memory due to spatial transcultural factors implicates the consequent changes for them to treat identity and culture consciousness. Its ubiquity participates in shaping and reshaping the identity, to form an ideological bridge. This is a basis for them to redefine the past and to fabricate the post-traumatic memory into an acceptable one in a new space. Fabrication means that it is constructed based on certain personal historical concepts and ingesting certain historical “elements”. For instance, Bonja’s highly personal and subjective virtualization prompts the transcultural memory into an accustomed living state. His process of resistance, experimentation, adaptation and acceptance of Australian food is a vivid example as a metaphor that how the disadvantaged diasporic to fight against the negative illusion of the past.

After Bonja arrived in Tasmania, he had a long time to adapt to the new food habits, and complained to his daughter, “The restaurant is selling Australian food, I am not used to it.” “So I had to make my own food, or I would starve to death.”<sup>[5]56</sup>. Apparently, his resistance to native Australian food actually reflected his alienation from his new environment and a strong transcultural memory force making him clinging to the habits in motherland. This is a sharp contradiction in current transcultural feeling and previous transcultural memory. To help her father adapt to the Australian diet, Sonia has more opportunities to communicate with the outside world, and she has learned most of her new eating habits from her host Australian family, the Heaneys made breakfast every morning with baked beans, buttered toast, and Vegemite, claiming that they were “the health food of this country, and have made us who we are”<sup>[5]193</sup>. Her food represents not only the common taste of Australians, but also the national eating habits of which Australians are proud of. Inevitably, the Australian food culture gradually entered his life. It was during his relationship with Jean, an Australian woman, that Boyan first showed his willingness to try local food. Boyan's love affair with Joan brought him an "increasing sense of security and happiness" in his life for the first time since his wife's departure.<sup>[5]207</sup> His conversion in diet habits symbolises a revision of the transcultural memory, also a challenge and questioning of the definition of history. This is a postmodern memory landscape. The transcultural memory here has been separated from its original function to restrain or shackle subjects, but, through various culture symbols such as diet, to help to retrospect the past, then to redefine an active and flexible memory in a new space. It helps to revise the history and reconstruct the various possibilities of history.

To summarize, the continuous struggle of the “post memory” or “transcultural” “absent memory” prevalent in almost all diasporic groups is a metaphoric impulse of dynamic redefinition and recapture of the past and identity, which is a distinct rebellion against the traditional “center-margin” binary opposition and a rejection being manipulated by the strong transcultural memory that hinders the integration process. This is an underlying, inner psychological drive, puts a considerable strength for them to deal with the derivative identity under the transcultural background.

## ***2.2 Identity: From Fluidity to Clarification***

Conspicuous attention should be also paid to the confusion, conversion, legitimization and maturation process with an ultimate clarification of identity. As the title implicates, action of clapping with one hand is like a fist into the void, no for, no opposition, no connection with the outside world, as if symbolizing a failing to stir up a ripple in Australian society, running through the novel. This refers to the necessity for the protagonist to build up their own concrete identity in Australia in a postmodern and post-colonial context. In postmodernism, the romantic ego is tend to be suppressed or fragmented, viewed with suspicion by post-structuralists as a “totalizing principle”, where the self loses itself in the play of language and the differences creating reality and diffuses itself in depthless styles, refusing interpretation and eluding understanding<sup>[7]</sup>. In the former part, Sonja’s and Bojan’s identity are quite elusive, fragmented, and repressed because of intentional elusion from the reality and the past, implying a strong postmodernist tint without definiteness. The trajectories in identity change of them reflect a game of space and identity. Confronting the same predicament, Bojan is helpless and chooses

to escape, resorting to alcohol and violence to numb himself; Maria simply gave up and chose to end her life; Only Sonia is still struggling to find and rebuild her identity. As the plot progress, Sonja's diasporic identity find more meaning to be defined and established to be a unified one.

At the outset, in the midst of contradictions, a confusion of internal hybridity with a fragmentation is their identity state. Flanagan uses multiple devices such as fragmentation, absence, and migration to break the traditional concept of unity and stability, and expresses the fragmentation, fluidity, variability, and complexity of Sonya's living space and identity. "Absence" "escape" and "brokenness" are three key words in Sonja's life. Her identity is not essentially fixed, but hybrid, ephemeral, fluid, and volatile.

In this stage, Sonja's diasporic identity is featured with hybridity, resistance and incompleteness due to "absence". Since the early policy of national naturalization was brutal, and as the descendants of European war immigrants, at first, what embraced them was not empathy or sympathy, instead, they were marginalized, victimized and humiliated as the inferior group, which seems a anguished reverse process of acculturation since they becomes conspicuous of a repulse for precedent identity. It can be reflected in many aspects. Firstly, despite her father's persistence to create a pure-English monolingual environment, the natural emergence of bilingual families still appeared on Sonja, where the coexistence of English and Slovenia created a hybrid type of communication for her to communicate between different ethnic roles. The result of a hybrid language as a fusion of two languages signifies and facilitates inevitable identity hybridity. As Stuart Hall puts it, there is a promiscuous tendency in the context of globalization and diaspora that shatters and disintegrates the unified image of the dominant language, creating "a new form of international language that is radically different from the traditional hierarchical and class-based, seemingly high-spirited old English"<sup>[8]</sup>. Besides, her identity is broken and fragmented, whilst Bojan's is slighted and been repulsively marginalized. Her mother's absence, whose absence regarded as the role of "mother" "wife" is metaphorised, thus resulting in the loss of original culture identity. "Maria Buloh's burgundy-coloured shoes reached the third and lowest snow-pondered step outside their wooden hut. It was then... Maria Buloh knew she had already gone too far and that she could no longer return."<sup>[5]16</sup>, and she had no affinity of belonging towards her home either in Europe or in Tasmania, since the past memory, tinged with her disowning of motherly love; while Tasmania "was to a land at once alien and familiar" making her remind of "bruised country""broken willow" and "old convict towns unraveling liked used newspapers in the wind."<sup>[5]31</sup>

This can be illustrated through the breaking of many images: For instance, in the chapter of *1954*, the broken tea pot and Bojan's restoration symbolize the beginning of fragmentation and reconstruction of Sonya's identity. Since it is crashed into fragments at the airport, Sonja's several attempt to piece them together, "managed to assemble perhaps a quarter of it", but finally "in frustration give up"; for "the pieces would not fit, would not allow themselves to be back into some order that make sense"<sup>[5]54</sup>, signifying a reflection of failed endeavor to make her identity integrated into a holistic one in this stage. All of these factors made Sonja's identity confused, abridged and fragmented. Due to the absence of her mother, paternal love and abominable homeland memory and immigrant experience, she have to evade unfaithfully. Sonja refuses to belong to any stable place, just as she rejects any clear, homogeneous identity at the same time, and her identity is constantly shifting with changes in specific spaces, environments, and cultures. Sonia's fragmented identity space contains fragmentary memories of the past and present, Europe and Australia, Slovenia and Tasmania. This complex identity encompasses not only the individual's understanding of physical space, but also the absorption and inclusion of the history and culture associated with space. In this stage, her "friendships are gone and memories broken, thought Sonja, gone and broken."<sup>[5]32</sup> As Zygmunt Bauman put it, "If the modern 'identity problem' is how to construct and stabilize identity, then the postmodern 'identity problem' is first and foremost how to avoid fixed identities and keep their choices open."<sup>[8]65</sup>

"Resistance identity" is derived as a force to decentralize the identity due to the hybridity and fragmentation. Defined by Castells Manuel, this term refers that the individual constructs the identity by challenging the logic or subverting the system of the virtually or intangibly dominant presence<sup>[17]</sup>. Keeping distance from the social institutions of domination and forming the identity. "Resistance identity is generated by actors who are in positions/ conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination."<sup>[9]33</sup> The concept not only depicts a repulsive force, but also implies another form of connection between an individual and the system in the contrary. As a typical diasporic individual, Sonja attempted to bid defiance to the dominantly repressive outside forces as the other. Along with Bojan, she refused to have dominant Australian food, "otherwise I bloody starve"<sup>[5]61</sup>. This is a distinct refutation of accepting the dominant food that connotes being naturalized. It can be generalized that, at the former stage, the passive being hybrid and fragmented in identity in Sonja epitomizes the panorama for the initial stage in diasporic groups, and tend to convert to an active rebellious one to

resist being acculturated.

The narrative about identity in SOHC is not only a simple revision of the concept of history, but also a challenge and questioning of the definition of it. The unavoidable fluidity and volatility in Sonja's identity is derived from the mildness but indifference of the new land along with the striking being of the previous identity from the old Slovenian family and trauma present an intermediate state in these diasporic group, in which the two cultures are constantly colliding and blending, but neither side can assume an absolute dominance. Australia cannot completely assimilate the memory of the disadvantaged Slovenian identity, while the identity of the latter one cannot be completely erased from the protagonist because of their vulnerability. For Sonja, being naturalised voluntarily or involuntarily as an Australian is to “renounce previous citizenship” “a sad but necessary step to take”, which makes Sonja and Bojan both suffer a broken self. While, Bojan also experienced dislike, identity “chaos” and “nihility” engendered by the new culture and hostile environment accompanied by self-negation and self-assault to escape the reality. He “renounced everything and scourged his flesh daily in the hope” “of purging his soul of its terrible demons.”<sup>[14]59</sup>. Although this immigration make them hard to being accepted by new environment, their previous distinct nationality also build a bridge for Sonja and Bojan later conciliation, receiving acceptance from amiable Australians such as Heaney family. When Sonja met her father again, she didn't call him “Bojan” nor “artie” instead of a unfamiliar but formal address, which means a rejection of her past subversive, obediently vulnerable identity. And later, Bojan prepared delicious food for his daughter is also the upshot of fluid attitude towards life. The subjective interality on Sonja is inductive of such interpretation.

We can astutely realize that there lies motives for change and underlying action impulse under this circumstance towards a harmonious balance of “interality” with a flexible fluidity, and the following transition of Sonja negates the singular evaluative identity mode. As Geling Shang proposed, “interality” is a general term of the non-physical factors or properties and effects that refer to the time and space, changes (processes), relationships, etc., within and between existence, entities, words and concepts”<sup>[10]54</sup>, indicating an “internal relationship of interaction, interplay, and mutual influence” when two or more is inter-referential, which is premised on the recognition of differences and respect for others and take the communication as purpose.<sup>[5]65</sup>. This concept underscores the impulse of life through the affirmation of difference, plurality and commonality, try to solve the theoretical dilemma faced by human beings in the philosophical concept of entity/existence. This philosophical perspective may explain the maturation conversion of Sojan from being beleaguered by a singular evaluation stipulated by Australia's mainstream society, to moving her identity value evaluation criterion towards a state accepting being different because of ethnic role and war-trauma icon with a positive attitude.

As the upshot, she becomes to mature and attempted to find a definite meaning for a unified identity. It can be seen as “becoming”. Proposed by Deleuze, “becoming” emphasizes difference and being dynamic; all “existence” is nothing but a relatively stable moment in the flow of “becoming life”<sup>[11]</sup>. All kinds of “existences” in the world have a pluralistic and dynamic generative significance of survival value and meaning. The juxtaposition of cross-cultural identities insinuates a seeking to achieve a regenerative and coexistence of them. The unequal and unbalanced relationship between immigrants and natives undergoes a series of processes such as confrontation, compromise, and mixing, and finally constructs a unified identity role featuring cross-cultural, mixed, and dynamic diaspora identity. She tried to develop association with Australian, to have their diet and to have jobs in an Australian community, featuring a combination of an integrative identity. This is a conclusive resolution to make her identity clarified of a combined, fluid and dynamic one featured with “becoming” in a pluralistic potential because both two of sides can legitimize the survival value and a rich meaning of a hybrid cross-cultural identity. The inborn one retaining in Sonja and Bojan reminds their distinguishable national signs, which is a footstone providing a solid resource to consolidate self-worth and self-esteem in a antagonistic, nonchalant foreign environment and help to build revitalization of identity in Australia. In the end, Sonja come to accept the dual identity emerged from fragmentation and fluidity, which embodies compatibility between the time boundary as the past and the current, between the space boundary as being an Australian and a Slovenian, expanding the humanistic horizons of the diaspora and brings a richer and more meaningful life experience.

### ***2.3 Consciousness Reconstruction: from Isolation to Deterritorialization***

Diaspora consciousness is defined, borrowing from Cohen, as “a strong and enduring group consciousness about the homeland, and feelings of solidarity more or less shared by the members of a diasporic collectivity in the host country”<sup>[12]</sup>. They mediate “in a lived tension” with different experiences of diaspora consciousness.<sup>[13]</sup> As French philosopher Foucault proposed that the history of

mankind is a history of power and discourse. Whether in Australian history or real life, the diasporic Europeans haven't suspend to make their voices heard and pursue for establishing a balanced, eclectic culture conscious for the sake of survival.

At the beginning, Flanagan presents a life and inner picture of the marginalized European Australians, which is in sharp contrast with the dominant society, strengthening the previous binary opposition model and exacerbating the isolated, different culture conscious of the Bulohs. This is also an implicit metaphor of that ideological dilemma and an implicit reference for the passive discourse power of diasporic groups in that history.

In the initial part depicting their primary settlement in the new land, the native Australians presented only to excrete, to elbow out, and to isolate those immigrants: Sonja's father, was assigned to "do the wog work which the new Australians would have preferred", being marginalized, belittled by them; they had to settled in the street where " crude vertical-board huts with corrugated-iron roofs and corrugated-iron chimneys", which brought them "all too painful memories of forced labour camps in the Urals and Siberia". Since the day those European immigrants inflicted with trauma from their national continent, they have to live within their own communities, with an insular and solidified and reciprocated a negative culture consciousness towards the Australia mainstream culture. They confronted the animosity from the outside world, and their positive attempts to naturalise themselves are barricaded. They have lost their homes, languages, social cohesion, culture and identity. The fragmentary English they learn is actually a simple patchwork of coarse slang, and Australian food and customs are difficult for them to adapt to. Despite acquiring Australian citizenship, they still have an inferior status in citizenship. Tasmania seemed to them a place they could never belong to, and "nothing they did seemed to make sense, so every morning they became more miserable and alienated". Although Sojah and Bojan finally escaped from the derelict, relentless homeland and settled herself in Sydney, the spiritual displacement still haunted and this kind of invisible diaspora has no end. A distinctive feature for them is that longing for the homeland that cannot be separated in the depths of the heart, and the national and personal memories in the depths of spiritual non-belonging cannot be dissolved with the body diaspora, which seems to be an irresolvable contradiction of a conscious dichotomy. In this stage, this sense of "othering" in relation to native Australians estranged them in consciousness of identity and culture. As Said points out, "Exile originated from an ancient habit of exile. Once exiled, the exile lives an unusually miserable life forever with the stigma of being an outsider..... As far as exile is concerned, it carries more of a sense of loneliness and spiritual exile"<sup>[14]</sup>. Being an invisible spiritual "othering" passively is the inner implication of the body diaspora form, a silent symbol to bid defiance for the hegemonic culture conscious landscape in a global, mobile context in essence.

Protagonists in this stage are trapped in a dilemma of spiritual values conflicts; they find themselves trapped in a stalemate caught in the sharp conflict between their native culture and foreign life, between material newness and spiritual nostalgia, signifying a transformation from alienation of existence into the alienation of soul. As a typical European offspring, Sonja's consciousness experienced a struggle between the superficial consciousness and the subconscious, and the combat between the two was transferred to reality. The struggle between dual poles resulted the split personality and a strenuous process to find a balance for Sonja mixed with tension. A forced reenactment of a horrific experience in the past has been suppressed by the subject's consciousness, which usually result a schismatic subconsciousness. On one hand, she wish to integrate; on the other hand, she suffered a huge fear to do it and establish an abnormal affinity of intimate sexual connection. This process constitutes the phenomenon of "secret fear" (non-home hallucinations) that is common in diasporic immigrant groups, for example, his father. Bojan, he "used several masks: of speech, of behavior, of personality."<sup>[5]</sup><sup>109</sup> As we can see from this, at first Bajon's conscious in a new context is "delighted in deception". This is also an employment of evasive conscious to disguise a fearful mentality. Just as Fernanda Duarte pointed, the "co-presence of 'here' and 'there' "<sup>[13]</sup><sup>330</sup> is one of the interrelated patterns indicative of diaspora consciousness. As we can see from some seemingly superficial and resistant performances of Sonja and Bojan, are just the reflection in their deep contradictory subconsciousness between being "here" in a totally defamiliarized host culture and being remained "there" because of insuperable brand for persisting in old national norms, behavioral modes and valuation criterion. Besides, according to psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok in their masterpieces *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, the "intergenerational ghostism" of hidden trauma in the family is often transmitted from generation to generation in an unconscious form. It haunts the next generation of the injured subject like a ghost, causing them to split their personalities. The "phantom" is interpreted as "It is a fact that ghosts, in whatever form they appear, are merely inventions of the living."<sup>[15]</sup> Even under the camouflage of individual and collective hallucinations, this invention is, in a sense, the embodiment

of the chasm which have been created due to the concealment of lives in some objects of love. Thus the ghost is a meta-psychological fact that it is not the past that haunts us for a long time, but the chasm left by the secrets of others.

This doubleness is “more productively conceived as the interstitiality of entering (or leaving) and destabilizing border zones of cultures, as fracturings of the subject that resist falsely comforting identifications and reifications<sup>[16]</sup>. Arguably, here the cultural and identity consciousness is creolized as a syncretic product of continuous historical, cultural and linguistic process. Its reformation for consciousness helps to reconceptualize their identity, “ascertain how diaspora consciousness is shaped in the host country through specific texts, discourses, practices and institutions.”<sup>[13]318</sup> At first, the self-isolated culture and identity consciousness of the heroine is derived from the abnormality and absence of a complete family, which symbolises a void of core cohesiveness in a culture when confronting an alien environment. Human geographer Edward Ralph points out that “Home is the basis of our identity and the dwelling-place of being”<sup>[17]</sup>. From a sociological viewpoint, “the family is made up of individuals, but it is again a social unit, part of a vast social network”<sup>[17]53</sup>. It can be seen that family is essential to overcome the “sense of wandering” and create “a sense of residence”. However, the reason for her mother’s departure and her father’s self-deprecation is actually attributed to the unfriendly immigrant policy exerted by country’s hostile governance. This reified parody through this story insinuated an irony of the paradoxical nature of the culture policy, signifying the hypocritical representation between the harsh reality towards the exiles and a promised illusion being inclusive. Therefore, the pursuit of the reconciliation with her father is also a metaphor to reconstruct her approval to a stable family. Based on this, readers can delve into the authenticity of the inclusive immigration policy issued by Australia in history, which is a deceptive admission for freedom of immigrants; critically speaking, they were exploited for their labour values for developing modernization. Despite the need for improving economics, the mainstream society still maintains a dominance in contrast to the deeds of diasporic groups. Therefore, there is the reasonability for the self-isolated culture consciousness of the Bulohs, foreshadowing their efforts to breaking such invisible constraints under the objective, exterior shackles.

The second stage features with the deconstruction of the isolated consciousness to rebuild their own cognition of a dual culture conscious. The dual consciousness oscillating between reproaching the host culture and maintaining their native one in the diasporic group is inherent, also an allusion to the contradictory interpretation of that history. A process of “deterritorialization” of the existing mono-cultural conscious into a dynamic, progressive one is occurred. In SOHC, Sonja deconstructed her contradiction in cultural consciousness from the individual exterior forces, with a subjective seeking for establishing communication with friendly others. Sonja’s own initiative to bridge the gap between the two poles of cultural conscious, finally subverted the objective dominance of the host culture. This stage can be demystified from “motion” “immanence” and “deterritorialization” proposed by postmodernist philosopher Deleuze. “Motion” means that it deconstructs the intrinsic properties of things until the boundaries between them are blurred, and eventually all encoded forms are removed. “Motion” usually happens because it is in the “plane of immanence”, which is a constantly changing interface, which distinguishes the object from the “plane of organization” that is limited by structure<sup>[18]</sup>. Here, both Sonja and Bojan’s being conscious at first are confined in a self-isolation and insularity-centered, which barricades their tendency to be open-minded and take communication with others. As the plot progress, some outside factors such as care from Jiri and Helvi, personal active participation in domestic chores, as well as Sonja’s delivery of her daughter, etc, are all motion that constantly delimits and deterritorializes her fossilized being consciousness immanence, deconstruct her negative and introvert subconscious state, and drive her to configure a more macro being state. All these contributed to a multiplication of Sonja’s self engaged in different active and dynamic interrelationship. Deterritorialization in the previous isolated, closed mono-cultural consciousness brought different images and aspects that have similar characteristics, which are never a “closed” one, and the fragmented and pluralistic characteristics are concentrated. This implies the pluralistic conversion of Sonja’s culture consciousness constructed dynamically.

Such lengthy and laborious process emphasizes that the cultural consciousness conversion in diasporic group is enforced to break the imposed ideological constraints to reconstruct a more rational, appropriate one to seek harmony in a new land. Their efforts symbolise the hardships in history to dissolve the contrast between reality. Being an evidence for their strong capability to deconstructing the stereotyped, isolated diasporic conscious, Sonja’s and Bojan’s effort proved the deeper implication behind their cultural dilemma, getting rid of the influence of being the objects caught in aphasia due to a immigrant, diasporic identity. This process subverted Slovenian Australian images as the passive, repressed ones; instead, they rebuilt their strong plural cultural consciousness to illustrate the difference,

individuality and independence in an unfamiliar country.

### 3. Conclusion

As a descendant of European post-war immigrants, Flanagan invited readers to join the diasporic narrative completely, intertwining the dynamics of identity construction, multi-forces struggling in memory and an integrated individual mentality through a diachronic perspective. He refused to see history as a structure, instead, through a diasporic narrative, he dedicated himself to scrutinizing the subjective aspects in the character, then expand the appreciating angle to recontextualize and rehistoricize the related history in the contemporary global community, thus rejecting a totalizing view but a new-historical view. Just as Greenblatt puts it, the efforts of individual in history context is continuously interacting with the broader objective surroundings, creating an awareness that history is a critical discourse rather than an absolute truth. Recontextualizing and rehistoricizing diasporic experiences in contemporary society is conducive to redefine the migrants' history, offering more illustration perspectives for the purpose of subverting the stereotyped, marginalized and negative living status of migrants, thereby incorporating some mini-narratives featured with a dynamic process of the diasporic groups within the context of history.

In a post-colonial globe, the proliferation of multiculturalism and transnationalism of border zones "may require something more than the domesticating metaphor of 'populating'"<sup>[16]</sup><sup>50</sup>. As Akhil Gupta remarks, since "multiculturalism simultaneously contains cultural differences within a unitary national narrative"<sup>[19]</sup>, it is important. In this regard, the diasporic memory power is complicated and intertwined, in which characters often go through the struggle against different sorts of memory, which performed as an inherently cognitive drive force in relation to protagonists' dealing with the cross-cultural hybrid identities and eventually endeavor to achieve a pluralistic self-identity clarification. Meanwhile, final deterritorialized reconstruction of new cultural consciousness through contradictions between the double contexts reveals that the being state is also helpful to guide the diasporic to reorient themselves. This is a broader inquiry into the relationship between memory, identity and consciousness in view of diasporam, giving a preliminary answer to the question of "Who we are, where we come from, and where are we going?" infused with a shared future of mankind vision. Viewed as an incisive query towards race and cultural integration as a grand proposition, this story allows Flanagan to create an independent space for thought free from the hegemony of meta-narratives, making room for mini-narratives—which raise difference, heterogeneity, possibility and multiplicity. Under these circumstances, Flanagan's diasporic narrative is dynamically formulated, stepping out of the known realm of what has been made and demonstrated, reaching for what hasn't been made or represented. This dynamic, opened keynote of writing movements help scholars expand their realms of insight, and embrace the plurality of narratives, readings, and interpretations in terms of diasporic literature.

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