



MONASH University

**SECOND GENERATION MIGRANT WRITERS IN AUSTRALIA:
TRANSCULTURAL CREATIVITY AND WORLD ENGLISHES**

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Abstract

With the transcultural flows of migrants across the globe, Inner Circle countries (Kachru, 1982) are no longer ‘monolingual’ and are, in many senses, host to different varieties of world Englishes (Sharifian, 2009). As such, writers from the Inner Circle also have creative potential to shift transpatially in the choices they make with language. A category of these writers are second generation migrant writers who are ‘insider-outsiders’ with one foot in each door but writing only in English. They possess schemas of knowledge from both home and host cultures, and varying degrees of language competence in their different worlds. This thesis examines the transcultural creativity of selected second generation Australian migrant writers through the lens of World Englishes and Cultural Linguistics. The sources of data are selected texts from Alice Pung, Benjamin Law, and Randa Abdel-Fattah, paratexts drawn from online sources, a questionnaire-survey and follow up interviews of participant responses, and semi-structured interviews with the selected authors. This thesis investigates the potential forms of transcultural creativity through the linguistic strategies used by the authors, and as revealed by participant responses to their transcultural creativity. The results show that the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writers takes both linguistic and discorsal forms. They also show that despite the Australian Englishness of the text, what seems like ‘otherness’ traditionally, has already crossed transcultural boundaries to be part of what is considered ‘the norm’. Furthermore, these results show that the transcultural creativity of the selected texts is a construction of the authors’ metacultural writing competence guiding their readers and the reader’s own interpretation of the text. Findings suggest that the transcultural creativity of second generation writers is produced through the authors’ choice of linguistic strategies, reflection of self, perception of participants, cultural conceptualisations of both home and host cultures, and defamiliarisation and refamiliarisation of dominant social discourses.

Declaration

This thesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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List of Key Terms

Table 1 List of key terms

Key term	Meaning
Home culture/home language	The culture of and language used by the parents at home, the parental tongue(s)
Host culture/host language	The culture of the country the individual lives in, and the official language used in the country
Second generation migrant	First born in Australia in a family to migrant parents

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Creativity is the power to reject the past, to change the status quo, and to seek new potential. Simply put, aside from using one's imagination - perhaps more importantly - creativity is the power to act – Ai Weiwei

An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all – Oscar Wilde

Creativity takes courage – Henri Matisse

The need to be creative can best be demonstrated through language, in which it is almost human nature to be creative. As Runco (2014) writes:

Creativity plays a significant role in language, for example, and in fact this may be the best example of everyday creativity. It is the creativity of language that demonstrates that it is not entirely acquired through experience and learning (p. xi).

Notable physicists, novelists, and artists have been quoted expressing that the act of creativity is stepping out of the ‘ordinary’ and thinking beyond ‘rational’. For example, the above quotes from notable artists—both art and literature—are so inspirational that they are linked and liked and quoted all over the internet, to inspire others, or to represent a thought or feeling that requires attention. According to these inspired voices, creativity is linked with ‘invention’, creative thinking with something ‘risky’ and ‘dangerous’ (and if it is not, then ideas should not be called ideas at all?)—and lastly it is as an act of courage. Matisse’s quote is inspirational for its simplistic approach to an intricate and complex word. However, what is it about ‘creativity’ that requires, or even, inspires ‘courage’? Studies in creativity have examined what creativity means—cooperation as creativity, appropriateness as creativity, cultural values as creativity, convention as creativity, and perception as creativity (Albert & Runco, 1999; Attridge, 2004; Bohm, 1998; Carter, 2004; Csikszentmihaly, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Götz, 1981; Negus & Pickering, 2004; Pope, 2005; Runco, Illies, & Eisenman, 2005; Robert J. Sternberg, 2019; Robert J Sternberg & Lubart, 1995; Zawada, 2006). Of the many types of creativity, linguistic creativity is but one manifestation. Linguistic creativity has been avidly studied from a variety of approaches and understandings, including from a discourse and

creativity perspective (Jones, 2012b) and as a means of examining varieties in world Englishes (Bennui, 2013).

World Englishes, in particular Braj Kachru's (1988a) widely cited and influential model, is the study of English varieties existing and emerging around the world. Kachru's model has paved the way for understanding the complexity and pluricentric nature of the evolving English language by drawing on a concentric circles metaphor that situated countries where English is the only official language, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia to name a few, in the very centre, with developing varieties encircling them. Scholars have recently contended that the framework tends to oversimplify the reality as well as emphasising a norm-dependent – norm-providing dichotomy (Canagarajah, 2012; Saraceni, 2015; Yano, 2001). The same scholars have also critiqued the framework for failing to examine the influence of linguistic diversity within the Inner Circle, as well as the impact of Inner Circle varieties on Kachru's Concentric Circles model. Thus, there are many studies, not necessarily from a Kachruvian approach to world Englishes, examining features and characteristics of world Englishes, and there are quite a few that examine areas of linguistic creativity from a Kachruvian approach. Furthermore, some scholars have examined linguistic creativity in world Englishes in combination with other approaches, such as Cultural Linguistics (Fallatah, 2017; Xu & Sharifian, 2017, 2018). The Cultural Linguistic approach offers a new perspective into the examination of the depth of the creativity shown by bilingual speakers.

Prior studies on various aspects of linguistic creativity in bilingual/multilingual literary texts have demonstrated that the writers are indeed drawing on the languages available in their linguistic repertoire (Albakry & Siler, 2012; Bamiro, 2011; Bennui, 2013; Bennui & Hashim, 2014; Kachru, 1995b; Osakwe, 1999; Thumboo, 2001; Widdowson, 2008a). With English being widely used around the world for a variety of reasons, such as economic, academic, and so on, studies in world Englishes examining linguistic creativity in literary texts have also found that speakers are using English for reasons such as an act of post coloniality—in other words, claiming the English language as tool for expressing cultural sensibility, nativising the language to the local culture (Achebe, 1965; Kachru, 1988b). In world Englishes, most linguistic creativity studies focus on Kachru's notion of *bilinguals' creativity* among other terms, such as *transcultural creativity* and *translingual creativity*. Studies in world Englishes confirm the presence of otherness within the text written in English (Bamiro, 2011; Tawake, 2003) and the value of examining the linguistic creativity of literary texts of a particular variety as indicators of that variety of Englishes (Bennui, 2013). However, in the scholarly literature, most studies are researcher-based text and discourse analysis, with a few scholars prompting the need for more studies that use other research methods to further deepen the findings, whether the approach

focuses on the readers' perception of the text, the English variety in question, or linguistic creativity (Albakry & Siler, 2012; Bennui, 2013).

Despite the diversity that Kachru's model of world Englishes offers to studies of English variation, when it comes to examining literary texts, in particular world Englishes literatures, there have been few studies that focus on Kachru's Inner Circle. This is in spite of the acknowledgement of the transcultural flows of migration (Yano, 2001) that results in the circle becoming a host to many varieties of world Englishes (Sharifian, 2009). Scholars such as Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni (2015) have noted the tendency of world Englishes to avoid the Inner Circle, particularly in studies of world Englishes literature, and suggest that for a paradigm that is inclusive of all varieties it still holds this prejudice against the contexts of, to some extent, the forebears of Englishes. Hence there are only a few current studies that examine linguistic creativity in Australian literary texts from a world Englishes perspective. Scholars, such as D'souza (1991) and BurrIDGE (2010) have noted that second generation migrants—or the next generation within the context of colonial and postcolonial contexts—are not only comfortable using English, but are also developing their own varieties which are blends of English and the Other tongue (alternatively, the local tongue and the Other, English, tongue—to reminisce on one of Kachru's (1982) notable works—*The Other Tongue: English across cultures*).

Second generations are in a unique position, as although they may speak the host language, they are also exposed to the language of their parents. However, there are very few studies that focus specifically on writers within this category, without grouping them as part of the diaspora. Studies focussing on the second generation migrant category in Australia are examined for example, regarding the impact on identity and language maintenance. Those that focus on literary texts, explore the ethnic selves of the authors and identity construction from a literary approach, e.g., Wilson, 2008 and Zevellos, 2005. From these studies there is evidence that this group of speakers are operating from behind a dual lens, inserting both home and host culture selves, while writing in English. Thus, it raises the question then as to what a linguistic approach to these texts would offer.

In light of this, this thesis investigates second generation migrant writing from an Inner Circle context, Australia. In exploring this specific group, it addresses the need for further exploration of Inner Circle contexts from a world Englishes perspective. Scholars suggest that investigating the perception of potential readers would prove valuable to the literature (Albakry & Siler, 2012; Bennui, 2013). Thus, this thesis first conducts a researcher-based analysis of the selected second generation migrant texts and relevant paratexts to gain an insight into the transcultural creativity of the selected

authors. However, it also employs the use of questionnaire-surveys and interviews to explore participant responses to the authors' linguistic and discursal creativity. In addition, it includes interviews with the authors themselves to understand their process of linguistic creativity.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The global spread of English has its challenges for writers across the world, particularly those writing in English for audiences in their own countries or for a more global audience. Previous scholars have argued for the right of non-native writers to write in English as their own for a variety of reasons (such as Achebe, 1965; Bamiro, 2011; Osakwe, 1999; Jin, 2010; Zhang, 2002; Bennui, 2013; Bennui and Hashim, 2013, 2014; Dissanayake and Nichter, 1987; Kachru, 1987), and others have raised awareness of the challenges (Ayoola, 2006; Kacso, 2010).

The statement of the problem thus lies in the potential of writers within the Inner Circle from a world Englishes and Cultural Linguistics perspective. On the surface, and through the results of previous studies in world Englishes, it may seem that texts from the Inner Circle do not 'fit' the category of world Englishes literature because they are written by English as first language speakers. However, Clyne (2004) challenges the 'monolingual mindset', arguing that in the world and in contexts like Australia that is becoming greatly diverse and multilingual, one must move away from being and thinking monolingually to not only appreciating but widening our worldviews to think multilingually. Australia, like many other countries, has experienced a history of taking in immigrants and refugees, who in turn have their own families, developing generations of new linguistically diverse Australians.

If studies in world Englishes are inclusive of all varieties of Englishes, then texts by second generation migrant writers should also belong in the category of world Englishes literatures. They are not only transculturally diverse and approach contemporary conflicts of growing up in Australia as an 'insider outsider' as opposed to an outsider looking in, they present an insight into the linguistic creativity in the author's writing process. In a global context where people are shifting between cultures and transmigrating around the world for a generation or more exploring the creativity in translingual/transcultural, second generation migrant writing presents a new perspective on how cultural backgrounds and languages can influence the way one writes.

1.3 Aims of the study

This study, therefore, aims to investigate the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writers in Australia. It aims to determine the linguistic strategies that second generation migrant writers employ in their written works that reflect their transcultural creativity. It aims to determine how the linguistic strategies used by the second generation migrant writer conveys their understanding of the world, and how they evoke cultural conceptualisations significant to the overall narrative. Furthermore, it aims to explore not only how through the authors' transcultural creativity linguistic strategies can also bring to mind the authors' host and home culture in their conceptualisations of cultural concepts. In this same vein, it aims to understand how the authors blend conceptualisations in reflection of their meshed linguistic repertoire in their writing. In other words, this thesis aims to explore the areas of transcultural creativity in second generation migrant writing where the authors are drawing linguistic and cultural resources of both home language and host language, English, in order to convey cultural concepts that are both creative and potentially accepted and understood by readers of the texts.

This thesis also aims to draw attention to the complexity of the second generation migrants' creative process to demonstrate that despite English being a first language, the linguistic choices made are just as complex as those who are writing in English as a second or acquired language. So thus, an overarching aim is to emphasise the need for a shift away from the monolingual mindset, one that is still prevailing despite the evident promotion of multiculturalism in Australia. On the surface, features of language and themes may seem universal; however, the way readers respond to the text and the writer's creativity can influence how the text is accepted by society, in particular those features of language that creatively mesh the linguistic resources of both home and host culture. Furthermore, this thesis aims to demonstrate that texts from the Inner Circle have much to contribute to world Englishes. Such texts are representative of a group of culturally linguistic users of Englishes who are drawing from a meshed linguistic repertoire of uneven linguistic competences and are evoking meaning through multiple cultural conceptualisations of familiar words.

1.4 Research questions

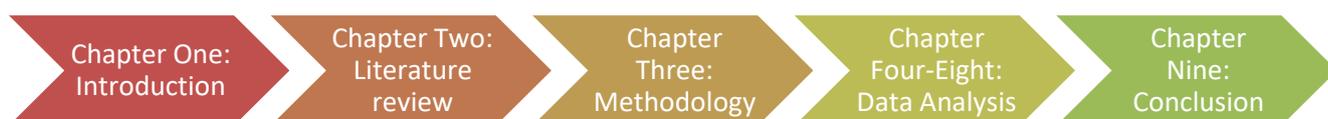
This thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do second generation migrant writers write creatively?

- a. What linguistic strategies do writers use?
 - b. How do they use these strategies?
 - c. How are abstract cultural conceptualisations realised in the text?
 - d. To what extent do readers participating in this study understand cultural conceptualisations that the authors draw on?
- 2) How are these texts and their transcultural creativity received by readers?
 - a. What is considered creativity in language use by the participants?
 - b. To what extent do participants consider the author as being creative?
 - c. To what extent does it influence the readers' interpretation of the selected texts?
 - 3) How do paratexts construct and situate the texts and authors?
 - a. What are the sociocultural influences that construct and contextualise the texts?
 - b. How do paratexts present the texts to other audiences?
 - c. How is the linguistic creativity and language used by the authors perceived by external online sources?
 - 4) How do the authors reflect and respond to their creativity (and creativity of their fellow authors)?
 - a. What is the influence their bilingual competence has on their language creativity?
 - b. How did the authors decide/choose to be 'creative' transculturally?
 - c. How do the authors respond and reflect on their own instances of transcultural creativity?
 - d. How do the authors respond to instances of transcultural creativity from other authors?
 - 5) What are the implications for Inner Circle writers who are writing across cultures?

1.5 Thesis overview

This thesis is divided into nine chapters, according to the structure listed below. The nine chapters are: (1) Introduction, (2) Literature Review, (3) Methodology, (4) – (8) Data analysis, (9) Conclusion.



Following this introductory Chapter 1, Chapter 2 explores the background of the study, examining the framework of world Englishes from a Kachruvian perspective and prior studies in linguistic creativity within this framework. It further details the situation of world Englishes and linguistic creativity studies in the Inner Circle context of Australia, as well as highlighting the situation of multicultural literature in Australia. This chapter also situates the thesis within its conceptual and analytical framework.

Chapter 3 provides the details of the methodological framework employed in this study, including the justification for sources of data, the research instruments, and the analytical approach. It contains three sections, each addressing a significant aspect of the methodology: how the data sources were selected, how data was collected, and how the data was analysed in the final stage.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 of the study analyse and discuss the data according to a number of major themes derived from the research questions. Chapter 4 is titled ‘Transcultural creativity as self’, and specifically focusses on the interview with the authors’ data, examining the authors’ relationship with the English language, their social context growing up in Australia, and how they perceive their creative process. Chapter 5, titled ‘Transcultural creativity as linguistic strategies’ examines the linguistic strategies employed by the selected authors in this study. ‘Transcultural creativity as perception’, Chapter 6, analyses the data from the questionnaire-survey, focussing on the perceptions of the participants to the selected authors’ creativity. Discussions of cultural conceptualisations are interwoven into the analysis of specific examples of linguistic strategies. Chapter 7, titled ‘Transcultural creativity as meaning-making’, examines specific examples from the selected texts of culturally constructed concepts in light of Cultural Linguistics, and the perception of participants of those concepts. Lastly, Chapter 8, ‘Transcultural creativity as breaking conventions’, brings together much of the discussion from the previous chapters, and discusses them in light of the overall discourse of second generation migrant writing.

The final chapter, Chapter 9, provides an overall summary of the findings, its contributions and implications for Inner Circle writers writing across cultures. In addition, it discusses the limitations and recommendations for future studies.

1.6 Significance of the study

To conclude, it is anticipated that this study will contribute to the theoretical field of world Englishes in general and to new perspectives on Australian literature. The contribution is significant in the following senses. First, the exploration of second generation migrant writing is an important next step to understanding the transiting, translanguaging, and transpatial shape of English in the current global linguistic context. Second, examining cultural conceptualisations adds an additional dimension to studies of linguistic creativity in world Englishes, and allows for a better understanding of the linguistic choices that writers make. Third, it presumes that the findings of this thesis will offer insight into transcultural creativity from the perspective of the reader and the authors. Such knowledge throws light on the response towards the writer's creativity and the social constructs that might encourage or hinder the linguistic creativity in the process. Finally, the findings of this thesis offer new ways of understanding transcultural texts from a linguistic and cultural linguistic perspective.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews the world Englishes framework and the research conducted in relation to linguistic creativity. More specifically it examines previous studies in linguistic creativity in world Englishes and sets the theoretical framework that informs the research of this study.

2.2 World Englishes and Linguistic Creativity

English is an international language, not because it is the most widely used first language of speakers and writers, but because there is an increasing number of bilingual and multilingual speakers and writers who are adopting the language for a variety of cross-cultural, intercultural international communication (McKay, 2003). Saxena and Omoniyi (2010) consider language “to be not only crucial to the processes of globalization but to be its life force” (p.1). As such, its role and use in the present global linguistic context has many implications — “for better or worse, by choice or force, English has ‘traveled’ to many parts of the world and has been used to serve various purposes” (Sharifian 2009, p.1). Several approaches have been devised to visualise, understand and predict, to some degree, English in the global context.

One of these approaches is the world Englishes approach, and the following section will delineate this approach. Second, as a solid body of literature focussing on varieties of Englishes around the world, it is accompanied by an equally solid body of literature on linguistic creativity of world Englishes. Much has been written about language and creativity – and with the shift towards the World Englishes paradigm over the last thirty years, investigation into the creativity of bilinguals has been thoroughly examined to some extent. These studies within world Englishes have examined bilingual creativity in terms of linguistic ownership in compositions and literatures in Englishes (Achebe, 1965; Ayoola, 2006; Canagarajah, 2006; Jin, 2010; Omoniyi, 2010; Sridhar, 1982), a method of cultural linguistic expression (Ayoola, 2006; Bhatia & Ritchie, 2008; Osakwe, 1999; Scott, 1990; Tawake, 2003; Watkhaolarm, 2005; H. Zhang, 2002), a means of expressing identity and bilingual creativity particularly in a postcolonial world (Achebe, 1965; Bamiro, 2011; Bolton, 2010;

Fotouhi, 2014, 2015; Sridhar, 1982; Tawake, 2003), and as an examination of varieties of world Englishes (Bennui, 2013; Bennui & Hashim, 2014; Fallatah, 2017; Hashim & Bennui, 2013; Rivlina, 2015). Other studies have also examined bilinguals' creativity in other fields, such as pragmatics (Song, 2009), media (Gao, 2005), and in educational contexts (Sui, 2015; W. Zhang, 2015).

Notably, these studies examine the creative use of English from an 'outsiders looking in' perspective, where the data collected comes from writers of Outer or Expanding Circle backgrounds. For those that examine creativity in written discourse, common themes of these previous studies focus on: 1) writers and literatures coming from formerly colonized regions, such as parts of Africa, and India; 2) linguistic strategies these writers adopt and their stylistic motivations when writing in English; 3) contact literatures, initially beginning with postcolonial/colonial writers and then expanding to literatures from the 'Expanding Circle'; and 4) literatures written in *English* by authors who have learnt English because they live(d) in an Outer Circle country, or because they are from the Expanding Circle.

2.2.1 Language, English, and the Global Context: World Englishes

Kachru and Smith (1985) note that the term 'Englishes' is significant in many ways, including that it "symbolizes the functional and formal variation in the language, and its international acculturation [...] the language now belongs to those who use it as their first language, and to those who use it as an additional language" (p.210). Initially, the term world Englishes was used synchronously with the other term "New Englishes" which applies and refers to the new varieties of Englishes that were emerging in the Caribbean, West and East Africa, and parts of Asia usually as a result of colonisation (Baker & Eggington, 1999; Bolton, 2005, 2006; Jenkins, 2006, 2009; Seargeant, 2010; Seoane, 2016). The term 'New Englishes' now has mostly been "superseded by world Englishes" (Seargeant, 2010, p. 107). Sharifian (2015) defines the term as referring to "the many varieties of the English language that have been developed and used across the globe" (p.iv). This term has also largely been associated with Braj Kachru and his model of concentric circles that categorise English varieties in relation to their status, function and spread across the world.

This model of 'Inner Circle', 'Outer Circle', and 'Expanding Circle', has been revisited since its inception in discussions relating to the developing transcultural flows of the global linguistic context. The Concentric Circles model, while serving as a purposeful model for envisioning the

world and its English speaking population, tends to champion “educated varieties of India, Nigeria, or Singapore” when within the very same communities there are also a variety of emerging and localised practices of less ‘educated’ meshing of idiosyncractic localised variation (Canagarajah, 2011b, p. 256).

Yano (2001) suggests that the Concentric Circles model needs to reflect the blurring lines between language users of the Inner Circle and the Outer Circle. With the Outer Circle representing language users within nations where English is an official (or important) language, users feel they are ‘native’ speakers of English. The other reason relates to the cross-continental and intercontinental cross-cultural flows of immigrants from the ‘Expanding Circle’ to the ‘Inner Circle’ who are shuttling between codes (Canagarajah, 2011b; Sharifian, 2015b; Sridhar, 1982; Yano, 2001). These immigrants bring their varieties and cultures with them to their new home leading to many studies in recent years to investigate and explore intercultural communication in world Englishes (Sharifian, 2015). Bhatt (2001) describes world Englishes to be “varieties of English used in diverse sociolinguistic contexts,” and notes that it is a field of study that “represents a paradigm shift in research, teaching, and application of sociolinguistic realities to the forms and functions of English” (p.527).

A critical element to world Englishes, is the pluralistic nature of the English language; that there are *Englishes* and not simply one *English*. As such, Saraceni (2015) critiques this framework, suggesting that for it to be further applicable in the future, it needs to expand and adopt to shifting contexts and sociolinguistic realities. One such reality is the way in which current forms and variations of world Englishes are perceived and approached. With this distinction of there being *Englishes* and attempts to strive for equality between them, it would seem this has been achieved now, after almost four decades of explosive new research into world Englishes. However, this is not true. Although recognition of varieties is growing, there are still a number of issues that arise from the structure of the world Englishes model at present. Saraceni (2015) highlights the problematic approach to defining varieties that studies in world Englishes have taken over the years, one of which is ‘equality in diversity’. He notes that “there is a difficulty in reconciling the idea of *different* Englishes with that of *equal* Englishes”, suggesting that the emphasis on “difference necessitates a benchmark for comparison” which often means many world Englishes varieties are described in relation to how “they deviate from more established (and more powerful) varieties, namely American and British English” (Saraceni, 2015, pp.78-79). Although in theory this gives other varieties recognition and a sense of codification in description, it inevitably creates a division between ‘the new and different’ and ‘the old variety it deviates from’, and thus the sense of unequal Englishes.

Thus, he suggests that what the paradigm of world Englishes needs is a new approach to looking at language and varieties.

Furthermore, Canagarajah (2012) adds his own voice to the criticism towards the world Englishes framework in constructing his notion of *translingual practice*. His succinct and critical assessment of the world Englishes framework offers a valuable foundation to the overall argument of this thesis:

we must develop an orientation to English as having been already diverse. It hasn't become translingual or hybrid only because of its flows outside its traditional homeland or native speaker communities [...] Not surprisingly, the dominant models of global Englishes leave out native speakers and their communities from their analyses. The diversification of English seems to matter only in cases of its use by multilinguals or non-native communities (p. 57)

The core of the argument here is that indeed the framework has moved mountains in gaining recognition for varieties of Englishes, primarily from the Outer Circle, as legitimate varieties. However, in the process of gaining this recognition, the power of other varieties must be suppressed. While championing 'native' Inner Circle varieties sounds almost dangerously on the border of Philipson's *linguistic imperialism* theory, surely world Englishes has surpassed an age where, to quote an Inner Circle text, as Hermione Granger from *Harry Potter* says, 'fear of a name only increases fear of the thing itself'. Appreciation of the varieties of Englishes should not only focus on Outer Circle norms, but also to study Inner Circle varieties as contributions to world Englishes that are as intra-varietally diverse in their own right, and continue to be so in light of notable factors such as migration transnationally (see Yano, 2001; Sharifian, 2015). Canagarajah (2012) further contends that:

Native speakers are also negotiating English in contact situations, with similar expansions and changes in the indexicalities of their English. WE, EIL, and ELF models leave out a consideration of such processes among Inner Circle speakers. [...] While the products of these interactions are diverse and variable [...] the underlying processes are of more explanatory value (p. 69)

The takeaway here is that this thesis adopts the world Englishes framework as the core approach in examining the creativity of second generation migrant writers, not only for its prestige in discussions of pluralistic varieties of Englishes, but because of the potential this thesis offers to such a framework.

2.2.1.1 *Bilinguals' Creativity*

'Monolingualism' in multilingualism, sociolinguistic, and similar approaches, and notions of language purism are "political products of European nationalism and are ideologically very close to concepts of racial purity" (Saraceni, 2015, p. 109). It is not a new discovery that "multilingual language users have more options of codes, strategies, and nuances since they control more than one linguistic system" (Kachru & Nelson, 2006, p. 19). Scholars have previously examined in abundance how language can be mixed and switched as instances of bilingual creativity (for example: Bandia, 1996; Bhatt, 2008; Chan, 2009; Chik, 2010; Duran, 1994; Kharkhurin, 2008; Kharkhurin and Wei, 2008; Li, 2013; Simonton, 2008; Tay, 1989). Usually these studies are more focussed on 'creativity in bilingualism' as opposed to 'bilingual creativity'. 'Creativity in bilingualism' is the act of using the languages at one's disposal in a creative manner, code-switching and code-mixing, intertwining both languages, but also displaying a diversity in creative thought processes (Kharkhurin & Wei, 2014). Although 'creativity in bilingualism' and 'bilingual creativity' are used interchangeably, there is both a distinct difference between both usages, and at the same time, an overlap which can be categorised as aspects of a greater term: 'bilinguals' creativity'.

Kachru's (1985) term 'Bilinguals' creativity' refers to the creative processes that result from competence in two or more languages. It recognises that non-native speakers are creating "new, culture-sensitive and socially appropriate meanings—expressions of the bilingual's creativity—by altering, manipulating the structure and functions of English in its new ecology" (Bhatt, 2001, p. 534). It is not simply 'bilingual creativity', but bilinguals' with the possessive apostrophe – in the sense that it is not just a phenomenon that occurs, it is also a phenomena that belongs to bi-/multi-lingual users of English (and also, if one considers cross-lingual contexts, bilingual users of other languages). Bilinguals' creativity involves two aspects. The first is a text designed with the use of two or more linguistic resources, and the second, use of linguistic strategies for psychological, sociological, and attitudinal reasons (Kachru, 1985). He examines the three approaches to bilingual creativity: linguistic, literary, and pedagogical. The emphasis on literary approach that acts as a foundation of many current studies in linguistic creativity in world Englishes, focusses on texts written in a language other than the mother tongue of the writer. However, Kachru notes that even this is conflicting in some cases, particularly in traditional multilingual societies where the mother tongue is not as clear. A traditional case is Singapore, where both the institutionalised variety of English and the basilectal

variety are part of the linguistic repertoire and therefore available for appropriate selection by the Singaporean creative writer.

Thus, based on this understanding of bilinguals' creativity in a literary approach, Kachru suggests the following three processes of creativity used in non-native literatures in English: 1) 'Expanded' contextual loading of the text which includes the thematic and de-Englishisation of language away from Judaic-Christian traditions; 2) 'altered' *Englishness* in cohesion and cohesiveness, such as through stylistic foregrounding; and 3) 'transferred' discourse strategies, such as effectively using the 'mixed' style of two or more codes. The bilinguals' creativity in contact literature is a nativised thought process that does not correspond to Judeo-Christian traditions of literary and linguistic discourse creativity, including canons of discourse types, text design, stylistic conventions, and traditional thematic range of English (B. B. Kachru, 1987). Therefore, the strategies and styles used by the bilingual cannot be judged based on one norm from one particular cultural tradition and nativisation of text means that the context of situation needs also be altered to match (B. B. Kachru, 1987).

In addition, Kachru (1987) contends that "such creativity is not to be seen as a formal combination of two or more underlying language designs, but also as a creation of cultural, aesthetic, societal and literary norms" (p. 130). The resources and processes of creation may produce a piece of work that on the surface mirrors texts found in the Inner Circle but must be understood at a different level within different spaces of contexts. As such, Kachru (1987) suggested three aspects of nativisation:

- Nativisation of context: contextualising unfamiliar terms to give meaning. However, the lexis should also be examined in terms of the discourse and context that it is situated in and also by who it was written.
- Nativisation of cohesion and cohesiveness: cohesion and cohesiveness should be redefined according to the institutionalised variety that is appropriate to the universe of the discourse.
- Nativisation of rhetorical strategies: the inclusion of consciously or unconsciously devised strategies that are drawn from schema understandings of interactions in the native/first culture and transferred into English (this aspect includes the linguistic realisation of such devices as native similes and metaphors, transcreation of proverbs and idioms, and others which will be explored in more depth in section 2.2.2.2).

Thus bilinguals' creativity involves the recognition of competence in more than two languages, three main processes of creativity, and processes of nativisation that cannot be compared to traditions, in particular Judeo-Christian, of literary and linguistic creativity. Several scholars, such as Bamiro (2011) have employed Kachru's bilinguals' creativity framework in analysing the linguistic creativity of non-native writers.

However, a few scholars take the framework further. For example, in furthering Kachru's (1983a, 1985) bilinguals' creativity and also his transcultural creativity framework (Kachru, 1995b), Jones (2010) argues and critiques the present approaches to language and creativity, while proposing another approach to creativity, that is, discourse and creativity. In arguing for the theories and approaches to bilinguals' creativity at present, he takes Kachru's own definition, listed above, and focusses on the second entailment of bilinguals' creativity, noting that there are many studies that currently focus on the first entailment, regarding the uses of two or more linguistic resource to design a creative text (Jones, 2010). What is concerning for Jones (2010) is that most of the work currently being done in language and creativity "still falls into the 'language and creativity' paradigm due to its bias towards linguistic creativity – the novelty or inventiveness of linguistic *products*" (p. 471). Though this is fair, he does propose that his discourse and creativity perspective places 'value' as a primary concern, not simply aesthetic value but "rather in the sense of pragmatic value, the extent to which our so called 'creative' uses of language actually help us to accomplish things in the material world and in our relationships with others" (Jones, 2010, p. 471). This framework thus sees to it that:

There may, therefore, be nothing intrinsically 'creative' about an utterance or a text that comes under the scrutiny of such an approach – namely, there may be no 'language play', no metaphors or puns or other rhetorical devices, and it may not even be intrinsically original or inventive. Instead, what may be 'creative' may have more to do with the strategic way language is *used*, and what may be 'created' or not be an inventive linguistic product, but rather a new way of dealing with a situation or a new set of social relationships (Jones, 2010, p. 472).

2.2.2 Wave 1: Postcolonial and colonial writers

The position many writers within this wave of Outer Circle, formerly colonised writers take, is one of postcolonialism. The resistance and desire to try to use the English language to "overturn the

assumptions of cultural and racial inferiority imposed by colonizers and foolishly accepted by the colonised” is present in many works (Kehinde, 2009, p. 76). As such the English language takes on a powerful role, one that is often contested, as either the weapon to strike back or another means of imperialism. This section examines the emergence of writers of world Englishes literatures, and investigates the role of English in such literatures, and then how writers creatively manipulated the language to meet both the context and to communicate their messages and stories.

2.2.2.1 *Writing in English*

In 1965, Chinua Achebe questions the existence of ‘African Literature’ and the language of the literature, in his article, *‘English and the African Writer’*. This piece of reflection regards not only his own approach to using English and writing, but the inescapable questions that arose concerning African Literature in both content and the language of which it is written. Achebe (1965) writes:

I have indicated somewhat off-handedly that the national literature of Nigeria and of many other countries of Africa is, or will be, written in English. This may sound like a controversial statement, but it isn’t. All I have done has been to look at the reality of present-day Africa. This ‘reality’ may change as a result of deliberate, e.g. political, action. If it does an entirely new situation will arise, and there will be plenty of time to examine it (p. 28).

He considers the linguistic diversity of Africa as a whole, and then of nations, and recognizes the advantages and disadvantages of the colonisation. While it disrupted the African way, Achebe acknowledges, “it did create big political units where there were small, scattered ones before” and “it gave them a language with which to talk to one another” (p. 28). For Achebe, to have a language like English as a common ground was advantageous, as it would be impossible to learn all the languages in Africa. He saw English as a language to be manipulated and nativised to reflect the speaker’s worldview, asserting:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings (p. 30).

Although Achebe is aware of the possibility that using English might strip African writing bare of its Africanness, however he argues otherwise, that instead of sterility, he sees a new voice out of Africa “speaking of African experience in a world-wide language” (p. 29). He does not see the need for the

African writer to learn English like a native speaker but should learn it well enough to use it effectively in creative writing. What the African writer should do is “aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost” (p. 29).

As a leading voice and writer often cited in literature regarding bilinguals’ creativity and world Englishes literature, Achebe stakes a place in the world for writers of similar ilk in which he claims ownership of a language that was still considered a property of the English. Nonetheless, while Achebe speaks positively of adopting English, there have been varying views taking the positions of either English as a language of creation or English as the language of linguistic imperialism (Kirkpatrick, 2007a). On the one hand, there are writers like Achebe who refuse to believe that writing in English is akin to a sin. For example, Raja Rao (cited in Kirkpatrick, 2007) writes “We shall have English with us and amongst us, and not as our guest or friend, but as one of our own, of our castes, our creed, our sect and of our tradition” (p. 341); Anita Desai (cited in Kirkpatrick, 2014) expresses that English is “flexible, elastic, resilient, capable of taking on whatever tones, rhythms and colours I choose” (p. 38). On the other hand, there are voices of writers who only see English used for writing as a source of further cultural and linguistic imperialism; for example, Sri Lankan poet Lakdasa Wikramasinha (cited in Bailey, 1996) states “[t]o write in English is a form of cultural treason. I have had for the future to do this by making my writing entirely immoralist and destructive” (p. 43). This conflict of voices highlights the contesting and dominating presence of English in locations where its introduction was not a choice (Bailey, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 2007a, 2007b).

In this early stage of writing in world Englishes non-native writers were predominantly from the Outer Circle, for example, Africa and South Asia in places such as Nigeria and India. ‘Writing in Englishes’ differs from the traditional literary canon, wherein which the latter takes on the “Western epistemology as default” while the former “represents a counter-voice to the icons of the literary tradition of the ‘mother country’ in postcolonial critique” (Omoniyi, 2010, p. 472). Examining literature and the creativity of such texts in English has predominantly been done through the lens of monolingualism as the norm and the native tongue (Kachru, 1995a). Literature written in English has tended to fall into the singular category of English Literature regardless of English variety or geographical origin (Brewer, 1985). With the rise of world Englishes, these texts of writers in Englishes were labelled as *contact literatures* by B. B. Kachru (1987), in the same sense as contact languages – that it has two faces, one, a national identity and two, linguistic distinctiveness. It became somewhat a notable point as a body of literature unapologetically written in a variety of Englishes can signal the existence of such variety. Hence, Thumboo (1999) argues that literature in English only

“starts as contact literature” but then eventually evolves and “acquires body, momentum, and contemporary preoccupation” leaving its ‘contact’ quality as a historical technicality (p. 256). Debates over the naming of literatures written in Englishes have been tossed up over the years, but ultimately, as Karn (2013) finds, that ‘world Englishes literature’ is often attached to ‘world Englishes’ and ‘new Englishes’—the potential effect of being associated exclusively with post-colonial literature that features new Englishes emerging from those regions. In the initial years of World Englishes, this was perhaps the most relevant—after all, research in Kachru’s world Englishes, began with exploration of postcolonial varieties and the idea of legitimising speakers of those varieties of Englishes. When it comes to writing in Englishes, Kehinde (2009) isolates two significant positions of writers in Africa – those who call for “appropriation and reconstitution of English as a medium of African literature” and those who advocate against the use of English as a primary medium of African literature (p. 78).

Some writers, use English in the paradoxical fashion of “writing *against* English *in* English” (Bailey, 1996, p. 43). This is a sentiment also noted by Ayoola (2006) who recognises “...clearly an inherent absurdity in bashing the white man in his own language” (p.5). However, language choice is a ‘dilemma’ for the African writer (Ayoola, 2006). They may choose to follow the example of Wole Soyinka and choose to write in English, or Ngugi wa T’hiongo who switched to Kikuyu partway through his writing career (Ayoola, 2006). The local language may be an ideal choice; however, it may not be the most logical as it is not ‘taught’ in terms of writing or reading, whereas English is. The binary of employing English as the written choice of language for Nigerian writers, Osofisan (1984 cited in Ayoola, 2006) positions, presents the opportunity to extend the writer’s audience beyond Africa but at the same time potentially distances him from his own people. As such, for those who do choose to use English, they may do so with the intention of demonstrating that they are “as good, if not better in their use of the language” (Ayoola, 2006, p. 6). This in turn, may backfire on the writers, if their prose becomes incomprehensible to the audience. The conflict of writing in English is also caught in a binary of non-native writers who see English as their only language of literary expression, and those who use English as determined by the theme (Sridhar, 1982). Sridhar argues that “a language belongs to whoever uses it, and is not the sole property of its native speakers” (p. 293). For some writers, English is as native to them as their mother tongues, and therefore it is a natural language to use.

The complexity of the relationship of those who use English in post-colonial nations as well as other nations around the world is also tied to political, social, and individual choice in a web of power and influence, and with the latest wave of globalisation. For example, in the Philippines where

historically, the nation has been colonised by the Spanish, the Americans, and the Japanese, going through different periods of language contact, English has remained a predominantly used code alongside their local codes of Filipino/Tagalog (Abad, 2004; Hidalgo, 2004). It is a creative struggle for writers within this nation, who must use an adopted language to express and somehow convey the Filipino identity and socio-political circumstances (Abad, 2004). Even so, it is not always clear if the literature of this nature is poetic imperialism or indigenous creativity (Gonzalez, 1987). However, in examining Philippine literature, as far back as the early 1900s, Gonzalez concludes that though there is some evidence of indigenous creativity, and that “the creativity of Filipino writers, both poets and short-story writers, although derivative from American and British tradition, shows innovation within the traditions of American and British literary creation” (p.154).

2.2.2.2 Nativisation and linguistic strategies

It is important for the writer to find a style to express their worldview and that readers must familiarise themselves with the writer’s “general epistemological viewpoint or the sum of total beliefs, preconceptions and values which the writer shares with others within a socio-cultural context” (Parthasarathy, 1987, p. 164). The predominant approach is the recognition, as per Kachru (1987), of nativisation of English that involves experimentation on several levels including vocabulary, collocation, idiomaticisation, syntax, and rhetorical patterning. These levels of experimentation are realised in the choice of linguistic strategies used by the writer. Some of the more common examples of these strategies found by scholars (such as Albakry & Hancock, 2008; Bamiro, 2011; Osakwe, 1999; Parthasarathy, 1987; Sridhar, 1982; Tawake, 2003) include:

- Loan translations
- Lexical, phrasal, and idiomatic transplants from the mother tongue
- Nativise syntactical structures
- Recreate native linguistic tempo (imitate native-style repertoire and/or speech styles)
- Recreate dialects and language variations
- Proverbs
- Similes, metaphors and other devices
- Names and modes of address
- Nativise cultural, historical, and social discourse

- Native literary styles of storytelling blended with non-native styles
- Code-switching and code-mixing

Although the English language is shared by native and non-native alike, culture specific manifestations in language are not always shared or recognized but are features of language that can no longer be taken for granted (Parthasarathy, 1987). In world Englishes literatures, these cultural manifestations in language are notable in the strategies that they use. For example, in examining Raja Rao's novels (*Kanthapura*, 1938; *The Serpent and the Rope*, 1960; and *The Cat and Shakespeare*, 1965), Parthasarathy (1987) notes that names and ways of naming used in Rao's works such as 'One-eyed linga' or 'husking rangi' reflect the nature and importance of interpersonal relationships of Indian culture. The linguistic strategy of naming and modes of address can be creatively or directly translated. Incorporation of untranslated words from the indigenous language, in other words, direct borrowings or transplants, in literary texts also allow the author to convey to the audience the extent of the relationships and express the feelings between characters and their extended families that cannot be expressed only in English (Tawake, 2003). Another instance of the creativity in use of linguistic strategy is in Osakwe's (1999) analysis of Wole Soyinka's English poetry. The use of literal translation in Soyinka's English language poetry draws on Yoruba poetic discourse. For example:

. . . They rose

The dead whom fruit and oil await

On doorstep shrine and road, . . .

(Soyinka, 1967, *Idanre*, p. 65 cited in Osakwe, 1999, p. 64)

Osakwe (1999) highlights that the use of 'fruit and oil' here is culturally loaded. Within a Yoruba cultural context, these are sacrificial ingredients for ancestral worship and "a way of smoothing the relationship between the living and dead" (p. 66). Such strategies, Osakwe concludes, are used when felt appropriate by the poet to add "Yoruba local colour, flavor, rhythm, and density" in a manner which retains the authenticity of the culture underneath the "English expression mask" (p. 76).

Through the use of linguistic strategies, world Englishes writers are also able to express native sensibility. In the works of Patricia Grace, a Māori English writer, English is the language of choice, however, her stories are told through narrative voices and structures that are designed to evoke the way "older Maori had of telling a story and mark the story's departure from the linear form of beginning-middle-end that is characteristic of traditional Eurocentric fiction" (Tawake, 2003, p. 49). Other strategies Tawake (2003) notes include specific types of the characters, for example, the

presence of an unborn child narrating is considered innovative as it emphasises the Māori conceptualisation of the relationship between the living and the dead, the past and the present. The fabric of the text is entrenched in ‘nativeness’—in culture, that has influenced and shaped the course of the story. This is also evident in Dissanayake and Nichter’s (1987) study of the native sensibility in South Asian, Sri Lankan writer Punyakante Wijenaikē’s works. They focussed on three prevalent metaphors within Wijenaikē’s works: the food idiom, the hot/cold dichotomy, and silence as a significant tool. They claim that although readers can perhaps understand the text via a more superficial study, an understanding of the pervasive referential frameworks of cultural knowledge and the importance placed on certain actions can lead to a “deeper appreciation of cultural sensibility and a sharing of richer imagery” (Dissanayake & Nichter, 1987, p. 119). Tawake (2003) echoes a similar argument; examining these Outer Circle texts in this manner can influence and impact the analyses and interpretations in ways that give “testimony to the limitations of a European literary theory to explicate and evaluate literature written by bilinguals in a bilingual society” (p. 53).

Similarly, Albakry and Siler (2012) and Albakry and Hancock (2008) take what has been previously researched in bilinguals’ creativity in world Englishes, and apply it to an area of literature that has received little attention, namely Anglophone Arab literature from Egypt. Respectively, they examined *Map of Home* (2009) by Randa Jarrar and *Map of Love* (1999) by Ahdaf Soueif. Albakry & Hancock (2008) examined the motivation and strategies of code-switching in Ahdaf Soueif’s *Map of Love* (1999) as a literary device in fiction. They find that Soueif’s construction of *The Map of Love* (1999) and use of English places the author in a position “no different from the West African, Indian or Singaporean writers in English” as she pushes the “frontiers of the English language so as to express and simulate the multicultural experience of her characters” (Albakry & Hancock, 2008, p. 233). Albakry & Siler (2012) on the other hand, presented a linguistic investigation on *Map of Home* (2009). The novel is an autobiography focussing on the author’s life across two different cultures, and what Albakry & Siler refer to as ‘borderland’ literatures. They adopt Kachru’s framework of contact literatures and bilingual creativity, however critique the gap in previous studies, noting that the major focus is on literatures within the Outer or Expanding Circle that are located within *one* locality rather than those in which “creative processes may derive from two or more cultural homeland experiences and may include full immersion and familiarity in native and non-native English speaking regions” (p. 111). As such ‘borderland’ literatures are neglected. While the term ‘borderland’ may be associated with geographic boundaries, political lines of territories, these researchers also note that it can relate to “an interaction of cultural realities: language, religion, history, tradition, norms, etc” (p. 111). Thus, they further expand, to some degree, Kachru’s notion

of 'contact literature'. Furthermore, they conclude that in such borderland fiction, particularly those that cross oceans and not merely physical political borders (i.e. American and Latin cultures), bilinguals' creativity in these texts are designed to "capture both Middle Eastern and Western contexts and how they are negotiated by the narrator" (p. 119). The creation of the text and language use exist within greater frameworks of historical, political and cultural contexts, and may be used to speak directly to a Western audience to "humanize their culture to non-Arab readers" (p. 120), although they admit they can only speculate on how such texts are received by these readers. With this Albakry and Siler (2012) demonstrate insight into how Kachru's frameworks can be applied to borderland texts, and brings afore the fact that many previous studies in this area have relied heavily on a discourse analysis of the text, on studying linguistic and stylistic features of the text, and how writers confirm and demonstrate their bilinguals' creativity. What has not been attempted, is to engage with the readers of such texts in order to understand how their creativity is being received in terms of the content of the texts and of the language use and choices as well.

In recognising the linguistic creativity of world Englishes literatures, one must also acknowledge that the degree of nativisation may vary among generations of writers, in the same way that a migrant family can vary in mother tongue competence depending on the generation, i.e, the first migrant generation may be less competent in the language of their host country than their grandchildren, the third generation. In world Englishes studies, D'souza (1991) demonstrates this in her examination of speech acts in Indian fiction written in English. She investigates how speech acts that feature prominently in indigenous grammar are reproduced in Indian English fiction, focusing on ten texts including Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) and Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English, August* (1988). Her findings include the manner in which she categorises the texts:

- Minimizers: Language use that is least marked (i.e. kept within the boundaries of the English standard)
- Nativizers: Language use that is culturally loaded but remains unmarked (i.e. writers "seek to recreate within the text the speech acts that they see as salient within the Indian context" (D'souza, 1991, p.309))
- Synthesizers: Language use that blend both the strategies used by minimizers and nativizers

The difference between nativizers and synthesizers is that the former includes writers such as Anand and Bhattacharya who were born early in the century in a context where debates of nationalism and criticism of linguistic patriots were strong, whereas the synthesizers belong to the next generation.

This next generation emerges in a time where there *is* a debate of the English language still dominant, but they have grown up feeling “comfortable with the English language and have no idea to apologize for their use of it [...] they have grown up speaking English in a country in which English is no longer a foreign language” (D’souza, 1991, p. 313). Thus, the strategies of synthesizers may vary from those of nativizers as they are representing Indian English, and not a language that mimics the indigenous one.

Therefore, for this wave of writers, there is an overall concern for the dominance of English, but in turn, the desire to wield this language is not because it dominates, but for the power it offers to those who used it. Writers find themselves having the ability to twist a language deemed as postcolonial, into a language to which is their own and can express their realities and contexts. Much of the studies from this wave are dominated by a postcolonialist discourse, one that causes some writers to walk away from English, decreeing that it is not worthy as the language of the colonisers. However, for those who do use English, such as Chinua Achebe, Raja Rao, scholarly literature in world Englishes focus on how these writers make English their own—make English Literature into *Literature in Englishes*.

2.2.3 Wave 2: Expanding Circle writers

Although investigation into the linguistic creativity of world Englishes writers has never specifically been limited to those of the ‘Outer Circle’, it has only been within the last 20 years that studies in world Englishes have examined contact literatures from the Expanding Circle (Bennui & Hashim, 2014). Many of these studies also adopt Kachru’s bilinguals’ creativity framework to examine the linguistic creativity of literatures from the Expanding Circle. In the scholarly literature, a large portion has primarily examined Thai English texts (Bennui, 2013; Bennui & Hashim, 2014; Buripakdi, 2008, 2012; Chutisilp, 1984; Hashim & Bennui, 2013; Khotphuwang, 2010; Watkhaolarm, 2005) and literatures and writing in English from an ‘Other’ perspective, such as Chinese (Ibáñez, 2016; Jin, 2010; Xu, forthcoming; H. Zhang, 2002).

For non-native speakers from the Expanding Circle, English becomes the medium because without the imposition and history of a colonial past, choice of language is guided by the individual motivations and preference. Being members of Kachru’s Expanding Circle, their categorisation suggests that the geographical regions have not been influenced or affected by colonisation of nations

from the Inner Circle. As such, an author's reasons for writing in English and the attitudes towards the English language vary from their Outer Circle counterparts. Compared to the postcolonial standpoints of Outer Circle writers, as seen in the previous section, Kacso (2010) found in her study of Expanding Circle authors and their attitudes and motivations in writing in English, that the non-native authors had a differing view of English. She notes:

When asked about their personal attitude towards English, they all claimed a strong positive connection with it. For several of them, the liberating feeling coming from it makes it the main or, in certain circumstances, the only means of creative expression (p. 73).

Kacso (2010) examines more generally a number of Expanding Circle writers regarding the sociolinguistic reality of their created texts. She contacted a number of authors from a variety of Expanding Circle countries who wrote in English, including: Argentina (*María Cristina Azcona*), Indonesia (*Sukasah Syahdan*), Israel (*Ada Aharoni, Luiza Carol, Mois Benarroch*), Italy (*Anna Piutti*), Mongolia (*Oyungerel Tsedevdamba*), and Thailand (*Pongpol Adireksarn*). The findings are illuminating in that some writers, such as Benarroch, did not have a clear answer, except to rationalise that the English language was among the languages available in their context, and it was the only one that was not associated with any negative emotions for the author. The freedom of a language possessing an international flavour, made English an attractive medium for Benarroch. This is the same for Carol, who also uses English because of its international quality and its potential when immigrating. However, she later shifts to using Esperanto as a means of expression. Piutti and Aharoni, on the other hand, both found writing in English to be the most natural and familiar language for them to express themselves. For Azcona, Tsedevdamba, Syahdan, and Adireksarn, writing in English is intentional and focussed with the reasons ranging from the onomatopoeic potential of English over the native tongue, to spreading native cultures and proving that one can indeed write well creatively in an L2 language, to using English as a tool to send specific messages. Thus, for Expanding Circle writers, the motivations for writing in English are varied. To some extent we see similarities to the motivations of Outer Circle, postcolonial writers, but the attitudes differ due to the socio-political contexts in which these arguments arise.

Jin (2010) provides a close encounter of the motivations of a non-native writer from the Expanding Circle. As a writer from this circle himself, notable for his own highly regarded published novels, he argues that Standard English “may have to be stretched” (p. 466) to enrich its language, flavoured by the many users who are not from the Inner Circle or who *are* within the Inner Circle but who may not be seen as ‘native’ to some because of their immigrated status. Where Achebe (1965)

argues for the writers of colonised Africa, and other writers of Africa who write in English, Jin argues for the writers of the rest of the world that has not previously been colonised with English thrust upon them. The struggles in writing in English for non-native writers are personal affairs even though the interests between those who acquire English and those who inherit it, are not so different (Jin, 2010). It seems both Achebe (1965) and Jin (2010) are able to distinguish between their English, and the English of another—in this case, presumably, what might be considered Inner Circle English and the standard English that has shifted its way from the Inner to the Outer, and requires to be stretched into the Expanding Circle periphery territory.

The stretching of English to accommodate raises questions for the author that echoes in some ways D'souza's categorisation of Indian English texts. Jin (2010) asks how to deal with 'foreignness' when writing in English, in other words, how would mother tongues be rendered in English and how to present other Englishes? The linguistic strategies used by Expanding Circle writers exhibit many features that were also demonstrated in Outer Circle and postcolonial writing (H. Zhang, 2002). Some examples of such strategies include lexical borrowing, loan translation, coinages, semantic shifts, hybridisation, reduplication, acronyms, clipping, ellipsis, curse words and obscenities, address terms, proper names, vocabulary items of uniquely cultural reference, political discourse, metaphors and proverbs, nativized discourse strategies and styles, colloquial variety of English, codemixing/switching, and norms of written discourse (Bennui, 2013; H. Zhang, 2002). In a study of Ha Jin's works, Zhang (2002) refers to these strategies as 'innovations' and are predominantly in the form of 'lexical innovation' and 'cultural metaphor'. However, innovations in this sense, are not necessarily newfound words though they may be newfound (to the English language) collocations and figures of speech, they are English lexis used with specific cultural foundations which, on the surface may make sense, but below, derive greater meaning. For example, in addressing transcultural creativity, specifically the comprehensibility and interpretability of transcreations, Bennui (2013) refers to the presence of religious texts in Thai English fiction as a potential point of concern regarding interpretability:

The Bible is modified, not commented, with the theme that temptation affects attaining the enlightenment. This version is distinctive in that this sacred text requires the readers' deep interpretation on not only Christianity but also Buddhism and Hinduism since its theme centres on these three religions. Overall, transcreation of religious expressions represents a salient stylistic strategy of the transcultural creativity in Thai English literature (p. 340).

He considered this a significant point of discussion under the nativisation of context strategy as it demonstrates the intricacies of the sociohistorical discourse around religion and religious texts in Thailand and how it might be transcended into the limitations of English.

Another example of the use of linguistic strategy and the agency of the writer can be found in Ha Jin's works. At a linguistic level, Ha Jin's works contain a range of linguistic devices that convey "the peculiarities of Chinese political and social life" (Zhang, 2002, p. 313). Jin (2010) demonstrates this with his own personal experience, a strategy he adopts to express the inexpressible in English. Consider here how Jin described his own experience:

Among the Chinese, there are some misconceptions of my way of using English. People often say I directly translate Chinese idioms. This is not true. I did use a good number of Chinese idioms because most of my characters speak Mandarin, but in most cases I altered the idioms some, at times drastically, to suit the context, the drama and the narrative flow (p. 466).

An example that he provides is his use of the Chinese expression for describing a bald crown, *di zhong hai* (地中海):

...a sea within a landscape, which sounds funny mainly because it is a homonym of 'the Mediterranean' in Mandarin. In English there is no way to reproduce the humour if we simply transcribe the idiom, so the narrator of my story 'A Pension Plan' describes her boss's crown this way: 'with a shiny bald spot like a lake in the mouth of an extinct volcano'. Clearly, the expression may sound Chinese to the English ear, but it has actually shed its Chineseness. (p. 466)

Creativity is often inspired by a desire to express what the norm cannot provide, or that the convention and tradition has no existing space for describing it (Maynard, 2007; Negus & Pickering, 2004). With English only, or even for writing (including speaking) solely in another language—in particular, non-native/second language/foreign—a language user will undoubtedly feel the restraints of such language. There will be expressions—idiomatic, proverbial, metaphoric, for example—that cannot be expressed in English, and which will lead writers to draw on linguistic repertoires of their mother language. Jin (2010) himself, has expressed that such methods of creating foreignness in his written creative English sheds its Chineseness. A direct translation may not be understood by the reader, and it may either be questioned, or ignored. On the other hand, a literal translation may be all that is necessary, and that just by simply using it in a new language – i.e. English – it develops a new meaning of its own. Jin describes both of these strategies as methods of stretching the English language.

Studies of Expanding Circle writers, such as Bennui (2013) aim at presenting an approach to examine varieties of Englishes in world Englishes through the literature. This echoes Butler (1997) in the sense that a criterion for a variety is to have a body of literature written in that variety of English without apology. Bennui's study thus demonstrates that this is possible. His study not only demonstrates the uniqueness of Thai English, but the indicators of an apparent Thai English variety. He uses specifically fictional texts of Thai English literature, rationalising that:

non-fiction texts convey linguistic creativity only slightly when compared to fiction. Consequently, fiction embodies dialogues with colourful flavours of linguistic formations via the characters' interaction, and narratives requiring a deep rhetorical analysis. This feature of fiction displays a relationship between fictional English and natural English in print of speech in the selected Thai English literature. The Thai writers create the characters' speech patterns which closely resemble spoken Thai English. Furthermore, fiction also carries thematic components that need an interpretation with the socio-cultural background of Thai literary discourse and conventions (p. 11).

He further highlights that his study differs from previous studies that examine Thai English literature (see Chutisilp, 1984; Watkhaolarm, 2005; Knotphywiang, 2010) by examining linguistic creativity more generally and not only lexical and stylistic innovations (Bennui, 2013). As such, a study like Bennui (2013) presents a significant contribution to future similar studies in world Englishes. He does however recognise that his study only focusses on a textual analysis that describes and discusses the linguistic and literary features of selected Thai English fiction, and that future studies would benefit from employing other methods like interviewing the authors or distributing questionnaires to students and instructors in a world Englishes course. This is evident in the complimentary (but only in a broad relevant manner) nature of Kacso's (2010) study, as she conducted and interviewed her Expanding Circle authors in order to understand their attitudes and motivations in writing in English. In interviewing the authors, she was able to further explore those major issues such as the authors' themes and goals (of the writing), audience reception, language related issues and stylistic matters, and the publication and review process.

This wave of writers experiences a space that resides in the periphery of users of English, who are to some degree untouched by the discourses of colonialism and postcolonialism and are using English for a variety of reasons—not all of which are negative. They choose to write in English because of its international reach or because in their context, it is not linked to much negativity throughout their literary writing experiences. The studies that examine literatures from writers of the

Expanding Circle demonstrate the use of linguistic strategies in a similar manner to those in the Outer Circle, with similar motivations but potentially different reasons. As the choice of writing in English is less about striking back against the Empire, and more on a personal level for some authors, such as those in Kacso's study and Ha Jin, so too are the linguistic creativity processes that the writer undergoes. The linguistic decisions they make in writing in English are innovative to the language, though they may sound foreign to 'native' English readers.

2.2.4 Wave 3: Writing, language, and creativity from the Inner Circle: A focus on Australia and second generation migrant writing

This section discusses the potential to expand the Kachruvian approach to the world Englishes framework. Furthermore, this section examines a specific Inner Circle nation, Australia and the issues that have arisen regarding the literature and language of these transcultural Australian literatures. It will end with a discussion of the challenges of examining texts from the Inner Circle.

2.2.4.1 *Linguistic creativity of the next order: the potential to revisit the Inner Circle*

First generation writers show a distinct awareness of the language they use in writing in English, but for second and third generations in English speaking countries, although their social experiences overlap with the previous generation, and individual experiences growing up in an Inner Circle country will differ, they diverge from the previous generation. Firstly, they are born in an English speaking country (more specifically, an Inner Circle country that has been associated with ideals of 'prestige' and 'nativeness'). Secondly, their linguistic repertoire may either be bi- or multi-lingual, or limited to English only, perhaps with some linguistic heritage from their parents but inadequate knowledge and/or competence for a conversation.

As argued by Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni (2015), there is much the Inner Circle can lend itself to research into world Englishes. According to Pandey (2019), since Kachru's *bilinguals' creativity*, there has been a refocussing on the context of creation as a contextual outcome of identity politics "triggered in part by taylorization attempts in all zones of production" (p.203). Varughese (2012) is wide-thinking in saying "it is clear that Kachru's model is helpful in conceiving of the

Englishes of the world and accommodates, to an extent, the complex situation of the multi-Englishes of the Inner circle” (p.17). Though Varughese makes two arguments, from one perspective they are complementary of each other, but from the other, they seem to conflict. The first is that she argues:

it is my own view that, while Kachru’s ‘Outer’ and ‘Expanding’ circles remain useful concepts for an explanation of what World Englishes literature is, this is not so of the ‘Inner’ circle: in my definition, that is, World Englishes literature is *never* produced from the Inner circle. The issues at stake in this argument are not simple questions of geography, spatial proximity to the English ‘Standard’, or characteristic linguistic properties: it is more how these matters, in a certain combination, produce varied kinds of writing, some of which I would call World Englishes literature, and some of which I would not (although they’re all in play) (p. 17).

Her argument that world Englishes literature is “*never*” produced in the Inner Circle, coupled with her following explanation, makes sense when one considers that within Inner Circle countries, there is literature that fits snugly within a ‘monolingual’ literary paradigm. If it is Australian, then it can be said to be written in Australian English(es), embedded in Australian cultural conceptualisations, locally ‘nativised’ to relevant discourses, and can be interpreted in such ways without conflict of questions from countering or complementing alternative ‘multilingual’ literary perspectives. Thus, these would not be world Englishes literatures, unless perhaps to follow the constant trend of defining a variety—in this case, Inner Circle—through examining these ‘native’ monolingual texts. This is also where Varughese’s definition of ‘world Englishes literature’ conflicts with itself:

Most (but not all) World Englishes literature explores the culture(s) of the country and people from which it is written (these countries belong to Kachru’s Outer and Expanding circles); usually the literature employs the English of that place (to a lesser or greater degree); and, moreover, the writer chooses to write in that English over other languages in which she could alternatively write (p. 17).

Although she highlights specifically ‘Outer and Expanding Circles’, the mindset here mirrors what Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni (2015) argue are some of the critical issues of the World Englishes paradigm. The notion that such a definition cannot be applied to the Inner Circle is somewhat conflicting, as the latter half of Varughese’s definition also suits the users of various Englishes from the Inner Circle and the literatures that they write. She herself also devotes a paragraph to elucidating the complexities of Inner Circle linguistic diversity, though this seems to be partly redundant considering her above arguments for world Englishes literature. What makes Varughese’s arguments worth noting, is that her stance presents world Englishes in light of and equivalent to a postcolonial

stance to world Englishes. In this light, her arguments indeed see world Englishes literatures as “beyond the postcolonial” and that “World Englishes writers are less and less interested in their putative subalternity to a former colonial power and more and more interested in what constitutes (often positively) the identity of the culture from within which they write” (p. 17). Karn (2013) also rejects the notion of world Englishes literature being only associated with postcolonial literature and chooses instead to embrace the other perception where world Englishes literature explores the culture and people of which the text is written, uses the nativised English of the context, and that the writer chooses to write in English over other potential alternative languages. According to Pandey (2019), in a world of superdiversity and supermobility, “a pendular swing to a focus on context over form makes market sense as these literary creations with roots in the so-called periphery increasingly have transnational reach and relevancy” (p.203).

Thus, in regards to the second generation migrants, Kachru’s *bilinguals’ creativity* framework becomes slightly problematic — ‘slightly’ because in relation to Kachru’s original framework, it is limited to the competence in two or more languages (see section 2.2.1.1 for the full definition). Pandey (2019) asks the question and provides a relevant answer in response: “How can the Kachruvian project be continued moving forward? One way might be to be astutely aware of the seepage of macro contexts of deterritorialization in any analyses of literary creation” (p. 215). While many second generation migrants can fit the build of the *bilinguals’ creativity* framework, there will be many others who overstep the boundaries or exceed the limitations of the prescribed framework. Questions to consider when examining the second generation might be — To what extent are writers of this generation aware of the language they use? How do they creatively express themselves with their available linguistic resources? As children expand their vocabulary growing up, finding and learning new words to describe the world around them, children of migrants have the advantage of absorbing not just one culture, but two or multiple cultures. As they age, regardless of the varying social phenomena that may affect their lives (i.e. going to cultural school on weekends, learning their mother tongue either at home or at Saturday school, learning another language, moving away from home, even the friends they make), they are already living in a bi-/multi-cultural environment, and must find ways to express their worldview. For the second generation, writing in English, in particular, within Inner Circle countries is not a choice, but a given. For them, choosing to write in a language other than English, would situate them on the same level as aforementioned writers such as Ha Jin, even Chinua Achebe (to some degree). In contrast, Pandey (2019) claims that there is:

a maneuvering away from a nano-focus on the opacity of linguistic elements encoded in WE creation or so-called, ‘weird English’ creativity (Bolton, 2010; Ch’ien, 2000) to more of a

focus on the deterritorialization of the contexts of creativity (Higgins, 2017; Tannenbaum, 2014) – encoded in and through transparent, ‘accessible’ so-called standardized English – we are in turn witnessing parallel paradigmatic shifts away from lingual-focused paradigms of prior sociolinguistic frameworks, to more amorphously situated metapragmatic-oriented accounts (p. 203).

Her claims suggest that current studies are shifting to fill the spaces in which scholars like Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni (2015) have poked holes in the paradigm. Regardless of who is more true or accurate, time will tell, and this thesis thus, shall only add to confirming the hopefulness that Pandey’s claim poses, while aiming to further the framework as Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni (2015) alike are suggesting.

2.2.4.2 *From the Inner Circle: A focus on ‘multicultural literature’ in Australia and varying responses*

While the previous section highlighted the potential to move beyond postcolonial within the framework of world Englishes, this section proceeds to briefly highlight the context of which this thesis pursues its investigation. Although primarily this is an applied linguistics thesis, language and literature are intertwining concepts when one is focussing on literary texts and the language of use in such texts. To introduce this section, we have Feingold’s (2007) statement: “Australian literature, like the Australian nation itself, occupies an interesting and at times contentious place in the taxonomy of national literatures” (p. 62). By this, she refers to the position Australia has as a former British colony thus affording the country a position as a nation among many with literature primarily written in English, “something that for many years, marked it simply as ‘English’ literature, a part of a larger British canon” (p. 61). As we know, what we perceive to be ‘English’ literature has a much more complex core where questions such as “how English is English literature” are parallel to problems such as how the Englishness of English literature is dependent on the “more basic problem of the Englishness of the English language” (Brewer, 1985, p. 41). Feingold (2007) acknowledges the evolving presence of “local dialects of English” around the world, and that despite being a nation with culture and literature shaped by the British immigrants and their descendants, it is also a nation that “has developed its own language and voice more subtly than have some others” (p. 61).

Contrary to the criticisms Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni (2015) delivered in the previous section, that the Inner Circle is often avoided, Feingold (2007) is more optimistic, suggesting that “its [Australian] literature [is] a distinctive contribution to the family of world literatures in English” (p.61). It would be safe to assume here that Feingold’s (2007) use of ‘world literatures’ belongs to the generic category applied to the many literature in the world, written in English, and not predominantly the focus of this thesis: world Englishes literatures. Thus, we should not say that her arguments are contrary to those of Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni’s (2015). Instead, Feingold (2007) highlights the evolution of Australian literature with consideration of its history with Britain, and the process of decolonisation that came with it. Australian literature was originally Bush dominated (as in the Australian ‘bush’, see Butler, 2001), thematic emphasis of “national culture dependent on the spirit of place” and “what it might mean to be Australian”, challenges hypermasculinity by women writers, “ways of linking self with nation”, explosion of Aboriginal publications, and “new voices, new perspectives, even new genres” (Feingold, 2007, p. 69). These are the accomplishments that led to an Australia today, that Feingold (2007) claims “no longer looks exclusively to Britain for its literary models, nor writes exclusively in reaction to them” (p.69). However, she is critical in conclusion on the present state of Australia, in suggesting the following:

A twenty-first-century Australian nation may yet reimagine itself as a republic, as a multicultural polity, as an integral part of Asia or Oceania—but it will take another fundamental shift to achieve this: one at least as great as that which occurred in the mid-twentieth century, in the way of Britain’s declining empire (Feingold, 2007, p. 70)

Her words are echoed in a similar vein, though not mirrored in exact detail, by Ommundsen (2018) in an article titled *Multilingual Writing in a Monolingual Nation*. In her introduction, Ommundsen (2018) furthers the accomplishments of Australian literature noted by Feingold, by saying that it has included “writers and texts formerly considered marginal” such as “more women writers” and “writers of popular genres, Indigenous writers, and migrant, multicultural or diasporic writers” (p. 2). Ommundsen’s arguments centre on the still dominant monolingual mindset to literature in Australia. Her arguments occur eleven years after Feingold’s words, thus demonstrating that there has been little shift to the reimagined Australia—and therefore, its literature.

Ommundsen raises several concerns regarding multicultural literature (to use this term for now, inclusive of both migrant and diasporic literature) that are present despite being a nation that has proudly proclaimed its multicultural agenda. To examine this broadly, she highlights the history of Asian-Australian writing in Australia, dubbing the period before the 1990s and the time of refugees

and Native Title debates, as a boom for Asian diasporic writing. Prior to the 'boom', the history of multiculturalism in Australia was impeded by the politics of the nation, which to some extent is a cause for the rise of the thematic 'us vs. other' in multicultural, not only Asian-Australian writing. The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (Graham, 2013), also colloquially known as The White Australia Policy, meant that it was not until the 1970s that large scale Asian migration was possible. According to Ommundsen (2007), "the history of multicultural additions to the national literature closely reflects trends in Australian migration since the Second World War" (p. 77). Furthermore, she highlights that:

all multicultural writing is autobiographical; that it is formally and linguistically unsophisticated; that it reflects the views and attitudes of the community to which the author belongs; that it is nostalgic, confessional, celebratory, subversive, authentic, etc. Such assumptions in most cases say more about the position from which they are voiced, and more about the mainstream culture, than they do about ethnic minorities (p. 78)

From Ommundsen's assessment of the dominating grievances, there is one that stands out more than the others considering the purpose of this thesis, and that is the perception of multicultural writing as "formally and linguistically unsophisticated" (p. 78). We must see this in consideration of some of the core concerns that Ommundsen also recognises in relation to the notion of multicultural writing in Australia, that is also a familiar story to processes of language change, such as the "private grievances, protection of traditional Australian values, fear of falling literary standards, suspicion of globalization and political correctness, anti-academic polemic" which have "all added fuel to the anti-multicultural rhetoric" (p. 83).

However, with such strong arguments against multicultural literature in the 1990s, spilling over to the 2000s, there have also been counter arguments that see the positive addition multicultural literature brings to Australian literature. This came in the form of prominent figures of multicultural Australian literature such as Sneja Gunew (Ommundsen, 2011; Raschke, 2005). Gunew (cited in Ommundsen, 2007) argues that exclusion or marginalisation of certain writings frame the existence of writings that are included or endorsed by the analytical process, in other words, the category 'ethnic minority writing' frames what is perceived as 'Australian literature'. Gunew's (2017) overarching argument in her recent book, *Post-Multicultural Writers as Neo-Cosmopolitan mediators* is "that we need to move beyond the (often unacknowledged) monolingual paradigm (an assumed model) that dominates Anglophone literary studies, particularly within settler colonies such as Australia" (p. 3).

Although Gunew and Ommundsen are literary scholars, their arguments are relevant to the linguistic perspective. Particularly as Gunew also asserts:

by introducing the acoustic ‘noise’ of multilingualism (accents within writing) to the constitutive instability within monolingual English studies, I attempt to show that within global English, diverse forms of ‘englishes’ provide routes to more robust recognition of the significance of other languages that create pluralized perspectives on our social relations in the world (p. 3)

Though she draws from postcolonial, cosmopolitanism theory, and neo-cosmopolitanism, her arguments bring to the fore one of the cores of this thesis: “without invoking the full range of complexities associated with the Sapir-Whorf theory, how does one convey another language meaning system within the monolingualism of English- language writing?” (Gunew, 2017, p. 53). While her question sounds like the strong form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which is largely unsupported in the scholarly literature, Gunew’s general idea here is how to convey one’s complex linguistic repertoire within the constraints of one language? Such a question leads Gunew to address the complexity of English performativity, wherein which she concludes “thus it is more difficult to assert the legitimacy of other versions of English within cultures that strenuously reiterate their monolingualism, such as Australia, than officially bilingual cultures such as Canada’s” (Gunew, 2017, p.88). From this conclusion, we see reflections of arguments presented prior and following this section on the presence of the monolingual mindset and the tendency to avoid the monolingually dominated circle of Kachru’s World Englishes paradigm for studies that examine the linguistic and literary creativity in world Englishes literature. Such presence of mind makes Gunew’s (2017) following thought relevant, even though this thesis reaches a point of divergence in terms of approach:

All this led me to ponder, in turn, the dynamics among multi- and monolingualisms and their relationship to national literatures and to what degree the concepts of “mother tongue” or “native speaker” had a place in all this (p. 98).

According to Ommundsen (2018), the body of literary texts in Australia written in languages other than English is limited, with rare translations that are available to a wider readership. This means that “diasporic or multicultural writers, those who work between languages and between cultures, need to write in English in order to find a readership in Australia [...] But writing in English does not always mean that they leave their other language(s) behind, or that they write like native speakers of English” (p.4). Such a strategy puts the writer at a disadvantage with the readership who is “unaccustomed to versions of English different from their own” (Ommundsen, 2018, p. 4). As a core

issue to her arguments on the prevailing monolingual mindset, much like Gunew's (2017) need to raise awareness on the multi-voicing of multicultural literature, Ommundsen claims that "having an 'accent' in writing has often been deemed unacceptable in Australia" (p. 4). Even so, this did not prevent Gunew (2017) from examining the presence of an 'accent' in Christos Tsiolkas's (also a second generation migrant from Greek descent) *Barracuda* (2013). She interprets the references of 'accent' in the main character's narration as a metaphoric relation of the characters, the overarching 'outsider vs insider' theme, and the role of language. Her reflection however, muses on "the reception of Tsiolkas's work within Australia and through him (though I don't wish to be too prescriptive about this) the work of other 'ethnic' writers is that the accent is usually unheard—the degree to which class is set in opposition to ethnicity rather than often being fused together continues to bemuse me" (p.104).

The 'accent' has always been a controversial point of discussion, and over the years, Ommundsen (2007, 2011, 2012, 2018) has consistently referred to a specific critic on multicultural writing. Robert Dessaix, an Australian novelist and essayist, suggests the following:

The reason so much migrant writing is 'marginalised' is that, in this basic sense, it's often not very good – and for obvious reasons: the author's English simply doesn't allow him or her to produce meaning at the same number of levels...as a native speaker's (Dessaix, 1991, cited in Raschke, 2005, p. 21)

Such criticism of migrant and multicultural writing is severe on its own, as it presents the image of anti-multiculturalism, and in most senses in the World Englishes paradigm, the voices of colonialism that the paradigm desires to move beyond. Ommundsen (2007) notes, however, "the real target for his criticism [...] was not the writers themselves but rather what he called 'the multicultural professionals', those academics and critics who, he argued, make a career out of promoting these so-called marginalized writers and attacking the mainstream literary establishment for being culturally exclusive" (p. 80). Gunew, along with Ommundsen (2007), was one of these multicultural professionals whom Dessaix waved his criticism at. Nonetheless, Dessaix's criticism has been taken to heart, and provides an unconvincing outlook on the reception of the *writing* of multicultural literature. Despite these literatures being Australian, they are labelled 'multicultural'. What does it mean to be like a 'native speaker' in Australia? And how 'good' must one's English be for migrant writing to be no longer marginalised? Thus, this is the perspective of multicultural writing in Australia. There have been few studies on transcultural writing, though most are from literary, translation, and creative writing perspectives (for example: D'Arcangelo, 2014; Healy, 2010; Haines,

2015; Graham, 2013; Wilson, 2008; Zin and Mee, 2014; and Zannettino, 2007). Just as there are few studies of such texts from a world Englishes perspective examining the linguistic creativity—though there are several studies from a literary approach. Thus, this thesis aims to fill this gap in the scholarly literature for both world Englishes and Australian literature, in examining the writing of second generation migrant writers in Australia, translanguaging and codemeshing in English.

2.2.5 Returning to Language, English, and the Global Context: World Englishes and challenging the monolingual mindset

To end section 2.2, let us note first of all a particular trend among studies related to creativity in bilingualism and bilinguals' creativity. Bhatia and Ritchie (2008) explicitly argue:

Bilinguals' organization of the verbal repertoire in his/her mind is very different from that of monolinguals. When a monolingual decides to speak, his/her brain does not have to make complex decisions concerning language choice, as does the bilingual. Such a decision-making process for a monolingual is restricted at most to the choice of a limited number of varieties/styles (for instance, informal versus formal) (p.7).

Most of studies on bilingual creativity examine bi-/multi-lingual speakers or investigate 'non-native' speakers. This is expected from studies that view language from a bi-/multi-lingualism approach or world Englishes approach. Each of these frameworks are still highly relevant to the current global context. However, Bhatia and Ritchie (2008) suggest that while bilinguals are required to make complex decisions regarding language choice, *monolinguals* do not. This is problematic. It suggests that monolinguals do not possess a complex repertoire of varieties and styles, and further suggests that in certain cases, such as, children of migrants, will perhaps 'think' like a 'monolingual'. The above studies advocate the diversity and complexity of bilingual users of language, and investigate their 'creativity' but just as it is problematic to say that monolinguals can be more creative in their native language than non-native speakers, it is problematic to say that a monolingual is limited in varieties and styles. Even with one 'official' national language under our belts, a "monolingual" can be a multidialectal speaker of a variety of different Englishes for not only different speakers, but contexts, discourses, and using different registers.

Furthermore, to end this section, we must also introduce a pair of terms highly relevant to this thesis: *deterritorialization* and *re-Englishing* (Pandey, 2019). With these terms are several concerns

raised by Pandey, that again, hold some relevance. As noted above, Pandey is a stout supporter of a Kachruvian approach to Englishes and literary (and with it, linguistic) creativity, and a core argument she makes is:

The question is no longer whether WE sees visibility in texts (a Kachruvian concern), but rather, what is the ultimate linguistic capital and worth accorded these varieties in literary creations from the so-called periphery—a new concern. WE scholars are going to have to determine whether writers are still really writing back to the Empire, or is the Empire now writing back? (p. 217)

For Pandey, *deterritorialization* is in terms of linguistic deterritorialisation, a concept fairly associated with world Englishes and other movements that acknowledge the plural form of Englishes. However, it is the second term, *re-Englishing* that is of particular concern here and shall be the lead of the following discussion that concludes this section of the thesis. It reflects the issues on the context of Australia discussed in the previous section (2.2.4.2) and the beginning of this section. Pandey makes a significant assessment in the following:

unlike the deep multilingualism and de-Englishing strategies hallmarking the textuality of authors' of the prior-century, literary creations of the 21st century demonstrate a clear trending towards shallow multilingualism and re-Englishing – indeed, a multilingualism-lite – the market benefits of which, particularly for the translation and education industries have obvious outcomes. [...] uniquely deployed strategies of Englishing – linguistically inscribed acts of English-learning, in combination with contrasting keywordings and metaphorizations – ensure that a distal multilingualism evokes connotations with the 'foreign,' while by contrast, proximal linguistic renderings of monolingual English evoke consistent connotations with the 'familiar.' (p. 209)

There are two points that must be addressed for this thesis. The first, is Pandey's arguments regarding re-Englishing. In juxtaposition with the use of 'de-Englishing' to mark "authors of the prior-century", 're-Englishing' takes the reverse position. Earlier in section 2.2.4.1, Varughese (2012) was cited arguing that world Englishes literature has now moved beyond postcolonial and is entering that era which does not seek approval from the Inner Circle for the way language—English—is being used. In order to study second generation migrant writing, there is no avoiding the Englishness (English as a native language, and not just English as England's language). However, that does not mean that there is no continual process of de-Englishing → re-Englishing → de-Englishing occurring, as is a natural part of language evolution, contact, and change. Just as the initial paragraph of this section

argues that it is problematic to say that monolinguals are more creative and that they are limited in varieties and styles, it is also problematic to see ‘re-Englishing’ as only the next goal for language evolution without reference to the possibility that it is only just one other step in the process.

The second point is in relation to Pandey’s vocal address to ‘shallow’ multilingualism and rendering of linguistics into the ‘familiar’. It is interesting that Pandey uses notions of ‘shallow’ multilingualism, which in many cases, it is. Indeed, it is a worthy argument done so in light of the Kachruvian approach. However, along with the above quote, she argues that literature invites participatory bilingualism where the multilingualism is “explained, exemplified, and ‘accounted’ for via the conduit of monolingual discoursing” (p.209). She is critical of the presence of multilingualism being subverted to monolingualism as such acts result in linguistic forgetting. Through the “absence of real languages – told rather than shown – instigates the forgetting of actual linguistic diversity which is either really absent, or made absent in the presence of an overwhelming linguistic homogeneity” (Pandey, 2019, p. 209). Her arguments on the present day literatures in Englishes suggest that they no longer uphold the values and beliefs of the initial Kachruvian ideology; that time has eroded the aims and goals of writers, to the point that the presence of multilingualism is now considered to be ‘shallow’ rather than deep. Thus, on the one hand, Pandey is correct in drawing attention to this problem of the complacency and unspoken fear for the greater discourses that make the production and editorial decisions in publishing of modern day literature. In these cases, yes, Pandey’s (2019) points are highly relevant. However, this is also where the argument reaches a point of divergence for this thesis. While writing in English and presenting multilingualism in “contrived acts of participatory bilingualism” (Pandey, 2019, p. 209), one needs to consider what it is meant by ‘contrived acts’ and how these are presented. There may be a sense of linguistic forgetting and linguistic diversity that seems absent in the presence of linguistic homogeneity, but what does this really mean? If we accept that all varieties are each intra-lingually diverse, then it cannot be linguistically homogenous. If we accept that there is intra-lingual diversity and linguistic diversity, then what guides us to think of linguistic homogeneity in the first place? On one hand, such acts might as well precipitate linguistic invisibility, but on the other hand, we must also see this process as two-way. We must not only encourage linguistic visibility as Pandey suggests, and to maintain the well-intentioned Kachruvian perspective on *bilinguals’ creativity* but we need to challenge the ideology of prevailing discourses, such as Clyne’s (2004) arguments for challenging the monolingual mindset.

Though Clyne (2004, 2007) raises arguments on challenging the monolingual mindset in the context of language learning, his arguments are still relevant. In Clyne’s view, he presents a picture of fallacies in maintaining a monolingual mindset for the Australian context. In section 2.2.4.2,

though in relation to Australian literature, Ommundsen (2018) also highlights the dominating and overwhelming presence of monolingual writing in Australia—approximately 14 years after Clyne. For a world such as Australian society, how can a monolingual mindset dominated industry proceed, to the ‘deep’ multilingualism that Pandey (2019) argues is now lacking, if readers are barely becoming familiar and comfortable with shallow multilingualism to begin with? It is not to champion ‘shallow’ multilingualism, as this would indeed, to further Pandey’s arguments, present a mistaken understanding. However, her arguments also teeter along the edge of a discussion of the monolingual mindset. Using *Brick Lane* (2003) from Monica Ali, Pandey argues:

Chanu's English emerges error filled and illegitimate. A linguistic exhibitionism in which Englishing – English fluency, both flawed and fluent – serves as the primary microlinguistic conduit of thematicized ‘access’ for protagonist and reader alike. Thus, multilingualism is evoked in and through a monolingual mindset – in and through English – explained, rather than experienced. This literary privileging of the monoglossic over the heteroglossic is further effectuated via conflating a ‘foreignness’ with incorrect English in its contrast to the ‘familiarity’ of both correct and ‘corrected’ English. Such thematic uses of Englishing – acts of learning English – ultimately spotlight a desired Englishness, evoked and invoked via character (Pandey, p. 211)

Pandey is not wrong, however, to in part, disagree with her is one of the aims of this thesis. As I commented somewhere earlier in this chapter, partially disagreeing with Pandey is a point that potentially borders on Philipson’s *Linguistic Imperialism* because it sounds to champion a dominant English. This is not the point of course; the point is to remember our arguments on linguistic diversity and to see them where many still see homogeneity. Pandey’s argument is voiced and clear, optimistic in its prevailing attempt to divert attention to the issue of literary representations of multilingualism through an English variety. Indeed, the concern is that the “desired Englishness” and the “conflating of ‘foreignness’” presents a problem if we are to move forward in understanding world Englishes literature. However, this is again, the point of divergence for this thesis. While these concerns are acknowledged, and to some extent form the framework of this thesis, much like in the earlier discussion on world Englishes, and the criticisms that scholars such as Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni (2015) pose, to examine the second generation is to also examine their use of English as a native language and their use of English as multilingual and transcultural users of Englishes. This thesis also seeks how to challenge the monolingual mindset without leaping to entirely defamiliarising English to the readers. Pandey (2019) sees multilingualism evoked through a monolingual mindset, however this thesis argues that such presence of multilingualism is a way of challenging the

monolingual mindset. It's not 'shallow', rather with the right commercial packaging, these examples of shallow multilingualism can pose the beginning pathways to putting aside the monolingual mindset and embracing a more multilingual—spatialised mindset. Therefore, perception plays a big role.

To end on one final point, in her swift arguments, Pandey (2019) also asks:

Are we now encountering a normativity of a bilingualism that is told – in English – rather than shown; invisibilized and spatially peripherized rather than spotlighted, and textually codified only to be carefully corrected, rather than rendered in its 'original' [pun intended] Outer Circle form? (p. 216)

The answer is hopefully no. Although it is slightly problematic that texts in other parts of the world in the circles that prior scholarly literature has been dominantly focussed, for them to 're-English', this diverges from the direction of this thesis. For the purposes of this thesis, the answer, again, is hopefully no. This perceived normativity should only remain temporary. It should be through the writer's agency and the reader's interpretability that open the pathways in which 'shallow' multilingualism can become 'deep', and that 'deep' can become the norm. But as Fang (2020) suggests, first you must start small and alter the monolingual mindset, rather than go big and risk alienation and obscurity. As argued elsewhere in this chapter, there is much to gain from even a whisper of the presence of multilingualism in writing that can be analysed and interpreted away from a monolingual mindset. The choices in creative writing are often more deliberate than subconscious or accidental and therefore, examination of the linguistics of these texts contribute towards the future vitality of world Englishes in written form (Pandey, 2019)

Thus, in the current global linguistic context, we have bilingual speakers, some of whom are bilingual because their parents are migrants and affording them the opportunity to both maintain their mother tongue and also acquire the host country language, while others are 'passive bilinguals' able to understand but unable to communicate in the mother tongue (Baker, 2011). As there are more bilinguals than perceived monolinguals, can one really presume that a monolingual is 'restricted' or 'limited' in their varieties and styles? What of local contexts and discourses and the advent of the internet, spurred on by globalization? What of globalisation itself which allows the spread of other cultures, and heavily coded language—to which give monolinguals access to a means of diversifying their language without necessarily appropriating the terms 'bilingual' and 'multilingual'? And lastly, the term 'monolingual' is of course problematic to begin with, as is the ideology of monolingualism that history has shown to be the newborn and not the adult—multilingualism being the latter, having existed long before. Though this ideology has also caused many scholars within world Englishes to

look the other way, at the other circles, and become somewhat negligent to the linguistic diversity of literary texts in the Inner Circle. Although it is concerning that there is a sense of re-Englishing, rather than de-Englishing, as well as the presence of ‘shallow’ multilingualism, this thesis demonstrates that there is more to the ‘shallow’ multilingualism and how English is being stretched to accommodate Englishes and the transculturalness of its content. Though this thesis, up until this point has mostly discussed a number of terms such as *linguistic creativity* and *bilinguals’ creativity*, the focus is on the transcultural creativity of second generation migrants. Thus, the next section of Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature regarding *transcultural creativity* and a new approach to examining transcultural creativity in second generation migrant writing.

2.3 Transcultural Creativity and Cultural Linguistics

This thesis, up until this point, has discussed many ideological aspects of language and creativity in order to reach this point of focus. While this thesis has tended to focus on *bilinguals’ creativity*, for the theoretical idealism, the above literature review demonstrates also how it is somewhat lacking when in consideration of cases such as second generation migrants. Thus, this thesis uses the term *transcultural creativity*, and the following section explicitly discusses prior and current studies of transcultural creativity and the way it adopts the term in light of a new approach, Cultural Linguistics.

2.3.1 Transcultural Creativity

‘Transcultural creativity’ is not a new term, and it has been used by scholars such as Kachru (1995a, 1995b, 1997) and Bamiro (2011). Kachru (1995a; 1995b) uses it in similar terms of ‘*bilingual’s creativity*’ where there is a distinct “‘patterning’—conscious or unconscious from more than one language” (p. 15). Kachru (1997) argues that “the multilingual’s use of English in various literary contexts in world Englishes provides abundant data for transcultural creativity” (p. 70). Often, this term when used by Kachru, is also one that (along with bilingual’s creativity) is aligned with the partially true argument that the mother tongue is the main medium of literary creativity (Kachru, 1995b). Such an argument was prevalent in the discourse at the time, focussed on the notion that creativity in the ‘other’ tongue was an exception that breaks the norm. It was a view of creativity predominant in societies that perceived themselves as monolingual (Kachru, 1995b). Thus, he argues,

in multilingual societies, models of creativity and experiment changes as the language of creativity changes. Though Australia is perhaps nowhere near close enough to claim to be a multilingual society, it *has* claimed the title of ‘multicultural’ and with it, the expectation of multilingualism occurring. The language has yet to change, but the linguistic resources available to writers—multicultural and multilingual—have already changed, and therefore the models of creativity and experiment should also change.

Thus, in analysing transcultural creativity for Kachru (1995b), he adopts Smith (1992 cited in Kachru, 1995b) to measure his examples of transcultural creativity in intercultural crossover: *intelligibility*, *comprehensibility*, and *interpretability*. In his application, Kachru adopts the three concepts in the following manner: 1) *intelligibility* refers to the surface decoding of a linguistic utterance; 2) *comprehensibility* refers to the comprehension of a text in one variety of English in the context of situation of another variety; 3) *interpretability* refers to the reincarnating of English into the local culture. It is the interpretability aspect that both acts as a point of interest and divergence for this thesis, as it refers also to the contextualisation of the text within the available and appropriate linguistic resources of the context. What does it mean to ‘reincarnate’ English into *Australian* culture? What shape would the reincarnation take? As other scholars argue, noted earlier in this chapter, that many do not find the Inner Circle to also be within this process. So perhaps the better question might be, how is English reshaped in world Englishes literatures—transcultural literatures in the local ‘multicultural’ context of Australia?

Kachru (1995b) also raises the point that there are creative writers who are using two or more languages to be creative—that is both ‘mother’ and ‘other’ tongues. Their creativity is “based on a conflation of two or more languages, and the basic ingredients are ‘translation’, ‘transfer’, and ‘transcreation’, used in the broadest senses of those processes” (p. 280). Core to his discussion in Kachru (1995b) is what he sees in the transcultural creativity of world Englishes literatures, and what it offers. The transcultural creativity of world Englishes writers leaves a mark in their work, the presence of underlying scaffolding of formal patterns in the text from another language (Kachru, 1995b). He suggests that formal patterning and linguistic conflation is not always conscious and thus the creative writer must make several choices, including if they desire to establish a link to oral or written native literary traditions. These strategies contribute to processes of decolonisation of English and distinctiveness of new canons (Kachru, 1995b). It is here that this thesis reaches another point of divergence on two points.

The first is Kachru's claim that creativity is focussed on creative processes of two or more languages, unexpectedly excludes situations where individuals may consider themselves more 'monolingual' than multilingual. Recent studies have sustained arguments for other ways of looking at codeswitching which has tended to imply a similar line of thought where the linguistic repertoire contains separate systems of languages that the user can switch or mix between. Such ways include the notion of *translanguaging* (Canagarajah, 2011a; Wei, 2011) and its counterpart, *codemeshing* (Canagarajah, 2011a; Young, 2009). Translanguaging is the process of going between different linguistic systems and their structures in various modalities of speaking, writing, signing, listening, etc., and going beyond them in terms of transmitting information and the "representation of values, identities and relationships" within a particular social space where various dimensions of the language user's personal history, experience and environment, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and cognitive capacities are coordinated into a "meaningful performance" and a "lived experience" (Wei, 2011, p. 1223). Canagarajah (2011a) uses *codemeshing* to describe the realisation of translanguaging in written texts. The use of this term over 'codeswitching' is seen as preferable as codemeshing implies one meshed system of linguistic repertoires rather than alternation between separate systems of linguistic repertoires. Young (2009) advocates that encouraging a codemeshed approach to language use opens the ways of seeing language and "expand[s] our ability to understand linguistic difference and make us in the end multidialectical, as opposed to monodialectical" (p.65). Second generation migrants are at crossroads when it comes to their competence in their mother tongue(s). Due to varying factors such as change in home structure and ability of the parent(s) to teach their mother tongue, the degree to which the mother tongue is maintained will vary among second generation individuals (Hinton, 2001). Thus, they will potentially claim English to be their first or only language, even though to some extent they are drawing on the linguistic resources of their mother tongue. In such cases, they are automatically excluded from definitions such as Kachru's *bilinguals*' or *transcultural creativity*. Such definitions do not account for a codemeshed integrated linguistic repertoire.

The other point is regarding Kachru's arguments, while relevant theoretically, are still much situated in the debates of the 1980s when there was a prevailing need to legitimatise not only varieties of world Englishes, but the creativity of its users. These debates while still relevant now, have come to a head and to some extent, been thoroughly 'decolonised' theoretically, if the criticisms of Canagarajah (2012) and Saraceni (2015) are to be observed, but have as a result potentially alienated the Inner Circle in some areas of research. Although Australia is a formerly colonised nation, its position in Kachru's concentric circles places it in the same circle as its coloniser and long-established

former colonies, UK and USA, respectively. Australia's presence as an Inner Circle variety is also predominantly due to English being used as the sole official or national language. Therefore, many of the arguments that Kachru and other world Englishes scholars who examine creativity in the 'other' tongue, does not entirely apply to situations within the Inner Circle, unless specifically focussing on the relevant groups or individuals.

While *transcultural creativity* is not as popular as other terms such as 'bilingual's/bilinguals' creativity' and 'translingual creativity', scholars who have used it have previously applied this term to the same area. For example, 'transcultural' creativity has been used interchangeably with 'translingual' (Bamiro, 2011). In cases of bilingual creativity, its usage supplements and substitutes rather than stands on its own. Bennui (2013) explains 'transcultural creativity' as an extension of Kachru's 'nativisation of rhetorical strategies' component of *bilinguals' creativity* (see section 2.2.1.1). While Scott (1990) does not use the term 'transcultural creativity', he focusses on translingual creativity and describes it "as the purposive and artful reproduction within one language of features from another language" (p.75). Thus, this thesis is interested in understanding the transcultural creativity of second generation migrants, and subsequently, sets out to prove that such 'Inner Circle' texts cannot be generalisably listed and studied in the same way as 'English' only or non-multicultural Australian-only texts. On the other hand, it is unavoidable that they share many similarities in content and themes, as well as linguistic strategies as writers of world Englishes. However, due to the location of production of second generation migrant Australian writing, they do not share many of the traits and arguments commonly associated with previously studied writers of world Englishes whose work can be comfortably studied under the framework of bilinguals' creativity.

Where these second generation Australian migrant writers belong, like Alice Pung, Benjamin Law, Melina Marchetta, Randa Abdel-Fattah, Christos Tsiolkas (to name a few dominating second generation migrant writers in Australian literature), is in a space between these two. The ways in which they are using English, as a primary language (as opposed to a 'first') and written medium, are not necessarily going to be typical of Australian English Inner Circle expectations. BurrIDGE (2010), for example writes:

Recent studies show that second-generation Australians of non-English-speaking background are developing an AusE of their own, different from the Ethnic Broad-accented English of their parents, but different also from General AusE (p. 145).

Thus, we must keep in mind that second generation Australians are developing an Australian English and using such a development as their own in their writing—blending both home and host cultures together. J. Warren (1999) argues in relation to the development of ‘wogspeak’ in Australia as a means of cultural linguistic expression for migrant and second generation migrants, that:

language plays an essential role in the development and expression of such bicultural identities, not only parents' language, but, and here is the central issue, more specifically the language of the host culture, English (p. 88).

Second generation migrants also experience the challenge of finding themselves in and between two cultures, and two languages (Warren, 1999). Culture is one aspect of the environment that influences our development, values, ways of thinking, behaviour, and can affect both levels of creativity and the evaluation of that creativity (Niu & Sternberg, 2001; Runco, 2014). The role English plays in various contexts, through various mediums and the influences of those contexts on its usage become significant in further understanding the synchronic changes of the English and its many Englishes at present. Our choice of language and the choices we make in language define us. Even more so, when we consider that we are a product of culture, whether it is one or more, and therefore our creativity is also influenced by culture (Runco, 2014). One considers the current global state of language—to look away from the dominating theme of Chapter 2, world Englishes, for a moment—and see how English and many other languages have spread around the world allowing access to materials such as music, technology, and publications available in English, as well as the ‘culture’ embedded in these works. It is here we can also consider an argument that Underhill (2011) makes:

it is because the vitality of those authors’ worldviews has not died within our language. To a greater or lesser extent, their ways of viewing the world continue to contribute to the ways we view the world. As the great German linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) put it, poets and philosophers strike their roots into reality, and in doing so, they cultivate and shape our vision of the world. Poets have the capacity to shape our interior world, the intimate space within us just as much as ideologies structure the frameworks within which we live and work [...] It would, however, be a mistake to consider that literature be exiled to the private sphere. As readers and literary critics often affirm, writers transform our conception of the public sphere (p.4)

Previous studies have already provided the foundation for exploring the creativity of Outer and Expanding circle writers. We see where they are coming from and how their words draw out a world of their own conceptualisations.

In arguments between English Literature and Literatures of world Englishes however, there is no space for those in between. Those writers from the second generation of migrants, such as Alice Pung, Benjamin Law, Randa Abdel-Fattah, whose worldviews are a mesh of host culture and home culture, and who have been using English from as young as they can remember, do not necessarily produce texts that belong to the traditional perspective of English Literature, and cannot be perceived entirely under the same lens as non-native, immigrant texts. Canagarajah (2011b) contends that:

We have to study how texts travel across spaces, gaining new shape and meaning through these circulation processes. To study travelling texts, one needs more process-oriented interpretive tools, sensitive to the diversities in production and reception. Readers have to engage with the otherness of the text to co-construct meanings, problematizing their own norms and literary standards (see Ashcroft 2009). To adopt this orientation effectively, we have to also move away from another traditional practice – i.e., treating the text in isolation from social and other ecological influences. (p. 255)

As the World Englishes paradigm shifts to accommodate the changing world, the natural evolution of language requires another framework of approach—more so with English as an international language, and a great majority of speakers around the world using the language as a subsequent language. Where using English by those who come from the Outer or Expanding Circle, meant also needing to justify their usage, presently, there is the emerging class of people who are using English as their first and dominant (though it may also be co-dominant, depending on the situation) language who draw from multiple backgrounds in the same manner as someone from the Outer and Expanding Circles do. Sharifian (2011) maintains that “World Englishes should be differentiated and explored in terms of the cultural conceptualisations that underpin their semantic and pragmatic levels” (p. 139).

2.3.2 A Cultural Linguistic approach to Transcultural Creativity

Xu (forthcoming) is one of the few studies that explore a literary text within the World Englishes paradigm, specifically using the term *transcultural creativity* in regards Ha Jin’s *Facing Shadows*. For Xu (forthcoming),

English has become a language of transcultural creativity, particularly when it is used by multilingual writers in the sphere of literary creation. Unlike traditional English literature, where creative use of English belongs exclusively to ‘native’ speakers and writers of English

in terms of their novel use of linguistic devices such as metaphor, punning, word play, rhyme, slang and idioms, transcultural literary creativity in world Englishes covers a wider range of variations resulting from the blending and meshing of linguistic codes, literary textures and cultural traditions other than those from the traditional native varieties of English.

It is with this definition in mind that Xu (forthcoming) analyses the cultural expressions, symbols, and schemas embedded in *Facing Shadows*, and that argues functional variations are essential for self-expression and transcultural creativity to mark the worldliness of English in the expanding world Englishes literature. Xu (forthcoming) states, much as other scholars have stated (as noted in section 2.2), “that it is not only inevitable but also normal to nativize poetic medium by multilingual writers in relation to cultural semiotics in World Englishes literature”. The process of nativisation of English is a natural part of the multilinguals’ competence and is a means of reflecting and recreating their multicultural life experiences and performed identities (Xu, forthcoming). Therefore, the transcultural creativity that Xu (forthcoming) identifies is a “natural response to the multicultural flows of multilingual writers and their shifting worlds”. It is this approach to transcultural creativity that this thesis adopts in using the term *transcultural creativity* in second generation migrant writing.

Although this thesis diverges from Xu’s (forthcoming) and Kachru’s use of *transcultural creativity* in the sense that both while valuable and applicable, do not provide space for the complex processes of bilingualism for the second generation migrant, nor the contestable state of ‘monolingualism’. Language diversity occurs on different levels, beginning with sound to form to deeper layers of cultural conceptualization (Sharifian, 2011). An approach to transcultural creativity and world Englishes in recent years is the Cultural Linguistics approach adopted by Xu and Sharifian (2017). A part of the Cultural Linguistics approach is the awareness that “conceptualisations emerge from the interactions between the members of a cultural group across time and space” and these members are constantly negotiating and renegotiating these conceptualisations across generations of speakers (Sharifian, 2006, p. 12). It is at the level of conceptualisation that Sharifian (2014) feels that changes are more significant to the development and existence of new varieties of language where culture interacts with language. The concept of cultural conceptualisations forms the main tools of investigation within Sharifian’s Cultural Linguistic framework, and they are: cultural metaphor, cultural schema, and cultural categories.

One of the main tools that Sharifian (2008, 2011, 2015a, 2015b) considers as pivotal to the framework of Cultural Linguistics is *cultural schema*. Schema refers to the knowledge of experiences that is classified in categories and accesses prior knowledge about these categories in order to interpret

and evaluate the situation at present (Landau, Meier, & Keefer, 2010). They are conceptual structures of knowledge shared by members of a cultural group that enable interpretation of and communication of knowledge and experiences (Sharifian, 2014). *Cultural schema* builds on this understanding of schema. By *cultural schema*, Sharifian (2017) means that they “capture beliefs, norms, rules, and expectations of behaviour as well as values relating to various aspects and components of experience” (p. 4). Another main tool is the concept of *cultural category*. The structure and elements of the world are mirrored in the way one constructs their categories as “cultural categories are rooted in people’s cultural experiences” (Xu, 2014, p. 176). *Cultural categories* are those “culturally constructed conceptual categories that are primarily reflected in the lexicon of human languages” (Sharifian, 2017, p. 4). The third analytical tool in Sharifian’s framework is the *conceptual* or rather as Sharifian refers to it, the *cultural metaphor*. This tool maps thought in conceptual domains and reflects the influences of culture (Drulák, 2004). Kövecses (2005) writes:

Creative writers and poets commonly use metaphors, and because literature is a part of culture, metaphor and culture can be seen as intimately linked. After all, metaphor can be viewed as the ornamental use of language. Thus, metaphor and culture may be seen as being related to each other because they are combined in literature – an exemplary manifestation of culture (p.1).

Metaphors have a way of reflecting culture, employed by individuals to construe the objective world, not only shape the way one thinks and speaks about their world but influences the activities a particular culture sanctions, and provides a window to conceptualisations underlying the social world (Landau et al., 2010; Lantolf & Bobrova, 2012; Lv & Zhang, 2012; Sharifian, 2011)). *Cultural metaphors* are “cross-domain conceptualisations that have their conceptual basis grounded in cultural traditions such as folk medicine, worldview, or a spiritual belief system” (Sharifian, 2017, p. 4). These tools thus, can be used to analyse the relationship between language, culture, and conceptualisation. Crucial to this thesis is the many ways in which the second generation is transculturally creative in their writing, and how they convey, in the words of Gunew (2017) in the previous section, “another language meaning system within the monolingualism of English- language writing” (p. 53).

Several scholars have employed the Cultural Linguistic framework to examine the stretchability of English to accommodate the meaning and conceptualisation of varieties of Englishes. In communicating interculturally in English, speakers are not only conveying sounds and meanings of their native tongue but also their cultural conceptualisations (Xu and Sharifian, 2017). For example,

Ahn and Kim (forthcoming), in their examination of Korean conceptualisations instantiated in the English of Han Kang's novella, *The Vegetarian*, demonstrate that even though the Korean English does not use formal features that differ from 'standard' English, it is used to express and portray Korean cultural schema in the character's utterances, such as *u-li-ju-ui* (the collective sense of social unification and homogenous selfhood of Koreans) and *jang-yu-yu-seo* (order between seniors and juniors). They argue that the conceptualisation of 'being a vegetarian' in the context of the Han Kang's narrative is one that has a deeper understanding when read in relation to the cultural schemas of *u-li-ju-ui* and *jang-yu-yu-seo*. The creative use of English can evoke cultural conceptualisations of a particular variety of English that are meaningful for those who, to some extent, share and understand them. Utterances can acquire additional situated meanings depending on how listeners—or for this thesis, readers—frame the situation and construe meaning (Palmer, 1996). Palmer argues that new social meanings may emerge that restructure and reconstruct existing social norms. Meaning becomes relative to the society and its associated discourses of politics and culture, but can become "subject to disputation by interlocutors coming from different backgrounds and social statuses" (Palmer, 1996, p. 37). This is evident in some of the data collected in Xu and Sharifian's (2017) study of Chinese English cultural conceptualisations. The examples of cultural category such as 'Red Boomers' that have historical socio-political associations that may be shared and for those who understand, may be discussed and disputed. According to Xu and Sharifian (2017), cultural conceptualisations are grounded in bilinguals' creativity. It is through the bilinguals' creativity that a user of English can evoke cultural conceptualisations salient in the most relevant varieties of Englishes for any given context and purpose.

For second generation migrants, they must deal with not only possessing a distributed cognition of culturally inherited schemas, but also that each schema potentially has dual roots derived from the resources of the host and home cultures. Cultural conceptualisations are "heterogeneously distributed" between members of a cultural group (Sharifian, 2011, p. 3). To some extent, "it is the overall degree of how much a person draws on various cultural schemas that makes an individual more or less representative of their cultural group" (Sharifian, 2011, p. 7). For example, Xu and Fang (forthcoming) demonstrate how the conceptualisation of Xiao/filial piety—drawn initially from the schemas presented in the *Xiao Jing*, a classical Chinese text—has been re-schematised in contemporary societies and Chinese diaspora. Thus, the diaspora, inclusive of second generation Australian migrants, are increasingly re-conceptualising the social construct as a source of tension between generations and intercultural conflicts (Xu and Fang, forthcoming). The second generation is a generation that experiences the contesting values of the dominant cultures within their social

environment, though their experiences are largely but not only restricted to them, different from first generation migrants or non-native speakers who learn English as a second or later language in life. They may be clear in their understanding of cultural conceptualisations or have a fuzzy awareness that is only supported by experiences that may never be fully explained to them. While there are other groups of language users who may fit a similar prototype, this thesis focuses on that group of individuals defined as second generation migrants early in this thesis. We see an example of a cultural linguistic approach to a second generation migrant text in Fang's (2019) examination of two works by Alice Pung, *Unpolished Gem* (2006) and *Laurinda* (2014). Through the examination of cultural conceptualisations of FAMILY, DEATH, and ANCESTOR WORSHIP, she demonstrates the crossroads of Chinese-Australianness. These conceptualisations are considered not "just *Chineseness* or *Australianness* as separate entities, but as interrelated and overlapping" (p. 648). Much like Xu and Fang (forthcoming), the texts present examples that demonstrate the shift in generational schematisation of cultural concepts. She demonstrates through the example, taken from *Unpolished Gem*:

Ah Bah's ghost, the ghost of my solemn-faced grandfather, was still floating around in the Mekong, molecules of his soul extending as far as Melbourne, warning my father not to go back (p. 654).

According to Fang (2019), the excerpt—of a dream Pung's father had and thus retold by Pung to her readers—reflects the cultural schemas DREAMS ARE WARNINGS FROM ANCESTORS AND GODS AND SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY and DREAMS OF ANCESTORS. However, Pung uses a dry humorous tone that suggests she does not take this as seriously as when her father first told her of the dream. Fang (2019) notes then that while Pung's parents would accept the above schemas, Pung herself and her generation may only see it as DREAMS ARE WARNINGS FROM ANCESTORS AND GODS "that are not necessarily taken seriously" (p. 654). As such, Fang (2019) argues that:

Both texts, which are set in Australia and essentially Australian stories, are also literature of the world in comparison to other literatures in world Englishes. It is literature that is not just Australian, but Chinese-Australian. The linguistic strategies used do not only 'foreignise' these texts but conveys the experiences, beliefs and values of the author through an international language like English (pp. 654-655).

While the above studies demonstrate the overlapping, shifting, and heterogeneously distributed knowledge of schemas, Fang (2019) further demonstrates the transcultural creativity of the author in conveying these schemas of understanding to the reader. Pung's narrative style and employment of

humour as a linguistic strategy, not only encourages readers to laugh, but is also engaging in a cultural discourse that is heterogeneously shared.

However, with the awareness of a heterogeneous distribution of cultural conceptualisations, Xu and Sharifian (2018) suggest that there is a need for speakers of world Englishes to develop new proficiency and competence to cope with the challenges of intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability among speakers of world Englishes. The above studies demonstrate the dual understanding and interpretation that can be gained from examining texts from a Cultural Linguistic approach. To examine the transcultural creativity of non-native speakers is complex enough when one considers the linguistic choices they must make as they shuttle between the languages in their linguistic repertoire. However, in studying the transcultural creativity of world Englishes writers, the Cultural Linguistic approach allows for identifying not only differences but similarities. Xu and Sharifian (2018) suggest that studies adopting the Cultural Linguistic approach to examine varieties of Englishes are also raising awareness of the worldliness of different Englishes and contribute to the inclusivity research of world Englishes. As noted in section 2.2, world Englishes has been criticised for how it defines varieties. Attention has primarily been given to codification of a variety in terms of distinct phonology, grammar, and “to some extent distinct lexicon in the availability of literature in the variety and its acceptance in society” (Sharifian, 2015b, p. 526). More compelling, however, is Sharifian’s (2015b) approach to the use of English. While Pandey (2019) may have provided a persuasive discussion on the overwhelming presence of ‘shallow’ multilingualism, and the masquerading of ‘multilingualism’ in the use of English, Sharifian (2015b) argues “from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics, it is the adoption of English to encode and express deeper levels of cultural conceptualisations by communities of speakers that lead to the development of new varieties” (p. 526). Indeed, these arguments are presented in two different spheres that minutely overlap on the common ground of world Englishes, however, what Sharifian’s argument sparks, is the position of seeing the use of English, not as a sign of *linguistic imperialism* or *re-Englishing* but as a pathway of potential. A pathway where Jin (2010) can argue that English must stretch to accommodate, in much the same vein that Achebe (1965) can claim it must stretch to bear the weight of the experience of its speakers and writers and language users.

Thus, the definition of *transcultural creativity* that this thesis takes as its framework, is one that combines the approaches of previous studies in linguistic creativity in world Englishes. It is based on Kachru’s *bilinguals’ creativity* to some extent, with the provision that it is inclusive of individuals and users of English as a first language, but whose linguistic resources are as rich and diverse as that is accounted for in approaches such as *metrolinguism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010). *Transcultural*

creativity here, also bears in mind the linguistic diversity of all spaces, inclusive of all circles in Kachru's world Englishes circles. Therefore, it becomes the extension of *bilinguals' creativity* that Bennui (2013) says it is, in a more inclusive manner. Furthermore, with Xu's (forthcoming) study and Fang's (2019), as well as the other aforementioned and incoming applied Cultural Linguistics studies in mind, *transcultural creativity* further expands Kachru's 'nativisation of rhetorical strategies' (see section 2.2.1.1). While the initial nativisation strategy focusses on linguistic realisation of schematic understandings, this can further include the culturalisation of rhetorical strategies, in other words: the conscious or unconscious inclusion of devised strategies that instantiate or are drawn from cultural conceptualisations of available resources and codemeshed into the language of use. *Transcultural creativity* is thus, for this thesis, the creative processes of competence in one or more varieties of language that constructs a text that draws from the linguistic resources available in the codemeshed linguistic repertoire and uses a variety of linguistic strategies that instantiate, reflect, or evoke cultural conceptualisations of multiple domains.

For the authors that are examined later in this thesis, English is, of course, the main medium of expression. And as this thesis has so far discussed, the English language is a diversely flavoured language in this present global linguistic context. As Underhill (2011) articulates, "though each language opens up to us a 'world'...each language system opens up a sphere for creative conceptual thought. Freedom and expression are inextricable. Individuals choose either to accept or to resist and to modify the concepts that their mother tongue and cultural mindset provide them with" (p.7). In other words, to play a role in society, to make opinions matter, an individual chooses to take a step into the periphery and 'stretch' the resources at hand.

2.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter has examined the previous literature in world Englishes and linguistic creativity of world Englishes literatures. It finds that despite the large body of literature, there is a gap in studies examining texts from the Inner Circle, as many of the existing studies are still focussed on defining varieties of Englishes or exploring the bilinguals' creativity of non-native users writing in Englishes. While these previous studies have established a solid framework for examining varieties of world Englishes and the contributions of their users to the English language, there are few studies that consider the intra-lingual diversity within Inner Circle nations, particularly in fields such as literature. Despite there being studies on varieties within the Inner Circle, there have been few studies examining

the linguistic creativity of written texts from the Inner Circle. Understandably, it is due to the traditional perception that the Inner Circle speakers are ‘native speakers’ of English, and therefore there is little to examine from an approach such as *bilinguals’ creativity*. However, as shown in this chapter, an Inner Circle country such as Australia, despite the prevailing monolingual mindset is both multicultural and multilingual. More so in light of the diversity of Australia’s context and the presence of second generations who potentially maintain a codemeshed linguistic repertoire. Writers of such calibre are producing written works draw from a meshed linguistic repertoire and cultural conceptualisations of multiple cultures and therefore, that should not be read only from a monolingual mindset.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter describes the sources of data, the data collection procedures, and the analytical process employed in this study. First it discusses the sources of data and rationale for their selection. Then it details how the data is collected from five sources: the selected texts, paratexts of the selected texts, questionnaire-survey, follow up interviews of questionnaire-survey participants, and semi-structured interviews with the authors. The chapter then ends on the discussion of the data analysis process, which includes predominantly qualitative methods.

3.2 Sources of data

There are five main sources of data for this study. The main source of data comprises of the selected works of second generation migrant Australian writers. Most of the criteria for the selection of texts and their authors are based on an adapted version of Bennui's (2013) text selection process. The following section elaborates on the selection process of the paratextual data. Most of this data is drawn from the selected text itself, from book reviews from a number of sites, and from other articles written by the selected authors. While the data collected from the paratexts form a picture of the social environment around the texts, this data also supplements the main source of textual data and provides an even wider scope to the public image of the writer.

While selected second generation migrant texts are the focus, data is also collected from two additional research instruments, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. As noted in Chapter 2, one under researched area of the scholarly literature is the reader response to the transcultural creativity in transcultural or world Englishes literature—understandably it is difficult to measure. Bennui (2013) points out it would be valuable to ask for participant responses, while Albakry and Siler (2012) note that it can only be speculated on the reception of such hybrid literary texts “by its bilingual and monolingual American readers” (p. 119). The last three sources of data are collected from questionnaire-survey and interviews. A short and long answer, open response questionnaire-survey was developed to gauge the response of participants to the different aspects of transcultural

creativity. From the questionnaire-survey, selected participants were given the chance to further elaborate on their responses in a follow up, semi-structured interview. The final source of data is conducted with the selected authors. These are conducted face-to-face or via phone, depending on whichever the author was most comfortable with.

3.2.1 Selected texts

The selected texts for this study are: *Laurinda* (2014), *Unpolished Gem* (2006), *Does My Head Look Big In This?* (2005), *Ten Things I Hate About Me* (2006), and *The Family Law* (2010). They are several works by three main authors: Alice Pung, Randa Abdel-Fattah and Benjamin Law, respectively. Their profile is listed in Table 2 below, however, a more detailed background of the authors is discussed in section 3.2.3.3. The blurb and image of these texts are listed in Appendix A.

Table 2 Selected author profiles and the selected texts

Text coding	Author's Name	Gender	Book Title	Genre	Published ¹	Publisher
UG	Alice Pung (1981-	Female	Unpolished Gem	Memoir, Creative fiction	2006	Black Inc. Books
Laurinda/L	Alice Pung (1981-	Female	Laurinda	Young Adult Contemporary	2014	Black Inc. Books
DMHLBIT	Randa Abdel-Fattah (1979-	Female	Does My Head Look Big In This?	Young Adult Contemporary	2005	Pan McMillan Australia

¹ This refers to the *first* year of publishing.

TTIHAM	Randa Abdel-Fattah (1979-	Female	Ten Things I Hate About Me	Young Adult Contemporary	2006	Pan McMillan Australia
TFL	Benjamin Law (1982-	Male	The Family Law	Memoir, Creative fiction	2010	Black Inc. Books

Firstly, the texts selected are from second generation migrant writers, in particular, Australian second generation migrant writers. As listed in Table 1 in the List of Key Terms, by second generation, this thesis refers to those who are the first generation to be born in Australia, with parents who were born in another country. Thus, second generation migrant texts are texts that belong to this generation of writers.

As reviewed in Chapter 2, previously texts studied under the world Englishes framework, were generally texts from beyond the Inner Circle, from either the Outer or the Expanding. Any previous studies in second generation migrant writing have predominantly been undertaken from a literary studies perspective (D'Arcangelo, 2014; Fernández, 2001; Graham, 2013; Healy, 2010; Wilson, 2008), and none has been conducted from a linguistic perspective until recently, and even then, there are only a handful, including Fang (2019, 2020) and Xu and Fang (forthcoming). In saying that, this thesis does not include works from other Inner Circle countries, not only because it is outside the scope of this thesis, but the socio-political histories of other Inner Circle countries are as diverse as Australia's and their influences on creativity in second generation migrant writing may potentially be different.

Bennui (2013) listed the following ten criteria for the selected Thai English fiction for their study:

- 1) A reasonable ratio of texts selected;
- 2) must be written in original English and not translated;
- 3) must be original work of the author and not collaborated;
- 4) must be published by or around a certain time period in relation to the socio-political status of English/variety of English;
- 5) must be published by local or international publishers and their readers are both local and foreigner;

- 6) writers of selected books must have a national identity (in Bennui's case, a *Thai* identity);
- 7) selected works must be by male and female writers to avoid gender bias;
- 8) popularity of writers and their fiction are or have been recognised for prizes, awards or widely renown;
- 9) selected texts must share local cultural themes and must represent ideology and identity of, in Bennui's case, Thai socio-cultural patterns embedded in narrative perspective; and
- 10) selected books must contain sufficient examples of lexical and discourse creativity.

As Bennui's (2013) criteria guided the selection of texts for an Outer Circle variety of English, some of these were adapted to suit the context of this study. Criteria 1-6, 8-10 are easily applicable, with additional provisions, such as, criterion 2 is applicable in the sense that although English is the national language in Australia, it is important that selected works are not translated.

The compilation of fiction by second generation migrant writers can be found in Appendix D for criterion 1. Classification of whether the text belonged to a second generation migrant writer is based on the definition provided in Chapter 1. As this is often difficult to judge without direct contact with the author, compiling the list was based on the availability of texts and information provided online via a Google search. Those that had a blurb, Wikipedia page, or other visible online mention, stating that they were the 'first' born of immigrant parents in Australia, were included in the list at the beginning of this study in 2016—therefore in the time since, there may have been many other texts published or authors with a more salient online presence. From this list, the selection is narrowed down in accordance with the other criteria listed.

To jump to criterion 6 for a moment, this criterion is applicable in a slightly adapted sense—not only should writers feel an 'Australian' or ethnic identity, they must embrace their hyphenated identity as working between these cultures. Relevant here is criterion 4 in the sense that texts published in the last 30 years are preferable because they are more recent and more relevant to the present. Furthermore, they are published after 1990, in order to avoid the era of 'Asian boom' literature that Ommundsen (2011) refers to as containing themes such as "tales of concubinage, foot-binding, and political oppression" (p. 509). Though such themes have shaped Asian-Australian and Asian diasporic literature, for second generation readers and writers, such themes maybe more irrelevant than relevant. For the texts not from authors with an Asian heritage, the choice of text attempts to avoid major political themes—even though such a thing might not be possible—and are selected based on their friendliness to a young adult audience.

Criterion 5 lists the acceptability of both independent and traditional publishing. However, with the present availability of different means of publishing—traditional or independent—this thesis focusses on those works published by mainstream, traditional publishers. The reason for this is because traditional publishing may have expectations that might hinder a piece of work from being published – aspects of creativity that might be deemed ‘unacceptable’. Thus, how ‘much’ creativity is still visible to the participants, is a question that this thesis attempts to address when examining the paratexts and questionnaire-survey.

To address the remaining four criteria: Criterion 7 would depend on the availability and the selection of the texts based on the other nine criteria. Criterion 8 was essential to the selection process, as Bennui (2013) notes “this criterion displays the extent to which the writer’s works have social impact” (p.163). The last two criteria (9 & 10) are explanatory, and are applied to this study in the sense that: this must be done in light of the cultural themes, ideology, and identity of the hyphenated cultures (9); the degree of which would vary as the writers are working with English and codemeshing their available linguistic repertoire (10).

In addition to the above criteria, the selection of the texts was also limited by the following, which is labelled criterion 11:

- 11) works are selected based on the generation they ‘represent’. To follow the timeline of world Englishes, it is only recently that there is an ever-growing collection of writers writing in English coming from the Expanding circle.

Thus, according to this criterion, examining the most recent generation of second generation migrant writing in Australia coincides with the ‘young adult’ genre. The literature selected for this thesis is mostly from this genre. Some define young adult fiction based on the ages of the protagonists, while others define it regarding the reading audience. This study takes both into account. According to Coats (2011), examining literature from this particular category is particularly important because the readers are generally at a critical part of their life in finding out where they do and do not belong in society. Therefore, the above mentioned texts were selected, based on the publication recognition or the authors and/or texts, the themes, and representativeness. While both Pung and Abdel-Fattah have several published texts, their earlier texts were selected as per the criteria, primarily those which received or were nominated for awards. The theme of ‘coming of age’ tended to be more present in the earlier texts of the authors and matched closely with one of the dominating themes present in Law’s *The Family Law*.

3.2.2 Paratexts

A text makes its presence known to its readers and generally to the public via its *paratext* (Genette & Maclean, 1991). In order to understand the impact of the transcultural creativity of the selected texts, a variety of paratextual data are sourced; these materials are listed in Table 3 below. Their coding is also included, and the key to understanding the coding is provided in section 3.5.

Table 3 Selected paratexts

Code	Author	Source	Genre/Type
Type of Paratexts, category 1: <i>Peritexts</i>			
P-AP-U-I	Alice Pung	Unpolished gem	Introduction
P-AP-U-C			Cover
P-AP-U-BC			Back Cover
P-AP-U-D			Dedication
P-AP-U-AK			Acknowledgements
P-AP-L-C		Laurinda	Cover
P-AP-L-BC			Back Cover
P-AP-L-A			Afterword
P-AP-L-D			Dedication
P-AP-L-AK			Acknowledgements
P-RAF-D-BC	Randa Abdel-	Does my head look big in this?	Back cover
P-RAF-D-D	Fattah		Dedication

P-RAF-D- AK			Acknowledgements
P-RAF-T- BC		Ten things I hate about me	Back cover
P-RAF-T-D			Dedication
P-RAF-T- AK			Acknowledgements
P-BL-FL-C	Benjamin	The Family Law	Cover
P-BL-FL-D	Law		Dedication
P-BL-FL- AK			Acknowledgements
Type of Paratexts, category 2: <i>Epitexts</i>			
P-AP-SB	Alice Pung	Author's Blog	Home Page Blog posts
P-RAF-SB	Randa Abdel- Fattah	Author's Blog	Home Page Blog posts
P-BL-SB	Benjamin Law	Author's Blog	Home Page Blog posts
P-AP-OA	Alice Pung	Online	Articles written by Alice Pung
P-BL-OA	Benjamin Law	Online	Articles written by Benjamin Law

P-RAF-OA	Randa Abdel- Fattah	Online	Articles written by Randa Abdel- Fattah
P-AP-TT	Varied	https://www.alicepung.net/2014/11/05/talking-points-bigotry-in-australia-speech-melbourne-writers-festival-2014/	Transcript on a talk by Alice Pung
P-BL-PT	Varied	https://thegarretpodcast.com/benjamin-law/	Podcast transcript on why Benjamin Law writes
P-RAF-PT	Varied	https://thegarretpodcast.com/randa-abdel-fattah/	Podcast transcript on why Randa Abdel-Fattah writes
P-AP-U-TN	Varied	Black inc. books (Alice Pung)	Unpolished Gem teaching notes
	Varied	www.alicepung.net	Unpolished Gem teaching notes
P-AP-L-TN	Varied	Black inc. books (Alice Pung)	Laurinda teaching notes
P-R-T-TN	Varied	Pan Macmillan Australia (via Google)	Ten Things I Hate About Me teaching notes
P-R-D-TN	Varied	Amazon	Does My Head Look Big In This study guide
	Varied	Goodreads	

See end of chapter coding notes	Varied Varied	Book Blogs Amazon	Reviews ² Categories
P-A-U-PD	Alice Pung	Amazon	Product description ³
P-A-L-PD	Alice Pung	Amazon	Product description
P-R-D-PD	Randa Abdel- Fattah	Amazon	Product description
P-R-D-PD	Randa Abdel- Fattah	Amazon	Product description
P-B-FL-PD	Benjamin Law	Amazon	Product description

The selection process for paratexts is similar to that of the five selected texts. Once the texts are decided, the paratextual sources are sorted under the two categories: *peritext* and *epitext*. For paratexts, there are a number of sources: 1) the selected text themselves; 2) author's home page; 3) blog posts written by the author; 4) reviews (from 3 sources); 5) teaching materials; and 6) articles (written by the author and also about the author, including interviews). Criterion 1 belongs to the *peritext* category, while criteria 2-6 are the sources of *epitext*.

- 1) The *peritext* contains any of the following: forewords, afterwords, introductions, dedication, acknowledgements, and editor notes, front and back covers; in other words, information that contributes to construction of the greater context around the production of the book.

² Selected reviews from these sites can be found in Appendix F

³ Details of the Amazon pages of selected texts can be found in Appendix E.

- 2) & 3) Author's homepage and blogs provide details of the author's biography and public interests, providing insights into their process of creativity and intentions for their written works.
- 4) Examining what reviewers think of a text provides insights into social circumstances and reader responses. These epitexts are drawn from three sources: Goodreads, Amazon, and independent book blogs. Goodreads is selected for its popularity within the book community and its social media capacity – interaction via discussion forums, the Facebook style newsfeed and 'like' button capacity makes it another valuable source of data. Users of the site can post their reviews and receive likes and comments. However, Goodreads takes the place of a social media website, and although there are giveaways available and competitions for pre-publication Advanced Reader Copies (ARCs), it does not have a commercial function. Therefore, reviews from Amazon are also included due to the contrast in purpose of its website. Lastly, reviews from independent book review-aimed blogs are also sourced. In contrast to the previously listed epitexts, reviews on book blogs are either stumbled upon or viewed by avid followers of the blog. A book blogger may also have an account on Goodreads or Amazon; however, they may only post their full blog post on their blog, and a short summary with a link (on Goodreads or Amazon) to their external book blog site.
- 5) Teaching materials in relation to the main selected texts are examined where available, particularly those openly available online. Such examination provides further insight into the value of and context surrounding the text from a teaching and learning perspective.
- 6) Lastly, articles written by the author and about the author. These include columns, news articles, features, interviews, and articles written by scholars. How writers present themselves in their articles or interviews reflects their values, interests, and creative processes. For example, Randa Abdel-Fattah, a strong advocate for Muslim women, has written many articles regarding the topic – her novels also tend to share a similar theme in relation to the experiences of growing up/living in Australia for her young protagonists.

3.2.3 Participants

There are three groups of participants in total, including cultural informants. These cultural informants generally shared the same written language and to some extent, schemas and thus, were

able to provide further insight to cultural conceptualisations that I may have missed. Further confirmation, however, came from questions addressed to the authors, who are also participants in this study. This section details the criteria and further information of the cultural informants and participants.

3.2.3.1 Cultural informants

The main criterion for choosing cultural informants was that they must share the written language to some extent, of the authors' cultural background. For instance, Pung and Law are both Chinese (though Pung is Teochew Chinese, and Law is Cantonese Chinese) and Abdel-Fattah is Palestinian-Egyptian and her written cultural language is Arabic. Age, gender, ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds were heterogeneous and as such are able to provide flexible and valuable cultural and linguistic discussion on instances on culturally constructed concepts.

Table 4 The attributes of the cultural informants

Code	Age Range	Gender	Background	Education
C1	25-50	Female	Saudi Arabian	PhD in Cultural Linguistics
C2	25-50	Female	Saudi Arabian	PhD candidate in linguistics
C3	25-50	Female	Syrian Australian	PhD candidate in linguistics
C4	30-35	Female	Mainland Cantonese Chinese	PhD candidate in Cultural Linguistics
C5	30-35	Female	Mainland Chinese	PhD candidate in applied linguistics
C6	25-30	Female	Mainland Cantonese Chinese	Masters in Early Childhood Education

C7	45-55	Female	Chinese-Australian	Advanced Diploma in Accounting
C8	45-55	Male	Mainland Chinese	PhD

Discussions with the cultural informants were undertaken casually or referred to where questions of ambiguous intercultural crossover in the selected texts are noted. For the following discussion on the participants of the research instruments mentioned, it should also be noted here, that ethical approval was given by Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) with the reference number, 2016-1219-7569, before conducting the questionnaire-survey and interviews.

3.2.3.2 *Questionnaire-survey and the follow up interview participants*

The first set of data that requires participants consisted of a questionnaire-survey. There are 41 participants recruited to take part. Participants do not need to have read any of the books beforehand, though this would be a bonus if they had read them. They are not expected to be writers or interested in writing as a hobby or commitment either. Participants are recruited from two sources:

- 1) Through social media. The link of the questionnaire-survey is advertised through the researcher's social media platforms that are literary-related, such as Goodreads and book blogs in order to gather data from interested book readers.
- 2) Undergraduate students (including Honours year students). Just as Bennui (2013) recommended, the questionnaire-survey is advertised in a number of *English as an International Language* classes where the educational content focusses on the status, spread, critical issues, and intercultural communication of Englishes. Furthermore, this participant group includes young adults who have mostly likely jumped from end of year 12 to first year undergraduate studies, and would include those who may have encountered the text during their high school education years.

The participants from these two categories provide a diverse range of responses that showed on a cline of folk linguistic to semi-informed to linguistically educated and informed responses to the questionnaire-survey.

From the participants of the questionnaire-survey, those who were in their third year, fourth or Honours year are invited to participate in a follow up semi-structured interview. This criterion is due to their academic maturity; not only must these participants be in their final years of their undergraduate studies, but they must also have completed at least one third year unit from the English as an International Language program at Monash University, now part of the Linguistics and English Language program. This is important as their understanding of certain concepts, such as translanguaging, world Englishes, and EIL, adds the third dimension to the semi-informed diverse responses of the questionnaire-survey. The details of the five follow up participants are in Table 5.

Table 5 Questionnaire-survey follow up interview participant's information

Code	Age range	Ethnicity and background	Cultural identity	Main field of study and education⁴
FUI-C	18-22	Chinese: second generation migrant, parents also Chinese background but born in Vietnam	ABC: Australian Born Chinese	Third year undergrad student at Monash University, Faculty of Arts and Education. Her main field of study is EIL, and education, primary
FUI-D	20-22	Indian	Global Indian open to new influences	Third year undergrad student at Monash University, Faculty of Arts. Her main field of study is Intercultural communication
FUI-F	22-24	Chinese: her mother is from Fuzhou	Chinese-Singaporean. Chinese influences but	Honours year student at Monash University, Faculty of Arts.

⁴ At the time of the interview in 2018

			identifies more as Singaporean	Her field of study is on EIL and Singaporean English
FUI-M	18-25	Technically Chinese, but also Hong Kong Chinese	Born in HK, attached to HK. Identifies as a Global Citizen that lives in Australia	Final year undergrad student at Monash University, Faculty of Law and Arts. His main field of study is— for linguistics, applied linguistics and EIL
FUI-T	18-22	Indian heritage, Kenyan background	Plain Australian	Third year student at Monash University, Faculty of Arts Her main field of study is a double major in literature and arts

A diverse range of ethnicities were invited, though not all accepted, and as such, the diversity is slightly skewed. However, there is still variation in ethnicity—a demographic that the participants are also required to describe for and about themselves. It was also important to note the ways in which the participants ascribed their identity as this can relate to how they perceive the ‘foreignness’ of the selected authors’ transcultural creativity.

3.2.3.3 *The interviews: Author participants*

Bennui (2013) did not interview their selected authors, though he recommends it would be a valuable option for further studies that used literary works to examine varieties of world Englishes. Although this study focusses on transcultural creativity, the recommendation similarly applies. Therefore, for the five selected texts, the three authors were approached via their website contact page with an invitation to take part in this study. All three accepted the invitation and through an email exchange, they agreed and consented to an interview of approximately one hour in length at a location that is suitable and comfortable for both the author and the researcher. Both interviews with Pung and Law

occurred in Melbourne, and the interview with Abdel-Fattah occurred over the phone due to the interstate location.

Table 6 outlines a brief profile of each author, highlighting their age group (thus in line with the selection criteria listed in 3.2.1), their ethnicity, and what they ascribed to themselves. Table 6 provides further information to what has already been noted in Table 2.

Table 6 Selected author participant information

Code	Author	Age⁵	Ethnicity	Self-ascribed cultural identity
AI-AP	Alice Pung	37	Chinese-Cambodian	Asian-Australian
AI-BL	Benjamin Law	36	Cantonese-Chinese	Cantonese-Chinese-Australian
AI-RAF	Randa Abdel-Fattah	40	Palestinian-Egyptian	Muslim-Australian

As per the selection criteria for the texts, all three authors are highly recognised for their works in Australia. Their texts have won several awards or were nominated for awards (Pung and Abdel-Fattah), or they are renowned in the media or social media (Law).

Alice Pung is born in Australia, shortly after her parents arrived as refugees. Her family is one of immigration, with her parents born in Cambodia, and her grandparents born in Guangzhou, China. Even so, she describes her parents as ethnically Chinese. Pung grew up in Braybrook, Melbourne during the 80-90s around the time of the recession, and as such there was much youth unemployment. She has written two memoirs (*Unpolished Gem*, 2006, and *Her Father's Daughter*, 2011), one young adult fiction (*Laurinda*, 2014), edited two anthologies related to growing up in Australia (*Growing Up Asian in Australia*, 2008, and *My First Lesson*, 2016), and a number of middle grade books (*Our Australian Girl* series, 2015-2016). Both her memoirs received or were shortlisted for a number of prestigious Australian awards, including winning the Australian Newcomer of the Year award in the 2007 Australian Book Industry Awards. *Laurinda* received the Ethel Turner Prize for Young People's

⁵ At the time of the interviews

Literature in the 2016 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. She is also a lawyer as well as a writer. Since her debut, Pung has been vocally supportive of diversity in literature and has appeared on many panels at book conventions.

Randa Abdel-Fattah grew up in Melbourne though later moved to Sydney. She is of Palestinian and Egyptian background. For Abdel-Fattah, her coming of age coincided with an upheaval in political context in the 90s and she describes this as having a strong impact on her identity construction. As a result, Abdel-Fattah primarily chooses Muslim as a point of reference for her identity over other key hyphenations. She has written eight books and co-edited an anthology. Two of which are middle grade (*The Friendship Matchmaker*, 2011, and *The Friendship Matchmaker Goes Undercover*, 2012), five are young adult (*Does My Head Look Big In this?* 2005, *Ten Things I Hate About Me*, 2006, *Where the Streets Had a Name*, 2008, *Noah's Law*, 2010, *When Michael Met Mina*, 2016), and one adult (*No Sex in the City*, 2012). Her most recent anthology is co-edited, *Arab Australian Other: Stories on Race and Identity* (2019). She can also be seen on the media or on social media commenting on issues pertaining to racial discourse in Australia.

Benjamin Law, like Pung and Abdel-Fattah, is also born in Australia. He grew up in a big family, being one of five kids, on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. His parents are immigrants from Hong Kong. Law has written two books at present, both a compilation of memoir essays, *The Family Law* (2010) and *Gaysia: Adventures in the Queer East* (2012). He has also co-authored two other books, *Sh*t Asian mothers say* (2014) and *Law School: sex and relationship advice from Benjamin Law and his mum Jenny Phang* (2017). He has also contributed to various iconic and notable Australian publications as a journalist, including *Frankie*, *The Monthly* and *The Big Issue*. Law, of the three selected authors in this study, is the most present in both the media and social media. *The Family Law* was nominated for the 2011 Australian Book Industry Awards under the categories, *Book of the Year*, *Newcomer of the Year*, and *Biography of the Year*. It is also adapted into a six part, three season TV series that was also nominated for a number of prestigious AACTA awards.

3.3 Data collection

This section provides the procedures of the data collection for the research instruments that were used in this study. As already described, there are two research instruments used: questionnaire-survey and semi-structured interview.

3.3.1 Questionnaire-survey

Brown (2009) notes that “open-response questionnaires provide a way to find out, in an unstructured manner, what people are thinking about a particular topic or issue” (p. 200). The selection of the questionnaire-survey is to gain an insight into the responses of participants towards: a) the texts in general, b) the production of such texts, c) and the contents within (including the themes, linguistic strategies employed (i.e. nativisation of proper names, transfer of syntax or lexis from one linguistic resource to another) and creative innovations (such as creative plays on words and creative metaphors like ‘bogasian’ and ‘boxed into my blazer’ (Laurinda, 2014)).

The questionnaire-survey was conducted via Google forms as the format is easy to read and fill out. It is designed to focus on short to long answer open responses, depending on the dedication of the participant, to elaborate on their multiple choice closed responses. Furthermore, the language of the questionnaire-survey was run through a pilot test and altered to more colloquial language to suit the participants who responded from the first category of questionnaire-survey participants (as listed in section 3.2.3.2). Data was collected via the questionnaire from May 2018 to September 2018 and was advertised in four units of the (formerly) English as an International Language program. The questionnaire-survey is divided into three sections, as listed in the following:

Part A: This part investigates the basic demographics.

- 1) What gender do you identify with?
- 2) What is your approximate age?
- 3) Which do you generation do you identify? i.e. first, second, third, etc. If confused, please list under ‘other’
- 4) What is your ethnic background?
- 5) Do you have an interest in writing? (Creative or otherwise)
- 6) Following the previous question, what type of writing do you do? Options included: *Creative writing* (fiction, short stories, poetry, etc); *Social writing* (messaging, social media status/comments, social networking, etc); *Academic writing* (essays, exams, reports, etc); *Every day writing* (shopping lists, small notes, etc)

Part B: This part investigates examples of linguistic creativity. It is divided into two parts. The first asks questions regarding the participants understanding of creativity with language:

- 1) What does ‘creativity’ mean to you?

- 2) When you think of being creative with language, what are some key words that you think of?
- 3) Do you think ‘refreshing’ the meaning of a word is considered as creative? (i.e. the word ‘lover’ in an Australian context is associated with ‘mistress’ generally, but if considered from a Chinese perspective, it may also mean ‘girlfriend’ or wife’.) Why and why not?
- 4) What aspects of language do you think is considered as being creative in language? (i.e. using metaphor, playing with words, etc?) Please list at least two definitions based on your own interpretation.
- 5) For the above question, what are some linguistic examples?

Question 3 uses an example to further prompt participants on the knowledge of familiar words being conceptualised in different ways. This example is the knowledge that the word ‘lover’ in an Australian context is associated with ‘mistress’ generally, but if considered from a Chinese perspective, it may also mean ‘girlfriend’ or ‘wife’. The example is taken from Xu (2010), who demonstrates that while the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines a lover to be someone you have a sexual relationship that one is not married to, from a Chinese English lens, it semantically broadens the word to include someone who is a ‘wife’ – thus officially married to – or a legitimate girlfriend, with the closest Chinese equivalent being *airen* (爱人), a term used to address a spouse.

The second part introduces selected excerpts from the text which stood out in the conversations with the cultural informants. These excerpts demonstrate a variety of linguistic and discourse creativity. For each excerpt, participants were asked: a) a multiple choice question on whether it is ‘creative’ and then b) to further elaborate. Each of these excerpts also included a secondary (or third) sub-question aimed at asking participants their interpretation of certain culturally-specific keywords within the excerpts.

Eleven excerpts had been taken from the selected texts based on the most prominent discussions. Not only were they focused on a form of linguistic discourse creativity, eight excerpts specifically demonstrate a focus on culturally constructed concepts, and three excerpts primarily focusses on linguistic strategies illustrating transcultural creativity. Participants were encouraged to respond to the content of the excerpts in whichever manner suited them best. This is particularly important as cultural conceptualisations are heterogeneously shared within a culture, and thus potentially less shared by those outside of the culture. If so, it was important to know how these cultural conceptualisations are interpreted and whether participants can recognise the transcultural

creativity of the author. The full sample of the selected excerpts are included in Chapter 7 and Appendix B. For example:

The next section will present a number of examples found in selected texts. You will be asked to answer a multiple choice question about whether you think that the language used in each section are creative? Then to fill in the following question of 'Why and why not?'

Quote 1:

In contrast to Hong Kong – a throbbing, stinking metropolis of concrete, where people hung out their laundry thirty storeys up – Caloundra was a ghost town. Literally everyone was white. (The Family Law, Benjamin Law, P.22)

Is there creativity in Quote 1? *

Yes

No

Maybe

Not sure

Other...

Can you please elaborate on your answer for Quote 1? Why do you think so? *

Long-answer text

Figure 1 Questionnaire-survey sample 1

Quote 4:

The Cambodians have a saying: "A girl is like white cotton wool— once dirtied, it can never be clean again. A boy is like a gem – the more you polish it, the brighter it shines." (Unpolished Gem, *Alice Pung*, P.216)

Is there creativity in Quote 4? *

Yes
 No
 Maybe
 Not sure
 Other...

Can you please elaborate on your answer for Quote 4? Why do you think so?

Paragraph

Long-answer text

Figure 2 Questionnaire-survey sample 2

Part C: This part examines participants' responses in relation to the social discourses and whether they think the text is appropriate. It is a general overview of participants' reflection on their own experiences and social environment. Questions asked are:

- 1) Do you feel the creativity of the author (such as the way they use language, the themes that they introduce and explore, and the story they tell) is at a high level? Or just normal? Please select one or multiple answers based on your impression.
- 2) Can you elaborate on your answer to the previous question? What influences do you think are considered as 'high level' creativity?

- 3) In light of the context you live in, is/are the texts appropriate? Can you briefly explain why?
- 4) Can a text be considered creative if it does not conform to the expectations of the society it is introduced?
- 5) Can a text be considered creative if it does conform to the expectations of the society it is introduced?

Brown (2009) suggests that “the exploratory nature of open-response items and the unanticipated responses they sometimes evoke are crucially important” (p. 205). What is evoked plays a role in the participants’ perception of the transcultural creativity of the author. Readers, according to Fialho (2007), go through a linguistic-psychological-aesthetical cycle of refamiliarization. The process is as follows: R → reading; C1 → comprehension 1; F → feelings; FG → foregrounding; D → defamiliarization; F → feelings; R → refamiliarization; RS → refamiliarizing strategies; C2 → comprehension 2; AP → aesthetic perspective (Fialho, 2007, p. 107). Through the questionnaire-survey and the other research instrument, semi-structure interview, this study maintains awareness of this process, but conceives of it in light of both the world Englishes frames of *intelligibility*, *comprehensibility*, and *interpretability*, and the Cultural Linguistics approach of cultural conceptualisations.

3.3.2 Interviews

The aim of a semi-structured interview is to explore in greater depth participants’ experiences, views, or feelings, and allows participants to determine the direction of the interview while the interviewer guides the interview with topics in mind (Richards, 2009). This research instrument is used to collect data in two separate stages. The first is in follow up interviews on the findings from the questionnaire-survey. In order to gain a better understanding of the results from the questionnaire-survey stage, five participants underwent a 20-40 minutes semi-structured interview. The variation in interview length occurred due to the individual speaking styles. The interviews took place at Monash University, at a location that was both quiet and comfortable for the participant and the researcher. The structure of these interviews followed roughly the questions and themes below, and allowed space for me to ask further questions:

- 1) Do participants agree with the findings of the questionnaire-survey?

- 2) How do they compare their own perceptions of language and creativity to others who had participated in the questionnaire-survey?
- 3) What is their understanding of the selected quote?
 - a. What schemas do they draw on?
 - b. How do they make sense of it?
- 4) What do participants think is considered 'acceptable' creativity? To what extent is an act or action considered creative?
- 5) Do they think what the authors have created is acceptable?

For the second set of interviews conducted with the three selected authors, the semi-structured questions and themes were provided to the participants beforehand. These interviews, as noted earlier in section 3.2.3, lasted for approximately one hour of their time and were based on the following themes and questions, reflective of this study's research questions:

- 1) Background information
 - a. Approximate age range?
 - b. What is their ethnic background? National background?
 - c. What was the social environment like when growing up?
 - d. What is their cultural identity? (How do they answer the question 'where are you from?')
 - e. What factors influence their identity? (Such as ethnicity, age, gender, etc)
 - f. How does the author feel about the way they use English?
 - g. What is the relationship the author has with English?
 - h. Are there any positive or negative associations to how you use English?
- 2) The conception of their story
 - a. How did the authors first conceive the idea for their fiction/nonfiction?
 - b. What was their initial aim?
 - c. Did they have a particular audience in mind?
 - d. How do they feel about the response and feedback to their fiction/nonfiction?
- 3) The creative process
 - a. How did the author decide whether to directly translate or creatively translate culture-specific/culturally loaded terms from their heritage language to English?
 - b. Was it a conscious/unconscious decision?
- 4) Further elaboration (showing the authors selected quotes from their texts)
 - a. What was your initial intention when you wrote this section?

Question 4 includes a brief process that mimicked the process participants underwent during the questionnaire-survey, in particular the section on the selected excerpts. However, due to the time constraints, only three main excerpts were selected based on the diversity and popularity of responses from the questionnaire-survey. It is also during the interviews with the author, that I was able to confirm or clarify the presence of specific linguistic or discourse creativity and/or cultural conceptualisations that were not shared by myself or the cultural informants. For example, with Pung, the presence of Teochew Chinese references; with Law, the confirmation of linguistic creativity where he used English words to represent a cultural concept and vice versa; and with Abdel-Fattah, to confirm a ‘shoe’ reference that carries much more cultural conceptual weight than its casual reference suggested in the text.

3.4 Data analysis procedure

This section details the stages of the analysis and the analytical tools used for each stage. The analysis procedure can be represented in Table 7:

Table 7 Data analysis procedure

Stage	Dataset	Levels of analysis	Focus of analysis
Stage 1: Identification	(1) Texts	Level 1: Text and discourse analysis of transcultural creativity	Linguistic creativity
			Discourse creativity
		Level 2: Discourse analysis of cultural conceptualisations	Cultural conceptualisations
	(2) Paratexts	Level 1: Meta-discourse analysis of transcultural creativity and cultural conceptualisation	Perception of text and linguistic creativity from external sources
		Level 2: Discourse analysis (themes & issues)	Identification of major themes of texts

Stage 2: Verification	(1) Questionnaire- survey & follow up interviews	Level 1: Meta-discourse analysis of transcultural creativity and cultural conceptualisation Level 2: Discourse analysis (themes & issues)	Perception and reception of cultural conceptualisations and transcultural creativity
	(2) Author interviews	Level 1: Meta-discourse analysis of transcultural creativity and cultural conceptualisation Level 2: Discourse analysis (themes & issues)	Creative processes Cultural conceptualisations Confirm/explain some results from Stage 1(1)

The analytical method employed across all data collected is the discourse analysis approach. A text does not exist in isolation of its social environment; it develops meaning and becomes meaningful in discourse. Predominantly, discourse analysis has been the preferred method of analysing literatures in world Englishes, mostly examining the linguistic strategies used (Albakry & Siler, 2012; Bamiro, 2011; D'Souza, 1996; Kachru, 1995a; Osakwe, 1999; Sridhar, 1982; Watkhaolarm, 2005), discourse creativity (Dissanayake & Nichter, 1987; Gonzalez, 1987; Jones, 2010, 2012b; B. B. Kachru, 1987; Y. Kachru, 1987; Parthasarathy, 1987), speech acts of characters within the actual text (Bamiro, 2011; D'souza, 1991), and nativization as well as lexical innovations in terms of literary creativity (Karn, 2013; Tawake, 2003; H. Zhang, 2002). Alternatively, some such as Bennui (2013) adopted a textual analysis approach in his examination of Thai English literature.

'Discourse analysis' has been used interchangeably with 'text analysis' and the definitions for 'discourse' are diverse. The generally accepted view of this approach to text is "that it has something to do with looking at language 'above' or 'beyond' the sentence" (Widdowson, 2008b, p. 1). Jones (2010) provides a way to look at creativity from a discourse approach, defining discourse in such an approach "as a broader range of practices associated with the social construction of knowledge" (p.471). Jones (2010) also suggests that a discourse and creativity approach would see creativity not only as clever manipulation of language or invention and innovation but in the "actions that we use language to take and the broader social implications of those actions cannot operate simply through the analysis of texts" (p. 474). Thus, this thesis took into consideration this

approach of discourse analysis when examining the texts as the observation of creativity is not simply beyond the sentence and language in communication, but also about the greater perception of discourses surrounding its process and production.

To analyse the bulk of textual data from the selected texts, I used the discourse analysis approach in conjunction with several frameworks used by previous scholars, as noted in Table 8 below.

Table 8 Adopted and adapted analytical frameworks

Analytical frameworks of	Adopted/adapted to this thesis
B. B. Kachru (1987)	Nativisation of context Nativisation of cohesion and cohesiveness Nativisation of rhetorical strategies (as discussed in section 2.3)
Kachru (1995b) Kachru (1985)	Bilinguals' creativity → Transcultural creativity approach (as adapted in section 2.3) Transcreation
Dissanayake and Nichter (1987)	Thematic metaphor discursal approach to Punyakante Wijenaike's literary text
Sharifian (2015a, 2015b, 2017)	Cultural conceptualisations: <i>cultural schema</i> , <i>cultural category</i> , and <i>cultural metaphor</i>
Xu and Sharifian (2017, 2018) Xu (forthcoming)	Integrated world Englishes and Cultural Linguistics approach
Jones (2010, 2012a)	Discourse and creativity approach

Incorporating the above analytical frameworks into the approach taken in this thesis, results in up to three levels of analysis of each stage, including a combination of the following: *text and discourse analysis of transcultural creativity*, *discourse analysis of cultural conceptualisations*, and *meta-discourse analysis of transcultural creativity and cultural conceptualisations*. There are two stages

of analysis, *identification* and *verification*. Stage 1 aims at analysing the text and collecting the data on linguistic and discourse creativity.

The first level of analysis involves identifying the instances of transcultural creativity (divided into two major categories: linguistic and discourse) and aims to answer the first two sub-questions of research question 1 of this thesis. The data is coded according to the major linguistic strategies found in the scholarly literature (Chapter 2). While there are many specific sub-categories of linguistic creativity, this thesis simplified these into the following categories that are collected from previous studies in world Englishes that examined literary texts.

Table 9 Coding categories for linguistic strategies

Category code no.	Category	Description
1	Codemeshing	Codemixing, codeswitching
2	Creative and direct translations	Transliterations, translations
3	Creative manipulations	Munat's (2016) notion of creative manipulation (chapter 2) Puns Transcultural plays with words
4	Linguistic creativity	Semantic shift, lexical innovations, and lexical borrowings
5	Terms of address	Terms of address used between family and friends
6	Referential acts	References to discursal concepts such as event schema, role schema, etc.
7	Speech acts	Cursewords, obscenities, greetings, prayer, and discourse particles
8	Naming acts	Proper names, nicknames, and place names

The second level of analysis for the selected texts involves a discourse analysis of the cultural conceptualisations present in the texts and the underlying linguistic strategies found. This level involves examining how certain words and expressions that may seem ‘familiar’ but have roots deep in a particular source of cultural conceptualisation. The level of analysis aims to answer the third sub-question of research question 1.

The second half of stage 1 analyses the paratextual data. There are two levels of analysis, all aimed at answering research question 3. The *meta-discourse analysis* is adapted from Sharifian and Tayebi (2017), and applied in the sense of identifying words or expressions used within the paratexts when the participant describes their perception and reception of any aspect of transcultural creativity in the selected texts. Level 2 involves a discourse analysis of the themes and issues generally discussed or reflected in the paratextual context. The paratextual data is not represented in its own chapter in the remainder of this thesis as the findings present the supplementary outlook of the context surrounding the texts. Therefore, the findings are discussed in relation to the findings of the other data.

It is during stage 1 that validation with cultural informants also takes place. Even though I may share some Chinese cultural knowledge as a semi-cultural insider, my position as a second generation migrant in Australia, makes me also a cultural outsider to some extent. Thus, I provide both an emic and etic perspective to both Pung’s and Law’s text but a clear etic perspective to Abdel-Fattah’s. Therefore, it is at this stage that the analysis of the text for instances of transcultural creativity and cultural conceptualisations are validated through discussions with cultural informants (see section 3.2.3.1 for profiles). Once these are confirmed, further explored, and synthesised, the results are used to formulate the instruments for stage 2.

The main focus of stage 2 is *verification*. It is also the stage of reception and perception. The levels of analysis replicate those of the paratextual data, involving the meta-discourse analysis and discourse analysis of themes and issues. The interviews of both the follow up questionnaire-survey participants and the selected authors, are transcribed and coded according to major themes. While the follow up interviews are significant in presenting the perspective of linguistically informed responses to the transcultural creativity, like the paratextual data, the findings are interwoven and supplement the analysis and discussion of the other datasets, primarily, the selected texts, questionnaire-survey, and author interviews. The data of the datasets listed in stage 2 (Table 7) are categorised according to main themes that answer research questions 2 and 4 including, but not limited to: participants’

interpretations of creativity, reception and perception of authors' transcultural creativity, and reception and perception of cultural conceptualisations in selected texts.

3.5 Coding

This section briefly describes how the data is coded and referenced in the remaining chapters of this thesis. The code for the main datasets (text, paratext, questionnaire-survey, and interviews) has up to four components, and generally follows this pattern: Method – Author – Book – Dataset Type. For example, P-AP-U-TN refers to: Paratext data – Alice Pung – Unpolished Gem – Teaching Notes.; and FUI-C refers to: Follow Up Interview – Participant C. The coding for paratextual data from online book forum sources, Amazon, Goodreads, and Book Blogs, are coded according to the following example for *Unpolished Gem* in Table 10.

Table 10 Example coding for book review paratext data

Code	Author	Source	Book
P-AP-U-G1	Alice Pung	Goodreads Review 1	Unpolished Gem
P-AP-U-G2		Goodreads Review 2	
P-AP-U-G3		Goodreads Review 3	
P-AP-U-G4		Goodreads Review 4	
P-AP-U-G5		Goodreads Review 5	
P-A-U-A1		Amazon Review 1	
P-A-U-A2		Amazon Review 2	
P-A-U-A3		Amazon Review 3	
P-A-U-A4		Amazon Review 4	
P-A-U-BR1		Blog Review 1	

P-A-U-BR2	Blog Review 2
P-A-U-BR3	Blog Review 3
P-A-U-BR4	Blog Review 4

Datasets are coded accordingly: P for Paratexts, QSP for Questionnaire-Survey Participant, FUI for Follow Up Interviews, and AI for Author Interviews.

The coding for the linguistic strategies follows a strict number coding, based on the categories listed in Table 9. To understand their reference when used in text, the data from the text and discourse analysis is coded in the following manner. Author codes remain consistent with the above coding: A for Alice Pung, B for Benjamin Law, and R for Randa Abdel-Fattah. However, the coding of the texts changes for the linguistic strategies, to the following:

Table 11 Author and text codes for linguistic strategies

Author	Book	Code
Alice Pung – (A)	Unpolished Gem	1
	Laurinda	2
Benjamin Law – (B)	The Family Law	1
Randa Abdel-Fattah – (R)	Does My Head Look Big In This?	1
	Ten Things I Hate About Me	2

Therefore, based on the categories listed in Table 9, examples of the coding are as follows:

Table 12 Examples of linguistic strategies coding

	Author	Book	Category	Example	Final code:
Example 1	B	1	2	4	B-1-2-4
Example 2	A	2	1	8	A-2-1-8

Example 3	R	2	2(1)	5	R-2-2(1)-5
Example 4	R	2	1	9(b)	R-2-1-9(b)

In Table 12, Example 1 refers to a linguistic strategy example from Benjamin Law’s text, *The Family Law*. It is a category 2 example, which means it is an example of creative or direct translation, and number 4 refers to it being the fourth example listed in the complete list in the Appendix C. Both examples 3 and 4 include a bracketed sub-category. For example, category 2 is divided into (1) direct translation and (2) creative translation. Example 4 is bracketed with a letter, i.e. (b); this means that number example includes more than one instance. R-2-1-9(b) therefore, refers specifically to the example of ‘*konefa*’. The full example is listed below:

Table 13 Example R-2-1-9(b)

Author	Text	Category	Example 9	Excerpt
R	2	1	(a) Ahwa	‘Big family dinners and a million conversations around the dinner table! Thick Arabic <i>ahwa</i> boiled on a coal barbeque and drunk with syrupy baklava and <i>konefa</i> . Drinking it over stories about back home when we played on snow-capped mountains after school and spent our weekends swimming in the Mediterranean. Picking <i>warak ayneb</i> from the pot while nobody’s looking and scooping hommos into fresh loaves of bread and letting it melt in your mouth! The <i>darabuka</i> and <i>oud</i> and <i>table</i> hypnotising your hips into dancing around the lounge room with your cousins and aunts. A community of aunts and uncles and cousins, even when they’re not blood relations.’ (p.153)
			(b) Konefa	
			(c) Warak ayneb	
			(d) Darabuka	
			(e) Oud	
			(f) table	

3.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter has described the research methodology of this thesis, including the sources of data, data collection and research instruments, and the data analysis procedure. There are five main sources of data: selected texts, paratexts, questionnaire-survey, and interviews that follow up on the questionnaire-survey and semi-structured interviews with the selected authors. Data collected from the paratexts and follow up questionnaire-survey interviews supplement and enhance the analysis and discussion of the data found in the other sources. Thus, the analysis occurs in two main stages. The first stage analyses the texts for instances of transcultural creativity, and the second stage through the use of research instruments is aimed at further understanding the instances of transcultural creativity and cultural conceptualisations, as well as the reception and perception of these aspects.

Chapter 4 Transcultural creativity as a reflection of self

4.1 Overview: From what we know

I write about Asian people because I'm Asian you know. They're the characters that I can most fully flesh out, they can become more three dimensional – Alice Pung (AI-AP)

Oftentimes, it can be heard from the mouth of a writer that what they write is what they know best. Setting, character, theme, and other relevant facets of story development are somewhat intricately tied with the authors' own experiences and show in some form or another. This is not new, merely reiterated as a reminder. For the authors selected for this thesis, this is still proven true. As evidenced by Pung in her interview (briefly quoted above). Where these authors come from plays a dominating role in shaping not only their identities but their stories and writing styles. The construction of a piece of writing—or in the case of an author's book—is the product of both writer and reader, the authors' experiences and its resonance in the mind and heart of the reader. Therefore, writing is not isolated from the external world despite the contents. Park (2013) in her self-explored discovery and investigation into 'writing is a way of knowing' argues that looking into herself, writing autobiography helped her see and understand the world around her. She also came to an understanding of her many identities, complicated by race, gender, and class related to language, and how these identities were "largely influenced and (re)shaped by the sociocultural and socio-political contexts in which I [she] had lived" (Park, 2013, p. 338). Thus, this chapter looks at the social context of the selected authors, their relationship with English and their mother tongues, the creative process and consciousness of choice, and how their creativity shows in their written works.

4.2 Social context, the influence of politics

At the same time, the government had this policy of multiculturalism, so even though the environment was a bit rough and at times racist openly, at school it wasn't like that – Alice Pung (AI-AP)

As noted in Chapter 3, despite the intentions of the researcher of this thesis to avoid selecting second generation migrant writers who were born or grew up in hot political climates (hence the exclusion of second generation authors born prior to the 1980s), this youngest generation is still, to some extent, experiencing at least one topic of political interest—such as the discourse of multiculturalism. This is particularly prevalent when each author was asked to describe the social context of their growing up. Pung points out in her interview, that the social context for her was a period where discussions were focussed on policies of multiculturalism and a period of youth unemployment where iconic Australian figures like Les Twentymen and Richard Trigear were prominent. It was, as noted above, a time when racism was a little bit more openly common. She compared the political atmosphere (noted above) to that of her school in the west of Melbourne:

AI-AP: *people make fun of multicultural days where you wear ethnic costumes and food, but that kind of helped the kids accept difference I think*

Law's interview reveals that his concerns about his social environment growing up were similarly different. From a micro perspective, these concerns are localised to his Queensland electorate. A macro outlook, however, shows that the concerns are much the same as Pung's. He had grown up caught among heated discussions of multiculturalism and what it means to be Australian, citing the influences and effects of significant political figures like Pauline Hanson.

AI-BL: *I never thought anything was different because when we turn on the TV, everyone was white; so when I walked out into my neighbourhood, everyone is white; so I'm like, guess I'm living in a white country.*

Naturally, this way of thinking that conceptualised his local environment constructed his schema of Australia, and which eventually led to cultural shock of a kind when Law later moved away to Sydney and discovered how multicultural Australia could be. Much like Pung, he cites the 80s and 90s as multicultural-focussed policy, describing this period of time as being “*charmed*”. Where Law lived, it was “*like ground zero for Cantonese immigrants*”. Knowing this, Law states that he felt how it led, in some form, to shaping his current identity.

AI-BL: *I think that was the first time I was really aware that being the minority was also inherently linked and intrinsically linked with being political because for the first time I really understood that my family and I were being politicised. You know*

being caught out in parliament as a community, as a threat, like I mean I kind of joke about it now, but it was kind of like scary and humiliating at the time

It is this turbulent period of time that set the backdrop for Abdel-Fattah's own growing up as someone from not just one Arabic heritage, but two: Egyptian and Palestinian. She is now of course a very vocal political advocate, having become very politically and socially conscious about the world around her at a young age.

AI-RAF: *I feel like I was growing up in a sort of conscious, sort of brightness of Australia at that point because it was quite multicultural anyway um in terms of my adolescence, and my sort of coming of age sort of coincided with the serf cold war in the nineties, so my entire adolescence resonates with a political context in which an Arab was no longer a description, it was an accusation. I really came of age at a time when my community was under the microscope and sort of being forced to um prove their belonging, prove their right to their loyalties. So really a precursor to what is happening now but it's something, also, a context in which I grew up in most certainly influenced by that as a teenager.*

The policy of multiculturalism that is referred to by these authors is the somewhat antiquated and dated *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* that is often referred to as the White Australia Policy. Although this policy was officially withdrawn in the late 1960s, Healy (2010) suggests that it “still underscored attitudes in Australian society under the more service-oriented policy of ‘integration’ of the early 1970s” (p.4). This led to an assimilation policy, which ended in 1972, before a policy on multilingualism was established in 1976 (Healy, 2010). Even so, a need to shift to English, perceived as the language of power in the new context, contributed to many second generation Australians potentially losing “their attachment to their family’s past and the nuances of family histories, languages and customary practices. This effectively rendered it necessary for immigrant children to live ‘in-between’ societies and translate across many cultural identities” (Healy, 2010, p. 5).

Despite the genre which distinguishes the notable Australian works of these authors, their experiences are reflected in the narratives they tell. This is more prevalent when one compares both memoir and fiction by the same author. Regardless of the notable differences that one would expect between genres—the former being a portrayal of one’s life, and the latter a creation of the author’s imagination—the roots are there, more particularly when the author has decided what story they wanted to write. For example, in *Laurinda*, the audience is not told what the home language of the main character is, instead the reader is only aware that there is another language being spoken at

home. The reader is also aware that the parents had immigrated from Vietnam, though they are Chinese. Pung in her interview reveals however, that the language is “*just Teochew, I just resort to the default language I know*”.

4.3 Author relationship with the English language, and where does this situate them?

“It’s my first and really only language, I’m not particularly fluent in Arabic. I understand Arabic, particularly the Egyptian and Palestinian dialects, and I learnt Arabic in so I kind of read and kind of read, very rusty now, and I can communicate with my grandmother but my first and really only language is English, so I don’t really think about it, just that I do.” – Randa Abdel-Fattah (AI-RAF)

In shaping the social context of the authors’ upbringing, a dominating aspect is the *language choice*. To varying degrees, it is generally expected that a migrant family will speak the migrant language at home. The degree to which it is successfully shared, will vary. While D’souza (1991) (see Chapter 2) focusses on a context in which colonisation is the defining historical shift in language use and choice, and the concerns are focussed on an insider to outsider perspective—for these authors, immigration is the focus, as is being positioned as an ‘insider’ who feels like an ‘outsider.’ These authors are indeed belonging to a generation who are “comfortable with the English language and have no idea to apologize for their use of it” (D’souza, 1991, p. 313).

AI-AP: *I grew up speaking Teochew. I was about seven or eight when my grandmother moved out and that was you know it was a big deal for me. And then I just started speaking and thinking in English. My thoughts used to be in Chinese, because I remember distinctly that I wasn’t five or four; I was seven or eight when the English thinking took over and once that took over, that was it, it’s my primary language and it’s the language that I best communicate in. So in my relationship with my parents is locked at a level of maybe eleven or so because that’s the extent of Teochew that I know so I can’t discuss much politics or anything like that nothing too complicated.*

AI-BL: *I guess like I feel really fluent. And confident in it, because it’s my, in some ways my first language and in other ways it’s not, because I grew up with Cantonese, but I*

...speak it exceptionally poorly and so I understand conversations in Cantonese, but to replicate it is still really difficult for me. So, there's kind of an element of shame attached to that, having those limitations, and I don't speak any Mandarin. Like I can say, like you know, wode zhongwen shuode bu tai hao like I can say that, but in terms of English, I feel like I've got a PhD in writing so. If I have one thing I'm confident about, it's my ability to communicate.

English is prevalently the primary and dominant language choice for Abdel-Fattah (quoted at the beginning of this section), Law, and Pung. The dominance of the language prevailed despite growing up in bi/multilingual households. In Pung's case it is English and a dialect of Chinese (Teochew), for Law it is English and Cantonese, and Abdel-Fattah grew up with English and Arabic, in particular the Arabic dialects of Egypt and Palestine. Their relationship with their alternative codes is varied, but consistently between the three authors is the knowledge that their competence in either of their linguistic code is not equal. These authors are “*confident*”, “*fluent*”, and recognise that English is their dominating first language. This shows and confirms D'souza's categorisation of ‘synthesizer’ though not to the same model.

Through a variety of influencing factors, such as when her grandmother moved out in Pung's case, the possibility of maintaining the home language can be halted, stilted, or continued. Similarly, Law also experienced a stilted maintenance of his home language, which he attributes to the dynamic of his family.

AI-BL: *Because they had five kids, so they couldn't just enforce that much discipline on how we spoke. And because the only people who spoke it were my parents we just I don't know, English really dominated, and we didn't get much Cantonese programming...like my dad would get Cantonese videos and then he worked most of the time, so it was really up to my mum communicating with us, and she still—both of my parents—still talk to us predominantly in Cantonese with a little English sprinkled and we speak English back with some Cantonese sprinkled through it. I don't know at what point I lost that, I didn't ever fully have Cantonese under my belt ever.*

This is common for the second generation, particularly when assimilating into school and being able to carve a suitable ‘host’ identity becomes important (Röder, Ward, Frese, & Sánchez, 2015). Maintaining language often falls to the parents and/or family, and whether they choose external education to further maintenance (Hinton, 2001, p. 223), when the balance is not available, then

competence will favour the dominant language, as in the case of Law. Law's case is compounded by multiple factors: home life, family size, parental availability, language of interlocutors at hand, and lack of supporting extra materials. Having passive knowledge of the heritage language is considered a typical outcome in that "children get to the point where they can understand the home language in a basic way but cannot speak as well as they understand" (Hinton, 2001, p. 2011). Furthermore, Law is one of the younger siblings in his family and demonstrates a confidence and fluency that one might expect in a host language. Particularly since "siblings play an especially important role in English acquisition: younger siblings always learn English at an earlier age than older siblings, because the older siblings teach the younger ones" (Hinton, 2001, p. 208).

The 'quality' of the bilingualism is shared between child and parent; Law and his parents, for example, have "*Cantonese with a little English sprinkled and we speak English back with some Cantonese sprinkled through it*", thus illustrating this state of 'meshedness', or the interwovenness of the linguistic resources. Abdel-Fattah also hinted at this in her interview:

AI-RAF: *'cause there are some moments where there's a mishmash of English and Arabic. Because that's what happens with second generation, you start to, you learn Arabic as someone who has grown up in Australia. You start to Australianise the Arabic and it becomes you know this other kind of middle language.*

The social environment influences the way in which language is indeed maintained, and how the users make use of it, which could lead to 'Australianising'. These selected authors are comfortable and at ease with English, however their degrees of linguistic 'competence' do not quite fall into line with the expectations of Kachru's definition of 'Bilinguals' creativity'. His claim (see Chapter 2) in his 1985 definition, that bilinguals' creativity is the creative processes that result from the competence in "two or more languages" (p. 20) is a fair and generally substantiated argument. However, it does not necessarily embrace bilingual situations such as those demonstrated by the three selected authors. As these authors reveal in their interviews, they make the same decisions as 'bilingual' speakers make in the creative process. Their intentions for writing are similar, however how they think about their writing will be subjective to their own social contexts and desire to share or make known to their readers.

4.4 The meaning of ‘writing’: A way of knowing

“A memoir is told through a very particular personal lens, and truth is a subjective thing in terms of storytelling when it comes to your family” – P-BL-PT.

Ivanic (1998) wrote “All our writing is influenced by our life histories. Each word we write represents an encounter, possibly a struggle, between our multiple past experience and the demands of a new context” (p.181). Each of the three authors found a sense of knowing in the way they write. For Alice Pung, she came to a specific realisation. As noted in her memoir and article, after losing her words (due to the stress of high school finals), she “*learned that the people who had the words were also – not coincidentally – the people who had power in society*” (P-AP-SB). For Benjamin Law (P-BL-PT), “*in terms of if I have to kind of trace back how I got interested in writing itself was Rolling Stone would invite letters to the editor*”. On the other hand, for Randa Abdel-Fattah (P-RAF-PT) writing her first book was something she “*never had any doubts that I [she] would do it, because it was something that I [she] just so wanted to see it through. Even if it didn’t get published I [she] wanted to make the manuscript the best I [she] could.*” On a similar note, though more philosophically, Pung wrote:

Writers affirm people’s best selves back to them – and by best selves, I do not mean most well behaved selves, but the selves that are vulnerable, difficult to love, engage in stupid acts and small transgressions – your best self is your human self. It is your human self that makes the reader feel like they are not alone in their petty selfishness, uncertainty, envy, irrational anger, judgment. Your human self is the self that, upon discovering love as a verb and not an adjective, finds love hard work all of a sudden, but do it anyway. Your best characters have integrity - which simply means that you’ve managed to integrate all the parts of them, both good and bad (P-AP-SB)

Writing becomes a way of affirmation and self-reflection. While Abdel-Fattah emphasises the agency of self to complete a personal goal through writing, Pung reminds us that writing itself is also a personal act, a task of reflection, and a way of knowing ourselves. As Abdel-Fattah finds:

It’s funny how often these things are subconscious. You don’t really recognise them until somebody points them out or you read your work later, these sorts of inspirations that you are not conscious of until they are pointed out to you (P-RAF-PT)

This is in response to being asked about the references to *Emma* by Jane Austen, in her book *When Michael Met Mina* (2016). A novel, described on its back cover to be about a story of two individuals on opposite sides of a particular discourse—Mina is a refugee who has experiences as being fresh off the boat and detention centres, while Michael is the son of politicians who want to stop the boats. As evident by the themes of her books, Abdel-Fattah’s passionate advocacy stems from worlds and stories that she knows, hears and sees. The aspect of self-reflection is also shared by Law:

...the other thing that is challenging is being fair. People in your life will act in terrible ways, including yourself. In writing a piece like this, I was always questioning whether I was being fair to the people in my life, but also fair to a younger version of me as well (P-BL-PT).

In constructing the authors’ social context, data collected from epitextual material also reveal what inspired, influenced and encouraged these authors in pursuing not only writing, but the very themes they write about. As Ivanič (1998) states, “writing is not some neutral activity which we just learn like a physical skill, but it implicates every fibre of the writer’s multifaceted being” (p. 181). The construction of self leads to meaning making that is valuable to the writer and can impart new perspectives to the reader.

A glimpse at the peritexts of the selected texts provides a very clear picture of their influences and inspirations. The dedication of ‘The Lamb’ for Laurinda foreshadows the story, referencing a character who is featured in the story. As for the other dedications, these are incomplete without reading the acknowledgements that were either situated at the front of the book or just before the back cover. Although not specifically addressed in her dedication for *TTIHAM*, Abdel-Fattah dedicates two lines in her acknowledgements to her sister:

Thanks to my sister, Nada. You look great on the cover and there are more than ten things I love about you! (P-RAF-T-D)

This very specific dedication and acknowledgement refers to the yellow Australian edition of *TTIHAM*, in which the cover features ‘Jamie’ in a mirrored pose, one version of herself with the dyed blonde hair she has in the story; and the other with her natural brunette shade, thus depicting the character’s two selves. The dedication as well, is an asymmetrical mirror reflection of the novel’s title. In contrast, the acknowledgements for *DMHLBIT* is much more concise, featuring an acknowledgement of her agent and of those who understood why she wrote the book (P-RAF-D-AK). Pung’s acknowledgements are more detailed including a thanks:

To all the resilient teenagers in the western suburbs I've known over the years, who were the inspiration for Linh: thank you for letting me into your lives. Thanks also to the countless teachers who good-humouredly shared their 'horror stories' with me, yet continue to dedicate themselves to their profession. They are true unsung heroes (P-AP-L-AK)

This is also reflected in the Kurt Vonnegut quote used for the epigraph: "*Life is nothing but high school*". The quote draws upon various conceptualisations of HIGH SCHOOL, be it American, Australian or otherwise, and it speaks to the politics of highschool life theme played with through the contents of the novel. From the acknowledgements and the contents of this novel, the conceptualisation of SCHOOL IS A BATTLEFIELD is salient theme. Thus, we see a further glimpse of the social context that constructed the narrative.

The experiences of the authors contribute to their desires to write. For example, Pung (P-AP-SB) writes that "I also know that I grew up with a mother whose only literature is the Safeway⁶ and Target advertisements in our mailbox every week" and that she "learnt a lot about writing at university through reading widely". Law was also a very avid reader growing up, and that:

In my family, there were quite a few things that were seen as indulgences, 'Don't waste your money on that', but books were never one of them. My mom remembers that I was quite a low maintenance child, in that all she'd have to do was either turn on the television or throw me a book, and I'd be very, very quiet, like a succulent, really (P-BL-PT)

Both Pung and Law found the value of reading through the emphasis, need, or lack of in their growing up, while Abdel-Fattah had:

...very vivid memories of going to bookstores with my mother, who was setting up a new school library they were establishing in Melbourne, and sitting in these big warehouses where she was getting these big discount packs of books, and just getting so excited about that (P-RAF-PT)

Reading as a child played very dominant roles for all the selected writers—thus sowing the seeds of inspiration. Law developed a deeper interest in magazines, which had articles that greatly interested him, but also, in a roundabout way, location inspired Law's later works in the following sense:

⁶ A supermarket chain in Australia that was rebranded to Woolworths in the 2010s for Victorian stores that still used the name 'Safeway'

I knew that my family was always quite different. I grew up in a coastal surfing town in Queensland, and when you think of that, you don't necessarily think of a big bunch of Asians. We definitely stood out. It was a very monocultural place, very, very Anglo (P-BL-PT)

Through various forms of socioenvironmental inspiration, Pung, Law, and Abdel-Fattah found connections to the greater world. As children growing into young adults living in a perceived monocultural world, these connections were valuable to constructing their identity and position in their realities. Roald Dahl is a favourite, but significantly, all selected authors have also said that a favourite author as children was John Marsden, renowned Australian author of young adult novels. He is referenced in Pung's *Laurinda* acknowledgements where she cites him as an inspiration: "*John Marsden and Melina Marchetta, whose books guided me safely through my own teenage years...*". Young adult novels focus on the problems, issues and resolutions faced by adolescents through to early twenties young people. Most importantly, this genre deals with exploring the theme of identity (Almutairi, Hashim, & Raihanah, 2017). Abdel-Fattah reflects on her love for Marsden's *Tomorrow* series by highlighting that one of the definitive points of appreciation for the series was:

...the diversity of characters. You know, that for me was a really refreshing deviation from the fiction I had been reading, which was very, sort of white normative in the characters. There was a Greek character; there was an Asian character... (P-RAF-PT)

Such dynamic is not often present in Australian fiction, and if present, such characters would more likely take a backseat role than a lead role, a minority role, or other non-significant role. And if in the lead, would not necessarily be a 'young adult novel' but rather 'migrant narrative' or 'refugee narrative'. As Ommundsen (2011) points out, Pung's *UG* makes it very clear from the very first line that it is not "a victim story, not a story about refugees, trauma, or persecution" (p. 504). Thus, from Abdel-Fattah's quote above, diversity and fiction in Australia still had a lot of work ahead of them. Consequently, this shaped the way she looked at her own writing. When asked about the shame of Western countries putting emphasis on Western cannon literature, she notes:

It's something I am very passionate about, the fact that we use the idea of diversity mainly as a buzz word, when it really needs to be a process of, I guess I could say decolonising literature so that we are actually truly reflecting the world, and actually really representing different cultures, and not just in a tokenistic way, but truly upholding principles of equality and recognition and value (P-RAF-PT)

Abdel-Fattah (P-RAF-PT) discusses the nature of writing and society, and when asked whether she perceives herself as a Muslim Australian writer or as a writer in general when invited to festival and panel events:

Yeah, this is a fantastic question, because it goes to the heart of being a writer in a white-dominated society, [...] where you're writing about issues that affect your circle and community. What is your position then? [...] This is, I suppose, what it means to be a writer with all of these hyphens. It's not so much that I resent the tag of Muslim writer, it's more that I just want the fluidity to move between my own self-identification, and not to be labelled and boxed in like that. [...] I remember a review in which the reviewer said, and it was a review of a book by Melina Marchetta, she said 'We hope that Melina and Randa can write books about normal characters now' (P-RAF-PT)

A significant point of discussion here is the positioning of a writer, as opposed to writing being the positionee, as Abdel-Fattah suggests. The argument suggests that the act of writing in society can be framed as: the product has the power to position a person, however, how society views such a product and its producer suggests the frame: society positions both the product and person. This in turn can be linked back to questions of a need to refresh these known and expected schemas of knowledge, to update them on the changing environments and provide new labels. As Abdel-Fattah highlights herself, in writing, a reconceptualisation of 'normal characters' is essential when living in a society that is promoted as multicultural and diverse. Thus, what has shaped the creativity of these authors is their life experiences, drawn from their own schemas of understanding, and written in conceptual metaphors they have encountered throughout their lives. The events that they have encountered in which they found themselves looking back and reflecting on the shape of their identity further spurred their written word, providing the fodder.

4.5 The Creative Process: Constructing the self

The process of writing is an act of self-reflection, but also a construction of collaboration. Pope (2005) argues the notion that creativity is a result of more than the act of creating. It is the product of collaboration between oneself (as the creator) and people, places, and other influential spectres that the creator comes across in the process. This is also apparent in the case of Law, Pung, and Abdel-Fattah. During the writing of his memoir, Benjamin Law shared his working drafts with his family.

He asked for feedback—thus emphasising the fact that the creativeness of writing is not a solo act, but an act of collaboration. This is also evident when Law talks about the process of writing his memoir:

What you realise is how many gaps there are in your knowledge and understanding of what these stories mean, and also, just the beats of the stories themselves. My parents, I knew that they'd migrated over from Hong Kong in the mid 1970s. I knew that my extended family were forcibly deported out of the country in 1986. Then when I started writing it, I realised there were so many things I didn't know or understand. Quite a bit of the book was actually sitting down with my family (P-BL-PT).

Thus, one's story, more so when writing a memoir, requires filling the gaps. The same can also be said for fiction, in which experts or outsiders can fill in or notice the inconsistencies in one's work. So, while the act of writing is considerably a reflection of self, a way of knowing self, it is from one's own experiences where much assistance is required from outside oneself to see the overall story. Abdel-Fattah would also ask her sister for further feedback on her stories even though it is often advised not to use family due to closeness and inability to be impartial judges.

She's incredibly ruthless and critical, and so I know I can usually trust her. And she's got a very sharp eye and picks up some real stupid mistakes. For example, in a book I wrote set in Palestine, the family, that father, has lost his beautiful farm and olive groves. He is a farmer. But when I am describing the apartment they are forced to live in, there was a small pass away reference to a pot plant that was dying on the front step. And she said, 'You idiot. How can a farmer have a pot plant that is dying?' (P-RAF-PT)

Thus, writing is further developed and shaped through collaboration. However, Abdel-Fattah also highlights the fine line between writing for the self and writing for a suitable place in the market. Discourses, according to Abdel-Fattah, have a way of influencing the kind of reflection a text shows to the society:

With the book that was set in Palestine, it was really about making sure it was edited in such a way that there would be no potential for it to be slammed as anti-Semitic or to have slurs thrown at it (P-RAF-PT).

The above snippets from the respective authors further show how the shape of the writing is reformed through collaboration and social discourses. In order to be a cooperative piece of writing, collaboration may be necessary as part of the process. Therefore, we must also see those acts of

creativity as acts of collaboration. Although this section focusses on the discourse rather than language choices, it demonstrates the aspects of the creative writing process that may influence the construction of the text from a macro perspective, which paves the way for understanding it from a micro examination of the language choice.

4.6 The Creative Process: Conscious choice

As is the role of writer, the agency of the author is to decide what to write and when to write it. They make many creative decisions in the process. In defence of foreignness (both literally, and also as the title of Jin's article), Jin (2010) writes:

Among the Chinese, there are some misperceptions of my way of using English. People often say I directly translate Chinese idioms. This is not true. I did use a good number of Chinese idioms because most of my characters speak Mandarin, but in most cases I altered the idioms some, at times drastically, to suit the context, the drama and the narrative flow (p.466).

Writing as a process is a key component to the construction and reception of these texts, which is not so much different from how "every language (English, for example) can be seen as a system in process, never completed, always open to change" (Pope, 2005, p. 110). As beings with feet in multiple worlds—cultural or otherwise—the decisions of the selected authors in language choices affected the construction of their works. Much like their predecessors—those writers who were new immigrants writing in a tongue completely foreign, or perhaps an uneasy acquaintance—these authors have also struggled over when to translate, creatively or directly, for the benefit of their audience.

AI-AP: *in my first book it was conscious because you know I had to translate my parents and grandma into English for an English readership and I didn't want them to sound ridiculous or even though they said ridiculous things, I wanted it to be part of their character and not part of their yeah you know broken language. But for the second book, it was a very conscious choice. Because my father told me his story, obviously, in Chinese-Teochew and I had to write about a sixty year old man and render his thoughts in English so that was very conscious and I gave him a literary voice because it was going to be a literary book not a narrative, your migrant narrative.*

For Pung, she was consciously aware of the need to ‘translate’. This varied between her books. For her first, *UG*, she felt it necessary for the situations she wrote about involved people who were speaking a language other than English. Whereas for her second, *Her Father’s Daughter* (2011), it was a far more conscious choice because of its focus as a retelling of her father’s experiences in Cambodia. The use of ‘translate’ here is dual, in the sense that it is both a self-translation of her story and the very act of consciously translating language. This is also notable in Pung’s reflection of her creative process to Excerpt 11 (see Appendix B):

AI-AP: *so America is the beautiful country so that’s, I mean, if my grandmother is telling the story, she wouldn’t have the word ‘Cambodia’ because to her, it’s Mei Guo. What you call America if you translate it literally, then it’s ‘beautiful country’ or ‘middle Kingdom’, that kind of thing. So my grandmother doesn’t think in English, so I couldn’t put Cambodia or you know China because they’re English words.*

Her decisions to ‘translate’ are affected by the type of story she wanted to write and the potential audience. In ‘translating’ Pung is dealing with not just translating and languaging emotions from thoughts onto paper but translating thoughts, ideas, and scenes that are shuttling between languages. According to Pope (2005), “writers in effect re-write the world (including other people’s words) every time they set pen to paper or fingers to keyboard” (p. 198). In *UG* she translates her parents to speak in standard English to mirror their fluency in their mother tongue to avoid caricature of her parents speaking with broken English and sounding ridiculous, “even though they said ridiculous things” (AI-AP). Her point here is that in their mother tongues, they are fluent speakers, therefore it made no sense to write them with broken language. Authenticity and voice of the character were important to these authors as their writing is also, in the words of Healy (2010) (citing Hsu-Ming Teo) “an ‘act of translation’ across *representations* of culture” (p.5). The audience, despite being in Australia, is not primarily ‘monolingual’, even though their choice of language is ‘English’ and thus they are predominantly presumed to be *monolingual*. As Lee suggests, “for those who are monolingual, this experience of reading puts them in the labyrinth of heteroglossia and forces them to confront multicultural discourses” (p. 107).

Further developing Pung’s arguments, Abdel-Fattah highlights the difficulties of choosing when or when not to translate.

AI-RAF: *You’re very conscious of your writing to a wider audience so I, if I’m specifically translating something that you know, I will do that. There are also moments where I don’t translate. That’s you know to make readers do sort of, it’s two things. The*

first thing, some things can't be translated, and it's just part of the natural rhythm of a person's sort of talking that is quite beautiful to still include it but also I think we live in a world where we expect people who speak English to always have everything readily understandable and available to them and I think that it's also good to make people who are reading this who don't understand the Arabic words, to sit in that moment of having to think about what a word means in between the lines as so many people who don't have English as a first language but who are expected to just get by.

There will be times when things cannot be translated. As Sridhar (in Chapter 2) notes on the choices of post-colonial and non-native writers when deciding what to write and how, some writers might choose to insert non-English language choices and then explain via footnotes or appendixes, whereas others may integrate and contextualise the non-English items in the passage (Sridhar, 1982). More importantly, Abdel-Fattah highlights this in her interview, much in the realisation of the sociocultural dynamic representation of reality:

AI-RAF: *There's some words where I think I did that deliberately as sort of like an inside joke with my Arabic readers*

The allusion to the exclusiveness of either themes or use of language that is a conscious choice of the writer is similarly shared by renowned author Maxine Hong Kingston:

[T]here are puns for Chinese speakers only, and I do not point them out for non-Chinese speakers. There are some visual puns best appreciated by those who write Chinese

As pointed out by Lee (2004), she is challenging here the concept of English as a unitary, linear, and continuous entity and inviting readers to engage with cultural translation (p.107). This sense of exclusivity was also found in the responses of the questionnaire-survey.

QSP18, E1: *I can feel that there's some culturally distinct expression but I could not understand what they mean*

QSP2, E3: *It once again alludes to something only a few understand*

Here, excluding the need for further context, participants—in response to specific excerpts taken from the selected texts—would find themselves excluded from further understanding, feeling more challenged and uninvited to understand the cultural background of the text. Abdel-Fattah makes conscious choices for the benefit of her characters and story, even if it means not-translating to maintain the “*natural rhythm of a person's sort of talking*” (AI-RAF).

For Law, the issues of shuttling between languages in his creative process was not as difficult in the sense that he was more conscious of and practiced in his own life a more balanced mix of his host and home languages.

AI-BL: *it was just about finding the best comparison, like obviously any kind of narrative non-fiction I think a reader knows the person is not carrying around a Dictaphone their entire life recording everything word for word, and at the same time, you do need to use quotes. Like sometimes you read a page with no dialogue, it's really hard to, like 'you know mum talked about this,' it doesn't work on the page, you need to have dialogue. And so I guess with both the book and the series we always talked about notions of the truth and me, it's always about getting that emotional truth, capturing the essence of that conversation rather than—it's not a journalistic project, know what I mean? It's a narrative, emotional project, and so yeah, I'm constructing dialogue and yeah, sometimes that dialogue is in Cantonese but I'm writing it in English, and at the same I didn't want to put the lahs and blah blah blah in there because the book is for English speaking readers largely so I wanna make sure that you receive the dialogue as easily and as straightforwardly as I am receiving Cantonese.*

Much like Abdel-Fattah, the desire to retain the 'naturalness' of the scenes being depicted is important, more so for Law whose text is a memoir in contrast to the selected Abdel-Fattah texts that are fictional, but inspired by her own life story. In his interview with me, Law reflected on the chapter of *TFL* dedicated to his experience with Cantonese, titled aptly, "Tone Deaf"—an example from the text chapter can be seen in Chapter 5, example B-1-1(1)-25.

AI-BL: *I feel like with Cantonese, like for instance, I really just wanted to give a primer on the language, and I'm obviously I'm not fluent in it, for people who don't speak tonal languages, like it's very hard to explain what it means. I really needed to extrapolate exactly what a tonal language was first, without being boring, but also to give examples that, one, make people interested and laugh, you know that whole sentence goh-goh-goh and I think just to show people, how one, how fascinating and playful Cantonese can be but also too, how difficult the language can be as well, and that blows people's minds, and even blows Cantonese speaker's minds who haven't heard that sentence before.*

Dissecting what Cantonese is, is significantly important to Law's representation of it. It illustrates the presence and meaning of the language to his existence as a person. Though he writes in English, Cantonese is still a very important part of his self. As discussed in Chapter 2, although Healy (2010) argues the importance of English in transnational texts, a language implied to be "at the centre of the social imaginary, both in terms of national and transnational identities" (p. 11), English is the centre of Law's world—which had become his norm—and not just social imaginary. While Cantonese is not quite left behind, it does not play a centre role, yet embodies a significant proportion of his national and transnational identity. In written form, it is a matter of, how to represent his world to his wide, not always specific, audience? For instance:

1) Example B-1-3-8

'Not much fun there,' she said. 'Not much foul play.'

'You mean "foreplay,"' I said.

'What's the difference?'

When I explained it to her, she laughed and shrugged.

'Doesn't sound very different to me,' she said

(Law, *The Family Law*, p. 12)

The pun-play here between 'foulplay' and 'foreplay', is captured in this sense in Law's mind:

AI-BL: *in my mind, she's actually switching between English and Cantonese, and I don't feel the need to make that explicitly clear to the reader because I'm not sure what purpose that serves. And p.s. my mum's speaking a bit of half and half like the thing is my mum is just speaking to me, and so I'm just going to make that as straightforward as possible*

From the text itself, a dialogue occurs, but the reader is not privy in this instance to what is Cantonese and what is English. In one instance, this represents an example of the type of 'shallow' multilingualism that Pandey (2019) argues against in new world Englishes literatures. However, Law made the creative decision to transcribe the conversation in English, because to do otherwise, he asks, 'what purpose does it serve?' His ideal here is to represent his perspective as the author of his memoir, and thus, this did not include accenting the English or including Romanised Cantonese that would interrupt the flow—or in Abdel-Fattah's words, natural rhythm of speaking. The difficulties of memoir writing for transcultural contexts and stories need to be balanced appropriately.

The notion of needing to balance one's creativity appropriately also relates back to the choices writers make in their writing. Conscious desire vs. audience appreciation can be a somewhat endless battle. If something exceeds comprehensible understanding, then it may not be considered creative. As Weir (1982) argues (and this can apply to any transcultural writer), "Third world writers in English must tread a fine line between the perils of incomprehensibility on one hand and nondescriptness on the other" (p. 308). Creativity is limited by a desire to try something new, yet a fear of trying something too new. If a line is drawn between newer (stepping beyond the norm) and older (conforming to the norm), there are two additional parallel lines of leeway drawn on each side, where creativity is found to be 'acceptable'—as long as they don't deviate too much or too far. For these selected authors, they needed to find that balance in which the audience could appreciate the story they have, while remaining true, natural, and authentic.

4.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has discussed the environment in which the selected authors have grown up, the shape of their social context and its influence on their relationship with English. Furthermore, it examined the authors' construction of self and conscious choice in the creative process. The selected authors to some degree consciously decided or chose to make certain translations. They did so with several objectives. The authors would consider the rhythm of the character's speech, the purpose of making a translation, and whether writing it another way would change the tone or voice of the passage. While some aspects of transcultural creativity in their works may be unconscious on the part of the author, it does not mean all acts of transcultural creativity were not a result of the author choosing between the languages in their linguistic repertoire or deciding that one was more impactful than the other. The next chapter presents the linguistic strategies that the authors used as a result of their conscious creative process and their relationship with English, to convey their narratives and relevant social realities.

Chapter 5 Transcultural creativity as linguistic strategies

5.1 Overview: The “-ness” in second generation migrant writing

“The fact that the writer needs to give prominence to culturally bound objects and domains of experience related to food, clothing items, mode of transportation, traditional maxims, chant, traditional concepts, and instruments. The undetermined nature of these indigenous lexical items has implications for the field, the tenor, and the textual metafunction of the discourse...these codes allude to the permanent ethnic identity of Achebe as Igbo and Nigerian, respectively” (Bamiro, 2006, p.318).

While Chapter 4 discusses the backgrounds of the authors—social context, creative writing process, and their consciousness in choosing and deciding how best to convey their realities—this chapter explores the linguistic strategies used by the selected authors. The consciousness of the authors’ linguistic choices in the selected texts is displayed through a range of strategies used. The result as such creates a feeling that the texts are as much ‘Chinese’ or ‘Muslim-Arabic’ as they are ‘Australian’. This dual construction of identity within the text is a result of the linguistic strategies used by the authors. It is within the creative process that the authors decide what they want the readers to read and interpret. The creativeness of the authors was notable in eight ways: 1) *Codemeshing*, 2) *creative and direct transfers*, 3) *creative manipulations, puns, and acts of humour*, 4) *semantic shift, linguistic innovation, and borrowings*, 5) *terms of address*, 6) *naming acts*, 7) *speech acts*, and 8) *referential acts*.

5.2 Codemeshing

As noted in Chapter 2, codemeshing is the idea of embracing a single integrated linguistic system. Second generation migrants, as demonstrated in the cases of Alice Pung, Benjamin Law, and Randa Abdel-Fattah, develop this sense of meshedness in the use of their language(s) which they have a varying degree of competence depending on their social environment growing up. Therefore, this is also present in their texts. For example:

R-2-1(1)-9: Big family dinners and a million conversations around the dinner table! Thick Arabic *ahwa* boiled on a coal barbeque and drunk with syrupy baklava and *konefa*. Drinking it over stories about back home when we played on snow-capped mountains after school and spent our weekends swimming in the Mediterranean. Picking *warak ayneb* from the pot while nobody's looking and scooping hommos into fresh loaves of bread and letting it melt in your mouth! The *darabuka* and *oud* and *table* hypnotising your hips into dancing around the lounge room with your cousins and aunts. A community of aunts and uncles and cousins, even when they're not blood relations (p.153)

Example R-2-1(1)-9 demonstrates codemeshing on the level of *codeswitching*, showing the presence of the English narration splattered with the presence of another language in Romanised form. The strategy of using the original code for these lexical items highlights the importance that the authors place on culturally bound objects and domains of experience (Bamiro, 2006). Common codemeshed examples of food are those that are specific to the main protagonist's cultural heritage, such as in example R-2-1(1)-9 where instances of food are listed: '*konefa*' is another dessert also comprised of syrup and filo pastry, and '*warak ayneb*' is the dish of stuffed vine leaves. In another example below, R-2-1(1)-1 directly borrows a word from Arabic. '*Haram*' though translated in the text, carries far greater cultural conceptualisation than it embraces, associated with what Islamic law proscribes as wrongful. Thus, its inclusion in the text as 'haram' and not just its tentative English equivalent 'forbidden', demonstrates the importance of this word to the narrative, scene, character, and culture, as decided by the author.

R-2-1(1)-1: "BILAL!" my dad yells. "I will not have you discussing such things in this house. Alcohol? I thought you had stopped drinking. You know it's *haram*, forbidden..." (p.22)

Another instance in which codemeshing of cultural items is introduced to the narrative to emphasise a prevailing point is example B-1-1(1)-25, where the narrator is describing the incongruity of the other language he speaks.

B-1-1(1)-25: This means the same syllables, pronounced in different pitches, can mean completely different, incongruous things. Consider this sentence: Goh-goh goh-goh (that older brother there) goh goh (is taller than) goh-goh goh-goh (that older brother over there). Again, that's: goh-goh goh-goh goh goh goh-goh goh-goh. Pause, then add another goh – with a different tone this time – and you're telling

the same brother to cross the road. Depending on how you say it, gau can mean ‘dog’ or ‘nine’, ‘enough’ or ‘rescue.’ Mae could mean ‘rice’ or ‘not yet’, ‘flavour’ or ‘tail’. (p.68)

The narrator uses ‘goh’ to emphasise the homophonous texture of Cantonese. Thus, these examples inserted into the flow of the writing show and reflect the intertwined nature of the character’s culture with their ‘self’, just as they are reflective of the writer and their conscious choices with language to codemesh certain items.

While codemeshing food and cultural items are important, codemeshing is also used to showcase the colourful variety of Englishes that foreground the social context of the selected texts. Some of the Englishes codemeshed in the text include, but not limited to Lebanese English, Chinese/Asian English, Broad Australian English, and Filipino English, for example:

R-1-1(2)-2: She’s sitting out on her front porch and I suddenly hear a harsh cough and an “In ze name of ze Father, ze Son, and ze Holy Ghost.” (Greek Australian English, p.53)

A-1-1(2)-11: “Why yu gib me dis one? Dis one no good! Hairy here, here, and dere! Hairy everywhere! Dat nother one over dere better. Who you save da nother one for hah?” (Asian-Australian English Ethnolect, p.2)

A-1-1(2)-16: “Dey not going to connect me, I know” (Filipino English, p.202)

General Australian English is also a common variety as this was the dominant variety in which the texts were written. The different varieties of eye dialect infer ‘typical’ associated dialects to the related ethnic groups: Lebanese, Chinese/Asian, and Filipino. Such acts, according to Albakry and Siler (2012) rely on some imagined notion of generalized stereotypes to complete the speech characterization of the characters. The representation of these varieties further adds texture to the characters across each of the selected texts, particularly in the representations of their speech in English and the other tongue. For example, Jamie’s dad is described as speaking Arabic for the majority of TTIHAM, and thus Abdel-Fattah presents his usual speech in standard Australian English, giving him the sense of fluency which he would have in Arabic.

R-2-1(1)-15: “...since your mother’s death I’ve fallen in love with her many times over...*Khalas*. Enough. What is done is done....” (Jamie’s dad, speaking Arabic, p.194)

However, it is only when Jamie’s dad is speaking English within the narrative does the reader become aware that his English is accented—as is evident in examples R-2-1(2)-1 and R-2-1(1)-3.

R-2-1(2)-1: “I go back to my vegetables. They no talk back to me or rolling their eyes.”
(Jamie’s dad. Ethnolect – Lebanese Muslim English, p.248)

R-2-1(1)-3: “You son of za sister of za brother of a donkey!” he yells. “Get out of za way!”
(Jamie’s dad. Ethnolect – Lebanese Muslim English, p.28)

This is the same with how Linh’s mother is represented linguistically in *Laurinda*:

A-2-1(2)-8: “My dawtah she seek,” she called into the phone... (Vietnamese-Chinese Mother,
Ethnolect – Chinese Australian English, p.265)

Example A-2-1(2)-8 is the only instance in *Laurinda* where Linh’s mother is observed as speaking English and not her dominating tongue. This was noted in a review by a reader:

P-A-L-G2: till I was about 70% into the story I’d not realised that mum speaks only about three words of English & that the shirt-making operation is thoroughly illegal

This example further demonstrates an instance where the transcultural creativity of the author is reflected in their work. It becomes even more prevalent when the readers do not realise that what they are reading is the brainchild of having multiple repertoires to draw, borrow and blend from.

Another reflection of the authors’ realities is the example A-1-1(2)-19. This example is a contrast to A-2-1(2)-4, particularly in its depiction of the broad variety of Australian English. Both examples are reflective of this particular variety, however, example A-1-1(2)-19 is spoken by your average Joe Australian—in this case, I refer to an Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic Caucasian Australian (in *UG*)—whereas, example A-2-1(2)-4 is spoken by the main character, Linh, and her friends (in *Laurinda*), who are of Asian ethnicity and are representative of the perceived description of multicultural Australian.

A-2-1(2)-4: “I did not, bitch!” Yvonne screeched back. I noticed the airy curtains of a house ripple.

“Be quiet, youse!” you said. “People are watching us.” (Asian Australians.
Australian English, p.10)

A-1-1(2)-19: “Whaddya mean this is two years outa warranty eh? I want me money back.
Youse powerpoints are shifty!” (Australian English – Broad variation, p.201)

In contrasting these two examples, we see a diversity in what is perceived as ‘common’, that the image of who speaks in this manner is not limited to one but many multicultural Australians. As Albakry and Siler (2012) state (and their words equally apply to second generation migrant writers):

“it is a delicate balance, but they [Arab English writers] have little choice but to experience themselves in hybridity; after all, they live through and within multiple cultural/linguistic structures” (p.119).

5.3 Creative and direct translation

In Chapter 4, a prevailing concern for Pung, Law, and Abdel-Fattah was the question of when or when not to translate. A strategy for one might not be matched by another. For example, Pung and Law tended to directly translate:

A-2-2(1)-6: “Keep still, Grandma Giap,” I told her as I wedged her brown foot between my knees. (p.19)

A-1-2(1)-12: When the immigration papers were finally processed, my other set of grandparents had arrived at Melbourne airport in their homemade cotton Mao suits of dark blue and earth-brown. My Outside Grandparents. (p.57)

B-1-2(1)-18: “...happening?” our eldest aunty asked... (p.153)

In A-2-2(1)-6, the main character is referring to a non-family individual as ‘grandma’. This is a direct linguistic transfer from the main character’s heritage background of Teochew Chinese and infers the culturally expected norms of address. On the other hand, examples A-1-2(1)-12 and B-1-2(1)-18 refer to members of the family. The linguistic items transferred from one language to another are highly visible and evoke cultural conceptualisations of CHINESE FAMILY, with emphasis on the cultural conceptualisation of CHINESE FAMILY IS HIERARCHICAL. The examples demonstrate that a grandparent or aunty is not simply a grandparent and an aunty, but in addressing or referring to both there are expected methods of address. How the authors tackle what is most appropriate to use in their written works varies. More usually, Pung directly translates the items rather than borrows the terms in their original form into the narrative, in contrast to Law’s dominant choice of method in *The Family Law* in the examples below. Both the discussions of Pung’s and Law’s linguistic choices will be further discussed later in the chapter, though the above and below examples demonstrate their conscious creative decisions.

B-1-2-20: When our maternal grandmother – my Poh-Poh – died some years ago.... (p.2)

B-1-2-21:I heard that Ma-Ma – Dad’s mother and my last living grandparent – might be moving to a retirement home... (p.190)

B-1-2-22: ‘See, Poh-Poh?’ they said. ‘Look, Goong-Goong! This place is different. The nurses speak the language!... (p.191)

The decision of when to directly translate is the result of answering the question of what would be the most relevant for the scene and to the reading audience. As all three authors pointed out in Chapter 4 that it is a very conscious decision to directly translate or to transliterate. The other question that arises in the minds of the three authors is when it would be best to creatively translate. Some examples are noted below:

B-1-2(2)-2: “In contrast to Hong Kong – a throbbing, stinking metropolis of concrete, where people hung out their laundry thirty storeys up – Caloundra was a ghost town. Literally everyone was white.” (p.22)

A-1-2(2)-4: “Like a chicken talking to a duck,” my mother calls these conversations (p.1)

It is not simply representing a language other than English (LOTE) spoken language, but the representation of foreignness that is deemed ‘creative’ due to the ‘type’ of translation. This is notable in A-1-2(2)-4 as a translation of a proverb or saying from another language. A-1-2(2)-4 comes from Chinese, 鸡同鸭讲 (*jī tóng yā jiǎng*), in which the English rendition closely resembles to the original. On the other hand, though similar but categorised differently, is the use of ‘ghost’ in example B-1-2(2)-2. Used by the narrator, Australian born Benjamin Law, its significance is somewhat weightier than example A-1-2(2)-4, where the speaker is a non-English speaking individual. B-1-2(2)-2 contains the juxtaposition between the phrases “Caloundra was a ghost town” and “Literally everyone was white”, and that it becomes clear that ‘ghost’ in ‘ghost town’ retains one conceptualisation in one language, but the adjoining clause, instantiates another conceptualisation attached to ‘ghost’ that may not be immediately perceivable through an English or Australian English only lens. Although this is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 7, the conceptualisation of ‘ghost’ here, once we examine it through a Cantonese lens, is of the ‘foreign devil’— *gwái lóu* (鬼佬)—the word used to refer to foreigners in a Cantonese context. It has deep roots in the socioeconomic context that has shaped its conceptualisation (as seen in Chapter 7); however, here Law borrows the notion of WHITE PEOPLE ARE GHOSTS.

5.4 Creative manipulations, puns, and humour

Creative manipulation of language is the introduction of semantic change to the original expression (Munat, 2016). Munat (2016) notes that familiar words with new meanings can disorientate or estrange the reader but with the assistance of satisfactory contextual cues, the reader may still decode the text. Language is manipulated to suit the needs of the author in a subjective interpretative sense. It is also present in the way the author plays with words to create a certain effect. Pung, Law, and Abdel-Fatah tend to use puns and word play within the same variety of language and also across languages and cultures. Using humour as a linguistic strategy strengthens the author's control in the reader's reception of their words. The selected authors also make conscious decisions in delivering heavier discourse—such as discussions of race—in a more approachable manner to the audience. Humour thus, is a strategy used by writers to re-write and deconstruct such heavy discourses for the audience, in a way in which they can appreciate (Graham, 2013). For example, R-2-3-1 demonstrates where language is manipulated to touch on a potentially controversial play on words that aims to prod, poke, question, and infer a specific social discourse.

R-2-3-1: In fact, my real name is Jamilah Towfeek but I'm known as Jamie when I'm at school because I'm on a mission to de-wog myself. (p.5)

This play on words occurs in the form of a prefix on the ordinarily prefix-less word 'wog'. 'Wog' in Australian English, is an ethnic slur referring to Australians of Mediterranean or Southern European background, and "although originally used as a derogatory term, the term is now used more affectionately and sometimes humorously, especially by the individuals the term is used to describe" (Sala, Dandy, & Rapley, 2010, p. 114). These individuals include the second and subsequent generations who claim the title of 'Wog' for themselves. Through her play on language, Abdel-Fattah can deconstruct critical notions within the prevailing social discourse, for example:

R-1-3-4: Too many people look at it as though it has bizarre powers sewn into its microfibers. Powers that transform Muslim girls into UCOs (Unidentified Covered Objects), which turn Muslim girls from an 'us' into a 'them'. (p.38)

While the critical message refers to the greater discourse on race, stereotype, and discrimination, Abdel-Fattah delivers this through simple, easy to identify words and images. She compares the event of a Muslim girl wearing a hijab as something akin to a UFO, an initialism that is widely known for meaning 'Unidentified Flying Object' and the discourse of aliens and extra-terrestrial life (see Chapter 7 for further discussion on the cultural conceptualisation of UCO). The way in which Abdel-

Fattah manipulates and creates with language becomes reflective of the goals of the narrative and highlights the significant discourse of race present throughout the text.

Pung also plays on and with words in her selected texts. Take for example the following:

A-1-3-17: My father remembers a story translated from English that he read in his youth... This new daughter of his will grow up in this Wonder Land and take for granted things like security, abundance, democracy and the little green man on the traffic lights. (p.16)

A-1-3-18: “So we finally get to meet your little Pygmalion project at last,” Brodie’s mum, Mrs Newberry, said to Mrs Leslie. I had no idea what a Pygmalion was but it had the word “pig” in it so I was sure it was not flattering. She turned to me. “How do you do, Dianne’s fair lady” (p.166)

There is the double play of ‘Wonder Land’, with a space, in example A-1-3-17 that firstly alludes to the classic well-known novel, ‘Alice in Wonderland’, a reference that is also made multiple times throughout *Laurinda*. The second reference is emphasised by the space in between the two words that gives the meaning of a land that is ‘full of wonder’. Thus, this shapes the background of the characters in *UG*, providing a sentimental picture of the cultural schema of the life of new immigrants to Australia. On the other hand, A-1-3-18 is a referential play on a well-known film, unknown to the main character Linh, yet reinterpreted in one sense of the meaning that can be attached. It references *My Fair Lady*—and its original source material, *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw—and there is Linh’s interpretation vs. that given by Mrs Newberry. Both Abdel-Fattah and Pung are playing with words and meaning that occur and are interpreted within the same language domain, in this case, Australian English. However, while Abdel-Fattah draws on a more critical discussion within the racial discourse, Pung’s examples here illustrate some of the woes, triumphs, and experiences of the immigrant discourse. This is seen in the deliberate phrasing of ‘Wonder Land’, and in the character’s perspective on ‘*Pygmalion*’. The latter is further significant as while ‘*Pygmalion*’ is considered a great classic text by Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw, and ‘*My Fair Lady*’, a great musical adaptation of *Pygmalion* that has become a classic in its own right, the character does not find it flattering nor impressive.

On the other hand, Pung also plays with language translingually. As second generation migrant writers, there are multiple scenes across the selected texts where, were it a conversation taking place in reality, multiple language codes would be used. An example of this came from Law and is discussed in section 4.6, with the play on ‘foul play and foreplay’. In depicting the following

scene, Pung draws on her codemeshed linguistic repertoire and her linguistic knowledge of her mother tongue.

A-1-3-14: So when the child drops the chopstick, clammers off the table and clutches her leg with icky-fish hands and cries, “Ma! Ma!” the mother turns away. “I’m busy clearing up. Go and bug your grandmother.” After all, “Ma” is also the word she uses for grandmother, just two tones different. (p.30)

A-1-3-14 presents a situation described in English but referring to a conversation of events in another language. In rendering this in English some of the meaning is lost, were it not for the contextualisation after grandmother. Chinese is a language renowned for its homophones (Wen, Guan, & Ying, 2015); however, it is often difficult to render the multiplicity of meaning in English. ‘Ma’ (for mother – *mā*, 妈) and ‘ma’ (for grandmother – *ma*, 嬷) sound the same/similar, but refer to different members of the family, thus this excerpt plays on this. In rendering it in English, it can be seen how the play on words creates an image that is reflective of the complex relationship between Alice, her mother, and her grandmother.

Of the three selected authors, Law tends to play with words more fluidly, shuttling and shifting between languages. As noted previously in Chapter 2, like Abdel-Fattah, the relationship they have with English has developed a sense of meshedness of English (and mother tongue) varieties. Furthermore, as Law previously stated, because of the genre of the text he was writing, he wanted to depict in a way that was reflective of how he had experienced each moment (Chapter 2). Therefore, he had to decide when best to creatively translate and how to make each moment relatable to the audience—usually done through humour, which much like Abdel-Fattah and Pung, transformed, approached, and deconstructed some aspect of the relevant discourse.

B-1-3-9: “I wasn’t even there that long, and then they *discarded* me,” she said, before correcting her English. “Not ‘discarded,’ sorry. *Discharged.*” (p.14)

B-1-3-11: “So I just goo-goo this?” she asked, when we loaded Google. Goo-goo, we both knew, was a crude and childish Cantonese term for penis.

“Yes, Mum, very funny.”

“Goo-goo,” she said again, laughing. (p.164)

The play on ‘discarded’ and ‘discharged’ reflects a simpler play of words in B-1-3-8 (see section 4.6) that can be attributed to a lack of English competence on the part of the mother. There is a conscious

effort to describe an event and feeling even though this is ‘corrected’, there is not much difference between ‘discharged’ and ‘discarded’ with the latter seemingly sounding more ‘accurate’. This example is comparable to B-1-3-8, discussed in Chapter 4. However, we, as readers, are also not told in B-1-3-8 in which language the conversation takes place, but we are in B-1-3-9. B-1-3-9 is specifically in English, but only through the interview with Law (Chapter 4) is B-1-3-8 revealed to be a codemeshed English-Cantonese conversation. Example B-1-3-11, similar to A-1-3-14 is a step further in terms of conscious language play, in which Law’s mum is drawing from multiple linguistic resources—English, in which Google is understood, and then Cantonese for ‘Goo-goo’ which is not an incorrect use of language, but a play on language across languages. This translanguaging shows one or both of two things: one, the integrated nature of a second generation (or others in similar situations) migrant writer’s conceptual linguistic space and how they use such integrated systems to capture their realities; and two, in the words of Wei Li and Zhu (2013), this “captures both the dynamic nature of multilingual practices and the capacity of the de-/re-territorialized speaker to mobilize their linguistic resources to create new social spaces for themselves” (p.519).

5.5 Semantic shift, linguistic innovation, and borrowings

As the second generation migrant writer is playing with words, codemeshing, and creatively or directly translating between languages, the result might occur as a semantic shift, linguistic innovation or additional borrowings into English. Law’s use of language demonstrates the creativity that results from frequent codemeshed instances and situations. Particularly in scenarios between Law and his mum, as noted in the previous section and in the below example:

B-1-4-1: “Yes!” she said to Scott and me breathlessly. “Yes! Why didn’t I think of this before? It will be like my second divorce. I’ll *divorce* this house like I *divorced* your father.” (p.215)

Law’s mum uses ‘divorce’ to describe the way she is leaving her old house behind, where in such cases, ‘leave/left’ would usually be the ‘correct’ or associated verb. Thus, the English word ‘divorce’ is semantically broadened to incorporate new ways of using them. Another example, this time from Pung:

A-1-4-3: “This is your Outside Grandmother,” my mother instructed me. Outside because my mother had married into my dad’s family. (p.57)

Example A-1-4-3 is another illustration of semantic broadening, in addition to the introduction of a new collocation: “Outside Grandmother” that is directly translated from *waipo* (外婆) and rendered in English. Thus, broadening the usual or expected usage of ‘grandmother’ in English to also incorporate the complexity of the schema of CHINESE FAMILY HIERARCHY. Pung also shows linguistic innovation in collocating ‘outside’ with ‘grandma’, demonstrating an instance that not everything can be translated.

The following example is transculturally creative as it is reflective of circumstances found in most discussions of immigrant discourse, such as the difficulties of adjusting to pronunciation and the questions around naming, among other concerns.

A-2-4-17: We always called my baby brother the Lamb because of our surname, Lam. His real name is Aidan, because Mum always wanted a word that our grandmother in Hanoi could pronounce, even though he had never met her. (p.14)

Example A-2-4-17 is a linguistic innovation that takes a transcultural approach to the concept of naming. There is a need to create a name that is flexible across different transcultural spaces while maintaining an essence of both home and host cultures—naming a child ‘Aidan,’ which can be read two different ways. It is a common English name used in Australia, yet its syllables ‘Ai’ and ‘dan’ are familiar to speakers of Chinese or Cantonese/Teochew origin, albeit with different tones to an Australian pronunciation. Furthermore, the play on his last name dubs him affectionately as ‘the Lamb’.

On the other hand, Abdel-Fattah is humorous in the following example as it gives a more ‘cultural spin’ reflective of the main character’s cultural background:

R-1-4-16: That’s right. Rachel from Friends inspired me. The Sheikhs will be holding emergency conferences. (p.2)

While R-1-4-16 may only be a simple play on words, drawn from and conceptually based on their physical and social environment, it is no less creative. Examples B-1-4-1, A-1-4-3, and A-2-4-17 present a sense of ‘creativity’ that also goes beyond simple plays on words. This “intricate intermesh at the conceptual, perceptual and semantic levels” as in the words of Osakwe (1999), goes beyond the surface structure of English, giving readers more sense and awareness of the other deep structure present. This introduces to the reader, linguistic innovations and new ways of using language, as well as new ways of reading it.

Overall, these selected second generation migrant writers have used various linguistic strategies within their written works to create textual atmosphere, create humour, and these strategies are informed by cultural conceptualisations. For second and subsequent generation migrants, writing is less *about* ‘foreignness’ as much as *it is* ‘foreignness’ in English. It is a two-way approach, both emic and etic, and therefore, what is being used and how or why it might be used becomes significant as demonstrated across all the selected texts. The next few sections look at more specific examples of selected authors’ linguistic creativity within the selected texts.

5.6 Terms of address

As noted by Zhang (2002), address terms play a key role in conveying cultural expectations. This was also a strategy adopted by Pung, Law, and Abdel-Fattah. In section 5.3 it was noted how both Pung and Law approached the task of translating family terms of address differently, one preferring to directly translate while the other, transliterating. Within all five selected texts, the use of terms of address (whether they are directly translated or transliterated) frequently reflect common relevant cultural practices to “express feelings and relationships within characters and within the extended family that have no equivalent in English” (Tawake, 2003, p. 48). The most common terms of address are directed at family to demonstrate their relation to one another, for example:

R-2-5-1: “Call Baba” (p.65)

One of the most prevalent terms of address used in the text, specifically in Abdel-Fattah’s texts, is the transliterated *baba* used by the main character to her father. Terms of address used by the characters were dominant in Pung and Law’s texts and were more present in those selected texts than in Abdel-Fattah’s text.

B-1-5-14: I heard that Ma-Ma – Dad’s mother and my last living grandparent – might be moving to a retirement home... (p.190)

B-1-5-15: “See, Poh-Poh?” they said. “Look, Goong-Goong! This place is different. The nurses speak the language!” (p.191)

The use of these address terms highlights the significant cultural values that are passed on in language. The cultural significance in the different terms of address for grandparents is prominent in TFL examples B-1-5-14 and B-1-5-15. Same text, same narrator. However, where *Ma-Ma* (B-1-5-14)

refers to his paternal grandmother, both *Poh-Poh* and *Goong-Goong* (B-1-5-15) refer to his maternal grandmother and grandfather, respectively. This is the same as the reference to ‘outside grandmother/parents’ in example A-1-2(1)-12 (section 5.3) and example A-1-4-3 (section 5.5). The same goes for the significance of the terms of address for the aunties listed in the following:

A-1-5-21: “What do you think, Young Aunt?” my mother finally asks. (p.12)

A-1-5-29: Even though they had left the plastic-bag factory a long time ago, the respectful name Little Aunt still stuck when they talked about my Aunt Que. (p.112)

A-1-5-30: I made berets from the fleecy factory scraps that my Third Auntie Samsu brought home for our family to use as floor wipes.... (P.92)

The use of ‘Aunt(ie)’ by Pung, further demonstrates the complexity of the system of address terms. They are the main protagonist’s aunts, and in English would merely be differentiated by ‘Aunt-name’. However, they are addressed differently with ‘young’ and ‘little’ aunt referring to the main character’s youngest aunt, and ‘Third Auntie’ referring to the third eldest. The cultural conceptualisation of CHINESE FAMILY IS HIERARCHICAL is prevalent here. The hierarchy differs from English where one term could potentially be enough to cover all without further elaboration, for example, ‘uncle’ for all brothers of one’s parents. Whereas in Chinese and many of its dialects, it is necessary to understand the precise relation between individuals as this can affect how one shows respect and maintains their personal honour as “one’s personal honor is closely related to the family” (Geng, 2015, p. 2).

While ‘Aunt’ is also used in Abdel-Fattah’s texts, the following example demonstrates the difficulty that comes with certain situations.

R-2-5-7: And then there’s Dad and ‘Aunt’ Sadja. The ‘aunt’ is going to take practice (p.244)

Due to the changing status and introduction of a new family member in Jamie’s family, rather than addressing Miss Sadja as ‘ma’ or ‘mum 2’, they settled on ‘Aunt’ Sadja. This allows the family to mediate between the mother-who-is-no-longer there, and the new mother, without offending either party. Similarly, between the two major cultures (Chinese and Arabic), kinship terms of address are also used to address family friends, associates, and strangers.

R-2-5-6: ...when one of my dad’s family friends, Uncle Joseph, walks up to the counter and spots me as he places his order. (p.156)

A-2-5-16: Keep still, Grandma Giap,” I told her as I wedged her brown foot between my knees. (p.19)

A-2-5-18: Whenever there was a large order, Aunt Ngo and Aunt Tee would get together to do the non-sewing tasks: putting buttons and spare threads in plastic envelopes....
(p.161)

Examples R-2-5-6, A-2-5-16 and A-2-5-18 demonstrate the use of kinship terms for family friends and/or associates; none of the referred individuals are noted in the texts as being related by blood. In comparison, in the ‘Aunt’ examples noted earlier, the aunts listed in A-2-5-18 are referred to in the format of ‘Aunt-name/surname’, which reflects the relationship that the main character has with these ‘Aunt’ characters—although this may vary between ethnic groups and intrafamily variations, in the cultural schema of CHINESE TERMS OF ADDRESS one would not refer to a blood related family member with their title and name/surname. They would more likely refer to them as ‘Eldest’ or ‘Third’ Aunt, as noted in a few prior examples such as B-1-2(1)-18 and A-1-5-30, respectively, as per the cultural conceptualisation of FAMILY IS HIERARCHICAL. Example R-2-5-6 also shows the terms of address for friends of the family that are very similar to those practiced in Chinese cultures—that kinship honorifics can be used to address family friends.

Other terms of address used by the selected authors to shape the landscape of their narrative include the ways in which parental affection and status can change the way someone is addressed.

R-1-5-8: When my parents are in a particularly affectionate mood they sometimes prefix my name with ya so I’m ‘ya Amal,’ which means ‘oh Amal.’ When I was little, I actually thought my name was Yaamal. (p.22)

B-1-5-12: “Well, look at you,” he said to his son. “Ah Leung. Do you know who I am?”
(p.173)

According to cultural informant C1, the use of the particle ‘ya’ in front of one’s name is a common term of address to show affection in Arabic—this is also described by the character in the excerpt. This is similarly noted in B-1-5-12 with the use of ‘Ah’ in front of the name. Using ‘Ah’ is a way of demonstrating affection in Chinese culture. Terms of address are also used humorously. For example, R-2-8-5 presents the character’s humorous attempt to address her father, while also referring to significant role schema of the FATHER.

R-2-5-5: Dear dad/baba/The Man I Look Up To In My Life (p.142)

Jamilah/She Who Holds Two Names (p.147)

The father is the most important figure in the family, more so in Jamilah’s case as her mother has passed away and it is a single parent household. To convince her father to allow her to go to her

school Formal, a dance event in school reminiscent of the American ‘Prom’, she wrote him a letter in which she addresses him additionally as “the man I look up to in my life”. In response to her request, Jamie’s father however, argues:

‘How many times must I explain to you that I do trust *you*? It’s the people around you I don’t trust. And then there’s your reputation. What will our friends say if they know you were out late at a party where there is drinking and dancing and God knows what else.’ (Abdel-Fattah, *TTIHAM*, p.190)

This further plays on the father’s significance, and shows respect to the fact that the father goes by cultural expectations in which, should she be allowed to go, she might ‘shame’ the family not because of her own actions but of those around her who might shame her.

Terms of address for ‘self’, not mentioned in most previous studies, was also notable in the selected texts. Identity is a constant theme across the texts, as it is often genre specific for Young Adult novels. As such, not only is it genre-specific, but each narrative is related to second generation migrants, who are always searching for whether they belong to the host or home culture, and how this influences their conceptualisation of self, such as in the following example:

R-2-5-4: But even if the laws of probability were suspended for a day and Peter asked me out, he’d be asking *Jamie* out. He wouldn’t look twice at *Jamilah*. (p.95)

Jamie’s differentiation between ‘Jamie’ and ‘Jamilah’ act as markers for her two different conceptualisations of self: JAMIE AS AUSTRALIAN and JAMILAH AS LEBANESE MUSLIM AUSTRALIAN. Thus, it becomes important to understand how naming practices occur, and of which is discussed in section 5.7.

The last type of terms of address is the personification of objects and abstract ideas. This is particularly notable in how one conceptualises ‘things’ as significantly cultural. This can be seen in the way references are made to concepts such as ‘Motherland’, ‘Fatherland’ or the ‘homeland’ (Xu & Dinh, 2013). The following example shows how Pung uses this strategy frequently in *UG*, particularly in speech of the Grandma.

A-1-5-26: “...Father Government is so good to us now!” (p.29)

The emphasis in A-1-5-26 on ‘*father*’ gives the impression of the cultural schema of PATERNAL DOMINANCE, not only in family structures, but also in social structures. As such this is carried on from one culture to another. This is similar to the discourse and cultural schema findings of Xu and Dinh’s (2013) study, where they suggest that the *motherland/fatherland* discourse is shared similarly

between East and South Asians. Attaching a term of address to this institution of the migrant’s family host country, which in A-1-5-26 is said by Pung’s grandmother, shows her respect to her new homeland.

5.7 Naming acts

Naming plays a particularly significant role across all selected texts. Names of characters, supporting characters, and the act of naming—who names who and how are they named. This was first raised in the previous section regarding how Jamie self-addresses herself. Allan and Burrige (2006) note that proper names “are subject to censoring behaviour and are therefore usually chosen with care” (p.143). Being a multicultural text, therefore predominantly the main character will be named accordingly, for example:

R-2-8-3: Miss Sadja shakes her head. ‘My mother, God rest her soul, would have taken that title...’ (p.84)

“Miss Sadja” is an appropriate name for a character that indexes a Muslim-Arabic cultural background, the specific cultural ethnicity of the character is not further explained in the text, but it is clear from the mention that it is not a female Anglo-Saxon/Celtic Caucasian Australian name. Thus, this section examines the naming acts within the selected texts, beginning with the names of the main characters.

Table 14 Names of main characters in selected texts

Text	Main character’s name
Ten things I hate about me	<i>Jamilah Towfeek/Jamie</i>
Does my head look big in this?	<i>Amal Mohmed Nasrullah Abdel-Hakim</i>
The Family Law	<i>Benjamin Law</i>
Unpolished Gem	<i>Alice Pung/Agheare</i>
Laurinda	<i>Lucy Linh Lam/ Lucy Lam/ Linh</i>

Names alone are significant identifiers of cultural origins. Within a multicultural society, such lines become blurred. One can be identified in one sense but carry many other identities. They also mark the relationship the characters have between themselves and their families, as well as with the society. For example, the main character of *TTIHAM* uses two names consistently throughout the text, each reflecting a part of herself—Jamie (her ‘Australian’ self) and ‘Jamilah’ (her Lebanese-Muslim self). This is noted by the character in example R-2-5-4, from section 5.6, as significant to her existence between two varied social discourses—‘Jamilah’ is a very Lebanese name in contrast to the diminutive ‘Jamie’, which can pass as something more ‘Australian’.

R-1-8-11: My name is Amal Mohmed Nasrullah Abdel-Hakim. You can thank my father, paternal grandfather, and paternal great-grandfather for that one. (p.3)

The name of the main character in example R-1-8-11 belongs to an Australian-Muslim-Palestinian. The stylistic manner in which Amal introduces herself in her text is much in the way of a formal introduction, one that is more commonly seen in official non-Australian papers. As a cultural informant (C1) explains, further elaborating the character’s own explanation, that Mohmed is her father’s name, and Nasrullah is her grandfather’s with Abdel-Hakim being that of the family and descending from the great-grandfather.

The naming of the character in *UG* is particularly interesting because despite knowing that her name is the author’s name as expected of a creative nonfiction text, she is constantly referred to as ‘Agheare’. This is how she is referred to by her family because it is how ‘Alice’ is pronounced within the Indo-Chinese community (Spurr & Cameron, 2009). On the other hand, the dual naming acts of the main character in *Laurinda* plays a slightly different role. It is not revealed to the reader until halfway that ‘Lucy Lam’ and ‘Linh’ are the same person, and that Linh is Lucy’s middle name. Much like Jamie and Alice, the dual role of a name and multiple names reflect multiple identities. Lucy represents her prestigious self who achieved a scholarship to attend the prestigious private school Laurinda. Whereas Linh represents the girl the prestigious Lucy left behind, the working class, public school, ethnic self. Law on the other hand, has a very Western first name—‘Benjamin’—but his last name can be associated as being ‘Western’ as well, something that was addressed in paratext:

P-BL-PT: *Where it has come in handy is because it could be a Westerner name, L-A-W, even though I'm Chinese-Australian, it has come in handy in situations where I don't necessarily want them to know my ethnicity right up front, which sounds strange, but the best example is when I really wanted to profile Pauline Hanson, wanted to arrange an interview with her when she was running, I think, for the New South*

Wales Senate. And of course, they said yes, because I was writing for Fairfax, and then I showed up looking like this.

The names mentioned in both *TTIHAM* and *DMHLBIT* do not contain a typical or “white” name, primarily culturally focussed: ‘Jamilah’ and ‘Amal’. However, for the other three texts, in varying degrees, at least one name in their given names is “white”. This cultural trend is popular among migrant families. Although neither Alice Pung nor Benjamin Law specifically refer to themselves by their Chinese names, these are also mentioned and presented as an alternative for when the occasion arises. It becomes clear that these would not be their go-to names on a daily basis otherwise, and this evokes a sense of the cultural conceptualisation that A GOOD ENGLISH NAME HAS VALUE. A critique of this is noticeable in examples B-1-8-15 and A-1-8-22 in which keywords stand out such as ‘jumbled, improvised English’ and ‘banal unpronounceable names’.

B-1-8-15: Their international names, Sebastian and Claudia, broadcast loud and clear: *We might have been born in Hong Kong, but our parents knew how to name us properly.* Their parents had somehow avoided the Chinese tendency to give their kids jumbled, improvised English names like Daffy and Virgyna, Nester and Cornelium. (p.71)

A-1-8-22: All this doesn’t matter because at the moment they are the ones with the banal unpronounceable names, and we are the children with the special names. We are the ones smiled upon by grown ups, white people and Fortune. (p.16)

As such, naming the next generation becomes a quest to find a name that is both ‘pronounceable’ as well as ‘cultural’ while remaining ‘suitable’ for the context in which it will most likely be used. Hence the reality previously described in example A-2-8-30 in section 5.5, regarding the name ‘Aidan’. Example A-2-8-30 demonstrate the codemeshed sensibility of a second generation migrant in both naming and nicknaming a child. There is a conscious choice given to what the child should be called yet does not leave others—members of this migrant family—behind.

Naming in the selected texts also takes the form of nicknames. The following examples R-2-8-2 and A-1-8-18 reflect different conceptualisations of AFFECTIONATE NAMING PRACTICES, including the acts of naming someone other than using their name and any kind of diminutive or variation of their own name. Such as example R-2-8-2, where both ‘loser’ and ‘mate’ are used informally (Allan & Burrige, 2006).

R-2-8-2: “Yeah,” Peter adds. “Don’t be a loser. Just come. What are you going to tell everybody? Oh, sorry, guys, I can’t make it because my dad won’t let me? Mate, they’ll roast you alive if you pull that one on them!” (p.15-16)

A-1-8-18: “Hey I’m just a skip!” he kept insisting, “I won’t be offended if you all call me that, ha ha!” he grinned like a fool at his own generosity, not realising that all my other relatives had already determined from day one that they would refer to him as the Round Red-haired Demon, even in Melanie’s presence. They congratulated themselves on their own magnanimity of spirit – after all, we were all known for calling ‘our own people’ such affectionate names as ‘Horseface’, ‘Toothless Aunt’, ‘Duck Brother’ and ‘Big Fat Potato’ (p.224)

The use of ‘loser’ and ‘mate’ here also shows a degree of ‘affection’, as opposed to aggression, negativity or derogation. In contrast however, it is dryly noted in example A-1-8-18 that from a Chinese oriented perspective, the conceptualisation of AFFECTIONATE NAMING PRACTICES is vastly different. Although ‘loser’, can be used negatively, it can also be used between friends in any kind of discussion that might lead one interlocutor to criticise and attempt to persuade the other to join in or take part in something. However, on the face of it, A-1-8-18 depicts a contrast in understanding of the cultural conceptualisation of AFFECTIONATE NAMING PRACTICES. There is permission granted from the character in question (“I’m just a skip...I won’t be offended if you all call me that”) for the use of a derogatory term but unbeknownst to him, Pung narrates that this is not at all the cultural conceptualisation that is evoked in the minds of her relatives. Their cultural conceptualisation of AFFECTIONATE NAMING PRACTICES suggests that it not offensive to focus on personal physical individual characteristics. Although drawing on physical attributes is a form of nicknaming (Starks, Leech, & Willoughby, 2012), example A-1-8-18 demonstrates the contrast in each interlocutor’s response and set of expectations.

Other acts of naming were in the form of property and food names. Much like terms of address, the naming of these locations and items shape the context in which the narratives are set. A few examples of property names are:

B-1-8-13: ...his new restaurant, Happy Dragon (p.25)

A-2-8-28: the only literature she looked at was the BI-LO and Safeway ads that arrived in our letterbox... (p.12)

Example B-1-8-13 reflects typical naming practices of those of Chinese origin. While these may not be homogeneously shared across those who are members of the culture, they are also quite noticeable, and once again draw on the importance of NAMING PRACTICES. In this case, the choice of name instantiates the cultural metaphor that SOME ANIMALS ARE LUCKY. The inclusion of the dragon is important as such creatures hold significant cultural importance and symbol. The dragon is not only a marker of national and ethnic identity for the Chinese, but also stands for “a number of different qualities and ideas, ranging from strength and success to impending danger” (Ommundsen, 2002, p. 68). As for example A-2-8-28, the property names ground the story in a familiar local Australian context—in a place where there is both ‘BI-LO’, an iconic Australian supermarket chain that was re-branded to ‘Coles’ supermarkets from 2006 onwards, and Safeway supermarkets also re-branded to ‘Woolworths’ after 2008. The same strategy is used with food, and thus the naming acts of food is also localised and mention of prominent local brands are featured.

A-1-8-19: Back in Cambodia, every canned comestible seemed to have some kind of Lucky This-or-That animal plastered on its label. “Lucky Lion Chilli Sauce.” “White Rabbit” candy. “Golden Star Happy Dragon” noodles. (p.12).

A-2-8-27: The most popular items were the Samboy chips, the Redskins and the 7 Ups that the kids would.... (p.4)

Furthermore, conceptualisations of APPROPRIATE BRANDING STRATEGIES are also highlighted, such as use of particular animals of the zodiac in food name items in example A-1-8-19. Example A-2-8-27 makes specific references to ‘Samboy’ chips, ‘Redskins’⁷ lollies, and ‘7 Up’, all iconic food and drink products that can be found in local supermarkets, as such grounding this story in an Australian context.

5.8 Speech acts

In D’souza’s (1991) study, the ‘Synthesizer’ category would use a specific speech act device in a natural and unconscious manner. The notion is that the second (next) generation’s concerns when

⁷ As of June, 2020, it was announced that the Redskins lollies would be renamed in the wake of George Floyd and Black Lives Matters protests

using language are less focussed on which language has the right word for that instance, and more focussed on how best to express themselves through codemeshing. Speech acts play a role in literary texts in nativising, shaping, and contextualising the narrative in its cultural context (Albakry & Hancock, 2008; Bamiro, 2011). All three selected authors use speech acts, presenting them through different strategies—whether transliterated, directly or creatively translated, or codemeshed—for example, this greeting:

R-1-7-3: “*Assalamu Alaykom*,” She says, greeting me with the universal Islamic greeting, Peace be upon you.

“*Walaykom Wassalam*,” I reply, smiling back at her. (p.28)

Example R-1-7-3 depicts a very standard Islamic greeting. As contextualised in the novel, it means ‘peace be upon you’; however this is more deeply entrenched in the teachings of Islam, where “moslems, males and females were [are] taught to use greetings by wishing peace to each other” (Al-Nasser, 1993, p. 16). The responding reply returns the same wishes. Abdel-Fattah transliterates the Islamic greeting, then repeats it in translated English. The inclusion of the translation invites the audience to understand this common greeting and have a taste of its shape in written form. Other examples of greetings come from *UG*:

B-1-7-4: ...Just then, her mother-in-law’s head poked through the rear window and hovered above her, like a hallucination.

“*Ah-Jun*,” my grandmother said, still wearing her work apron. “Are you in pain?” (p.16)

A-1-7-10: “Agheare,” she would coax from the bed, “are you cold? Oh, your hands, so cold!” She would grab my hand in hers and fill my ears with words that made perfect sense to her – visions of her young girlhood self who cried for her mother back in Chaozhou, China... (pp.175-6)

Examples B-1-7-4 and A-1-7-10 present two variations of greetings that are both embedded in Chinese cultural conceptualisations. In both, the initial greeting places an emphasis on health, as seen in ‘are you in pain’ and ‘are you cold’. Furthermore, both complement previous studies’ findings that greetings are less impersonal and focussed on more personal oriented remarks (Hong, 1985; Sun & Tian, 2017; Yi-bo, 2015). Such greetings evoke the cultural conceptualisation of *GUANXI*, wherein ‘relationship’ and ‘connection’ are fundamental to social relationships and networks. This extends beyond greetings, and can involve further understandings, related to interpersonal and social

networking such as mutual benefits that may lead to backdoor or under-the-table practices. However, in both examples B-1-7-4 and A-1-7-10, the relationship is more clearly defined and in-family, with A-1-7-10 between grandmother and grandchild.

Cursewords and swearing are another speech act that is also notable through the texts though they were included by the authors in two different ways. R-2-7-1 depicts the scene of the main character's father cursing in English, hence the eye dialect, and particular choice of lexis.

R-2-7-1: My dad is wearing in and out of traffic. "It is the most beautiful scent in the world!" he says in Arabic. He suddenly switches to English as a car cuts us off. "You son of za sister of za brother of a donkey!" he yells. "Get out of za way!" (p.28)

Much like Bennui (2013) and Zhang (2002), the cultural category of animal is a focus of the obscenity: "...brother of a donkey". That comparing one's relation to an animal equates to an insult, not at all different to similar phrases in English, such as 'son of a bitch' (bitch referring to a female dog). Reference to 'donkey' also infers images of 'stupidity', 'lack of intelligence' and generally used derogatorily in some cultures. In English, it can be associated with 'stubbornness' (Allan & Burridge, 2006). The reference to 'son of' and 'sister of' and the fact of whom is saying it in the selected text—an immigrant Lebanese Muslim whose dominant language is Arabic—infers deeper cultural conceptualisations of what is considered an INSULT. 'Son of a donkey' can be translated from "*Ibn-Al-Himar*" which is a metaphor for illegitimacy, and a main taboo of swearing (Ljung, 2011, p.133). The mention of family relations in conjunction with an animal with negative associations such as a donkey—even without the reference to 'donkey'—is therefore, considered an insult. As cultural informants (C1, C2, C3) suggest, the father's attempt to collectively mention at least two members of the family—*sister, brother*—shows also that he is looking for the rudest insult he knows. According to Ljung (2011), there are common standard insults found in some varieties of American English that involve mothers and sisters but are devoid of specific mention of taboo words so that the insult is delivered in an abbreviated form like "*Your mother! Your sister!*" (p.120). However, he notes that although not common in other varieties of American English or British English, "they are very common in the Romance and Slavic languages as well as in Arabic, Cantonese, Greek, Hindi, Mandarin, Turkish and others" (Ljung, 2011, p.121).

The other shape that cusswords and swearing take can be seen in the following examples from Pung:

A-2-7-7: "Dux of a shitty school," murmured Tully. "And only get into a crappy uni through a povvo scholarship where they bump up your score out of charity." (p.182)

A-2-7-8: “Dibbing, dobbing bitch” (p.196)

Examples A-2-7-7 and A-2-7-8 are grounded in Australian conceptualisations of cursing, swearing and choice of obscenities. The insults are aimed at particular items or individuals, and in this case are negative. The character in A-2-7-7 uses swearwords to insult while looking depreciatively at her current situation in life. The use of ‘shitty’, ‘crappy’ and ‘povvo’⁸, the former two taking precedence while the latter is more an insult than a swearword used as an adjective, highlights the reality and reimagines the typical categorisation of Asian characters in Australian fiction. They are Asian characters with a distinctive Australian voice. As for example A-2-7-8, the alliterative ‘d’ for ‘dibbing, dobbing’⁹ further emphasises the impact of the derogatory address term. Both A-2-7-7 and A-2-7-8 usage become representative of the character voice. This case also shows how the usage of swearwords can also “act as an in-group solidarity marker within a shared colloquial style” (Allan & Burrige, 2006, p. 78). Furthermore, these are second generation migrant characters, and they have grown up with knowledge of appropriate cursewords and obscenities and insults, and as such, the author’s inclusion nativises the characters speech and reflects their realities; the same can almost be said for R-2-7-1.

Despite Law’s explication that he did not want to include the “*lahs and the blah blah*” in his interview (Chapter 4), he does include similar discourse particles into the speech of his characters. In Law’s text, the inclusion of discourse particles is generally found in the speech of characters speaking a language other than English, such as the following examples:

B-1-7-5: “Ha, you want to have kids?” she asked in Cantonese... (p.9)

B-1-7-6: “Wah, what is going on?” they’d ask, raising their tattooed eyebrows. “You need to tell your parents they must make an effort to get back together! Ai-ya, why would any parents split up like this? You’re only children! And no marriage is a walk in the park, is it?” (p.45)

On the other hand, readers assume that the examples from Pung (A-2-7-9, A-2-7-11, & A-2-7-13) are represented in thoughts of the characters who are thinking in their other language, and not English, i.e. mother, father, aunties., until readers are told otherwise. However, unlike Law’s text, both of

⁸ ‘Povvo’ is a diminutive in Australian English, for someone who is ‘poor’ or ‘comes from poverty’

⁹ ‘dobbing’ refers to the act of informing on someone, in other words to ‘dob someone in’ in Australian English

Pung's main characters are surrounded in an immediate home environment that includes a majority of non-English speaking or immigrant characters.

A-2-7-9: As we walked, we wah'd over houses with roofs like red bonnets on top of white faces.... (p.10)

A-1-7-11: Ayyah (p.3)

A-1-7-13: Aiyoh (p.148)

The discourse particles in the above examples are notably familiar to those found in Law's text, despite varying romanisation (B-1-7-6). The selected language of reference in Pung's books is Teochew (as confirmed in her interview), an older language not quite as popular and renowned as Cantonese, yet share similarities to its fellow dialects and variants. For example, the variations of 'Ai-ya', 'Ayyah', and 'Aiyoh'. In the case of Cantonese and Teochew, the initial linguistic source is replete with many discourse particles that are used by speakers on a daily basis (Chor, 2018). As such, specific discourse particles cannot be entirely excluded in text particularly when the author wishes to provide some embodiment of reality that may be familiar to readers of the same imagined community.

Speech acts also took the form of prayer, which is more commonly found in Abdel-Fattah's books. As noted earlier in relation to Abdel-Fattah's strategy in transliterating Arabic greetings in her texts, her strategy of including prayer varies depending on the character. As seen in section 5.2, the selected authors make conscious decisions on how to present and represent the speech of characters who are predominantly non-English speaking individuals. All three of the following examples are spoken or thought in English.

R-2-7-2: Praying aloud to Allah to give him patience. Allah must have been listening because I managed to convince him that the sudden change in my hair colour would not mean I'd end up nightclubbing or on the arm of a boyfriend. (p.6-7)

R-2-7-15: Aunt Sowsan laughs. "Is that what you think? Your mother, Allahyirhamha –" God, rest her soul, "- was the loveliest, kindest women I've ever known. She snuggled her way into my heart..." (p.179)

R-2-7-16: "May Allah protect us from any further tragedy and rest your mother's soul. Ameen." (p.181)

Example R-2-7-2 is spoken in narration by the main character, Jamie, and while it uses the marks of an Islamic prayer—the key player and religious figure, 'Allah'—it is a description of the scene of her

father's first reaction when he discovers she's dyed her hair from black to blonde. The speech act in example R-2-7-15 sends respects to the one lost, and while sounds similar to the English 'god, rest her soul' carries greater cultural conceptual meanings of being used in reference specifically to someone who has passed away, in all instances. When Aunt Sowsan mentions Jamie's mother, she immediately says "*Allahyirhamha*" without missing a beat, though the author has contextualised it as 'God, rest her soul' it can also mean 'God have mercy on her'. The other example of specific spoken act is R-2-7-16, where a prayer spoken to the respective god to "protect", with an ending marker to conclude the prayer, "Ameen". The acts of transcribing and including this speech act, much like the previous section on discourse markers shows the extent to which certain discourses are prevalent within the narratives of these characters. These speech acts play a significant role in situating and creating/re-creating the textual atmosphere of these stories. They furthermore double to reflect the selected author's awareness of such specificities of the character's realities.

5.9 Referential acts

In the case of the selected second generation migrant texts, referential acts are predominantly culturally specific concepts, which are referenced in some form or shape. As concepts are culturally embedded, and thus carry much weight and highly relevant conceptualisations, the degree to which they are contextualised or require contextualisation is necessary. Some of the examples of referential acts are:

R-2-6-1: The sounds trigger memories of colourful weddings and Lebanese parties and dance floors and live bands and belly-dancers. (p.58)

R-2-6-6: It is perhaps the one issue on which Shereen and Aunt Sowsan argue. Shereen gets pretty upset about the fact that so much food goes to waste when there are people starving in the world. She's quite right, but it's a habit entrenched in Arabic culture and Aunt Sowsan would consider herself to be dishonouring her guests if she didn't make such an exorbitant amount. (p.187)

R-1-6-10: Then I perform the wuduh, the ablution, wetting my hands, face, arms, feet, and crown of my head. And then we pray. My father leads the prayer and his voice as he reads the Koran is soft and melodious. (p.29)

B-1-6-15: “We never camped. All those things involved in camping – pitching a tent; cooking on open fires; the insects; shitting in the woods; sleeping on rocks; getting murdered and raped in the middle of nowhere – they never appealed to us. 'Your dad never wanted to camp, and insects eat me alive. See, Asians - we're scared of dying. White people, they like to "live life to the full," and "die happy".' she paused. "Asians are the opposite." (p.43)

A-1-6-22: “No, no, no!” cried my mother, “You don’t understand! The shrine downstairs is directly below our toilet upstairs! That’s why I have been having such troubles! That’s the reason!” We were crapping on our gods and ancestors. That was why there was no peace in this new house, why my mother clutched her heart every day and complained of the largeness of everything. Once we moved the shrine to a more auspicious place, all her troubles would be alleviated. (pp. 125-26)

The above examples demonstrate references made by the authors to specific cultural concepts. Each contain intelligible items such as ‘colourful’ and ‘wedding’, ‘ablution’ and ‘wetting etc’, ‘shrine’ and ‘troubles’, or even concepts such as ‘death’, yet are compounded by a weight of its cultural conceptualisation. Image, role and event schemas are implicitly referred to, some more well-known than others, while others require further contextualisation or on the part of the reader, imagination. Abdel-Fattah (Chapter 4) notes that she would less likely translate an item if it is more commonly known, compared to one that is not. For example, R-2-6-1 draws knowledge from cultural event and role schemas of LEBANESE WEDDINGS AND PARTIES that is briefly described, while example R-2-6-6 is rooted in role schemas of the HOST IN ARAB CULTURE. She makes a more conscious effort to explicate an understanding of the conceptualisation DISHONOURING THE GUESTS compared to the event schema of LEBANESE WEDDINGS. This notion shows the importance of the role of the woman in the family in needing to not shame the family by not having enough food available. According to cultural informants (C1, C2), this also shows the level of respect being offered—the more intimate someone is with the family, the less inclined the family is to provide respectful formalities. Thus, the less intimate they are, the more respectful the formalities, and the provision of more than enough food is considered necessary.

Example R-1-6-10 requires knowledge of Islamic practices and the cultural rituals associated with praying. B-1-6-15 though explicitly instantiates Chinese conceptualisations of DEATH AS TABOO and ALL ACTIONS LEAD TO DEATH. This is much related to the conceptualisations of SHRINE and the IMPORTANCE OF GODS AND ANCESTORS (A-1-6-22) and that superstitiousness about death and dying

is culturally rooted. For those informed, “directly below” in (A-1-6-22) can be linked to the notion of *feng shui*, a traditional principle that is a core schema to Chinese culture in which it is believed that the forces of nature, i.e. *feng shui*, literally ‘wind and water’, are responsible for “determining health, prosperity, and good luck” (Chen, 2007). Where the shrine is worshipped becomes important, as improper places can result in why a family might have ‘troubles’, highlighting the level of importance of what such a shrine may entail. ANCESTORS play a key role; Deceased parents, grandparents and even great grandparents are considered still alive albeit in another world, watching over their descendants and thus, should still be respected (Mak & Chan, 1995, p. 74). FILIAL PIETY should still be given to the ANCESTORS and can also be done via worship of a SHRINE. Without knowing these cultural conceptualisations to some extent, interpreting these passages thus becomes a one-way road in which unknown answers are filled by knowledge from known schemas; for example, knowledge of how a wedding is conducted, or the role of a father or mother, and how to treat guests. Example B-1-6-15 however provides a fair sketch of contrasting conceptualisations that through the author’s creative choices illustrates the culturally constructed notion of DEATH AS TABOO.

Therefore, there is the sense that the author controls how much is understood and shared and how much may rely on shared cultural knowledge of practices and concepts. Example A-1-6-22 contains a greater degree of contextualisation with several keywords that reference and allude to the cultural concept and help shape its interpretation. This contrasts with example R-2-6-1 that refrains from more contextualisation. The amount of detail provided is also a personal creative choice of the writer. As interpreters of the text, the creative choice also reflects to some degree the social construction of one’s perception of the text in relation to the world the text exists (Carter, 2004). The degree of reference can reflect the degree of awareness of the society. If a society that is as multicultural as Australia is described to be, then less detail may be needed to explain its intricacy. However, this is dependent on the writer as well, and how they perceive what is considered necessary to explain and what they perceive as already shared.

5.10 Concluding remarks

This chapter has explored the linguistic strategies used by the selected authors in the five selected texts to not only convey their cultural realities but demonstrate their flexibility in playing with the languages in their linguistic repertoires. Codemeshing as a strategy allowed the authors to draw on their meshed linguistic repertoire in order to make the decision whether to creatively or directly

translate linguistic items from one language to the other. As noted in Chapter 4, the authors had a number of objectives when translating in their writing. Furthermore, the authors' use of creative manipulations with the emphasis on humour allows them to introduce their readers to the discussions occurring in the social discourse. As the authors are drawing on their meshed linguistic repertoires, they are able to play with words and discourses and present semantic shifts or linguistic innovations that are both relevant to the narrative, but to some degree are comfortably familiar to the reader. Thus, this chapter demonstrates the instances of fruition where the transcultural creativity of the author is made most visible through the strategies they use. Second generation migrant writers are using the same or similar strategies as other world Englishes writers, though their intentions for using such strategies may vary to suit their context. Furthermore, this chapter has also shown that much of the writing is deeply rooted in cultural conceptualisations and through the transcultural creativity of the author, readers may realise and seek to understand the deeper meaning of the English words.

Chapter 6 Transcultural creativity as perception

6.1 Overview: Perceiving creativity

Chapters 4 and 5 examined the authors' social context, as well as their approaches to being creative in their writing and how their transcultural creativity is evident through their use of various linguistic strategies. This chapter discusses how the perception of participants in the questionnaire-survey led to their understanding of whether the selected texts are transculturally creative. Participant responses also demonstrate the role of perception in understanding the transcultural creativity of the second generation migrant writer. The participants represent the position of readers of the text, and their perception of what is creative can frame their overall response to the text and language choices made by the author. Negus and Pickering (2004) claim that "creativity entails understanding an experience—or range of experiences" and thus, this experience gained through the act of creativity is not realised—not given meaning or significance—"until it has achieved its communicative form" (pp. 22-23). Thus, transcultural creativity is a two-way process of meaning making, constructed by both participants and author. The meta-discourse analysis of participant responses reveals that they will consider something novel and creative if it still makes sense in the context of use, encouraging the development of meaning through multiplicity of worldviews. What this perception of creativity means for transcultural creativity in world Englishes is discussed in this chapter. It examines the following in relation to transcultural creativity: 1) the relation of 'standard', 2) the collective effort in meaning making, 3) the emotional response, and 4) personal interpretation.

6.2 Too close to 'standard'?

Again appears to be written in 'standard' English. Only possible difference is syntax – QSP14

Creativity is not obvious - sounds 'standard' beside misinterpretation of word – QSP14

'Bear-hug' is a fairly standard descriptor of a wide, warm embrace. Italicisation of 'They' and 'issues' was merely for emphasis. I cannot find any specific use of creativity – QSP28, E3

In this quote, the creativity comes from that idiomatic expression involving the shoe. The use of such idiomatic expressions, which exist only in diasporic writers' first languages make their texts more unique than texts written in a perfect standard English – QSP34, E5

Leila's mother's speech is reflective of the author's creativity showing by defying Standard English criteria but pushing the boundaries of the Standard, and using English to enhance her writing instead of English using her to define her writing – QSP41, E7

It takes an incredibly witty individual to be able to stay "in the lines" so to speak, and still break the status quo in a creative manner. The individual loses the cop out "shock factor" of introducing counter cultural ideals/methods of communication, so it becomes much harder for them to create something entirely original. This is not to take from those who do address the cultural norms, as this still takes massive amounts of research and time to achieve correctly – QSP5

Weir (1982) highlights that for writers across cultures, being creative in English is also at the risk of being unintelligible—if they are too creative to be comprehensible then it is not creativity. Chapter 4 suggests that from an authorial perspective there is also the contention between the author's own relationship with English and their desires to emulate, instantiate, and/or include their cultural heritage and mother tongue within the confines of the English language. It is easy to say, as QSP7 does:

The forms of creativity are numerous and I do not believe there is a 'right' or 'wrong' way to express this desire.

These words emulate notions put forth by other scholars, such as 'multiple creativities' (Pope, 2005) or the many shapes and forms of creativity (Carter, 2006). However, a significant observation among participants to the questionnaire-survey is the question: if it is too close to standard, is it transculturally creative?

At the beginning of this subsection, QSP14's response suggests an alternative—"only possible difference is syntax"—but it is not the reference in this suggestion that makes a significant impact, it is the mention of 'standard' in the first half of the sentence. The same participant repeats this in their second quote, once again highlighting 'standard'. Other participants (such as QSP: 28, 34, and 41) also use 'standard' in reference to the excerpts in the questionnaire-survey. While QSP28 is using 'standard' generically to compare a particular linguistic item and their own perceptions of creativity,

both QSP34 and QSP41 consider how the author introduces a culturally specific item or depicts a character's language style in a way that pushes, according to QSP41, "*the boundaries of the Standard*". Both QSP34 and QSP41 see the linguistic choices made by Abdel-Fattah as creative because it makes the text "*more unique*" (QSP34) and "*enhances her writing*" (QSP41). Although QSP5 does not specifically reference 'standard' in any shape or form, they make valid arguments regarding the fine line of creativity, in the form of the 'status quo'. Csikszentmihaly (1999) argues that creativity is valuable in terms of its relevance to a domain, and that for an act to be 'creative', it needs recognition in the field. QSP14's remark also reflects this way of thinking. It encourages a limitation, much in the same way as Weir (1982), who focusses on bilingual writers (even those writing in English, though not from the Inner Circle). The above participants (QSP: 5, 14, 28, 34, 41) however, are responding to an Inner Circle text, even though they themselves may be individuals from an Outer or Expanding Circle country. From this, three points arise:

1) how does the dichotomy play out between 'creativity' and 'standard'—two concepts that cannot cross each other in order for there to be creativity in the language used;

2) how is the participant's response influenced by their upbringing; therefore, how they read a text, not only the creativity, is affected by their experiences;

3) how do readers therefore respond to something 'standard' that might not really be 'standard', but a 'standard' that is disguising something else—in other words, refreshing or schematising the familiar 'standard' and reshaping it.

In studies of language and creativity, creativity has always been explicitly noted—that line between what is creative and what is not—according in terms of perception. Maynard (2007) refers to elasticity. Csikszentmihaly (1996) refers to domain. My participants refer to 'standard'. Other participants made similar references, though no one else specifically used the word 'standard', for example:

QSP15: *You can only change the meaning of a word if people will understand the new meaning, so you can't just decide for yourself, this is where language norms matter. But having said that, meanings do change over time or between nationalities.*

QSP28: *If all that is done to 'refresh' the meaning of a word is to make an older/archaic/obsolete definition more prominent and relevant, then that is not creativity. That is a simple exercise in restoring a word to its former glory. There is a church in Detroit, Michigan which has not had its stone exterior cleaned for*

134 years. It was completely black before it was cleaned. No one of the recent time knew the original colour of the stones. After the deep clean, the church turned a natural shade of beige again. To me, this is analogous to restoring a former meaning of a word. Old meanings might have been forgotten. But once those meanings are put back to use, the word becomes revitalised. For there to be creativity, the word ought to take on a new meaning.

Both participants discuss creativity in terms of ‘meaning’—a focus that this thesis discusses in more depth in Chapter 7—and thus demonstrating the importance they place on how they perceive what is creativity. QSP15 references ‘language norms’ and their importance in defining creativity, more so when it is in consideration of meaning. QSP28, however, has clearly explicated the difference between what they feel is ‘restoration’ versus ‘refreshment’; thus, some creativity would give new meaning. Transcultural writers—or other similar multicultural, cross-cultural, contact literature writers—are not only finding that balance, but are being perceived by their readers in specific ways. These kinds of writers—globalised while being local, much like those of previous generations—are indeed challenging dominating monolingual perceptions of ‘standard’ English (Ibáñez, 2016), even more so now that English is a language that cannot be perceived only from a monolingual perspective (Clyne, 2004; Ibáñez, 2016).

QSP15’s reference to language norms begs the question of which ones? Academics have broached similar points of discussion in their research. Questions such as: What is ‘standard English’? Who’s ‘standard’ now? Transcultural writers are already exceeding the ‘language norm’ by being in possession of a blended, multiple linguistic repertoire of both their mother tongue and home language—depending on the case, these two might be the same, may overlap, or be a combination of two different parental tongues—and also their host language (in this thesis, predominantly English). QSP15’s perception is also reflected in critical comments by P-R-D-G2 and P-R-D-G3, discussed later in this chapter in relation to Abdel-Fattah’s writing style. The book reviews find that the content of the story is important, but disparaged the way it is delivered, considering it uncreative because the depiction of the dialogue lacked realism. There is thus an expectation on a ‘physical’ rather than theoretical ‘standard’. If it is creative, then they would have praised rather than critiqued, in the same way they had praised the content of the book but disparaged the specific written dialogue style.

The second example from QSP28 considers what constitutes creativity if refreshing a word is involved. QSP14, who remarks on the standardness, also writes, “*refreshing the meaning of the word could just be a result of cultural shift (changing with the times)*” (QSP14). This is echoed by QSP7:

QSP7: *For me, the underlying 'meaning' of the word is the same, but the connotation varies from culture to culture, which is the fascinating aspect. Using the example above, 'lover' always means 'person in a romantic relationship' but the level and perceived societal appropriateness of this person is the underlying nuance that varies between Australia and China. I am not sure I would term this 'creative' as most of these language differences are due to the historical, societal and cultural aspects of a nation, rather than an active attempt to alter the meaning.*

The arguments presented by these participants (QSP: 28, 14 and 7), on where does one draw a line on what is creative, is reminiscent of Csikszentmihaly (1999). However, where QSP28 insists that creativity is inclusive of new meaning and avoidance of simply reusing the old meaning, QSP14 subjects it to the natural process of language evolution over time. QSP7 further questions whether it is simply language difference rather than language creativity. Csikszentmihaly (1999) suggests that any new meaning can only be significant in reference to the old—“without rules there cannot be exceptions, and without tradition there cannot be novelty” (p.315). As such, this point trails into the second point made earlier, that participant responses are influenced by their upbringing. According to Attridge (2004), the creative mind can only work with the materials at hand and generally does not have knowledge beyond the limits of one’s culture, thus one’s creativity is in contributing to fill the noticeable gaps. Perception of what is creative, much like anything else in our living, breathing, existing world, is socially constructed; thus, mirroring the role of the author in their creative process of writing what they know. We build our understanding based on what we know and thus interpret as such.

6.3 A collective effort? Cooperative fracture and reference as perception

It is definitely creative because English in the past understanding belongs to countries that speak it as the native language, but now more countries start to add cultural characteristics into English use, which is culturally creative in language use – QSP18

For participants, perception of who it is written for, what for, and who is writing is also considerable motivation for how they categorise and understand creativity. If they did not share in the perception of creativity, it became a cooperative fracture and led to participants not considering it to be creative.

In a sense, perception of transcultural creativity—particularly considering the existence of world Englishes as well as the awareness that English is a globally shared language—can be compared to the metaphor of a coin. There are two sides of a coin, just as there are two dominant perceptions of creativity from the participants. The first is that it is not creative use of language because the item in question is considered part of the norm—thus referencing back to the previous discussion on ‘standard’. The second is that familiarity breeds cohesiveness which suggests a combined, and therefore cooperative, effort of the reader and the writer that results in creativity.

On one hand, some participants (such as QSP: 9, 10, 11, 12) approach the matter of creativity positively, even though they did not consider a specific excerpt as ‘creative’:

QSP9, E2: *Because it is the normal way of using English*

QSP10, E2: *This is more like a fact or prediction rather than a comparison*

QSP11, E2: *It sounds more like she’s quoting someone*

QSP10, E3: *This is just very normal everyday communication, not really creative*

QSP11, E3: *She’s describing the scene, but it sounds like something you would hear in everyday conversation to me*

QSP12, E3: *That is different cultural phenomenon*

The participants are dismissive towards Excerpts 2 and 3 in the questionnaire-survey and did not consider them creative based on factors such as being a reiteration of normal everyday communication, someone else’s quotation, a normal way of using English, or a cultural phenomenon. QSP10, quoted twice across two different excerpts (E2 and E3), makes a noteworthy judgment: what is written sounds more like a ‘fact’ or ‘prediction’ than a ‘comparison’, therefore it does not possess creativeness in use of language. The other participants, however, mostly found Excerpt 2 to be positive for transcultural, due to the author’s play with words and the use of ‘ghosts’ to represent the elderly residents in nursing homes. Furthermore, within Excerpt 2, the statement that was presented in the questionnaire-survey is taken from a section of the book in which Pung’s mother is having a discussion with her sister-in-law about children, filial piety, and what happens when they grow old. It can be read in one way as the ‘cultural fear of getting old’ and another as the ‘fear of nursing homes’. QSP11 in both responses (E2 and E3) note that the excerpts are a reference to something else, and as such are not considered creative. QSP11(E2) finds quoting someone else as not creative, whereas in QSP11(E3), her final evaluation is that because it “*sounds like something you would hear in everyday conversation*” it becomes less creative. This is similar to QSP9’s statement, though

perhaps from the other side of the coin. QSP9 feels that *'because it is the normal way of using English'* (QSP9, E2) the excerpt is not necessarily creative. This suggests that despite the Australian Englishness of the text (as Pung herself has stated that her books are indeed written in Australian English), what seems like 'otherness' traditionally, has already crossed transcultural boundaries to be part of what is considered 'normal'. This reflects on D'souza (1991) and her justification for categorising the language markedness across generations (in Chapter 2) as well as her acknowledgement that by the second generation, using English has become the norm and as such so are the ways of speaking to reflect this generation's cultural realities. Canagarajah (2012) argues that "English flows across layered and changing contexts, traversing competing norms and values, to take on new grammars and meanings" (p.154). He further suggests that the Inner Circle varieties are just as much affected by the pluralisation process. As such, the responses of the above participants in suggesting that the excerpts are not creative is also a response to the *familiarity* they encounter in the excerpts.

On the other hand, shaping what is transcultural creativity is found by participants to be asking whether something is deliberate or arbitrary, and if it is creative in a certain context. The three participant responses below show how some participants considered these dimensions as being important to their understanding.

QSP27: *I feel like cultural context is more of a collective effort, with bits and pieces filled in by many people until it becomes a cohesive whole and in most cases, not deliberately done. I feel like to be creative is something that is deliberate*

QSP21: *In some cases it removes negative connotations, other times it's all about how the word is translated, sometimes it's the context. So, sometimes using a word in certain contexts is creative*

QSP24: *Words can take on different connotations and mean different things if used in differing contexts. Words are fluid and have layers of arbitrary meaning which can be harnessed by any writer*

QSP27 suggests that creativity is something deliberate, and as such when something is cultural, it is the readers who complete the process. However, when it is implicit and not explicit, then QSP27 does not feel it is that creative. QSP24 suggests the arbitrariness of meaning comes with use in different contexts. On the other hand, according to QSP21, borrowing words can be creative depending on how those words are interpreted in the new context. Language and semiotic resources are embedded in

their social and physical environment, and construct meaning in the context of diverse interacting modalities (Canagarajah, 2013).

A defining feature in understanding creativity is that it is not definable in terms of different times and cultures (Carter, 2004). The participant responses, particularly QSP27, somewhat contrast this. Alternatively, QSP21 and QSP24 emphasise that creativity with language in transcultural situations—such as examples from the five selected texts—are context dependent in some cases. A writer may use any of the connotations and arbitrary meaning to be creative in their work. It is not necessarily the original act or the product that makes a work creative, but those who receive the act of creativity and what their expectations of that act's usual form and convention (Carter, 2004). What these participants present is the problem of use in context—the solution, also provided by the participants, is in how it changes the variables around it. Questionnaire-survey participants are keenly aware of society's expectations and thus, consider in relation how these expectations influence perceptions of creativity, for example the following responses:

QSP22: *William Blake was considered genuinely insane by the society he lived in, it wasn't until much later that people gave him the credit he deserved. It could just be that certain societies aren't mature enough to grasp concepts and maybe later they'll grow to admire and appreciate what they didn't before.*

QSP23: *I remember briefly in the past, reading sentences that weren't grammatically correct or detailed, but they had a way of pulling you in and making you feel what it was they were feeling. I think any Shakespeare would be a pretty good example for this.*

QSP24: *I would contend that the further a text strays from the mundane, the more rich and distinctive it can be. However, there is the risk of becoming too personal and losing the reader in obscure references and imagery.*

QSP28: *It depends on the subject matter. If the subject matter is taboo or controversial or sensitive, the creativity could be perceived as being offensive. Something can only be creative if it is understood by the reader. If the reader does not understand what the author means, the text would be interpreted as simply nonsense. [...] Hence, the author's exact intentions must be effectively interpreted by the reader in order for there to be true creativity in the reader's society.*

Both QSP22 and QSP23 reference the acceptance of two classical writers, one in terms of their works, and the other in terms of their language choices. The reference to classical works in considering

society's expectations and whether not conforming is a form of creativity or not, is a point that will be discussed a little later in this section. The other two participants, QSP24 and QSP28, make points that reflect the discussion in section 6.2. They suggest that moving away from the 'norm' makes a text more creative. However this runs the risk of becoming too obscure to understand—a point supported by Weir (1982)—and so it would seem that if the receiver of the act of creativity understands, it then can be perceived as creative (as QSP28 argues).

These participants, not all of whom have undertaken rigorous discussions in tertiary classrooms on 'culture', examine the concept of creativity from a folk linguistic perspective, influenced by their life experiences, upbringing, worldviews, and encounters with other similar or competing ideas of creativity. Their perceptions may be influenced by their literary understanding—if they had taken English Literature at some point in their education. Others, despite being self-acclaimed writers (not all creative writers), may be influenced by the perceptions of their peers, or what they have been told. For example, two participants reference Lewis Carroll or allude to his works, *Alice Through the Looking Glass* or *Alice in Wonderland*, as a measuring stick for their own perception. In the following, QSP22 references both Edgar Allen Poe and Sylvia Plath to frame their understanding of creativity in language:

QSP22: *A lot of Edgar Allen Poe's works, like The Raven, included great examples of the type of alliteration that shakes you to your very core. Sylvia Plath also had a poem about a fig tree that I've always thought back to when struggling with imagery, her words are like string and she meticulously weaves these colorful tapestries in each of her poems.*

Another participant (QSP8) not only demonstrates how a classical author deliberately played with words, but also shows an awareness for lexical development and diachronic variation.

QSP8: *Charles Dicken's character in Oliver Twist named Charley Bates but frequently referred to as Master Bates (the term masturbate was already in use when Dickens wrote Oliver Twist and had the same meaning then as it does today).*

In Chapter 8 of this thesis, a book reviewer presents a similar comparison, comparing Alice Pung's writing to Sylvia Plath rather than iconic Asian writer, Jung Chang. The link to perceived classical texts as a reference point for what is creative is notable, particularly when such texts are only considered classics by, as Carter (2004) argues, educational institutions and publishers designating their category of specific social exclusivity. Strategies for reading and understanding these classic texts, or literary competence overall, are those that are taught in educational institutions and not

necessarily applicable beyond these contexts or to texts not institutionally considered literary (Carter, 2004). The selected texts (as will be addressed in Chapter 8) are commercially categorised to align with other notable texts of the same or similar genres. Furthermore, the selected texts have both been used (or are still being used) in Australian high school curricula and have between them received various prestigious awards. As somewhat expected, participant responses to the creativeness of the selected authors vary, and not all of them considered the authors to be ‘creative’. Some of the reasons are listed above—the excerpts they have read are context dependent; the text does not exceed the participant’s perceived ‘norm’, and this includes what they considered as refreshing a word’s meaning, in which context was cited as necessary. Therefore, the creativity is influenced by context, and as Carter (2004) argues, that context is complex and there are many frames operating, possibly, within a single context.

Consequently, the result of knowing this is noticeable in some participant responses. For example:

QSP31: *Can mean a lot, depends how to use it, thus it's not that creative*

QSP38: *It can be a yes or no, mainly due to the contextual need and cultural acceptance. In my honest opinion, if the 'refreshing' ends up being offensive and disrespectful to the original idea, then really, what is the point?*

QSP26: *It can be. Language is very fluid and depends on interpretation more than actual meaning, most of the time*

QSP33: *Yes, because the meanings have shifted and new denotative and connotative meanings have been created and re-created*

Comments such as these bring us to the third point raised earlier in this chapter. How do participants respond to creativity and consider it as (not) reshaping the language as they know it? Already, QSP31 proposes that a word can mean many things, but depending on its use can result in its perception as ‘creative’. QSP38 suggests the presence of ‘need’ and a reference to both context and culture. It is an even more valuable comment because it also draws attention to the fact that individuals, those who are not necessarily linguistic majors, are reflecting on such critical perspectives. Both QSP26 and QSP33, in slightly different but relevant tangents, mention meaning as being constantly in shift, and that language is fluid and often subject to interpretation. The following responses suggest as much:

QSP24: *Creativity does not just require a distinct voice or vision but rather it needs a familiar context via which it can engage the reader. Whether it is narrative structure,*

common themes, or identifiable real world parallels, creativity must attract, engage, and transport.

QSP27: *Even simple explanations, if it can strike at something profound or makes you look at something workaday in a new light, is creative.*

Each response while contrastive as much as they are reflective of each other, focus on both the role of the author in how they write and the reader in how they respond.

6.4 It's because I feel something: Emotional correspondence

I can feel the mix of jealousy and confusion in the tone of this above quote – QSP23, E3

It invokes a feeling of anger and nervousness in me – QSP6, E7

I don't find this quote creative. There is little feeling, emotion, in the exchange between the two characters. It's straight forward wording that doesn't paint much of a picture – QSP29, E8

I guess I find this kinda funny, cos it seems like the jokes my friends and I have or have heard of – QSP38, E8

The emotional response of participants is also a considerable indicator of whether they classified an act of creativity as creative or not. If they felt something for the excerpt, or felt the emotions of the character's feelings, then the participant considered it as creative, as QSP23(E3) and QSP6(E7) show. This is also evident in participants that did not feel there is creativity, as can be seen in QSP29 (E8). QSP29 equates lack of feeling and emotion described within the excerpt as significant, and not only for the emotional response of the reader (as can be seen in QSP23 and QSP6's responses). Without feeling or emotion between the characters for the participant to feel, paired with too straightforward wording, the excerpt ceases to be creative. On the other hand, QSP38(E8) shows an emotional response that allows them to relate to the excerpt at hand. It is through the emotional response that they can also relate to the *familiar*, something that in the previous section is also a defining aspect to consider. This echoes Law's own statement (see Chapter 4), regarding his intentions—*"it's always about getting that emotional truth, capturing the essence of that conversation"* (AI-BL). One reviewer from Goodreads (P-A-U-G5) provides insight into their perception of Pung's prose in UG:

P-A-U-G5: I feel like the prose itself could've done with a bit of polishing/editing but considering it's Pung's first novel, it's a decent read. Although her writing voice is intended as witty, it felt overzealous and whingy the more I read

P-A-U-G5 considers Pung's work to be a 'decent' read even though they believe the text could have been further 'polished'. On the other hand, P-A-U-G5's perception that the emotions did not translate to them as the reader, suggests the writer's voice that was 'intended as witty' is not constructed linguistically creative enough to resonate with the reader. Another review (P-A-U-G4) comments:

P-A-U-G4: I didn't get to 'feel' what it was like to be her. The language used does not allow for this. I found it prescriptive, lacking in emotion

P-A-U-G4 suggests that the prescriptive nature of the author's language style led to a lack of emotion, resulting in the reader being unable to relate to the story. The emotional connection to a story gives both a sense of creativity and a sense of authenticity. This is notable in P-A-U-G3:

P-A-U-G3: Although this occasionally read as a not quite truthful account of past events, it also had a real honesty and poignancy, as the emotion attached to the events and memories always felt genuine

In FUI-C follow up interview, emotion is also a significant keyword associated with creativity—the implication being that should one feel emotion in some form or another, it would trigger one's feelings of creativeness.

FUI-C: *in that sense, one of the keywords to defining creativity was emotive [...] to explore those emotions or explore things that would trigger those emotions. Mental stimulation. All three things kind of connects. Does it bring about something? Either draws you to it or away from it*

FUI-C highlights the importance of emotionally resonating with the reader. Regardless of whether they are of the same background as the writer, it is necessary for the reader to feel the "mental stimulation" that leads to the exploration of an emotion(s) for them to find the text creative. Furthermore, this association between emotion, the author, and the reader, is suggested by another FU participant in relation to Excerpt 10:

FUI-T: *I like this idea of this 'petite small waisted Chinese beauty' because I consider myself Australian, because I have primarily an Anglo-centric education and background. I've lived here most of my life despite the fact that I can draw on other cultural and linguistic background. I know that this is a very typical sort of Euro-centric*

perception of a woman could be, and I find it interesting particularly because I'm curious of who's speaking [...] if it's someone who you expect to have Chinese heritage. [Then] someone who you expect to be investly aware of such paradigms or be interested in subverting these paradigms. But I think what I like about migrant experience is that you have the ability to talk critically about things while living inside them [...] I find that embracing, while recognising subjectivity with honesty and authenticity means that you can critique and that critique should be privileged and recognised. So there's truthfulness in this 'petite small waisted Chinese Malaysian beauty' because of the authorial centric nature of who's speaking

Participant FUI-T takes the discussion further than just 'emotion', carrying similar points on authenticity that book reviewers have raised, and thinking about it more critically. The author is bending expectations because they are, as Participant FUI-T suggests, "*privileged*" to do so as individuals who have experienced and lived in and across two (or more) cultural worlds. For the second generation migrant writer, writing can be used to be subversive and critical. Vannini and Franzese (2008) argue that "authenticity influences not only self-views, but how we negotiate interactions in which self-views are at stake" (p.1625). This resonates with the notions of creativity as being an act that strays away from the 'norm' to be creative—as such different from the centre—but not so far as to be too unusual and 'peripheral' to be suitably creative within the boundary line (to use a metaphor) of the field. The reaction to the authors' works also echoes the reviewers' perception on way the language is used. For example, a reviewer for *TTIHAM* (P-R-T-G2) comments: "The dialogue is unrealistic. That's not how bullying works" and that "I think literature should want to say something. But come on, that was just invisible, like the author should just write a manifesto". Despite the seriousness or the depth of the theme being presented in the text, some reviewers feel the delivery is not done authentically—for example the declaration of unrealistic dialogue—and as such is not as creative as it could be. Other examples include the following critiques (emphasis original):

P-R-D-G2: The dialogue was **So. Annoying**. It was UNBEARABLE. No teenager repeatedly brings up religion in a normal conversation with her friends without being labeled as some preacher or overly-religious person

P-R-D-G3: I have an odd relationship with this book because on *one hand* I think **it tells an incredibly important story (!)**, but on the other hand...**I can't honestly say I think the writing is good**. GAWSH. That sounds horrible to admit. This could just be my personal preference!! But the dialogue felt weird and unnatural

Going back to the notion of acceptability as creativity, all of these reviewers (P-R-T-G2, P-R-D-G2, P-R-D-G3) raise considerations that influence their perception of transcultural creativity in the text, such as content versus language, and what a reader might consider to be ‘good’ writing—or in this case, ‘good’ and ‘authentic’ representation of realistic dialogue. This is further seen in P-A-L-G1, where the reviewer critiques and praises Pung’s writing: “while I adored this book, it’s evident in Laurinda that Alice has come a long way in her writing and storytelling”.

Thus, emotion is a strong contender to one’s perception of what is creative or not, whether it is triggered by the characters to the reader, or occurs between the characters on the page. Therefore, if the reader does not receive what they believe to be an appropriate level of emotion, they may feel dissonant with the text and a lack of creativity. The more the readers feel (in some form or another) the text, the more creative it becomes in their eyes. This, however, becomes reliant and subjective to the interpretation that readers take from the words they read on the page.

6.5 Personal interpretation as creativity

I do, because it shows that people have different perceptions of the same words and that means they think differently, and that may be considered creative – QSP8

I think it’s very creative that adds to the rich tapestry of English - it’s a great way to express a person’s unique history and how they may or may not interact with a culture – QSP17

Subjective interpretation is a consistent theme in the research. Not only do participants, reviewers, and even the authors themselves mention it, but their own reactions and discussions are subjective to the individual. Above are two examples from the data, encapsulating two very different but relevant ideas. QSP8 makes a very succinct point on the subjective agency of the individual as being key to how they perceive and think about creativity in language use, and this is taken further by QSP17. Looking at their word choices, we are confronted by a few dominating keywords and phrases: “*rich tapestry of English*”, “*person’s unique history*”, and “*interact with a culture*”. It illustrates a somewhat complex imagery of the English language. This colourful understanding further encourages comments such as:

QSP11: *It might be considered creative if others understand it the same way you do. Otherwise it'll be considered a mistake.*

QSP27: *As long as it is understood on some level. The purpose of text is always communication. You can be as creative and unusual with your wording but if it is not understood, then it doesn't matter.*

QSP28: *it depends on the context and subject matter. There can only be creativity if it can be understood. But if the author's society and the target/reader's society share similar worldviews, cultures and language use, then the text might be regarded as being merely relatable, rather than creative.*

Here, let us focus on QSP28 for a moment, as both QSP11 and QSP27 are essentially saying something similar—that something is creative if it is understood—and therefore will be referenced a bit later. QSP28 does not simply talk about context and subject matter, but they situate it within the frame of both the author and target readers' societies. They make references to the collectiveness of what Sharifian (2011) discusses as being the heterogeneous distribution of cultural cognition. Furthermore, QSP28 argues that there is a difference between 'relatable' and 'creative', and this can be sourced to how one considers the way the author plays with and introduces into writing their cultural origins, cultural conceptualisations, and linguistic choices. The next generation are comfortable using English, are unapologetic for using it the way they are, and may not consistently use language depending on function or purpose (D'souza, 1991). This point is further emphasised in the reactions of questionnaire-survey participants and the informal reviewers of the selected texts. Take for example the following two responses (Questionnaire-survey, Part B, Question 3 as noted in Chapter 3):

QSP29: *It depends. At times, the refreshing of a word can aid to avoid repetitive phrasing which takes away from the creative aspect while, at other times, it leads to the meaning being lost - using 'lover' to mean 'wife' and having them be mistaken as an actual 'mistress'.*

QSP23: *for instance, Japan uses 3 words to express love. One way is to express love to a close friend. The second way is to express love to family members, or sometimes to a girl you like, and the third way is said to someone you want to spend your entire life to. So I think it's nice that all these countries have different ways of being creative in saying certain words.*

QSP29 suggests two points: the first is subjectivity, that follows along the discussion so far, and the other is the exclusivity of creativity. Both these points go back to QSP11 and QSP27's own comments, that it is only creative if it is understood. QSP29 also discusses the loss of meaning through translation. If one uses a familiar word, such as 'lover' in a context in which the intended meanings (for example, lover as mistress, wife, girlfriend, significant partner, not necessarily illegitimately) are drawn from another culture, then how it is used would determine its 'creativity'. If it is not used well, then it becomes lost in translation, and according to participant responses, it would not be considered creative. Where QSP29 takes on the 'would it be creative' question, QSP23, on the other hand, showcases points raised in Chapter 2, such as how one can be creative when thinking beyond the norm, the prevalence of the monolingual mindset, and thinking towards translanguaging, codemeshing, and multilingualism in writing. QSP23 provides examples of the possibilities that the English language can have when transcultural (and other) writers are contributing to it through their language choices in their own transcultural English works. These possibilities come in the form of how the writer captures broad, complex ideas in their words—in other words, how they capture cultural conceptualisations in a language which that has words that do not stretch to match in meaning.

So far in this chapter, the perception of individuals who, to some extent, share a common interest in writing—with 64% interested in creative writing (among other types of writing)—show that what is creative to them, is not necessarily what is discussed in scholarly literature in relation to linguistics. The diversity of the participants' ethnic backgrounds, coupled with comments such as those given by QSP11 and QSP27 above, show that perception of transcultural creativity is becoming indefinable when examining it in English. Not only are there varieties of Englishes, but groups of individuals like second generation migrants are growing up in contexts where they are speaking both mother tongue and host language with different degrees of competence. As Fang (forthcoming) argues, the second generation are operating within a codemeshed mindset, and as such, their creativity will be codemeshed, whether consciously or unconsciously. Writers introduce their own worldviews into their works—again, not always consciously—and these are then passed onto the readers who take them, and through their own worldviews, interpret as they see fit (Underhill, 2011). This is similar to the analysis given to Tan's work by Lee (2004) regarding the author's self-translation as a means of releasing foreignness and for—"two worlds [to] come into existence and are endowed with new meanings" (p.121).

Knowing this then affects the way language is shaped. Not only are writers being creative in the way they use certain words, but the readers are contributing to that creativity with their own interpretations. In dealing with a widely used language such as English, there is also the constant

development of transcultural creativity that pushes the boundaries of English. As Jin (2010) argues (in Chapter 2), there are writers who are pushing the limits of English and enriching it in ways that they “cannot help but sound foreign to native ears” (p.469). What QSP29 and QSP23 also suggest in their commentary, is that writers of this calibre are writing in a familiar language about concepts of other languages. How best to express this is part and parcel of the writer’s agency. This shows in the authors’ own reflection (in Chapter 4) of what they should write and how they should write it in order to convey the meaning or message of their desire. Their consciousness of their audience and awareness that they are indeed writing in English, also means they can view this as either a limitation or the opportunity to be released from the bonds of a singular language. It gives the author both an absolute agency and a limited autonomy, in the sense of what might be taken away from their writing by their readers. We see this in Chapter 4, when Abdel-Fattah indicated that she would include cultural insider jokes for her Arabic readers. This act is not shared by all her readers, who might note it but may not understand the deep meaning. It does not mean that they will not understand it, or that they will not interpret it in their own way. Thus, on the other hand, the author has absolute agency over what they do choose to say in their writing, for example when to translate and when not. This is evident in Law’s case where he chooses to convey whole conversations in English rather than include Cantonese which he would need to translate in text for the audience’s benefit (Chapter 4). Unless the reader is informed—because the text is in English, conveying not always ‘English’ ideas—some perceptions are that this is already creative. But not, without certain conditions attached. Take for example the following:

QSP41: *I think it is, because first off, I don't really see clear limits with being creative. And secondly, I think it's totally interesting to re-vamp/refresh/re-conceptualise a meaning of a word to suit your writing's context.*

QSP39: *Yes, but the perceptions may depend on the reader's background, some are not interested or do not notice/ get the point.*

QSP41 sees value in “*re-vamp[ing]/refresh[ing]/re-conceptuali[sing]*” meaning to suit the written context, claiming that it does not hinder creativity but adds to it. On the other hand, QSP39 takes a more diplomatic approach, and here their observation is worth noting: “*perceptions*” will depend on someone’s background and if something interests them, then the meaning and *therefore* ‘creativity’ is conveyed. As Pfeiffer (1979) argues, “[a] new scientific theory, no matter how unique, will not be hailed as truly creative if it continues from the beginning to be strongly disconfirmed. A work of art will not be considered truly creative if it fails to catch the imagination of its observers” (p.132). If it

is not noticed, then it will not be valuable. Even when noticed, if it is not recognised as ‘creative’, it might not be prized.

Furthermore, this discussion also reflects what was discussed in section 6.2; namely the perception of the standard as a measuring stick for participants’ understanding of what is creative and what is not. When something ‘standard’ is ‘revamped/refreshed/reconceptualised’ and is to some extent shared, it can be perceived as creative. If the receiver finds meaning in it, then it can also be perceived as creative. An example is QSP9’s response to Excerpt 1:

QSP9, E1: *There is slight humor in the description. You would think “ghost town” meant that it was kind of an abandoned place, but then they mention that they were just comparing the color of the people to that of ghosts. There is still room for interpretation.*

They recognise that there is still room for interpretation—such simple words like ‘ghost town’ can be easily overlooked, but when juxtaposed with something else they immediately, at the writer’s discretion, become subject to the reader’s perception of creativity. QSP24 and QSP28 also refer to this in their response to Excerpt 2 as they consider this transcultural play:

QSP24, E2: *The layers of meaning attached to ‘white ghosts’. On one level it can be read as racial, another, memorial, another, devoid of hope, another, insubstantial, unimportant. These combine to paint a haunting picture of fearful loss and an absence of human warmth.*

QSP28, E2: *To me the first sentence is not creative. Whereas, the phrase ‘old white ghosts’ in the second sentence may potentially be creative depending the readers’ ethnic origin. Cantonese speakers refer to white Caucasians/Europeans as ‘gwai lou’ (i.e. ghost dude/fella). Being a Cantonese speaker myself, I struggle to find it creative. That said, if ‘old white ghosts’ refer to senile, immobile, sickly old Caucasian people, when certainly, it would be quite creative.*

Law as the writer provides a foundation for readers to build meaning on. Regardless of whether they share the same cultural conceptual understanding, participants make their own interpretations. QSP24 dissects the layers of meaning in order to build their understanding and perception of creativity. While QSP28 contextualises how they perceive what, if, and when selected phrases in written texts are creative. Their responses draw lines between what may be perceived as a ‘common’ English word in a ‘common’ language used in a text for those who speak the same language, with

meaning derived from a culture not associated with the ‘common’ expectations. The cultural conceptualisations of ‘ghost’ and ‘ghost town’ is further discussed in Chapter 7. QSP28 furthermore, considers again the degree to which the interpretation contributes to the creativeness of an act. Another example is QSP22’s reflection on Excerpt 3:

QSP22, E3: *Through her usage of language, the author clearly establishes her distaste for “those” kinds of girls, bundling them all together as if to imply that they’re all the same, or that she’s somehow different than them simply because of her issues with physical contact. But if you read between the lines there are a lot of implications and the quote leaves you with some rather unsettling questions.*

QSP22’s initial comment confirms their belief that the selected excerpt is indeed creative, thus their brief analysis presents their interpretation of the excerpt; however, it is their following statement referring to deeper meanings that emphasizes their awareness of more room for interpretation. This is similar to QSP33’s responses, where they delineate that:

QSP33, E4: *The saying itself is ‘creative’, so are the metaphors of white cotton wool, and a gem. There’s also implicit creativity which is implied about the gender imbalance in certain ‘old’ societies.*

Both QSP22 and QSP33 recognise a greater depth of meaning to the excerpt provided. They recognise there are implications not discussed in detail but provide a contrast of layered meanings that further shape what the participants perceive to be creative. QSP33 also recognises transcultural play in language which raises the participants’ awareness that the author is writing from the perspective of other characters and as such they need to consider how to portray them, for example:

QSP24, E6: *The use of ‘Golden Towers’ could conceivably be a perspective-driven interpretation of something possibly mundane, but elevated by the speaker’s perception to almost mythic proportions.*

Therefore, from these responses, it becomes clear that when readers can interpret what they are given, whether they share the same cultural conceptualisations or not, they can still consider it to be creative. As Canagarajah (2006) argues, though he tends to focus more on L2 writers of English rather than those who use English as a dominant language, writers have this capacity to draw on all their linguistic resources and to shuttle between languages and codemeshed varieties. So even though these authors are conveying a message and sharing a story in English, they are doing so from their perspective of second generation migrant Australians who are living in Australia but are culturally diverse. Their

works may be perceived as Australian, but they are also transculturally creative so long as readers also perceive them to be so—in the way they use that widely used common language, shaped by their transculturally diverse backgrounds and conceptual linguistic systems, to make what is familiar potentially unfamiliar.

6.6 Concluding remarks

As raised throughout this chapter, how readers perceive what is creative is particularly insightful to perception in examining transcultural literature. The paradigm shift in looking at the English language as Englishes rather than the singular, *English*, plays a greater role. What is ‘common’ may not take on traditional understandings (as suggested by participants, it would still be creative to refresh language in a non-restorative sense). Implied throughout most of the data presented in this chapter, is also the notion that English words carry the weight of cultural conceptualisations not usually associated with ‘English’. It brings into question familiar debates on ‘what is standard’ and this in turn, can raise further questions of how participants are engaging in these debates on the ‘standardness’ of language within their contexts. This will undoubtedly influence the way they perceive what would be transculturally creative. This is more interesting considering second generation migrant writers who have grown up in worlds that are contesting against each other in terms of understanding ‘what is standard’ in language use. As such, transcultural creativity for the participants may not necessarily be considered ‘creative’ if it is too close to the ‘standard’.

Though it is never specified by participants what the exact depth of ‘context’ and ‘culture’ mean, participant responses reveal, to some extent what many other studies within world Englishes have yet to break into—what readers consider to be the creative property of writers, whether they are bilingual, trilingual, transcultural or otherwise. Furthermore, the results show that something is considered creative if it is received, either in the intended form or in a subjectively interpreted but still meaningful manner. At this particular point of discussion, there is a need to highlight that such a process becomes even more meaningful in light of the pluralistic nature of English at present, the globally shared nature of the common tongue that is adapting to various locales and then being shared again, and the advent of the internet where everyday individuals are learning other languages and varieties of languages that shape their own linguistic repertoire(s). As such, implied questions arose from participant responses, such as: how to define the line of what is creative in language use and to what extent is something creative more than a surface interpretation of language choice. In other

words, what does the language being used capture and conceptualise without breaking the flow? Transcultural creativity becomes somewhat dependent on who the readers are, who the writers are writing for, and what their intentions might be. If something is not communicated or shared with the audience—this varies between groups of readers and the writers themselves—then it might not be ‘creative’. However, if readers can still develop their own interpretations, despite not sharing or fully processing the intended meaning being communicated by the writer, then it may still be considered transculturally creative.

Chapter 7 Transcultural creativity as meaning making

7.1 Overview: Same words, different meanings

This chapter takes a closer look at how some of the cultural conceptualisations that appear in the selected texts are interpreted agentively and cooperatively by participants. New meanings naturally develop when the writer introduces new or different meanings of a word into their writing. Such a strategy may be unconscious on the part of the writer, and as noted in section 6.3, it may be a cooperative fracture between the reader and writer. Nonetheless, participants perceive the creativeness of second generation migrant writing and how their interpretation contributes to the meaning making process. In the space between the writer and the audience, as guided by the author, the reader is given the chance to develop new understandings of familiar words. Thus, this chapter examines the presentation and reception of culturally specific concepts through the second generation migrants' transcultural creativity.

7.2 Interpretability of cultural conceptualisations

Yes. Language evolves through creative use and giving words multiple meanings – QSP2

Yes it is creative because different meanings of words are created – QSP13

I do think it's creative, as it is applying a different conceptualisation or understanding to the word (bringing a new/different meaning to the word) – QSP19

Yes, I agree. Because when people from different background using the same word but express various meaning, the language will lead to the misunderstandings, which means new things appeared – QSP35

As the above quotes from participants' responses note, creative use of language and the way it is interpreted is key to language evolution. Many questionnaire-survey participants point out that the content of the excerpts could or did lead to the excerpt being 'creative'. Some consider the creativity to be context dependent and potentially relied on both the reader and the writer sharing the same

concepts in order to be understood. Despite not sharing, participants feel it is still creative when they interpret within their own frames of understanding. This chapter also demonstrates how the participants' degrees of heterogeneous distribution of cultural conceptualisations contributes to understanding transcultural creativity as meaning making. The following sections discuss the specific cultural conceptualisations: GHOST, SHOE, OLDER (or AGE PERCEPTIONS), ASIAN STEREOTYPE, and GENDER and PHYSICAL AFFECTION.

7.2.1 'Ghost town' and 'old white ghosts'

Excerpt 1

In contrast to Hong Kong – a throbbing, stinking metropolis of concrete, where people hung out their laundry thirty storeys up – Caloundra was a ghost town. Literally everyone was white (Benjamin Law, *The Family Law*, p.22)

Excerpt 2

And we grow old, they'll do what they do in this country and cart us off to old people's homes!
And we'll be stuck with the old white ghosts (Alice Pung, *Unpolished Gem*, pp. 148-9)

GHOST was present in both of Pung's books as well as Law's. In Excerpt 1, 'ghost' is used by the narrator whereas in Excerpt 2, 'ghost' is used by the narrator's mother in a non-English conversation the narrator observes. From questionnaire-survey participants, it becomes very clear that GHOST equates to either 'empty town', 'a state of existence', or metaphorically 'old people'. Only 10% of responses for both Excerpts 1 and 2 identify that the use of GHOST is a specifically Chinese cultural concept or pertains to that understanding. In addition, that did not include the 11% of responses that identify the use of the lexis to play on both meanings of the word yet did not demonstrate the source of a specific cultural schema.

7.2.1.1 *GHOST* in 'ghost town'

Usually a ghost town is thought to be deserted – QSP3, E1

The city was empty – QSP6, E1

As a dead town, where there is no activity – QSP13, E1

Abandoned, little remaining – QSP14, E1

Quiet, lifeless – QSP15, E1

A ghost town means a place that is lacking of people and prosperity – QSP18, E1

In the context of Quote 1, 'ghost' is used as an adjective connoting lifelessness, the opposite of vibrant – QSP28, E1

The most common conceptualisation of the use of 'ghost' from participants is GHOST TOWN AS AN EMPTY, BARREN OR DESERTED PLACE. 'Empty', 'lifeless', 'deserted', 'lacking in prosperity' is associated with the collocation, undoubtedly drawn from dominating conceptualisations of towns being abandoned due to a variety of reasons such as natural disasters or human intervention. It prompts the image of a town with buildings that look abandoned, perhaps devastated by disaster or hollow with the lack of human presence. The streets are empty, possibly with the remains of what used to be a busy hub of activity. Even the image of a tumbleweed blown by in the wind to emphasise the desertedness of the town. This image is instantiated in the above responses from participants in reaction to Excerpt 1. The notion of ghost town is well known, still present today as evident by ghost towns such as Collingwood, Queensland (abandonment due to economic shift) or Varosha, Cyprus (human intervention due to political reasons). However, the juxtaposition of the second sentence 'Literally everyone was white' suggests a more culturally specific conceptualisation of GHOST.

QSP22, E1: *Well initially I only credited the one message that was being communicated, which was that Caloundra was a quieter, emptier environment. But followed by that last sentence, it almost satirically points out that the majority of the populace is Caucasian*

Some participants thought beyond the 'traditional', 'expected' conceptual norm of the 'ghost' in English's 'ghost town':

QSP33, E1: *Something mysterious; but in this case, it refers to Foreign Devil or foreigners, usually white*

QSP11, E1: *Since I'm Chinese, the literal translation for white person is ghost person, it would mean white person*

Both participants bluntly associate the use of 'ghost' with 'being white' or as QSP33 wrote, 'foreigner' or 'foreign devil'. Other lexis associated with GHOST, according to the participants, that is beyond the conceptualisation of GHOST TOWN AS AN EMPTY, BARREN OR DESERTED PLACE include "pale" (QSP1, E1) and "as pertaining to race, and a lack of POC¹⁰" (QSP2, E1).

QSP4, E1: *Ghost doesn't mean the spirit of a dead person. Rather it took its cultural meaning of white to emphasise everyone is white in town*

QSP8, E1: *Less populated, less diversity, quiet. Maybe even suggesting that it conforms to white people stereotypes*

QSP19, E1: *Not as an empty town, but as a town filled with 'white' Caucasians*

These participants (QSP: 1, 2, 4, 8, and 19) find greater meaning associated with the use of 'ghost' in 'ghost town'. These specific participants are from a Chinese background, except for QSP2 who claimed a Filipino-American identity and QSP8 who identified as South-Asian. QSP19 even emphasises their awareness of the cultural schema in their response with the use of quotation marks.

7.2.1.2 GHOST in 'old homes'

Probably still white person – QSP11, E2

Ghost has a Cantonese reference in this case, referring to a foreigner – QSP33, E2

In Excerpt 2, GHOST refers to people as opposed to the characteristics of a population. In contrast to Excerpt 1, Excerpt 2 does include an immediate adjective to indicate further information—"old white ghosts"—however participants responded as though it did not include any juxtaposing or additional information to indicate any dual meanings.

¹⁰ POC refers to the initialism for 'people of colour'

The schema of GHOST is still recognised by participants as rooted in the Chinese-Cantonese cultural conceptualisation. QSP28 who is referenced earlier (see Chapter 6) on creativeness in interpretation and context, gets to the root of this cultural conceptualisation:

QSP28, E2: *Cantonese speakers refer to white Caucasians/Europeans as 'gwai lou' (i.e. ghost dude/fella).*

QSP28 draws on the Cantonese conceptualisation of GHOST and 'GWAI LOU' which they eloquently and succinctly describe as 'ghost dude/fella'. Thus, for Excerpt 1 and Excerpt 2, the use of 'ghost' in the text is rooted in GWAI LOU, which is sourced from two domains. One, a term used in dominance towards people of 'white' origin, possibly European, during a period when the arrival of foreigners could be negatively associated with acts of invasion or colonisation. Two, the cultural belief of 'ghosts' as physical beings, capable of influencing the actions of individuals, thus causing people to wary of ghosts (Wolf & Chan, 2016). For those from Hong Kong, the cultural understanding of GHOST, presents these beings as ubiquitous (Wolf & Chan, 2016).

In contrast, the use of 'ghost' here is also associated by participants with "*old people nearing death*" (QSP2, E2), "*people still alive, but no longer 'living'*" (QSP3, E2), "*elderly people, unresponsive, boring*" (QSP8, E2), "*lifeless*" (QSP15, E2), "*pale, aging, wrinkly, sagging*" (QSP19, E2), and "*people in the old home are only pieces of what they used to be*" (QSP29, E2). The participants show a natural response in understanding this excerpt by interpreting in terms of nearly dead, dying, or metaphorical representations of the humans being discussed, in other words, 'ghosts of themselves'. This is a consistent response from the participants. The other consistent result in response to 'ghost' in Excerpt 2 more so than in Excerpt 1, is a supernatural understanding. QSP10, 25, 26, and 41, for example, take the use of 'ghost' to literally mean 'spirit' or 'mythical being'.

QSP10, E2: *Means the people died in the old people's home*

QSP25, E2: *A mythical being*

QSP26, E2: *Spirits of people who can't move on*

QSP41, E2: *Ghost also is any interesting word because it's very spiritual and because there is no clear or promised image given to us*

7.2.1.3 'White' GHOST

An implied reference to white people, rather than implicitly describing them as such and also implies a level of 'death' and perhaps, the hauntings of the past – QSP7, E1

The use of word play, ghost and white – QSP16, E1

It is used to mean empty and sparse, but also it's a clever play on words to illustrate the whiteness of the new community – QSP17, E1

Illustrates the age (nearing death) as well as color of the residents – QSP17, E2

The culturally embedded concept of GHOST when used in such English-language texts is thus understood as more than the familiar 'English' conceptualisations—whether it be British, American, or the most local variety of the selected texts, Australian English. The clever manipulation of the author encourages readers to read beyond the norm, of which most of the participants respond accordingly. Participants who do not share the Chinese-Cantonese conceptualisation of GHOST interpret the passage according to their own conceptualisations. Some participants keyed into the author's clever manipulation and interpret the excerpt in the expected manner. Others develop additional meanings, thus demonstrating the flexibility and elasticity of the English language, as well as the depth of English to convey and attempt to convey complex cultural meanings.

Therefore, for second generation migrant writing, there is a shift in conceptualisation. Where for first generation migrants who are writing in English(es), one might say they potentially write in their own varieties of Englishes (subjective and variable however, on what they identify with), while those who have lived in a context for generations (thus exceeding the first to third generation migrant status), one can say that they are writing in the local dominant variety of English. Therefore, for the first generation, it may be safe (but not limited to) to read their works from the perspective of their variety, and for the second category from the local variety. For second generation, however, this is not a simple case as they are shifting between varieties, between languages, and drawing from their many and potentially complex linguistic repertoires which are being transferred through the way the decisions they make in their language choices.

For the first group, categorising GHOST would perhaps only contain categories such as GHOST AS CAUCASIAN PERSON or GHOST AS FOREIGN DEVIL, and draw on schemas such as JOSS PAPER, SPIRIT PAPER, etc., as suggested by scholars (Wolff & Chan, 2016). For the second group, conceptualisations of GHOST TOWN, GHOSTS AS HUMAN BEING (which is shared in differing degrees between groups),

lifelessness, what remains behind, etc., may dominate if we take the first group as from a general (for example) identity of ‘Chinese’ while the second group as being ‘Australian’. For second generation migrants, these categories evolve, merge and overlap, broadening semantics on ‘familiar’ concepts. ‘Ghosts’ becomes synonymous for both ‘empty’ and ‘white’. The metaphor of ‘ghost’ for people of ‘white’ skin tone emerges. However, ‘ghost’ potentially loses (depending on usage) the heavier, negative sociocultural historical political schema of GWAI LOU while still maintaining root conceptualisations of GWAI/GUI, the conceptualisation of ghosts as spiritual beings that is similar to popular conceptualisations in American Hollywood media, but culturally embedded in Chinese folklore.

7.2.2 ‘Shoe’

Excerpt 5

‘Look, if you don’t call him, I think *I* will, ‘cause you are so stubborn! You put my dad to shame! I thought he had a case of the inflexibles, but you? There’s this Arabic saying my mum always tells my dad when he’s really stubborn. She says his mind is like a shoe.’

‘A shoe?’

‘Yep,’ I shrug. ‘Lost in translation, I guess.’

– Randa Abdel-Fattah, *DMHLBIT*, p.272

In Excerpt 5, the cultural conceptualisation of ‘shoe’ is raised by the main character, Amal, when she uses an Arabic saying to explain the situation. Narratively, the use of the saying in its second generation styled translation, adds a third dimension to the character’s personality and showcases her status as SECOND GENERATION MIGRANT AS LIMITED BILINGUAL. The use of the saying is particularly interesting, as a surface reading of this excerpt provides a fair but uninformed understanding, not so different from the character’s own claim of ‘lost in translation’. However, for those who are informed, the use of ‘shoe’ in relation to the saying, is very much culturally embedded.

Shoes have a very specific meaning, according to cultural informants (C1, C2, and C3), that is generally associated with negative images and events. It can be used derogatorily in comparison to potentially mean not functioning, irrational, and stubborn. A common example cited is the shoe

throwing incident with former US President Bush. Kalliny (2011) notes that “throwing a shoe at someone in the Arab society is considered one of the most humiliating actions for the shoe receiving individual” (p.69). To be hit by a shoe is considered the most derogatory of insults in Middle Eastern culture (Ibrahim, 2009), and shapes the cultural conceptualisation of SHOE AS INSULT. In Arab culture, the cultural schema of SHOE constructs it as a negative and forbidden object from holy and domestic spaces because they are perceived as unclean as the object you cover your feet with—the part of your body closest to the ground and earth (Ibrahim, 2009). The use of the shoe in former President Bush’s case, is also played at “different levels of subversive humour, including the symbolic act of forcing George Bush (considered one of the most powerful men in the world) to bow to a shoe” (Ibrahim, 2009, p. 219). This is the culturally constructed concept behind the lost in translation saying used by Amal in Excerpt 5.

As nearly all participants are not from an Arabic or Muslim background, nor showed that they share understanding of this conceptualisation, there were no expected results on how this might be interpreted. This is very much in line with Amal’s own lack of understanding. Although the use of shoe here is more negative than derogatory, Amal and the character with whom she is interacting, Mrs Vasilis of Greek ethnicity, downplay this as lost in translation. Interestingly, although most participants of the questionnaire-survey could not specifically pinpoint an in-depth cultural understanding of ‘*shoe*’ in this context, they are able to interpret and interpret appropriately. Participants either show only comprehensibility of the text or both comprehensibility and interpretability of the text. For example:

QSP2, E5: *That the friend refuses to budge or get over his pride*

QSP14, E5: *Someone is overly stubborn and refuses to make a phone call*

QSP21, E5: *The person is interpreting that their companion is as stubborn as their father but their description is getting lost in translation*

QSP23, E5: *This person is obviously strong headed and doesn’t like to listen to reason*

Furthermore, for some of the other participants (noted below), they are also able to show how they relate the target domain to the source domain through their interpretation. This can be seen in the below examples:

QSP11, E5: *Perhaps the idea that shoes only fit on one foot and are a specific size*

QSP19, E5: *There must be a connection between being ‘inflexible’ and having a ‘mind like a shoe’ to represent stiffness or stubbornness in a person’s attitude*

QSP24, E5: *The use of a shoe to serve as a metaphor for stubbornness produces some interesting parallels such as a shoe's purpose, it's role and the inflexible, repetitive nature of the action associated with it*

QSP29, E5: *I interpret 'his mind is like a shoe' as, without having the flexibility, the dad isn't going anywhere. He's stubborn, and therefore stuck in his thoughts, just as a shoe, without something to move it, is stuck*

Participants recognise the link between the image and the idea, and they draw understanding from the way the author phrases the character's speech, associating "inflexibles" with the image of a "shoe". For example, QSP19 associates "stiffness" and "stubbornness" and QSP24 assigns similar adjectives to the shoe's "purpose". QSP29 goes further to recognise the role of a shoe as moveable only by external force, hence stubborn and inflexible.

These results show two points: the first fulfils a common understanding of schema, in that regardless of the participants' interest in reading or writing, they will develop their own interpretations to fill in gaps they do not understand. Whether this understanding is in line with the author's intentions is of little concern for some participants (for example: QSP 3, 23, and 27). For the participant responses above, to some degree, their understanding is guided by the author. Abdel-Fattah's words shape the participants' interpretations of the cultural conceptualisation, and through the collective effort between the writer and the reader, a new understanding emerges that differs though touches on the more in-depth culturally constructed concept outlined earlier in this section.

QSP3, E5: *The author is very creative in setting us in the character's world again, and uses language effectively to tell us a lot about them and their family in just a few lines*

QSP23, E5: *I'm not sure I understand the idea of 'lost in translation'. I sort of understand the stubbornness of the shoe, since it's difficult at times to get shoes on your feet*

QSP27, E5: *What little dialogue there was showed a lot about the speakers, even without the whole context*

Abdel-Fattah also confirmed in her interview:

AI-RAF: *there has the implication of a leather shoe. It's hard, you can't twist it, you can't bend it, yeah, and it's stubborn. [...] It's funny, because shoes come up so much in Arabic humour as well, like the whole thing about the ethnic mum throwing her shoe at the kids, and then the guy who threw his shoe at George Bush, it's like the ultimate degradation*

The second point, that leads on from the first point is that the author's creativeness allows these participants to respond in this way. For the participants to respond similarly—though without the 'degradation', with QSP25 having the closest response—this shows that Abdel-Fattah demonstrates a high level of *metacultural writing competence* (Xu, 2017). In portraying her character, there is awareness for variation, explanation, and negotiation with the reader, though it is to some degree present in the dialogue, this is also occurring within a creative context. Although the explanation is not an explicit directive, it is implied through the contextualisation of the speech, and it would be considered understood when readers respond either with their own further interpretations or unconsciously reflective of the author's intentions. This is more clearly shown in QSP23's response above.

Furthermore, there is a contrast in Abdel-Fattah's response compared to the cultural informants and research-gathered understanding of 'shoe' from an Arabic perspective. The understanding resonates but seems less weighty in Abdel-Fattah's hand in comparison. Despite associating 'shoe' with '*degradation*', she also associated it with '*Arabic humour*'. This also shows that the second generation migrant will make use of their linguistic and cultural heritages and convey these in a way that resonates with their known and unknown audience. Although in Excerpt 5, the cultural concept seems to lose meaning in translation, the excerpt also provides new ways of looking at familiar situations, new ways of describing them, and new meanings associated with the concept when used in English.

7.2.3 'I older than you!'

Excerpt 7

I've had enough. 'Serves you right!' I suddenly yell, jumping up from my seat. 'You don't deserve her!'

'Amal!' my dad shouts.

Leila's mum looks at me in shock. 'Why you talk like this to me?' I older than you! You show manners!'

– Randa Abdel-Fattah, *DMHLBIT*, p.294

Age and being ‘elder’ plays a dominant role in some cultures regarding how individuals are addressed and communicated with (Sung, 2001). This is notable in Excerpt 7 in the dialogue that occurs between the main character (Amal) and the mother of her friend (Leila’s mum). How ‘old’ and ‘elder’ is conceptualised and what schemas stem from these conceptualisations has been studied at various points in the scholarly literature (see Benczes, Burridge, Sharifian, & Allan, 2017; Rudwick, 2008; Sung 2001; Xu & Fang, forthcoming). From this excerpt, we focus on the fact that the character and story are centred on *Arabic* in English, and as such this section explores what the reference to ‘older’ here conceptualises. However, it proceeds then to how this excerpt is received by the participants, and where their interpretations lead them in negotiating with the cultural conceptualisation they encounter.

What is particularly interesting is the following response:

QSP7, E7: *The 'I'm older than you, show some respect' argument is fairly consistent across most cultures and nations.*

Their approach takes into account a surface level acknowledgement that this excerpt is “*consistent across most cultures and nations*”. This implies the AGE EQUALS RESPECT equation and though it may be true that it exists in most cultures and nations, it is the degree to which it influences interaction that may differ and be somewhat inconsistent.

Rudwick (2008) notes that age is an important social variable in light of the concept of ‘respect’, which changes and develops with every generation. The “norms of respect are by no means static and bound; they are both fluid and fluctuating and, perhaps even more importantly, context-dependent” (Rudwick, 2008, p. 154). In Excerpt 7, the AGE EQUALS RESPECT and OLDER AGE TRUMPS YOUNGER AGE conceptualisation results in certain expectations that align with cultural metaphors of ELDER PERSON AS AUTHORITATIVE FIGURE and ELDER PERSON AS RESPECTED INDIVIDUAL. Leila’s mum is evidently the older member of this dialogue, so when Amal, who is her junior by many years—equating to the same age as Leila and therefore situated in a younger generation—speaks against her, her immediate reaction is on the offensive: “*Why you talk like this to me? I older than you! You show manners!*”

The participants’ responses relevant to the notion of TRANSCULTURAL CREATIVITY AS MEANING MAKING are categorised as the following: 1) participants identified the specific culture or a familiar culture, 2) participants defined what ‘older’ meant to them, and 3) what their expectations of the cultural role of being ‘older’. This process of understanding differs slightly to the previous subsection where many were unfamiliar with an *Arabic* conceptualisation of ‘shoe’, thus drawing

meaning and interpretation from the figurative language itself. This is also somewhat similar to the conceptualisation of ‘ghost’ where unless you understood, juxtaposing or collocating lexis are used (if recognised) to understand the excerpt. As for Excerpt 7 above, as QSP7(E7) points out, this is a concept that seems to be present in most cultures and nations, and therefore, it infers a sense of relatability and interpretability.

Foremost, there are three participants who identify the target culture being referenced that is not specifically noted in Excerpt 7 (but most likely inferred from the other excerpts listed in the questionnaire-survey).

QSP8, E7: *it's showing that in Arab culture, you aren't allowed to argue with an elder person, even if they are wrong, because it is considered rude.*

QSP17, E7: *the hierarchy is important in this culture.*

QSP39, E7: *she should show her respect and have a good manner to someone who is elder than her, that should be a traditional Chinese culture.*

Not only did QSP8(E7) highlight the culture in a rather general sense, they elaborate somewhat based on their analysis of the excerpt provided to them. Although all participants to the questionnaire-survey claimed no knowledge of Arabic language (or any of the dialects) or culture, paired with the knowledge of the character’s background the participants could comprehend. According to Kalliny and Gentry (2007), in Arab culture there is high respect for the elderly and parents, it would be disrespectful to make derogatory statements about deceased relatives or to show disrespect to one’s parents. Arabic culture (keeping in mind the different group variations) is a highly collective society that values group and family. There is also a strong sense of commitment and attachment to members of families and in-groups, and to the relationships interwoven (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002). Thus, in the case of our main character, Amal and her apparent disrespect to Leila’s mum, to which Amal’s father scolds her for, we see the formation of relationships between the three individuals focussed in Excerpt 7. Amal and Leila’s mum are connected because of her friendship with Leila therefore Leila’s mum and Amal’s father are connected because of the same reason. Amal, as the younger individual, should show the Arabic respect to her friend’s mother. It is particularly interesting how both QSP17 and QSP39 respond to this excerpt, with the results of QSP8’s response.

QSP17(E7)’s response is less specific, focussing on the presence of a hierarchy in the target culture. Again, this is familiar to a variety of cultures. In Arabic culture, the high significance given to family and group members are marked by the hierarchy of relationships, and in some sub-Arabic

cultures, such as Moroccan, children are taught to “obey and show respect for elders and authority figures, socializing them to a hierarchy of relationships in the family” (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2002, p. 48). QSP39(E7)’s response is the most interesting as they not only highlight the relation of AGE EQUALS RESPECT but ELDER AS OLDER THAN EGO. They further relate this to what they know—“*traditional Chinese culture*” (QSP39, E7). We see an example of this in Pung’s (2006) *UG*, when the main character is being told a story about being filial by her mother:

My mother teaches me to obey my elders, and I grow up with filial piety permeating through every pore, so that when we have dinner with my grandmother, no one ever starts eating until she picks up her chopsticks. My grandmother sits at the head of the table, and I am always seated on her right-hand side. Whenever an unsuspecting soul picks up their chopsticks prematurely, she turns to me. “You know, Agheare, when your uncles and father were small, whenever they picked up their old chopsticks before the adults did, or whenever they did not hold their bowls in their hands properly, I would say, ‘No manners hah?’ and they would plead for me to teach them. ‘Ma,’ your uncle would say, ‘Give me a whack over the knuckles if you catch me doing that again!’” (p. 25)

In this passage, we see the AGE EQUALS RESPECT equation apparent in the attitudes to what is considered good ‘manners’. Xu and Fang (forthcoming) note that table manners—for example, not picking up the chopsticks before elders—are a representative example of ‘filial piety’ in the family context that indicate behavioural and attitudinal respect. This is not dissimilar from the way Leila’s mother demands respect with her words—the implied required action is that those who are younger should not speak in that way to someone who is older than them.

7.2.3.1 AGE EQUALS RESPECT

A glimpse of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) of the entries for ‘old’ (OED, n.d.-b), ‘older’ (OED, n.d.-c), and ‘elder’ (OED, n.d.-a) states that ‘older’ is someone who is: 1) advanced in age, 2) lived/existed for a long time, 3) possesses characteristics of maturity and advanced age. In the case of ‘elder’, this can refer specifically to someone who is born oldest of all their siblings, though this is also more narrowly applied to members of a family or whom possess a familial relationship, thus designating the *elder* between them. ‘Elder’ too, according to OED can designate *parents* and

ancestors or those who had lived formerly. Many of the participants' responses align with the above definitions such as:

QSP1, E7: Literally older in terms of age

QSP5, E7: Senior, more experience, more honoured.

QSP7, E7: That this character is an older sibling or elder.

QSP26, E7: Leila's mom is at least 3 decades older than the main character?

QSP28, E7: Perhaps of an older generation, or of a higher social echelon so as to deserve respect?

QSP32, E7: Exactly that. An older person, elder, and elders are to be respected or so the saying goes.

The above participants (QSP: 1, 5, 7, 26, 28, 32) all indicate that being 'older' referred to age, with one or two suggesting other additional provisions, such as QSP28. As such, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background, these participants have some conceptualisation of who they would define as older—i.e. '*senior*', '*older sibling or elder*', or '*older generation*'. However, while the above responses of QSP28, and QSP32 suggest that someone who is 'older' either "*deserve[s] respect*", "*to be respected*", or "*demand[s] respect*", there were a few participants (QSP4, 15, 24, and 37) who were more critical in their conceptualisation of AGE EQUALS RESPECT.

QSP4, E7: the authority

QSP15, E7: Means wiser

QSP24, E7: An exertion of will upon a situation that is disagreeable to one of the characters involved [...] Seniority and the expectation of deference based purely on acceptable responses.

QSP37, E7: better and more powerful

Xu and Fang (forthcoming) suggested that as generations shift, so too do the conceptualisations of cultural schemas. For participants (QSP4, 15, 24, and 37), this also seems to be the case. Even QSP32 sounds sceptical when they address the concept of 'older' when saying "*to be respected or so the saying goes*". QSP15 is the most benign, simply associating 'older' as "*mean[ing] wiser*", suggesting AGE EQUALS WISDOM. However, QSP4 is blunt in his response, literally associating 'older' with only one word of significance: "*authority*". QSP37 also implies a hierarchy of power, and quality—though the quality of what authority is not clarified. On the other hand, QSP24's response conceptualises

someone ‘older’ as an individual who has the power to force a particular situation, who is definitely older either in age or power (hence seniority, unclarified, but could be associated with a position or specific age distance) with the “*expectation of deference based purely on acceptable responses*”. Therefore, suggesting that there are ‘acceptable’ responses, as in the case of Excerpt 7 where Amal speaks out against the older person in the room—an act not considered an ‘acceptable’ response by Leila’s mother. This becomes more evident in the participants’ responses in the following section, that capture what they believe to be the cultural roles expected in Excerpt 7.

7.2.3.2 AGE DEMANDS RESPECT

Respect your elders – QSP2, E7

People use the excuse of being older, to get away with anything, especially when they have no counter-argument. They expect respect based on nothing but their age – QSP8, E7

a child disobeying her parents – QSP13, E7

A young person challenging someone of an older generation where their values are deeply rooted in their cultural norms (deserved respect correlative to one's age)[...] One's relative age deems the amount of respect deserved and the amount of respect they must give to others – QSP19, E7

Age difference that demands respect. So, not just one or two years, but an elder and someone definitively younger in an interaction – QSP21, E7

The culture that Leila's mother hails from clearly believes that age and respect are interchangeable – QSP22, E7

I see the situation as an adolescent being defensive of another, being angry for something they had to her, and being scolded for speaking up in an unkind manner for it [...] I interpret the pointing out of being older to mean because Leila's mum is older than she is deserving of respect when being addressed – QSP29, E7

For the above participants, the correlation between ‘being older’ and ‘being respected’ crosses the line of ‘filial respect’ to ‘sense of authority or expectation of deference’. QSP2 is short in his responses, but his three words instantiate the image of a child being told to ‘respect your elders’ by a

parent, someone older who is ‘unhappy’ with the actions or words made by the child. QSP13, QSP19, QSP29, and QSP35 have interpreted Excerpt 7 in relation to what they know. What they see is a child ‘disobeying’ her parents (QSP13), possibly ‘challenging’ (QSP19), while defending her friend and not showing the appropriate amount of respect. QSP21 notes that this excerpt highlights that the age difference demands respect, and that the elder has a reasonably large gap with the younger. QSP8 and QSP22 however, present more critical commentary, particularly towards how they perceive this excerpt. Critical in the sense that the observation is drawn by participants who do not share the same schemas as those presented in the text. But also, they note how the character herself is pushing the boundaries of what *is* expected of her as a daughter brought up with an Arabic conceptualisation of respect and as a child growing up in Australian society, where this conceptualisation may not be shared to the same extent. This can be seen in the participants’ responses, in how they read and interpret the use of ‘respect’ in this instance and how the individual roles are conceptualised.

7.2.4 ‘Straight As’ Asian

Excerpt 9

Bum-part hair and straight As – Benjamin Law, *the Family Law*, p.36

The reactions to Excerpt 9 is generally mixed. In brief, some ‘got’ it, but others didn’t. In looking at this excerpt, the conceptualisation is of your stereotypical nerdy or geeky looking Asian who had the typical bum-part hairstyle and scored an average of As on their grades. As such this is the image that is conveyed to most of the participants, a few examples are:

QSP7, E9: *The character being described as a studious person, known generally as a geek or nerd*

QSP24, E9: *Possibly the parting of the hair resembles the posterior with a central dividing line with bunches of hair on either side. Straight A's is more familiar, indicating a possibly Asian fixation with good grades.*

QSP32, E9: *A nerd? Someone who's hair parting is shaped like a bum or their bum has hair? Straight A's is pretty self explanatory.*

QSP41, E9: *Law writing 'bum-part hair' and 'straight As' already gives me an idea on who this character is and what kind of person he is describing*

However, what seemed like a natural collection of words and collocations, are not as easily recognisable to all participants. They either had no clue, or they had a different interpretation:

QSP6, E9: *I have no clue.*

QSP9, E9: *I don't understand it*

QSP18, E9: *Bum-part hair could be messy and straight as could be smarter look hair.*

QSP21, E9: *This is the description of someone who sticks to the basics in fashion and is more focused on their studies*

QSP23, E9: *Maybe short, straight hair?*

What is interesting in the above responses (QSP6, 9, 18, 21, 23, and 26) is that from QSP18 onwards, the responses demonstrate more inventive interpretations. The visual description of 'bum-part hair' is described in a variety of ways, for instance, QSP18 takes the whole sentence, including the 'straight As' as a complete description of the hairstyle—that it can be messy but being 'straight As' could equate to looking smarter. QSP21 associates the hairstyle to 'basics in fashion', while QSP23 is unsure in their answer, questions whether the description might in fact be related to 'short, straight hair'. Below, QSP7 (E9) sums up the perceptions to this excerpt quite clearly:

QSP7, E9: *Yes, this is creative language, as the meanings of the words require the necessary context and cultural knowledge to interpret what this character is really like as a person (In this case, what people might call the nerdy type).*

In the context of *The Family Law*, Excerpt 9 instantiates the conceptualisations of ALL ASIANS ARE SMART and SMART AS NERDY, SMART AS GEEKY. What is revealed throughout the whole novel and what is known about the main character, is that he *is* Asian, specifically Cantonese-Chinese Asian, and for a period of his growing up in Australia, he did have the expectation of good grades. It is a stereotype that he is familiar with, as he notes in his interview:

AI-BL: *bum part hair and straight As, sounds like that could have been the title of my memoir really. Yeah, and I think that's just like giving you a visual image of what I looked like as a teenager and also those cultural expectations required of us [...] kind of a visual and a cultural stereotype of Chinese people, because that's what I did my PhD on, for me, I'm actually really interested in leaning into cliché and stereotype,*

because my dad worked in a Chinese take away restaurant, and I was kind of an obedient Asian kid to some extent, and my mum is a little bit of a mad Chinese mum, but I think people cease being stereotypes and clichés when they're complex and at the centre of their stories because let's face it, lots of migrant parents, they work really hard to make sure their kids get educated, to get straight As

This is what makes responses from the questionnaire-survey particularly interesting. So while Law is feeding the readers a particular idea, as we have already seen throughout this chapter, participants are more than capable of drawing their own conclusions when more often than not they do not share or cannot claim any knowledge to the cultural conceptualisations being evoked. QSP3 and QSP26's responses take the cake in creative interpretations, as can be seen below.

QSP3, E9: *Hair parted right down the middle, and a straight person, but spoken in illusion to cursing.*

QSP26, E9: *Hair that parts and is greasy and unwashed like a hobo would have, yet this person is intelligent.*

QSP3 visualises the 'bum-part hair' easily enough, however, their interpretation of 'straight As' takes a whole new level of meaning. They interpreted 'straight As' as *straight as*. In the sense of 'being straight' or 'heterosexual'. This is worth noting because without knowing how this chapter in *The Family Law* (in which Excerpt 9 is included) began, QSP3 picks up on this play on words that could allude to Law's sexual orientation. As for QSP26, they correlate 'bum-part hair' with the hair of a hobo—in this case, they have interpreted 'bum' in the definition of 'someone who is homeless'. For those who are not included nor share the same cultural schema, their first port of call is a concept that they are more familiar with. In this case, we have the reference to domains of sexuality and homelessness. The former has merit as when one is in the know, it is well known that Law is homosexual and his memoir is not only an autofiction of his growing up *Asian* in Australia, but an exploration of his sexuality in addition to his growing up Asian in Australia. For a participant to comprehend that hidden not necessarily unintentional message, is worth noting. More so when Law evidently enjoys engaging creatively with his use of language—as noted in his play on 'ghost'.

7.2.5 'It was an *Aussie* thing': Gender and physical affection

Excerpt 4

The Cambodians have a saying: “A girl is like white cotton wool-once dirtied, it can never be clean again. A boy is like a gem – the more you polish it, the brighter it shines.” – Alice Pung, *Unpolished Gem*, p.216

Excerpt 3

I had met some of his female friends – girls with names like Cathy and Gemma and Louisa – girls who gave him big bear-hugs and kisses when they met. It was an Aussie thing, I decided. It was all innocent standard practice and it didn’t mean a thing. *They* didn’t have *issues* with physical contact like we did – Alice Pung, *Unpolished Gem*, p.249

Excerpt 10

Over the course of twenty years, my mother’s body underwent a remarkable and cruel transformation, from a petite, small-waisted Chinese-Malaysian beauty to a pumping sweating baby machine that spat out five children in quick, semi-automatic succession. In some mammals, I think this many children is referred to as a *litter* – Benjamin Law, *The Family Law*, p. 10

Participant responses construct a particular conceptualisation of GENDER ROLES, that is similarly approached in the way as conceptualisations of ‘older’ in section 7.2.3. For this chapter, the three excerpts from the questionnaire-survey have been grouped together in order to discuss the data on the participants’ conceptualisations of gender and physical affection.

From the dominating cultures of the authors and the setting of the books GENDER ROLES are conceptualised both similarly while different in their unique cultural way. The first is the Chinese conceptualisation (including Cantonese), the second is the Arabic-Muslim cultural conceptualisation (though this is segregated and dependent on the ethnic culture), and Australian conceptualisation. The Chinese cultural conceptualisation instantiated, is the expected role of each gender, including, but not limited to, the expectation of a wife to be obedient to their husbands or daughters to their fathers. There is an expectation of submission and dependency from a woman to their significant man, which they return with respect to the older women of the family, i.e. mothers, grandmothers, etc (Girod, 2017). Girod (2017) however, also argues that though the divide between genders has lessened, Chinese men are still expected to earn the higher wage, achieve more at schools, and gain promotions in work more often than Chinese women.

Similarly, Randa Abdel-Fattah's depiction of GENDER ROLES is prominently outlined in her second book *TTIHAM* (more so than her first, *DMHLBIT*) as a third dimension to the book's intentions. For example:

'I am. Not to mention that drugs can be put in drinks so that girls are easily violated. And you want me to send my youngest daughter out as prey? What has got into you, Jamilah?'

'I'm so sick of being different...Why does Bilal get to do what he wants?'

'He doesn't. You know I disapprove of his lifestyle. But what can I do? I can't control him like I used to. He's a young man now. I can only scream so much.'

'But if Shereen got up to what he did, it would be different. And she's older. So age has nothing to do with it.'

'Girls have more to lose than boys.'

'That's a double standard!'

'Nobody said society was fair.'

(Conversation between Jamie and her father, *TTIHABM*, Abdel-Fattah, p.30)

In a conversation with her father, Jamie questions the expectations of the gender roles assigned to her by society and not what she deems as logical. The father disapproves but is reluctant to reprimand his son further for his choices, as the roles have shifted. Though his son may be his son, he has grown into a 'young man' and thus a man in his own right, who controls his own future. Whereas, much like the Cambodian saying above in Excerpt 4, the father's comment about girls having more to lose than boys, evoke the more tentative roles of women. From an Arabic-Muslim perspective, there is the conceptualisation of the GENDER SEGREGATION schema (Abu-Hilal, Aldhafri, Al-Bahrani, & Kamali, 2016). Gender and the sense of self is considered primary to the conceptualisation of one's social role and its interconnectedness to the social system, and as such, both men and women have different roles and expectations (Abu-Hilal et al., 2016).

When it comes to immigrant Arabic families with young adults who are growing up in a Western country, the parents often feel a lack of control, particularly in mediating between their traditional cultural values of female propriety and those of the host country (Abu-Laban, 1979). A study of Arab-Canadian families found that "fear of losing 'complete control' makes parents prone to increasing tolerance of the son's behaviour with regard to staying out late as well as dating practices, [while] parents' attitudes toward daughters are much more restrictive" (Abu-Laban, 1979,

p. 146). Therefore, Jamie's father in the above conversation, much like the saying in Excerpt 4, and even the reaction of the main character in Excerpt 3, reflect the deep-rooted cultural conceptualisation of GENDER ROLES.

7.2.5.1 GENDER ROLES AS DEFINED SET OF EXPECTATIONS

The mother lost her beauty, she could no longer maintain in due to her dedication to creating a home and a family. Or, taking care of the family has stressed her out – QSP1, E10

Good sense of humor here. In addition, the cultural schema of being 'small-waisted' as a feature of a beauty; a mom with many children as a 'baby machine' (the metaphor here); the use of 'litter' – QSP33, E10

Understanding of GENDER ROLES AS A DEFINED SET OF EXPECTATIONS is another schema that is familiar to the participants, even when they had no claim to knowledge of the depicted culture. Consistently across the participant responses is that they are aware of how the ROLE OF THE MOTHER is being represented. They interpret based on the specific use of the Cambodian saying to showcase the main character's reflections on her role as a woman growing up Chinese-Cambodian in Australia, and see how beauty is conceptualised. In Excerpt 10, we see that 'beauty' is associated with 'small-waisted' as an ideal. This 'beauty' can be lost however, not necessarily due to time, but in favour of mothering a family. From the cadence of Excerpt 10's phrasing, the use of "*remarkable and cruel transformation*" suggests that the loss of beauty is also a willing sacrifice. This is comprehended by QSP1(10) who associates the loss of beauty to the mother's new responsibilities to her family and further interprets the excerpt suggesting that because the mother must take care of her family, the stress that came with it resulted in the loss of beauty.

The ROLE OF THE MOTHER has always been assigned to the *female* in the family, generally the 'mother' counterpart to the 'father', and this seems to be a recurring trend in migrant families coming to Australia as well (Pease, 2009). Women are expected to care for the family and handle the responsibilities often associated with the home (Pease, 2009). With that, comes the responsibility of being a mother, and through being a GOOD MOTHER, a few resolutions can be achieved, such as, maintaining a solid relationship with their other half and guiding their children to be filial and therefore can care for the mother and father when they grow old (Liamputtong, 2006).

The woman's position is easily identified by participants, and they can share in their knowledge based on what they read in Excerpt 10. From the responses, they position women as the conceptualisation of ROLE OF WOMAN AS ROLE OF MOTHER.

QSP6, E10: *The persons mother was more of a baby maker than anything else.*

QSP7, E10: *Discussing the struggles of women's roles within cultures and society.*

QSP8, E10: *Traditional housewives are expected to pop children and that's all that defines them*

QSP14, E10: *Cultural difference - women expected to conform with norms*

QSP17, E10: *Once again I think it highlights the role of a women in a creative way - it illustrates what expectations (perhaps negative) may be placed on a female*

QSP24, E10: *The usage of language to transform an organic, personal process into a mechanical routine one represents a different take on the role of women and mothers within a particular community...The relegation of the role of the woman to merely producing children is a rather appallingly matter of fact interpretation of a human life.*

Associated with this schema, is the idea of the MOTHER AS REPRODUCTIVE MACHINE, which we see the descriptions: 'babymaker' (QSP6, E10), 'pop children' (QSP8, E10), and 'merely producing children' (QSP24, E10). Both QSP7(E10) and QSP14(E10) highlight what Excerpt 10 does, in that it emphasises the struggle of women's roles in society and that there is a cultural variation. Motherhood is generally perceived in Southeast Asian cultures, such as Cambodian and Chinese, as a blessing (Liamputtong, 2006), however, the responses of the participants take an opposing view in their interpretation. This is notable in the way Law uses "*baby machine that spat out five children in quick, semi-automatic succession*" in Excerpt 10. On the other hand, we have QSP17(E10) who takes the discussion further, particularly in what it might mean, by pointing out that this excerpt highlights the expectations 'perhaps negative' of women in society. This is shared with QSP24(E10) who further analyses how the creative use of language is imparting a more in-depth message—that is the role of women in society. This ties in with the next set of participant responses, and their understanding of how the ROLE OF WOMAN is conceptualised from a Chinese-Cambodian perspective.

Excerpt 4 frames GENDER ROLES specifically so that it puts both men and women at a dichotomy to each other. Although the excerpt specifies Cambodia, the character's cultural

background overlaps with Chinese, and the same schema is also shared to some extent in Chinese. Below are some of the comments made by the participants:

QSP15, E4: *The use of metaphor, using dirt as an image for taking virginity...To criticise their value system regarding women*

QSP18, E4: *reveals Cambodians' conceptualization and attitudes towards girls and boys. Girls should behave innocently without any inappropriate behaviours. Boys should experience more tough things to make them stronger and more experienced*

QSP29, E4: *I find the use of metaphors in this quote to be creative. Comparing girls to white cotton, and how they can never be cleaned, shows just how fragile their purity was considered at the time. The boys, on the other hand, the polished stone, makes me think of a brightened future... Girls are seen as pure - the white cotton - but once they lose such a purity - being dirtied - it is not something they can ever regain - clean. Boys, however, are seen as valuable - gems. Able to have a rich - shining - future if only they are given the chance - polished.*

Participants show understanding through their interpretations. According to the participants, the selected excerpt instantiates the schema of QUALITY OF A WOMAN with ‘innocence’, ‘virgin’, ‘appropriate behaviour’, ‘pure’, and ‘untainted’. This further aligns with the schema of GENDER ROLES AS DEFINED SET OF EXPECTATIONS, by positioning both MAN and WOMAN with certain qualities. Qualities that the participants can relate to and deduce based on their own schemas—some of which might be shared. This can be further seen in the following responses:

QSP7, E4: *Yes, this is a creative use of language, because it explores the historical issues and gender politics between boys and girls within the context of an old saying, highlighting how this mentality has permeated the culture, without saying this directly.*

QSP8, E4: *people being compared to objects in that way is quite common, and this type of comparison is being frowned upon as time progresses*

QSP22, E4: *It's misogynistic and undermines the value of a female. But doubly so it's even worse on the males who seem to be defined by how many women they've slept with.*

QSP24, E4: *As an interesting insight into the Cambodian perception of masculinity and femininity. It is of interest that negative connotations are attached to female figures while males are praised.*

QSP7(E4) sees Excerpt 4 as creative because of the issues that form the cultural schema that the saying instantiates. The reference to “*gender politics*” (QSP7, E4), the idea that it can be “*quite common*” and “*frowned upon*” (QSP7, E4), and considered as “*misogynistic*” (QSP22, E4) draws upon a modern understanding of gender inequality and prevailing patriarchal hierarchies. Participants are being critical towards this excerpt and tend to align with the somewhat progressive movement towards a dominating discourse of gender equality in Australia. Although Australia is moving towards it, the media can be seen to host articles regarding the position of women in Australia, particularly in major institutions such as government. There were repeated reports on the number of women present in the current or recent Prime Minister’s cabinet, gender equality policies under the Rudd and Gillard governments, and of course, Australia’s first female Prime Minister (C. M. Warren & Antoniadis, 2016). The participants’ responses, their critical interpretations add to what they perceive to be creative use of language. QSP24(E4) suggests that Excerpt 4 presents an “*interesting insight*” into the Cambodian worldview. This is a point of interest, as the rejoinder that follows shows how the participant is engaging with this ‘different’ worldviews to concepts that are familiar to them. As QSP24(E4) critically points out “*it is of interest that negative connotations are attached to female figures while males are praised*”. It highlights the contrast that QSP7, QSP8, and QSP22 emphasise, and reflects the trend of a prevailing discourse in Australian society.

7.2.5.2 PHYSICAL AFFECTION AS CULTURALLY BOUND

Less creative use of words, but still creative in how they write this character's voice – QSP3, E3

To me, the deeper meaning behind Quote 3 is that there is a cultural difference between Asians and White Australians in regards to personal space. – QSP28, E3

I believe they were confused on the physical contact that Australian's had with others, as where they are from, physical contact might be more serious – QSP23, E3

I think it's a creative way to bring up the differences between cultures. How the affection here is noted to be innocent, just done, something the narrator has evidently thought over in order to realize - decide - it had to be an Aussie thing...The narrator, clearly, is from a place where physical contact isn't standard, and perhaps make them realize how normal such 'non standard' behaviors are in order places – QSP29, E3

Perceptions from the participants are more divided on Excerpt 3 as they (for example, QSP3, E3) considered its plainly written language to not be as creative as Excerpt 4 (which uses a saying to capture the reality). On the other hand, we have responses such as QSP28(E3), where it is the depth of the meaning that engages the reader's perception. Excerpt 3 and its distinction between the Asian and White Australian ways of approaching affection instantiates the Chinese schema of PHYSICAL AFFECTION and CHINESE GREETING. Greetings will vary depending on region, time and social relationship, but often hugging is not considered a typical Chinese greeting (Vargas-Urpi, 2013). This is further steeped in the Confucian tradition where contacts between men and women were once considered improper—and may still be considered improper for present older generations (Rui, 2019). According to Caldwell-Harris, Kronrod, and Yang (2013), showing affection and love is better done through actions. However, even though actions are preferred to words, “Chinese cultural norms appear to dictate restraint for direct expression, even if it is an action” (Caldwell-Harris et al., 2013, p. 65). Thus, it is no surprise that Pung, in Excerpt 3 feels confronted by the hugging that occurs between her Australian friends, unable to quite align one cultural experience with another, feeling culturally dissonant.

The participants reactions to this excerpt, however, also show a depth to their abilities to comprehend and interpret. The author, through her plain expression, provides a clear contrast, that also engages in deeper discourse on the cultural conceptualisation of ideas such as ‘affection’, ‘being Aussie’, and ‘the norm’. This is also seen in the responses from QSP19 and QSP22:

QSP19, E3: *A comparative reflection of cultural practices and the implicit contrast between the types of girls who would hug and kiss (by listing generic Western names) and the speaker's ethnic and cultural background...The speaker doesn't see physical contact as completely alien, but the divide of 'us' and 'them' implies it's not a common practice in their cultural background.*

QSP22, E3: *Through her usage of language, the author clearly establishes her distaste for "those" kinds of girls, bundling them all together as if to imply that they're all the same, or that she's somehow different than them simply because of her issues with physical contact. But if you read between the lines there are a lot of implications and the quote leaves you with some rather unsettling questions. It's clearly from the perspective of a female the same age as the girls mentioned who is uncomfortable with physical contact. There are a lot of implications in the words*

she uses and the way she sort of undermines girls with those names, grouping them all together under some kind of stereotype. Though I also feel a tinge of jealousy, especially where those italics are considered. She clearly divides herself from those females, and bitterly so.

QSP19(E3)'s response highlights two things: 1) the creativeness in terms of the linguistic strategy used, and 2) the critical engagement with the dominant discourse. QSP19(E3) perceives and interprets Pung's use of 'Cathy and Gemma and Louisa'—and as QSP19(E3) refers to them as 'generic Western names'—as a way of reducing the discussion and contrasting one group to another. By using 'typical' Australian names, Pung has, in a sense, constructed a specific, almost flippant, image of the Australian culture and of interpersonal relationships between its people—something that is not shared in her own restrained culture. Thus, QSP19's interpretation is insightful, particularly in how they perceive the use of Pung's linguistic choices. This is also shared in QSP22(E3)'s response: "*Through her usage of language, the author clearly establishes her distaste for 'those kinds of girls, bundling them all together as if to imply that they're all the same'*". However, QSP22(E3) takes their response even further, and much like other responses presented earlier in this chapter regarding other culturally constructed concepts, interpreting the excerpt based on a schema that they are more familiar with.

7.3 Interpretability of transcultural punning and metacultural writing competence

Again, it depends on the cultural background of the reader. I like the cultural conception of girls being like cotton wool and boys being like gems. This is a creative attribution of qualities/characteristics upon sexes... – QSP28, E4

This is a fantastic use of a metaphor - it is translated to the target language perfectly and gives nuanced insight into cultural practices – QSP17, E4

The saying itself is 'creative', so are the metaphors of white cotton wool, and a gem. There's also implicit creativity which is implied about the gender imbalance in certain 'old' societies. Boys become more mature and valued in the society, while girls are not. – QSP33, E4

Intercultural writing competence shines through, and the interpretation and description of writing a Cambodian saying in a different language (English) expresses and shows that creativity. Also, the imagery created for readers to interpret and read it over and over until they understand the message Pung is writing about shows that creativity – QSP41, E4

Throughout the selected texts, the authors have transculturally played with the words and languages available across their system of integrated linguistic repertoires. Through their codemeshed linguistic repertoires, they make the more suitable and adequate linguistic choice to best express the reality of their narrative. We see this in both Pung and Law's play on 'ghost' and Abdel-Fattah's use of the Arabic saying, for example. The authors are also drawing on multiple cultural resources at their disposal, being members of their home and host cultures, and this shows in the way they use familiar English words that are infused with deeper cultural meanings. The transcultural creativeness of the writer shows in two ways: 1) how they do it, and 2) through the readers' interpretation. The role of the author, in cases such as the authors selected for this thesis, in writing these kinds of narratives and drawing on their meshed linguistic repertoires, is to guide the reader to interpret, develop, and understand culturally constructed concepts. As a result, new meanings can develop and be considered transculturally creative.

How do the authors do so? Take, for example, the inclusion of the Arabic saying in Excerpt 5, illustrates the author's ability to guide their readers to touching on a particular interpretation. Not only does the main character use the saying, readers are prompted into focussing on words such as 'inflexibles' and 'stubborn' to contextualise and draw inferences between the idea of a shoe representing someone's stubbornness. We see a similar strategy when both Law and Pung use 'ghost'—the word itself is paired with 'white' to hint to the reader that all is not as it seems. A ghost is not just a ghost in the 'Western' sense. These examples further discussed in the above sections demonstrate the consciousness of the author in traversing the blended repertoires at their disposal. However, we can see some unintended results as well. For example, how Law uses the word '*litter*' in Excerpt 10 and '*straight As*' in Excerpt 9. The former contrasts a human family to that of animalia. Yet for some participants, they perceived the use of '*litter*' as not only referring to the group of children birthed to a mammal but link it with the idea of 'rubbish' or 'trash'. This same, unintended reading is also notable in Excerpt 10 responses, with the use of '*straight As*'. Despite popular understanding of this collocation being a reference to an achiever of good grades, some participants and informants found themselves questioning the presentation of 'straight As' in this form, tripping over the capital 'A' and reading it first as 'straight *as*'. This in itself is not necessarily an unappreciated reading, as its dual meaning as 'someone or something undeniably heterosexual', correlates with the one of the major conflicts encountered by Law in *The Family Law*.

Therefore, the creativeness is not only at the hand of the writer or the reader exclusively, but a collective effort. The readers are free to make their own interpretations. However, as demonstrated by the participants, they are also drawing on their own cultural conceptualisations of concepts that they encountered through the text. By drawing on what they know, they can develop interpretations and meaning that matter. At the same time, they are also being guided by the author to see a particular reading that may encourage a deeper appreciation for the discourses surrounding the text. This is notable in Abdel-Fattah's use of 'UCO' for 'Unidentified Covered Objects' that plays on the familiar initialism of 'UFO', which we can see in this excerpt:

Excerpt 11

Powers that transform Muslim girls into UCOs (Unidentified Covered Objects), which turn Muslim girls from an 'us' into a 'them' – Randa Abdel-Fattah, *Does My Head Look Big In This?*, p.38

One participants' response (QSP7) suggests:

QSP7, E11: *Yes, this is creative, because it tells us a lot about the character, history, background, setting, and story in just a few words. It takes creativity to pack a punch with so few words, and invent new was to interpret terms like 'us' and 'them' as well as creating completely new terms like UCO's*

Through the transcultural punning of the initialism, the image associated with 'UCO' becomes associated with whom the 'UCO' initialism refers. This is further overlaid by the greater discourse presented at the end of the sentence—the racial discourse. All of this must then be thought of in relation to what the deeper culturally constructed concept overrides the 'whom' that the 'UCO' initialism refers to: the women who wear the hijab and other headcoverings. Abdel-Fattah commented:

AI-RAF: *I mean that probably comes from years of having thought about how hijab is seen and by others, by other hijab users, having worn it myself, so you know, using humour as well, and it's a humour that pokes fun at the stereotype and pokes fun at the person looking at the hijab, and the acronym is also my way of saying the way that we think of Muslim women in shorthand is a way that we reduce them to acronyms as a metaphor so that the way that we don't see them in their fullness and their complexity, and what that does, how it functions to separate and distance people from other women.*

The transcultural creativity in Excerpt 11 thus requires understanding of the cultural schema behind it, its affiliations, expectations, and the role it plays in Muslim women's lives. However, even without complete knowledge of the schema, Abdel-Fattah's transcultural play with words, introduces the concept and the packed discourse around it to a new audience.

7.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter has explored a few specific cultural concepts that were found in the selected texts, examining what the concept is and how readers—the participants—respond, relate, and interact with the cultural concept. Therefore, we can see that transcultural creativity in second generation migrant writing is not only conveying culture from their perspective, or using language in a new creative way—both of which are of course aspects of second generation writing to be noted—but a two-way process of meaning making between both the reader and the writer. Through the metacultural competence of the author, the reader is also able to comprehend what they have read and are encouraged to make their own distinctions and takeaways.

Chapter 8 Transcultural Creativity as breaking convention

8.1 Overview: “New” ways of doing things

This chapter is called ‘breaking convention’ and this subsection is labelled “‘new” ways of doing things’. Much like the previous ‘first’ generation, the ‘second’ generation is doing something different because they are influenced by the myriad of factors that, to some degree, are similar to the ‘first’ generation, but yet are experienced differently. This thesis so far has aimed to further broaden the existing literature on creativity in world Englishes from the perspective of the next generation. As argued so far, the second generation, being a generation of individuals caught between worlds (both host and home), are drawing on their multiple linguistic resources to communicate and convey their cultural realities through their linguistic choices. Their group is and has been of growing significance because their contributions to language are not necessarily bound by their concerns for their linguistic limitations, but rather how best to move beyond what might be a limitation and turn it into a new way of addressing the situation. As Canagarajah (2012) reasons,

Rather than ruling out items that stand outside the shared norms as erroneous or idiosyncratic (in fidelity to systems), it is more important to consider how people do end up giving them meaning and achieve communicative success [...] a word that is already available in the English language [...] is being used in a new context, receiving new indexicality (p.72).

Thus, this chapter summarises and discusses the ways in which the second generation migrant writers’ transcultural creativity is breaking convention and the result of doing so in light of the paradigm shift of English to Englishes and world Englishes.

8.2 The role of *humour*

Humour plays a major role in all five selected texts. It is featured heavily as a recommendation by Pung’s editor when she was writing the introduction to her anthology *Growing Up Asian in Australia* (2008) that rather than using a serious tone on racism, Pung should use humour as her weapon (Graham, 2013). Through humour, the authors can not only lighten the text to engage their readers but also distance themselves from the heavy politicised discourse of race (Graham, 2013;

Ommundsen, 2002). Despite using humour to lighten the text, this does not mean that they do not address important discourses such as race and discrimination—Abdel-Fattah, as we saw in Chapter 7, does not shy away from using her words and linguistic creativity to emphasise the core problems that arise in the relevant discourses.

Humour used when discussing migrant experiences softens the edge of insults, control over emotions, and avoids damaging the relationship with the interlocutor, as well as to position the text as being ‘Australian’ and not just ‘ethnic’. The use of humour can be seen in *DMHLBIT*, for example, between Amal and her classmates:

“Did your parents force you?” Kristy asks, all wide-eyed and appalled.

“My dad told me if I don’t wear it he’ll marry me off to a sixty-five-year-old camel owner in Egypt.”

“No!” She’s actually horrified.

“I was invited to the wedding,” Eileen adds.

“*Really?*” This is definitely a case of dropped-from-the-cradle.

“Hey! Amal!” Tim Manne calls out. “What’s the deal with that thing on your head?”

“I’ve gone bald.”

“Get out!”

“I’m on the Advanced Hair Program.”

(Abdel-Fattah, *DMHLBIT*, pp. 70-71)

Amal jokes about her choice to wear her hijab to both mediate and downplay the seriousness attached to wearing a hijab, and at the same time to prove that she is still the same person. This makes Amal relatable to the audience while dispelling all the reasons that generally arise in stereotype of girls like herself who must wear the hijab. The use of humour maintains a comfortable, friendly social distance between the characters of the scene in *DMHLBIT*, and between the author and the reader. The result is that the reader can connect with the story, for example:

P-R-D-BR1: We always talk about the books that changed your life, but I seriously believe this one not only hold the power to change your mind, but your heart, as it tackles the heavy topics of racism, culture, religion and teenage expectations and life in current society.

This reviewer also acknowledges Abdel-Fattah's perspective on balancing "the light heartedness of everyday life with the serious and comical teenage years, as well as dealing with racial difference and prejudice" (P6-R-D-BR1). Furthermore, they comment:

P-R-D-BR1: Simply put this book was inspiring. It opened my eyes to another culture in such a humorous but down to earth way, all the while maintaining its beliefs, integrity and most importantly respect.

This reviewer highlights that the newer generations taking on Australian humour and are shedding new light on (potentially) difficult topics that had been previously heavily presented in fiction/non-fiction. Fang (2019) notes that the role of humour in a second generation migrant's text is both marker of Australian identity as well as a means of bringing the 'norm' crashing into something that might be considered 'foreign'. Excerpt 11 (see Chapter 7) also highlights another example in which Abdel-Fattah reduces a complex discussion of race regarding the use of the hijab to a single sentence of 20 words. An insight to her creative process, shows that she had deliberately used humour "*that pokes fun at the stereotype and pokes fun at the person looking at the hijab, and the acronym is also my way of saying the way that we think of Muslim women in shorthand is a way that we reduce them to acronyms as a metaphor*" (AI-RAF).

The humour in Abdel-Fattah's works also plays a role in emphasising the youth of her main character. This can be seen in P-R-D-A2's review on Amazon on the representation of the teenage voice as being "just sassy and sarcastic enough to be hilarious". The humorous tone of the main character's voice plays a key role in carrying the weight of the narrative until its conclusion. This focus on tone of voice is also noted in the product description for *Laurinda* on Amazon (see Appendix E), such as the following:

the spiritual descendant not so much of Jung Chang's *Wild Swans* as of Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*. Pung displays the latter's gift for deliciously wry humour and passionate, pungent prose - like Plath, she manoeuvres mesmerically between the hilarious and the heartbreaking (P-A-L-PD).

The description is provided in the little quotations used to lure in readers—in this case, P-A-L-PD, the quotes are provided by Amy Tan and reproduced by the *Sunday Times*. Amy Tan compares Pung's 'wry humour' and 'passionate, pungent prose' to that of Sylvia Plath, a well-known literary figure, thus equating this new author with a classic renowned author. What is striking in both *Unpolished Gem* and *Laurinda* is how the voices of her main characters retain a sense of Australian humour in their tone (Fang, 2019). This strategic use of humour is adopted by all three selected

authors to address situations that arise regarding various overarching discourses. It is a very Australian sense of humour—as we can see in the example from *DMHLBIT* above, where the humour is self-deprecating. As noted earlier in this section, humour can be used to mark a certain identity—for example, Australian humour indexes an Australian identity. In various scenarios presented in previous chapters of this thesis, the tone of the main character can sometimes be self-deprecating, sarcastic, and ironic. Australian humour is not always understood because it can be self-deprecating, defiant, ironic, and sometimes exceeds politically correct boundaries (Due, 2011). For example, Law’s brand of humour ranges from light and amusing and almost innocent exchanges between him and his mum (such as plays on words like ‘discarded’ and ‘discharged’ (B-1-3-9, section 5.4); ‘goo-goo’ and ‘Google’ (B-1-3-11, section 5.4) to detailed observations of reality such as his description of his mother’s rate of successive almost consecutive annual births (Excerpt 10, section 7.2.5).

Excerpt 10 especially is just one example of Law’s humour that comes across as graphic in detail yet encourages a small chuckle at the image illustrated—the image of a mother rapidly firing newborns from her lady parts. In his own words, Law addresses his choice of creative language as:

AI-BL: *it’s pretty graphic, but the thing I wanted to show was the so sentimentalized and romanticized motherhood, and all that sort of stuff, but I wanted to acknowledge that for my mum in so many ways, parenting was f**king tough. And you know especially migrant parents, ‘we worked hard blah blah blah’. We kind of know that parenting was tough—they tell it in our face—but I really wanted to honour that, in a way: one, it was funny, because it’s like why the f**k did you have five kids mum? [...] and I wanted to give people like an insider look at how tough it was without alienating them like ‘I don’t want to read this intense story about how brutal motherhood and parenthood can be’ so it’s like using that humour but making sure that she’s not just an object of derision.*

Law’s use of humour takes a difficult story of motherhood and makes it relatable to his audience in a way that, while graphic, doesn’t gloss over the trials, tribulations and triumphs. P-B-FL-G2 comments that “He’s less cynical and more gross than David Sedaris but there are a lot of similarities here.” This reference to David Sedaris shows the intertextuality of Law’s work. We can also see here the extent of Sedaris’ inspiration on Law’s writing. However, this excerpt (see section 7.2.5) is also embedded in greater cultural conceptualisations about the ROLE OF WOMAN AS ROLE OF MOTHER and traditional notions of MOTHER AS A REPRODUCTIVE MACHINE. Pung’s response to Law’s creativity in Excerpt 11 is worth noting:

AI-AP: *And this passage, this one I love, because it goes against everything you read from Chinese writers like you're not meant to talk about your mum's private parts you're meant to, you know. Asian people, when they have kids, every kid is a blessing, and not oh gosh, a litter, so this is not Chinese writing as we've seen it this is a completely new voice. They're pushing against their Chineseness and they're talking about race but this is completely something else, isn't it? This isn't even Chinese writing, this is oh I don't know...*

She raises two points: the first is that Law's take on his mum's privates is not a typical 'Chinese' approach, while the second point introduces the idea of a new voice in Australian writing. The latter point is discussed later in this chapter as it is highly relevant to the purpose of this chapter. However, the former point highlights that in using humour, Law takes this culturally embedded concept and deconstructs it for the purposes of his story. He does so bearing in mind his audience and the narrative he desires to convey.

The Family Law, on the whole, had a positive reception from readers, described as “funny, insightful, thought-provoking” (P-B-FL-A1) and as “many, many laughs to be had. Also the right balance of sentimentality” (P-B-FL-A2). Despite the rather graphic take of several scenes in *The Family Law*, such as Excerpt 10, readers are accepting the humour and in turn, accepting the text and the themes it deals with, as P-B-FL-G1 comments in their review:

P-B-FL-G1: Benjamin Law sneaks up on you like that – he comes across as quite the joker, quick with the quips about being the only Asian not good at maths – but he's masterful at using his personal anecdotes to ask big questions of the reader.

There is appreciation for his writing style that mixes humour significantly into his tale, even with scenes that focus on more difficult topics, such as the deportation of part of his family.

Humour plays a significant role as a strategy by which these second generation migrant writers can reshape their stories and critical points of argument in today's society into a relatable, palatable narrative for their readers. In using humour, they are also able to distance themselves from heavy political discussion of prevailing discourses while still encouraging their readers to see them through another lens. In order to be humorous, second generation migrants are stretching the boundaries of their creativity to cross transcultural boundaries and breaking convention along the way.

8.3 Stereotypes and caricature

Addressing stereotypes and caricature was a predominant theme across all selected texts, albeit each addressed slightly differently. Healy (2010) describes Pung's approach to stereotypes:

Pung's memoir renders these stereotypes in nuanced and compassionate terms. Rather than reject its clichés of 'Asian' experience, Pung's gentle parody asserts her family's place within Melbourne's urban and domestic spaces by connecting the 'wonderland' to her parents' history (p.6).

Current day world Englishes academic literature is opening the vault of world Englishes literary treasures—much in the same way that translingual and transcultural literature studies provide an insight to these literatures that transcend boundaries. Thus, just as other generations and their desires to avoid stereotypes, or to re-write those stereotypes by exposing readers to other concepts and meanings, Law, Pung, and Abdel-Fattah are paving their own ways with their words. To do so, they do not simply break open the vault, they break convention and re-shape the stories that are considered 'Australian'. This is more significant considering the social context, their varying degrees of bilingual competence, and the shape of Australian literature available for young adults at present (see Chapter 4).

Birke and Christ (2013) suggest that one of the functions of paratext is what they call "interpretive function" which is where "paratextual elements suggest to the reader specific ways of understanding, reading, interpreting the text" (p. 67). The boundaries that these authors' transcultural creativity is breaking have already been pre-laid. There are limits to being creative or having one's work interpreted beyond one's intentions or expectations. What is creative is often centred on what is first considered the norm and what is considered too far beyond the norm (Carter, 2004; Csikszentmihaly, 1999; Maynard, 2007). All selected texts on Amazon AU, a widely used commercial site for a range of products including the popular e-book reader Kindle, are listed in the expected, dominant categories of 'Books' and 'Kindle Store', in both formats. They are further subcategorised¹¹ as 'biographies & memoirs', 'ethnic & national' and 'memoirs' for the creative nonfiction by Pung and Law. Surprisingly, all but *UG* are further categorised as 'literature & fiction'. Although Law's book also includes some themes of emigration and immigration, only *UG* is sub-categorised as 'emigration & immigration', which shows an interesting reflection on how the text is

¹¹ The full list of categorisations can be found in Appendix E

commercially represented—suggesting that perhaps Law’s text is potentially considered more ‘Australian’. *Laurinda*, *DMHLBIT*, and *TTIHAM*, are all subcategorised as ‘teen & young adult’. In addition to mentioned subcategories, *The Family Law*, *Laurinda*, and both of Abdel-Fattah’s books are further categorised into specific groups. *The Family Law* is also categorised as a book about ‘parenting & families’, ‘history & criticism’, ‘regional & cultural’ and is described on the promotional page as: “a linked series of tales from a beloved Australian writer”. *Laurinda* on the other hand, receives sub-categorisations that emphasise the themes that can be found in the book, such as: ‘girls & women’, ‘social & family issues’, ‘bullying’ and ‘friendship’; this reflects the promotional quotes listed under Amazon’s product description for *Laurinda*. The Monthly, a free newspaper published by the book retailer Readings, presents *Laurinda* as a “[a] candid and powerful exploration of family, culture and class”. Such descriptions are revealing—like the categorisations we find on Amazon Au—they show us how the texts are shaped.

Through this shaping, readers would have been given certain impressions based on their prior knowledge and pre-conceptualisations. Take for example, P-A-L-G4 who compares *Laurinda* to other similar books such as *Puberty Blues* (Gabrielle Carey and Kathy Lette) and *Looking for Alibrandi* (Melina Marchetta)—two iconic Australian novels. On a general level, P-A-L-G4 perceives a shallowness in the text in which the setting is not realised until the reviewer spots a reference to ‘Wonderwall’. She comes off critical in saying, “while *Puberty Blues* perfectly executes the stereotypes everyone who’s ever been at high school knows, I closed *Laurinda* and found that not a single character came with me” (P-A-L-G4). This is a contrast to P-A-L-G3, who says:

P-A-L-G3: Though I do not share the same ethnicity nor background as Lucy, I found her, and several of her experiences, easy to relate to. Part satire, magnifying the pretensions of private school and the aspirations of immigrant families, part poignant coming of age tale, Pung draws on her own experiences which gives the story a sense of authenticity.

While P-A-L-G4 could not relate, P-A-L-G3 took the opportunity to do so beyond notions of ethnicity and background. Other reviewers also looked at *Laurinda* as a story where themes such as coming of age are common in Young Adult fiction, for example:

P-A-L-BR1: Teenagers go through those awful years when they begin to see their family through society’s eyes – or at least they think they can see what others see. Bringing your friends home, introducing them to your parents, becomes excruciating – you

realise that your parents are *so not cool*, and then you worry that, by extension, neither are you.

From this review, a hyphenated (Asian-Australian) or stereotyped (immigrant, migrant, refugee) story is as much ‘Australian’ as the next. Ethnicity is the only difference—the experiences will be and can be shared as much as they differ. These voices of readers further demonstrate that through familiar stories and recognisable stereotypes, they can empathise with the main character or find, as P-A-L-G4 comments earlier in this paragraph, “not a single character came with me” even though she had found other iconic Australia YA novel *Puberty Blues* “perfectly executes the stereotypes”.

In their interviews, both Law and Pung also address the notion of stereotype and caricature—for Law it is the desire to lean into stereotypes because they are, to some extent, true, a thought that is also shared by Pung. As Pung comments regarding Excerpt 9:

AI-AP: *That’s so funny! My brother had that hairstyle when he was growing up. I mean it’s a caricature, but I mean I got A’s, Benjamin got A’s [...] Yeah, we’re living proof that this stereotype comes true*

With both Law and Pung having written a memoir that feature their life stories, avoiding stereotyping would have been counterproductive, particularly if they had lived through it and as such it formed a portion of their realities. What Law makes an interesting point of, is how to make use of the stereotype or caricature and where it fits in the story being told—in his words:

AI-BL: *I think people cease being stereotypes and clichés when they’re complex and at the centre of their stories because let’s face it, lots of migrant parents, they work really hard to make sure their kids get educated, to get straight As*

Stereotypes can be true to some extent, but the persistence of “stereotype is not based on truth (but rather on simplicity and ease), the stereotype itself must be engaged” (Haines, 2015, p. 31). Despite Law’s positive outlook on leaning into stereotype, cliché, and caricature, he is aware of the space between the written word and the reality that will eventually read it. In reflection of his encounter in interviewing the author, David Sedaris, Law noted:

P-BL-PT: The second thing was that he did have rules about... he understood that you don't write in a vacuum: once your book comes out it has real world effects.

Prior to the release of her anthology, *Growing Up Asian in Australia*, Pung was recommended to rewrite and use a different strategy (such as humour) to introduce the volume, in an effort to create an image of approachability to a volume that often deals with stories of greater social discourses

concerns. Abdel-Fattah is also aware of the tentative nature of writing books like hers, with themes such as the ones imbued in her work—the controversial line that she should be wary of crossing between hinting at the greater social discourse on race without seeming political and blatant in writing a book on race:

P-RAF-PT: And also there is this weird thing that happens when you have books written about Muslim characters and the Muslim world, the so called Muslim world, is even if it is a work of fiction, it is quickly presented as a work of fact and social commentary.

The weightiness of Abdel-Fattah’s awareness is significant considering the sociocultural context at the time. When *DMHLBIT* hit the shelves in 2005, it occurred not long after the 9/11 attacks and sentiment about Islam and discourses related to it were fragile. The result of Abdel-Fattah’s book can be seen in the following review by P-R-D-G1:

P-R-D-G1: That Abdel-Fattah had an agenda in writing this book is obvious, and quite welcome too. It's a book that needed to be written. Some of it shocked me - the misconceptions and attitudes, I couldn't believe Australians - anyone - would think, say and do those things. But of course they do.

To draw from an emerging area in the scholarly research, *Raciolinguistics*, the selected authors are, in a manner, using their texts to reshape these dominating discourses on race and adopting the strategy of recontextualisation that is “an indirect strategy of political or cultural persuasion that does not directly shape lexical meanings or cultural contexts, but indirectly—and thus seductively—encourages listeners to align with antiracist assumptions” (Chun, 2016, p. 92). P-R-D-G1 states issues with race are something that people “do” in such a casual fact-based tone, suggesting that in the undercurrent of socioreality, a book like Abdel-Fattah’s is critically needed to dispel rumour and recreate identities.

Diversity, multiculturalism, and similar key buzzwords are a cornerstone of reference in product descriptions and most importantly in reader reviews. The shape that the commercial paratext creates for these transcultural writers sets expectations. While some did not empathise with the characters or stories (such as P-A-L-G4), others did, relating to the authors’ narratives and finding that familiar story. For example,

P-A-U-A1: *Unpolished Gem* is a worthwhile read for Asian immigrants, Australians interested in multi-culturalism and Melburnians in general, particularly those who have lived in Footscray, Braybrook, Avondale Heights and Springvale.

Another reviewer for *UG* writes, that it is a great book “to understand differences between two worlds completely different described by someone who lived them by herself” (P-A-UG-A2). P-B-FL-A1 for *The Family Law* adds “the book is full of quirky short-essays (of sorts) about growing up Asian in Australia – but it’s much more than this”. A note in a review left on Amazon for *DMHLBIT*, however, leaves an incredible insight to Young Adult fiction that highlights the importance of the genre:

P-R-D-A1: Contemporary Young Adult fiction has developed a greater sense of sophistication and maturity in its approach to a wide range of issues that concern adolescents in meaningful ways—race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, violence, domestic abuse, and sexual abuse (among other themes) are examined sensitively and plausibly in any number of well written works of Young Adult literature. The topic of religion, however, consistently challenges writers of YA fiction.

Thus, despite how these authors bring stereotype to the table, readers are responding to their stories in ways that suggest that the Australian literary sphere is lacking in these kinds of narratives. One reviewer is bold enough to suggest the following:

P-R-T-G1: American teens could benefit from this mixture of the typical YA story with the culture infusion that will teach them about an experience that might vary in some ways from their own—fighting prejudice and stereotypes, unique aspects of Muslim identity—but will allow them to see commonalities they might not expect. At some point, most teens feel as if they come from another planet, so Abdel-Fattah's story will provide more resonance than they expect.

While the stories may lean into stereotype and cliché, they draw on experiences that allow the authors to rewrite familiar stories into new ones—such as the iconic novels mentioned earlier, *Puberty Blues* and *Looking for Alibrandi*. Part of the challenge for these authors is how to use their creativity to represent a reality that is relatable to others. One of the strategies as noted earlier, is drawing on those greater themes, such as coming of age, or the stereotypical teenage girl story trope, while intertwining the greater narrative of various discourses in between. This is something Law himself tackled when

it came time to adopt his memoir into a TV series for an audience that was not necessarily going to be in the same ethnic identity category.

AI-BL: *We were aware that we were breaking ground, with Asian Australian representation, but for us the show wasn't about ethnic identity. Even though I love shows and movies about ethnic identity and I mean if anything, the family's pretty—almost too comfortable. They're not soul-searching in that way. And the first series is about divorce really you know, and the third series, you know we've just finished, and it's coming out over the summer, is about coming out as gay [...] The main characters are a mum and her mid to late teen son. Obviously, it's an ensemble cast, but it's about getting those people to identify with those characters. And whether if those, that the audience is Asian Australian or not, Chinese Australian or not, we're just trying to make those stories relatable for a much younger audience that won't necessarily get all the jokes for the adults here, but we're being more conscious about writing for those demographics.*

Through adapting his memoir into a TV series, Law's awareness that the show itself was breaking ground for ethnic representation in Australian media—particular of Asian characters—adds to how this representation would translate across generations, appeal to younger generations, and what would make the narrative seem real. Chapter 6 of this thesis briefly raised the point on authenticity and perception, and this is once again an argument to be revisited in light of the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writers. As Lau (2016) argues, authenticity is a debate that often arises in diasporic literature as there is always a chance that a text may seem inauthentic when written by a diasporic author who is outside the location in question. Furthermore, she discusses how:

Anglo-American publishing and its subcontinental outposts have tremendous cultural power in influencing academic canons and popular cultural trends, hence making the important point that authenticity itself is not of fixed value, but is a constructed commodity traded by those in power (Lau, 2016, p.53).

The same can be applied to publishing in Australia, where there seems to be a growing need for stories of diverse voices to join shelves of Australian literature. To return briefly to a point raised in the beginning of this section on the creative acts of these authors as a means of reshaping dominating perspectives on stereotypes within racial discourse, this section must end now on acknowledging, as Lau (2016) states, that through publishing and writing an author can use their words as a form of capital to re-construct perceptions of “authenticity”.

Therefore, addressing the great themes of stereotype and caricature lends the authors another dimension of transcultural creativity. They might use humour, as discussed in the previous section, and in the process rewrite familiar narratives. These second generation migrant writers perceive stereotypes and caricature not as a limitation, but rather a method that can be refashioned to convey their own messages, critiques, and concerns on those themes that are currently shaping this generation of young people—in Abdel-Fattah’s case, dispelling Islamaphobia or in Pung’s case, sharing with other second generation individuals or young immigrants or those with hyphenated identities that they are not alone, that their stories are relevant.

8.4 ‘Rewriting’: The advent (again) of a new era

While the previous two sections address how the next generation might do something, this section addresses the ‘why’ aspect. The ‘why’ however, comes in a few forms. The first is the second generation migrants’ desire to rewrite familiar narratives in a voice of their own, and the second is the reception to this ‘new Australian’ voice.

Graham (2013) and Ommundsen (2011, 2012) suggest that the novels of Alice Pung are literarily rewriting the genre of Asian-Australian fiction. Ommundsen (2011) herself, even highlights the distinct point of departure that Pung takes in positioning her narrative away from the familiar discourse of Asian-Australian writing—Pung’s first line in *UG* markedly states that “[t]his story does not begin on a boat” (Pung, *UG*, p.1). This introduction on Pung’s part is not an attempt to disprove or diminish the importance of refugee narratives, but instead to show that there are other ways to look, read and perceive Asian-Australian writing. In the paratext data, Pung addresses this, first in an article in *The Age*:

P-A-U-TN: When we came here my family were in awe of everything. Every little thing was incredible, like a wonderland, but the more you aspire towards being white middle class, the more you suffer internally.

P-A-U-TN notes were taken from *The Age* and subsequently used as materials for teaching in a unit guide for highschool students. The sentiments noted here, are also shared within the following example P-A-U-TN—found on the first page of the teaching notes that is also a quote, this time taken from Alice Pung’s own website:

P-A-U-TN: Young girls – particularly Southeast Asian girls – are socialised not to vocalise any form of anger or annoyance. And girls are not supposed to make fun of themselves because it is meant to do some sort of irrevocable damage to their brittle self---esteem...So I was tired of reading oriental Cinderella stories and migrant narratives of success. Instead of inspiring me, they actually made me feel like an abject failure. When will I ever accumulate enough suffering to be a real writer? I wondered. I had defeated no communists/nationalists/evil stepmothers did not have a seedy past or narcotic addiction, and the only thing I had ever smoked was salmon (in the oven)...Then I thought, damn it I'm going to write a book about yellow people aspiring to become white middle class!”

The beginning of the above quote, particularly the reference to the girls being “socialised not to vocalise any form of anger or annoyance” or “make fun of themselves”, already confronts two of the main themes addressed in this chapter—stereotypes and humour. Pung, much like Abdel-Fattah in the previous section (and Law from the earlier section of this chapter), emphasises the desire to write a story that is about—in her words—“yellow people aspiring to become white middle class”. So that is what she set out to do, and after her debut publication, Pung was even more surprised by the result than she had expected:

AI-AP: *When it came out, I didn't realise it hit such a nerve with young Asian Australians and I got a lot of letters which I always wrote back to and that's what began the anthology “Growing Up Asian in Australia” I thought, I can't be the only one with the singular Asian narrative.*

The result led her to eventually edit the anthology. The feeling is shared by Abdel-Fattah:

AI-RAF: *Does My Head was like just a recognition that there were no books out there that spoke to me and my experiences, everything that was, that contained Muslim characters that was either or always fit into the narrative of the white saviour rescuing, and giving voice to them and I really wanted to work out a narrative and challenge that.*

As Kramsch (1998) has argued before in regards to the relationship between language and culture, “language expresses cultural realities” (p. 3). The conscious desires of the writer to re-write expectations of a particular genre, such as Asian-Australian writing, is thus notable in the authors' approach to their written works and the strategies they adopt to break convention.

In section 8.2, it is noted that Pung felt that Law's choice of describing the effect of motherhood and parenthood using, in a sense, his mother as a graphic metaphor, is not 'typical' of Chinese writing. For Law to write about his mother and her difficulty with childbirth, using humour that both honours and realistically portrays the reality, shows a sense of breaking free of general conventions. It also shows a conscious desire, not only to breakdown and re-present stereotypes so that readers can be moved to learn more rather than be boxed in by stereotype, but also to give transcultural Australian writing a new shape and voice. One Goodreads reviewer noted, in relation to the style of Pung's *UG*:

P-A-U-G1: it is through this close relationship that her Chinese cultural heritage is imbedded and her early beliefs are moulded. Although the book is written through the eyes of Agheare in a suitably self effacing Chinese style, it is also intriguingly Australian. Almost as if Agheare lives 2 lives; one at home and at work with her Asian family and another one with her fellow students at school and university.

This review raises two important points of discussion. The first is the recognition that though not specifically explicit, there is a distinct relationship between the character's relationship and her Chinese cultural heritage. This relationship occurs to the extent that if her heritage is "imbedded" then the language of narration will also reflect this. As it is mentioned in the next sentence, the reviewer feels that the story is written in a "suitably self effacing Chinese style". However, the second point that is raised in the review, is that despite the story being written in a suitable Chinese style, "it is also intriguingly Australian". The reviewer accepts the repositioning of the text as being just as Australian as it is Chinese. This is further acknowledged by another reviewer who writes:

P-A-U-BR2: I think Pung has a distinctly 'old' Australian voice – self-deprecating, laconic and matter of fact. Her writing is both observant and insightful without being introspective or overwrought.

Although this reviewer is not the first to refer to the tone, P-A-U-BR2 is the first to specify its "distinctly 'old' Australian voice" quality. This observation further encourages and substantiates the authors' own intentions in their writing—to depict their realities in the ways they know best, and as Law (AI-BL) and Abdel-Fattah (AI-RAF) state in Chapter 4, there are times when what they have written is a combination of multiple languages merged to just one 'shareable' language. Furthermore, this brings back the arguments made by world Englishes writers, championing the recognition of their literatures written in Englishes. As highlighted by Achebe in Chapter 2, and thus reiterated:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suits its new African surroundings (Achebe, 1965, p. 30).

Through using humour and the ways in which the selected authors are approaching greater issues of the racial and immigrant discourse, and the linguistic strategies they employ, the selected authors are, much like Achebe suggested, using the English language to carry the weight of their second generation experience. It is a variety of language that is taking shape to be something that resembles their mother tongue styles but also suitable and distinctly a reflection of their identities as being hyphenated Australians. An experience that is not limited to only the second generation, but also one shared by other generations or groups of individuals.

The subsection of this chapter is thus labelled as ‘rewriting: the advent (again) of a new era’—with a focus on the ‘again’ in brackets, because it is a reminder that the study of these selected authors is only the beginning. Much like the generation before them, the way they are being linguistically creative may not be shared with subsequent generations to the same extent. They are purposefully rewriting narratives prevalent to discourses of race and immigration in order to give a new light on a new generation. However, the effect of their writing may have an unexpected impact that results in gearing reactions to a more positive understanding of the discussions occurring in the greater discourses.

8.5 Re-reading in appreciation: The acceptability of the texts for ‘others’

In following the discussion on humour, stereotype and caricature, and rewriting Aussie texts in the above sections, the question here is the acceptability of multicultural—or indeed, as this thesis positions them, *transcultural* world Englishes texts—in current Australian society from the bottom-top perspective. There are two sides to this paper fold: 1) acceptability of the text as valuable to Australian literature, and 2) acceptability of the creativity and language use brought by the writers to English.

The first point is easily addressed by participants in this thesis. Their answer is yes, these texts are acceptable, necessary and sorely needed. Further revealed in this chapter, and hinted at in previous chapters, is the awareness that current Australian literature for young adults is not as abundant in narratives that a multicultural Australian audience can empathise with. This is notable earlier in this

chapter, and in the review discussed in Chapter 6, P-R-D-G3, the reviewer highlights in bolded font that they believed DMHLBIT contains a very important story. The following questionnaire-survey participants are just a few examples of those who also address the importance and significance such texts provide to the reader:

QSP7: *The texts are appropriate in expressing their messages and aims to the reader, but I understand that my experiences mean that I have probably missed levels of cultural meaning in some of quotes, whilst picking them up in others. As the goal of most of these texts is bridging the gaps between cultures and opening discussion, they all do a very good job at achieving this end*

QSP22: *I think they're perfectly appropriate yes. I think controversial subjects are even more appropriate than the mundane even because they provoke the mind into a state of contemplation. A healthy amount of thinking might do this country some good actually*

QSP38: *I think the texts are appropriate. The texts are a great socio-cultural commentary, as well as a vivid expression of the diverse cultures that exist in metropolitan Melbourne. The text opens the reader to the culture of the respective authors.*

For QSP7, 22, and 38, the selected texts in this thesis, which they were asked to reflect on, are indeed appropriate. QSP22's response is particularly scathing in their final statement: "A healthy amount of thinking might do this country some good actually". This suggests that despite the dominant discourse of multiculturalism that the government has been vouching, more still needs to be done if there are individuals who think "controversial subjects are even more appropriate than the mundane...because they provoke the mind into a state of contemplation" (QSP22). This is not dissimilar to QSP38's more diplomatic response that the texts are "great socio-cultural commentary" and a gateway of exposure, perhaps not necessarily to authenticity but it is exposure to other cultures. A result we can see in QSP7's comment acknowledging that although they may not have caught or understood all the cultural weight behind each excerpt presented in the questionnaire-survey, they felt that the texts did a good job at bridging gaps between cultures and opening a space for discussing them. In terms of acceptability, these voices feel that the texts are appropriate and valuable to contemporary Australian readership.

The other point raised—the acceptability of the creativity and language use brought by the writers to English—is one that is also addressed in the history of multicultural literature in Australia (Ommundsen, 2007; Raschke, 2005). In Australia, there was a time when the writing of

‘multicultural’ and ‘ethnic’ authors was deemed less acceptable because, as Robert Dessaix (cited in section 2.2.4 of this thesis, but will be reiterated here) said:

The reason so much migrant writing is ‘marginalised’ is that, in this basic sense, it’s often not very good – and for obvious reasons: the author’s English simply doesn’t allow him or her to produce meaning at the same number of levels...as a native speaker’s (cited in Raschke, 2005, p.21)

Dessaix’s attitude is reflective of the kinds of attitude that schools of thought such as English as an International Language, English as a Lingua Franca, and the focus of this thesis, world Englishes, would like to see left in history. His critique is in line with a prescriptive approach, one that is also more monolingually inclined, and that does not perceive notions such as Kachru’s (1985) *bilinguals’ creativity*. Acceptability is a key factor in the judgement of whether something is considered creative or not. This is prevalent in the depth of the answers in the interviews that followed up with questionnaire-survey participants:

FUI-D: *I’m unsure whether [...] the word ‘acceptable’ should be used, whether at all. Because it then suggests, then, again going against the grain, something is just not right about this writing. Perhaps if this piece is written in English and another language, translanguaging, perhaps if I don’t understand it, it is just I who doesn’t understand it. And creativity is subjected to interpretation. It might be easily comprehensible to a different audience. So perhaps I think that Transcultural Creativity demands of the reader, of the audience, going beyond limits of what is acceptable and what is normal, what is right, I feel as it **should** rather welcome all styles of expression.*

FUI-M: *I think for, in terms of intercultural/multicultural/etc what have you, writing, it would be more acceptable to play with stereotypes. Being able to take the piss out of one’s own culture. Not to perpetuate certain—stigma—discrimination. There’s a fine line between stereotype and discrimination, so you don’t want to venture so far as to make a stereotype something that creates discrimination.*

Both the above participants consider the acceptability of language used from slightly different perspectives. While FUI-D suggests an open, undefined approach to creativity in language use, she is also authorising ‘transcultural creativity’, suggesting that rather than being limited by ‘acceptability’, it “should rather welcome all styles of expression” (FUI-D). There is the suggestion of being unlimited and unbound by traditional constraints of language, not unlike those constraints

that individuals like Robert Dessaix prescribe. FUI-M's response on the other hand, is more limited, constrained by the discourses that might inhibit the creative use of language. Their response is reflective of the discussion in section 8.3, regarding stereotypes and caricature. Though in their case, the notion of playing with stereotypes becomes acceptable creativity for them, because it can be wielded as a tool to dispel and deconstruct stigma and discrimination. However, FUI-M acknowledge that there is a "*fine line*" that one must be wary of.

Considering how transcultural texts, such as the selected few that were presented in this thesis, are to be read is also critical to the participants' acceptability of the text's overall creativity. For example:

FUI-M: *The problem with that is, a different reading of it, a different interpretation of it might not get the meaning that the author intended. So a piece of text at the end of the day has meaning only if the reader gives it meaning. And the reader is free to give it whatever meaning they choose. But at the same time, without understanding where the author is coming from, you won't get the whole, complete story, which is what the author is trying to say.*

Similarly, FUI-T poses a slightly different approach that at the same time agrees with FUI-M's interpretation of multiple readings and the role of the author's intended meaning in construction with the reader's interpretation. However, it differs in conclusion.

FUI-T: *I think they can enrich your reading but they shouldn't enforce the reading. Just because when we say ambiguous and then we say well there's two ways of reading it then you're not actually embracing the ambiguity, you're setting conventional roads for people to follow. I think people need, in literature, it's more beneficial for people to work harder. That people seek to find and define their own understanding in that ambiguity. It's internally contradictory.*

While FUI-M feels that there is a meaning to the text intended by the author, and then there is the instance where it is the reader who gives meaning to the text; however, in order to understand the "whole, complete story" is to understand both the role of the author and reader in giving meaning to the text. FUI-T's response, on the other hand, conveys that knowing what the author meant is only to enrich understanding, but ultimately, the text gains meaning from the reader's interpretation. FUI-T's argument thus mirrors the presence of two issues raised by Morgan (1995). Though her arguments are set in literature of the 90s, the direction of her arguments is still being reflected today, as she argues:

First, to assume that a text can directly communicate a ‘live’ experience to a reader is to underplay the shaping role of language in re-presenting a version of events and experiences. Second, to authorise a story as authentic by pointing to the (ethnic) identity or knowledge of the author behind it is to forget that the meanings of a text are not so definitely determined, and that it is readers who realise a particular meaning (p.272)

To the first point, although this thesis focusses on generally, but not all, memoir and creative non-fiction, these texts are not only ‘live’ but present an imprint of lived-in experiences. The point of discussion that Morgan’s (1995) first point poses is one that has been reflected on throughout this thesis and is a focal point of this chapter—that language has a role in shaping and re-shaping the events and experiences it communicates. Earlier in this chapter, it was demonstrated how authors are using language through humour to speak of their stories and re-shape dominant discourses. As for Morgan’s (1995) second point, more relevant for this section of the chapter, is how it marries well with current dominant discourses in society (and societies beyond those in Australia). FUI-T’s response reflects this, more importantly as an individual living in present society, twenty-five years after Morgan’s (1995) article was published.

The reference to dominant discourses is one which many are familiar with—various artistic works are critiqued based on the presence of authenticity and political correctness. To name a few—why the reception of certain recent Young Adult fiction, like *29 Dates* written by Melissa De La Cruz is criticised for being a text about a Korean character but not written by a Korean, while a book like *To All The Boys I Loved Before* by Jenny Han, also dealing with a Korean (half-Korean) character but yet receives little commentary in terms of the authenticity of the author, who is Korean-American. Indeed, as has been encountered so far, authenticity is what these second generation migrant writers have to offer when considered at a commercial level. They provide insight that others might not. This is the kind of authenticity that Morgan addresses—who has the right to write these stories and at what point are authors ‘re-writing’ into a space of inauthenticity? To discuss this further would be illuminating, though it detracts somewhat from the current discussion. What is relevant here, in light of second generation transcultural writing and their transcultural creativity, is Morgan’s (1995) argument suggesting that despite the presence of the author, it is the readers who must realise a particular meaning. This point of discussion returns this section back to the comments made by FUI-M and FUI-T. No matter how wonderful a text is, its meaning cannot be realised without a reader to do so. As Morgan (1995) argues, and the findings of this thesis show and suggest,

these books help to supplement and redefine the norms of a monocultural literature. Their textual constructedness and narrative practices enable us to think about the role of language in constituting our realities and ourselves rather than hearing simply the authentic voice of ethnic experience [...] These texts relativise culture, storying and habits of meaning-making—may therefore enable us to be properly ambivalent, valuing both the familiar and unfamiliar (p. 280).

8.6 Paradigm shift, transcultural creativity, and second generation migrant writing

Studies looking into second generation migrants and their creativity is limited to those in favour of examining first generation migrant writers, or even writers who are not necessarily migrants but are using English as a second (or subsequent) language. The favouritism shown in this direction is as much understandable as it is fair—there are more bi(multi)lingual speakers in the world today than monolingual speakers (Saraceni, 2015; Sasaki, Suzuki, & Yoneda, 2008; Yano, 2001), thus, for those who are interested in studying the ‘-ness’ of bilingual and/or first generation migrant writers (such as Ha Jin, etc), then there is a great breadth of literature to do so. Most certainly, there is much to interest scholars in world Englishes to study literatures of different varieties of Englishes. The presence of a body of literature written in a specific variety, after all, can be considered a defining factor declaring an existing member of world Englishes (Butler, 1997). Writing has also traditionally been considered a standard by which to judge language (Clark & Ivanic, 1997), thus making it a valuable resource in examining the development of new varieties of Englishes (Bennui, 2013). However, talk of the occurring paradigm shift from English to Englishes (Editors, 2018; Murata & Jenkins, 2009) has always been a topic for discussion, and will continue to be, so long as progress is being made. This is where looking into second generation migrant writing can provide further insight.

Before this chapter ends, I present one more case that emerged from the data, initiated by a reviewer. P-R-D-G1 raises an interesting point of discussion in her review. According to her review she has previously “rant[ed] and rage[ed]” about issues of translation for texts between, what linguistic scholars would call ‘varieties of Englishes’. However, in her review of *DMHLBIT*, she argues:

P-R-D-G1: but here's [DMHLBIT] a prime example of Americanising a text until it's virtually unrecognisable [...] If something can be depersonalised, this book has been de-place-ised.

P-R-D-G1 then goes ahead to list some examples such as:

Aussie word:	--- Changed to:
serviette	--- napkin
primary school	--- elementary school
tram	--- streetcar
kilograms	--- pounds
ABC/SBS	--- PBS (not available in Australia)
biscuit	--- cookie
grade/year 11	--- eleventh grade
rubbish bin	--- trash can
milk bar/corner shop	--- convenience store
mum	--- mom
maths	--- math
roundabout	--- traffic circle
university/uni	--- college
car park	--- parking lot
pedestrian crossing	--- crosswalk
000	--- 911
fringe	--- bangs
plait	--- braid
take away	--- take-out
mobile (phone)	--- cell phone
nappy	--- diaper
4WD/four-wheel-drive	--- SUV
thongs	--- flip-flops
chilli	--- chilli pepper
rubbish	--- garbage

Figure 3 P-R-D-G1 list of Australianisms translated to Americanisms

The reviewer (among other reviewers) severely critiques this translation:

P-R-D-G1: I don't want to know what would happen if a tourist, needing urgent help, was to dial 911 in Australia, but changing it in books is not doing anyone any favours. I actually think it's irresponsible and dangerous - and who couldn't figure out, at least from context, what was meant by "000"?? Also, changing "ABC documentary" (or SBS) to PBS really jolted me - I'd never even heard of PBS before moving to Canada; we certainly don't get any US channels!

To the reviewer's own amusement, some lexical items were not altered, leaving them in their original state, such as "four-wheel-drive", according to her edition, was used once, while other times were translated to "SUV". This act of translation between varieties is not an unusual necessity, particularly

for books being translated to ‘American’ from say ‘Australian English’ to ‘American English’. This act of translation was also commented on by Pung in her interview with me, in which she noted that one of her own readers wrote to point out that in Australia, the emergency number is indeed 000 and not 911. This critique on the necessity of translation among varieties brings forward the light discussion at the beginning of this subsection. The above example, and the discussion throughout this chapter, raises a few final points.

The first is that considering the paradigm shift, this act of translation between English varieties then raises questions on the necessity of doing so. It might be argued that it is necessary for the potential audience to understand; however, it takes away from the novel, more so when not performed consistently (as noted by P-R-D-G1). This is relevant then to wider world Englishes discussions of intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability, and of the notion of writing in English vs. writing in Englishes. One can write in any Englishes—whether it be Outer Circle varieties such as Indian English or Filipino English, or more Inner Circle varieties such as Australian English—however, what is the acceptability of the reverse, reading in that variety? At what stage is it acceptable? And at what point is it necessary to translate—especially if readers are, to a degree, already exposed and being exposed to other varieties of Englishes, thus easily able to spot the ‘inaccuracies’—the inauthenticity? The second generation migrant author is also processing the questions of when best to translate and when not to. However, the concern here is that while translating a text from one variety to another may prove to be effective in appealing to the new target audience, is it still relevant in a world where due to globalisation, people are becoming more and more exposed to popular culture and language varieties from all around the world? Proshina (2018) suggests raising awareness and knowing when to explicate is necessary in light of intervarietal translation and interpretation. More so the kind of translation that results from English diversification where the use of culture-bound words pose challenges for comprehensibility and interpretability intervarietally. In their exploration of what it means to be writing in English for L1 and L2 speakers of English in light of developing changes and shifting paradigms of English as a medium, Horner and Lu (2012) examine writing composition from WE, ELF, and English only perspectives through an intertwining discussion. They suggest that it means:

no longer designing the teaching of English in terms of transmitting either a single set of codified forms, or a host of such sets, but instead, as inculcating dispositions towards and critically engaged, potentially transformative practices with these. Far from being aimed at assisting students only in specialized communicative situations, or at assisting only ‘special’ students, teaching of such dispositions would in fact be useful in preparing all students for a

plethora of communicative situations insofar as the monolingualist norm is in fact chimerical: if English is always a language in translation, then even interlocutors in ostensibly ‘ordinary’, monolingual situations engage in ‘translation’ to produce meaning (pp. 68-69)

While their arguments pertain to the education of writing in English, the train of thought is familiar. Horner and Lu (2012) capture notions, particularly toward the end of the above quote, that are comparable to other approaches that have been discussed earlier in Chapter 2 and persist through the following Chapters (4, 5, 6, and 7), such as the ever present argument on challenging the monolingual mindset in Australia (Clyne, 2004). Another is the approach of *bilinguals’ creativity* and the attached idea that language creativity is not only the property of ‘native’ or ‘first’ language speakers but that of bilinguals who are being just as creative with not one but multiple codes (Bamiro, 2011; Kachru, 1985; Osakwe, 1999). Lastly, the overall focus of this thesis that second generation migrants are being transculturally creative in ways that are both similar and different to their parental first generation migrant predecessors and their ‘adoptive’ host country, ‘first’ language, ‘Australian’ forebearers. This returns us to the beginning of this paragraph and the question of when to translate between Englishes—if, as Horner and Lu (2012) suggest, that rather than just aiming at a few select groups, what needs to be encouraged are new dispositions for “all students”, then a result might be that “if English is always a language in translation, then even interlocutors in ostensibly ‘ordinary’, monolingual situations engage in ‘translation’ to produce meaning” (p. 69)

The second point is that the paradigm shift is occurring, and there are many varieties of Englishes present around the world, which are being investigated and defined even as we speak. However, it has already been nearly 40 years since Kachru (1983b) brought to light his ground breaking theory, and the world has been shifting both linguistically and theoretically. What this chapter has shown is that newer generations are also contributing to the shape that varieties of world Englishes take. Through their blending of linguistic repertoires, their codemeshing, the way their texts are being perceived and read, further varieties of language are being constructed. Furthermore, their contributions exist within the folds of their language choice and use and these choices might not always be explicitly showcasing their multilingualness in their creativity. The second generation, or the next generation, as D'souza (1991) notes, are comfortable in the way they use English and see the benefit of using it as their language of expression. The contributions of new generations may not be a marked innovative process, but one set in history, repeated over time. As Enfield (2015) posits, it is also:

the creativity of individuals in former generations [that] gives rise to today's conventionalized forms, which are for today's speakers simply learnt. If we can learn anything of the world view of speakers from a given pattern of polysemy in the language they speak, it is more likely to concern the world view of their innovative *ancestors* (p.42).

Thus, the linguistic creativity of the second generation might look familiar but could draw on a number of deeply rooted cultural conceptualisations—as shown in this thesis, among other studies in the overarching scholarly literature.

Lastly, to end this chapter, it would be essential to address transcultural creativity as breaking convention. As the introduction of this chapter presented, the second generation is breaking convention through their transcultural creativity. This brings to mind Otsuji and Pennycook (2010), particularly their discussions on *metrolinguism*, which:

describes the way in which people of different and mixed backgrounds use, play with and negotiate identities through language; it does not assume connections between language, culture, ethnicity, nationality or geography, but rather seeks to explore how such relations are produced, resisted, defied or rearranged; its focus is not on language systems but on languages as emergent from contexts of interaction (p.246).

Meaning, as noted in Chapter 7, develops through reader interpretation, but is also guided, to some extent, by the author through metacultural writing competence. These second generation migrant writers are negotiating their identities with their readers through their use of language. The representation of the selected texts on commercial sites categorises them into sets of expectations, however, the texts themselves are providing a context of interaction in which interacting parties are also contributing to the result that they achieve from reading a particular text. From the perspective of the authors, we know that they are aware of their limitations going into their works, but did not allow this to prevent them from using language and allowing that to emerge in whatever form to the reader in a way that is most meaningful to them.

8.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter is titled 'breaking convention' in reflection of the ways second generation migrant writers are changing the shape of, not only Australian literature, but world Englishes literature. This chapter has demonstrated the different discourses in which the transcultural creativity of second

generation migrant writers are breaking convention. These second generation Australian migrant writers are rewriting familiar narratives. They are drawing on the humour discourse as a means of distracting readers and encouraging them at the same time to engage with the critical discussions within discourses such as of race and immigration in Australia. Furthermore, their approach to these significant discourses breaks conventions often associated with particular cultures or genres of literature—such as Law’s graphically humorous description of his mother’s birthing history that disrupts perceptions of what is and is not shared or described in Chinese literary style. Thus, as a study from a world Englishes perspective, the second generation are breaking convention in the examination of world Englishes literatures. The discussion in this chapter demonstrates the importance of these selected texts and the writings of second generation migrant writers to Australian literature and to the discussions of greater discourses in Australia, but also to extending the world Englishes framework and dispelling the fear of examining literature from the Inner Circle.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Overview

In this study, I have examined the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant Australian writers, Alice Pung, Benjamin Law, and Randa Abdel-Fattah, in five selected texts, in the form of linguistic strategies used by the authors. I have also examined the authors' creative process, and the response of participants to the authors' transcultural creativity through a combination of qualitative methods. The data sources included textual and discourse analysis of five selected texts and relevant paratexts, a questionnaire-survey, and semi-structured interviews with both participants from the questionnaire-survey and the selected three authors. The analysis employed an integration of adopted or adapted frameworks of both world Englishes and Cultural Linguistics. Findings show that second generation migrant writers are using a range of linguistic strategies to write creatively. The language used may be English, but it is drawn from a meshed linguistic repertoire in order to best express and represent the culturalness of the texts' narratives. Through the transcultural creativity of the authors, cultural conceptualisations embedded in the language are both Australian and 'other' (in this case, Chinese-Cantonese/Chinese-Teochew and Muslim-Arabic), leading to providing readers with multiple interpretations of the text. Thus, the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writers is multiple, takes many shapes and forms in text, dependent on both the writer and the reader in constructing meaning, and takes the familiar into the unfamiliar in conceptualisation. The findings of this thesis can be found in the following section in relation to the main five questions.

Table 15 Summary of key findings of the research questions

Research question	Findings
Research Question 1: 1) How do SGMW write creatively?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transcultural creativity is found in the linguistic strategies used by the authors, showcasing both their conscious and unconscious decision making in their creative process

<p>a. What linguistic strategies do writers use?</p> <p>b. How do they use these strategies?</p> <p>c. How are abstract cultural conceptualisations realised in the text?</p> <p>d. To what extent do readers participating in this study understand cultural conceptualisations that the authors draw on?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second generation migrant writers use the same linguistic strategies as other world Englishes writers, though their intentions for using such strategies may vary to suit their contexts. • Second generation writing in English, much like other generations or similar genres, is deeply rooted in cultural conceptualisations and may be realised if readers seek the deeper meaning of the English words used.
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<p>Research Question 2:</p> <p>2) How are these texts and their transcultural creativity received by readers?</p> <p>a. What is considered creativity in language use by the participants?</p> <p>b. To what extent do participants consider the author as being creative?</p> <p>c. To what extent does it influence the readers' interpretation of the selected texts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcultural creativity in second generation migrant writing may not necessarily be 'creative' if it is too close to the 'standard' or 'norm'. • Transcultural creativity becomes dependent on who the readers are, who the writers are writing for, and what their intentions might be. • Participants may still consider something as transculturally creative if they can develop their own interpretations. • Through metacultural (writing) competence, authors can also guide the reader to interpret, develop and understand culturally constructed concepts. As a result, new meanings are developed that can be considered transculturally creative. • Transcultural creativity is a two-way process of meaning making, constructed by both readers and writers. Unless culturally constructed concepts are understood or shared by the reader,
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the language used to convey these concepts may not be considered creative.

Research Question 3:

3) How do paratexts construct and situate the texts and authors?

- a. What are the sociocultural influences that construct and contextualise the texts?
- b. How do paratexts present the texts to other audiences?
- c. How is the linguistic creativity and language used by the authors perceived by external online sources?

- The transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writing is further constructed by its place within the sociocultural context. It is both creative and not creative depending on how participants and external readers (from the paratexts) perceived the relevance of the texts to society.
- Sociocultural influences that construct and contextualise the texts include its placement in apparent and dominant genre categories such as *migrant*, *immigrant*, *refugee*, *young adult*, and *memoir*
- The selected texts have become significant through the construction of the TEXTS AS NECESSARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE. This is notable through the meta-discourse of book reviews and questionnaire-survey responses
- Perception of the linguistic creativity and language used by the authors is perceived to be dichotomous in the meta-discourse analysis found in external online sources. Some found that their use of language is innovative and unique, while others felt the equation, BLUNT DIALOGUE IS NOT CREATIVE DIALOGUE.

Research Question 4:

4) How do the authors reflect and respond to their creativity (and creativity of their fellow authors)?

- a. What is the influence their bilingual competence has on their language creativity?
- b. How did the authors decide/choose to be 'creative' transculturally?
- c. How do the authors respond and reflect on their own instances of transcultural creativity?
- d. How do the authors respond to instances of transcultural creativity from other authors?

- The “meshed” quality of second generation migrants' "bilingualism" contributes to the transcultural creativity of SGMW; therefore, despite the Australian Englishness of the text, what seems like ‘otherness’ traditionally, has already crossed transcultural boundaries to be part of what is considered ‘the norm’.
- Second generation migrant writing may be written in their most dominant language—English—but it does not mean that multilingualism is absent. It may not be immediately visible to reader, but if the cultural conceptualisation is realised, so too would the multilingualness of the English be recognised.
- Transcultural creativity is a reflection of self, it is a reflection of the social and linguistic context of the author/writer.
- Transcultural creativity is present in the consciousness of the writer during the creative process.

Research Question 5:

5) What are the implications for Inner Circle writers who are writing across cultures?

- English may be a given to these writers, but their works are no less diverse nor are solely ‘monolingual’ texts.
- A need to change perspectives and see the multiplicity first of shallow multilingualism in writing.
- Challenging the monolingual mindset means moving away from it to fully perceive the bigger picture of how language is being used, shaped, and challenged.

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- A need to appreciate the linguistic diversity and the multiple linguistic repertoires that a ‘singular’ variety stretches to accommodate.
 - A need to encourage how students see an Inner Circle Transcultural text for its *similarities* rather than *difference* to traditional Inner Circle texts.
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Thus, this chapter provides the conclusion to this thesis and its study on the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writing in Australia. The next section summarises the findings, outlines the contributions, before this thesis ends on the implications for world Englishes, Cultural Linguistics, studies in the Inner Circle, and final remarks.

9.2 Summary of findings and contributions

The last few decades have demonstrated a boom of studies in world Englishes, Kachruvian approach or otherwise. World Englishes is known for its appropriateness as opposed to correctness approach to being inclusive of all varieties of Englishes (Proshina, 2014). Kachru’s world Englishes model is still considered the most prevalent and cited, for what it offers: the three circles “seek to represent the fact that English plays *different* roles and exists in *different* forms for *different* people in *different* places. The model symbolizes diversity, in opposition to rigid and immutable sameness” (Saraceni, 2015, p. 51). However, Kachru’s model has also attracted criticism over time that shows the ongoing reflection of English, people, and transnationalism. A combined world Englishes and Cultural Linguistic approach offered the opportunity to look deeper into the features of a world Englishes variety, to seek the cultural underpinning specific language choices. The Cultural Linguistics approach, through the main tools of *cultural schema*, *cultural category*, and *cultural metaphor*, are heterogeneously distributed between community members (Sharifian, 2011). Thus, employing a cultural conceptualisations framework in this study allowed a deeper exploration of both the cultural conceptualisations that shape the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writers, and also the response and reception of its readers (or in the case of this thesis, the participants).

Hence, much like Xu and Sharifian (2017, 2018) and Fang (2019), this study is situated at the intersection of world Englishes and Cultural Linguistics. It examined the linguistic effect of the transcultural influences in the English of second generation migrant writers, who have one foot in both home and host cultures and languages. For some, these second generation individuals may fit comfortably in the type described by Kachru (1985), but for many others, they do not, as they do not possess the ‘competence’ of two or more languages. Their competence is specific to one dominant language, and the varying unequal degree of competence in the other, home culture language. Thus, this study examined how these second generation migrant writers creatively utilise their meshed linguistic and cultural repertoires to write creatively in their literary works.

Previously, scholars have primarily examined texts from firstly, the Outer Circle, then secondly, the Expanding Circle. As examined in Chapter 2, there has been much research into the bilinguals’ creativity in literary texts of these two circles, examining authors such as Chinua Achebe and Raja Rao. Studies in world Englishes, those looking specifically at the linguistic creativity of world Englishes literatures, also tend to avoid literary texts from the Inner Circle. This is an argument that is also reiterated in Canagarajah (2013) and Saraceni (2015) in their critical discussions on the gaps within world Englishes, not only in regards to the study of world Englishes texts, but also towards varieties of world Englishes from a world Englishes perspective. Furthermore, Pandey (2019) argues that the Englishisation of world Englishes literature at present is going in reverse, that it is re-Englishing rather than de-Englishing in the way that Kachru first intended in his arguments for world Englishes and bilinguals’ creativity. She argues too about the concern regarding the shallow bilingualism present in current world Englishes literature, that is only described but not experienced in the texture of the text, in other words is presented to the readers in unmarked English rather than the marked. This was also noted by D'souza (1991) in her categorisation of Indian English texts, that were notably varied in un/markedness depending on the generation—the most marked use of Indian English is present in first generation writers, and the least marked (though still present) in the ‘next’, or what this thesis terms the ‘second’ generation writing. Lastly, the scholarly literature on linguistic creativity of world Englishes literatures is limited to researcher-based investigations, to the extent that both Albakry and Siler (2012) and Bennui (2013) suggest that future studies would benefit from also exploring the reception and perception of potential readers and/or those who study world Englishes, who could further validate the findings in terms of variety but also the presence of ‘otherness’ within world Englishes literature.

In summary, in order to address these gaps in the scholarly literature, this thesis examined how second generation migrant authors are writing creatively in English from a world Englishes

perspective and how this creativity is received, perceived, and accepted. It used a text and discourse analysis approach in conjunction with questionnaire-survey and semi-structured interviews. Though linguistic creativity has been much researched in the context of world Englishes, the contribution of this thesis is the texture, shape, and its components. It is a contribution to world Englishes, as it focusses on a new set of literary texts (specifically second generation migrant writing), a new context (an Inner Circle country), an integrated framework (of world Englishes and Cultural Linguistics), and a focus on not only a researcher-based analysis of linguistic creativity but also the reception and perception of participant responses to the authors' linguistic and discourse creativity. Through these aspects, this study has shown that while the Kachruvian approach to world Englishes and *bilinguals' creativity* is still relevant, it can be taken further to embrace and be inclusive of all its circles and literary texts. This study has also shown that the integrated analytical approach provides a number of effective analytical tools to examine the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writing.

The research has confirmed that second generation migrant writers do write creatively from a world Englishes perspective, and that though they are writing in English, this does not mean that the 'shallow' multilingualism, to use Pandey's (2019) words, masks the complexity of the linguistic multilingualism present in the text. Key findings of the study in this thesis show however, that the authors' creativity is a reflection of self, inspired by their sociocultural context, their relationship with the English language, their perception of their unequal bilingual competence, their creative process, and the use of their linguistic strategies. Furthermore, these selected second generation migrants show awareness for their lack of competence in their home tongue, demonstrating an awareness and meshedness of both English and home language. The result thus is a continual presence of cultural conceptualisations of both world, multiple cultures, or a blended culture potentially embedded in the English words of the text. This was notable, for example, in Law's use of 'ghost' in Excerpt 1 in Chapter 7. At first glance, the surface reading of the example "Caloundra was a ghost town" has no presence of multilingualism and may draw on specific schemas of GHOST TOWN AS AN EMPTY, BARREN OR DESERTED PLACE, however, through the juxtaposition of "[l]iterally everyone was white", the author has hinted at the possibility of alternate readings. Again, there is no evident multilingualism present. However, the juxtaposition of 'ghost town' and 'white' are, as the findings in this thesis note, embedded in cultural conceptualisations that draw from two specific cultures. It is also recognised by questionnaire-survey participants and confirmed by the authors as conscious choices in their creative process. In the case of Cantonese and English, the cultural conceptualisation of GHOST differs from both, yet are both applied in this example. So while, in Pandey's (2019) view, there is no

multilingualism present, and this might be a clear case of re-Englishing, the findings in this study suggest otherwise. These second generation migrant writers are codemeshing in their use of English through decisions made in the creative process, and drawing on multiple linguistic repertoires to express themselves, embedding relevant cultural conceptualisations in the English they use. Thus, one must look at the deeper level of meaning to examine the cultural conceptualisations of what seems familiar.

As intended, this research also further extends previous notions of bilinguals' creativity and transcultural creativity to be further inclusive. While previous studies presume the almost equal presence of first and second (and subsequent) language competence, treating both languages as equally present in their linguistic repertoire, findings show that the second generation migrant authors are aware of the presence of their 'other' tongue but will choose to write in their dominant English tongue. While for those authors examined in previous studies, the assumption that English is acquired and not a given, it is a given for these second generation migrant authors. However, findings show that even though it is a given, this does not mean they do not make the same choices that second language English writers must make. For example, this can be seen in the creative decisions made by the selected authors in terms of linguistic strategies: Pung's choice to use 'Outside Grandmother' in example A-1-4-3 (in Chapter 5) is directly translated; though she may have chosen to describe this in other ways in English, she chose to use an unusual collocation over creatively translating and familiarising it in English.

The findings of this thesis also show that second generation migrant writers are indeed designing a text which uses linguistic resources from more than one language. They are using strategies with subtle adjustments made for psychological, sociological, and attitudinal reasons, even though, they are not producing bilinguals' creativity in the sense that he specifically prescribes: "creative processes which are the result of competence in two or more languages" (Kachru, 1985 p.20). As the findings of this thesis show, these second generation migrant authors are aware of their unequal competence in their home language, a result of their environment growing up and limited by factors such as loss of the individual with whom they communicate in that language, the status of being a younger child, and also experiencing an English speaking environment. Thus, the findings also show two key points. The first is that second generation migrant writing, particularly where this generation is using English as a dominant first or native language, has much to offer to studies on bilinguals' creativity in world Englishes. The second is that the findings demonstrate that texts, not only second generation migrant writing, from the Inner Circle are worth examining for their—to borrow Pennycook's (2003) words, "worldliness of English" (p.16).

This study also presents the first thesis length study of a world Englishes approach to linguistic creativity in Inner Circle literary works in an Inner Circle context, in this case, specifically Australia. Despite the general avoidance of texts from the Inner Circle contexts because of the writer's status as 'native' writers of English, this study has shown that such texts also offer new perspectives on the role of English for writers engaging in intercultural crossover in their texts. To world Englishes, the key findings of this study show that the meshed quality of the second generation migrants' bilingualism contributes to the transcultural creativity of the second generation migrant writer. Therefore, a key finding of this thesis is though the text can be read as Australian, and the language of the text can be seen as Australian English as well as a representation of the Australian English variety, the transcultural creativeness of the text resides in the perception. This is where the contribution lies to world Englishes scholarly literature—that what seems like 'otherness' traditionally, has already crossed transcultural boundaries to be part of what is considered 'the norm'. The findings of this study moves away from traditional studies of varieties into examining the trans-(lating, culturalism, nationalism)-ness of world Englishes literatures in light of the shifting paradigm of world Englishes that has always been seen as inclusive of all varieties of Englishes.

In extending previous research through the examination of creativity of participants' reception of the selected texts and perception of the transcultural creativity within the texts, the data revealed that participants were less likely to consider the use of language as creative if it was too close to what they considered to be 'standard' or the 'norm' of English. Even so, some participants argued that for the language of the selected texts to be considered transculturally creative, this was dependent on who the readers are and what the writer's intentions might be regarding their writing. The language used might still be considered creative if participants were able to develop their own interpretations. Thus, key findings regarding the perception of transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writing includes:

- 1) acknowledging that through metacultural writing competence authors can guide their readers to interpret, develop and understand culturally constructed concepts and foster new meanings that can be considered transculturally creative;

- 2) being aware that transcultural creativity is a two-way process of meaning making constructed by both the reader and writer, therefore the creativeness of the language used can be limited to whether the reader shares or understands the cultural conceptualisation.

It may seem that on the one hand, this thesis' embrace of English in its internationality, globality, and worldliness, might be seen as also embracing the imperialness that such perspectives

can be often accused of. However, it must be noted the undeniable reach that English has gained over many years, across the world and into the baskets of unsuspecting users, to be used for various purposes, as a tool of access, and language of communication. To put this into perspective first, Kendall (2018), in light of the African context and the debate on African Englishes, suggests that for African children, it may provide the wrong impression to present creative works in the language of their colonisers—as it has become a choice to write in English to reflect African values and not the values of the coloniser. This is a concern she highlights regarding the alternative perspective that dominating creative writers in Africa have on the language of literature—such as N̄gũgĩ wa Thiong’o and Achebe. This is undoubtedly true, as there is the danger of misrepresenting language, of choosing to retain colonial history. However, on the other hand, scholars, such as Braj Kachru and writers such as Jin (2010), Achebe (1965) and Rao (Kachru, 1988b), have chosen to re-write language. In other words, this does not mean re-writing as in to pull it apart and put it back together, but to reshape the perception of the language, to take the language of the colonisers and return it not as borrowed language but a language they call their own.

This is where the direction of this thesis takes its position. Current affairs have recently been reporting on a global history deeply entrenched in an unsavoury past—of which half the world had been built on—and even Australia is not salvaged from its own history. Australia may not have the shameful history that other greater nations have skimmed over (such as the US and UK), but it is not exempt. In the recent years, at best, one can pinpoint the moments in the millennium when groups of people were excluded from Australia, if one were to look at the White Australia Policy (more formally known as the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*) and the coming of the Multicultural Australia Act (Ommundsen, 2011). Not to mention the many other Acts that have excluded, limited, restricted many others. As such, Australia is not exempt, and as we take this back to language, linguistics, and transcultural literature, we must also remember. In this thesis, I have presented responses from questionnaire-survey participants and commentary from book reviewers on a number of award-winning transcultural texts. Through their eyes, it is clear that there is:

- 1) a need for such transcultural literature that transcends both worlds—home and host and potentially more;

- 2) such texts are examples of why world Englishes sorely needs to transcend further beyond studies defining varieties—only embracing the linguistic diversities within varieties can take this discipline into a new era of world Englishes studies.

9.3 Implications of the study

Second generation migrant writers share an even more special position in comparison to non-native or first generation writers in that they have grown up with multiple languages in their linguistic repertoire, rather than a dominating ‘mother, other tongue’ and ‘acquired English or second language tongue’, thus, their approach to using language while to the monolingual or multilingual approach, also intersects in not entirely expected ways. This could be through choice of linguistic creativity, the presence of English embedded in cultural conceptualisations, or both. The recognition of the second generation migrant writer’s transcultural creativity has a number of implications for world Englishes, Cultural Linguistics, and Inner Circle writers writing across cultures.

The findings of this thesis contribute to world Englishes by examining the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writers in world Englishes. This study represents also a contribution to the shift in world Englishes, further highlighting the need for studies in world Englishes—whether they be variety based or examining, as this thesis did, literary texts in world Englishes—on the linguistic diversity of all areas of world Englishes. Second generation migrants are only a portion of the ethnic diaspora; however, as writers, they are potentially writing in *Englishes* rather than simply ‘English’ and drawing on the cultural conceptualisations of their home and host cultures to convey their realities. For world Englishes, there’s a need to embrace all world Englishes literatures, just as it attempts to embrace all varieties of Englishes—including the linguistically diverse variations of each variety. This thesis has shown how this can be achieved through its examination of the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writing in Australia.

The integrated world Englishes framework employed by this thesis was not only a suitable approach in reflection of the codemeshed linguistic repertoire of the second generation migrant writer, it also allowed a close examination of the deep structure of the second generation migrants’ transcultural creativity. This was even more significant as the individuals in question are so-called ‘native’ speakers of English and are using English as a primary language. It is also one of the first large size study that employs an integrated world Englishes and Cultural Linguistics framework to examine the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant literature. Therefore, it has implications for both world Englishes and Cultural Linguistics in the following senses.

On one hand, it is a starting point for linguistic creativity studies with a focus on literature for the Inner Circle, more so for studies focussing on second generation migrants. This is significant as their creativity can be considered ‘shallow’ multilingualism than ‘deep’, even though the text may

not or should not only be read from an English perspective. On the other hand, it is an extension of the existing studies on bilinguals' and transcultural creativity into the next level. Therefore, such a study for world Englishes, may encourage further studies to look beyond the traditional perceptions of 'native speaker' and examine the linguistic diversity of the Inner Circle.

It is also a starting point for Cultural Linguistic studies to further extend research into the next generation who may possess a codemeshed linguistic repertoire, where cultural conceptualisations are rooted in multiple cultures. The discussion in Chapter 7 demonstrates the degrees of heterogeneous distribution and participant contribution to the understanding and schematisation of cultural conceptualisations. The awareness of this has further implications for the study of both second generation migrant writing and literature in Australia (which is discussed in the following section), and world Englishes literatures.

Second generation migrant writers in Australia are as much concerned with their linguistic creativity as 'non-native' writers who are portrayed in previous research in world Englishes. The only difference is their status as speakers and users of English as a first language. However, this does not mean that these writers are writing as 'native speakers'. As Ommundsen (2018) argues, writing in English does not mean leaving behind their other languages or writing like, or as, native speakers. English may be a given to these writers, but as this thesis has demonstrated, their works are no less diverse nor are solely 'monolingual' texts. Their texts can be read multiple ways, and often encourage those who are willing to be guided by the author's metacultural competence, to engage with alternative meanings and to wonder if what they read is truly what was meant. The examples presented in Chapter 7 reveal how diverse interpretations are, drawn from the participants' own cultural conceptualisations. In the same chapter, the participants' interpretations were compared to the authors' own explanations. There is no rule that there should only be one interpretation of a text. Furthermore, the texts are a product of authors who have grown up in multilingual and multicultural contexts, which should make them *less* monolingual than the overwhelming presence of English in their texts suggests. Such awareness of the transcultural creativeness of these second generation migrants should encourage challenging the monolingual mindset that is still present in Australian fiction. There are two points to be addressed here.

The first is that although the findings of this thesis do not challenge the monolingualism in the way that Ommundsen (2018) or Pandey (2019) suggest or critique, the implications are that, if in a society, such as Australia, where perhaps the deep multilingualism (of Pandey's words) may cross swords with notions of prescriptivism and correctness, then the challenge must be to change

perspectives and see the multiplicity first of shallow multilingualism in writing. The second is that in light of this thesis, to challenge the monolingual mindset would mean to move away from it to fully perceive the bigger picture of how language is being used, shaped, and challenged. As role models who are using language or guiding others to explore language use whether it is in the classroom, as an editor, as a writer, it is important to encourage a multilingual mindset. We must also appreciate the linguistic diversity and the multiple linguistic repertoires that a ‘singular’ variety stretches to accommodate—this thesis demonstrated the lengths that the selected authors could stretch the language. Through appreciation can understanding grow, and from understanding, can interpretation and reflection of meaning be developed in negotiation between the reader and the writer. This is not so different from Sharifian’s (2013) metacultural competence for intercultural communication: *awareness of variation, explication, and negotiation*; and Xu’s (2017) metacultural writing competence, based on Sharifian (2013), for online intercultural communication: *awareness of variation, intercultural explanation ability, and intercultural negotiation*. To challenge the monolingual mindset, we must also understand that second generation migrant writers (and other subsequent generations) are making use of their meshed linguistic repertoires to creatively construct their words to convey multiple meanings and are thinking beyond the restraints of what might be perceived as the ‘norm’.

Lastly, this study has implications in two ways for ‘Australian literature’ in the classroom. The first is regarding the selection of texts. Introducing Australian literary texts has been a dominant ideal, and that which has been achieved, according to Patterson (2012). Selecting stories that represent Australia and its multicultural diversity is also a significant criterion for final year English studies (not English literature or English as a Second Language units), in both NSW and Victoria, known as HSC and VCE, respectively (Patterson, 2012). Both Pung and Abdel-Fattah’s books are listed or have previously been listed as possible texts for study. They add value as multicultural texts, for which they have been listed for in the first place, and also represent the experiences of the next generation. The other implication is drawn from two results of the paratextual material. The first is the case of one reviewer (P-A-L-G4) discussed in Chapter 8, who felt she did not connect with the discourses represented in Pung’s *Laurinda* in comparison to iconic Australian young adult novels, such as *Puberty Blues* (by Gabrielle Carey and Kathy Lette). While the reception of the text by this reviewer may be due to individual tastes, in the classroom, what should be encouraged is how students see *Laurinda* as an Australian text and how it is *similar* to rather than *different* to texts like *Puberty Blues*. The second is the focus on metaphors and simile and symbols in teaching materials when it comes to language and literature. While these are fair points to examine, one cannot help but wonder what a

shift in language focus may contribute to the study of transcultural texts such as the five selected for this thesis. The study of these texts in the classroom can only benefit from a linguistic examination relevant to the overarching themes, as the use of English plays a particularly significant role.

9.4 Final remarks and future recommendations

Although this study has been successful in demonstrating the value of examining second generation migrant writing in Australia from a world Englishes perspective, and further examining English from the Inner Circle of Kachru's concentric circles, it is not without its limitations.

The selection of the texts, though put through a rigorous set of criteria, includes predominantly two female authors and one male author. The uneven balance of gender can be seen to some extent as a reflection of the gender ratio of second generation authors and, while this did not impact the investigation of the transcultural creativity of second generation migrant writing in this thesis, a gender comparison is potentially a fruitful avenue for future studies.

Another aspect of the text selection is that it represents only a limited variation of cultural backgrounds, primarily Chinese-Teochew, Cantonese-Chinese, and Muslim-Arabic (Egyptian/Palestinian). The rigorous selection process as earlier outlined, was aimed at choosing the more widely renowned texts and authors who self-ascribe or are reported to be second generation migrants. Future studies may consider a broader range of backgrounds to examine whether the linguistic strategies are the same or vary, and how cultural conceptualisations are received in those instances.

As this study chose to focus on the reception of the texts and the perception of their authors (via interviews), there was one aspect of the creative process not explicitly explored; namely, the role of editors. The texts were selected based on their published mode—traditional rather than independent—thus favouring the perception of prestige and wide reach of traditional publishers. As such, interviewing editors would benefit similar studies, particularly those examining the process of creativity in literary texts — editors play a significant role in what remains in the manuscript and what may be removed or reshaped to be more acceptable to the audience. Thus, future studies may also consider the role of the editor in examining linguistic creativity in literary works.

Recommendations for future studies also include:

- 1) Further comparison studies of second generation migrant writers in other contexts, not only limited to Kachru's Inner Circle, but the Outer and Expanding as well.
- 2) This study focussed on qualitative driven methods thus, further studies should consider quantitative approaches.
- 3) Although the focus of this study was on the worldliness of second generation migrant writing, further studies may also consider examining the linguistic creativity of considered 'Australian' texts as a way of examining the Australian English variety.
- 4) This study focussed on lexical and discourse creativity, and cultural conceptualisations; future studies could look more comprehensively at the other aspects of linguistics, such as syntactic and potentially phonological.
- 5) Further studies may also examine the attitudes and perception of transcultural creativity in the classroom, thus having implications for the teaching of these texts in both the English and ESL or EAL classrooms.

Thus, in conclusion, this thesis illustrates the insights that can be gained from examining texts from the Inner Circle. The linguistic diversity of the varieties within this circle and of second generation migrant writers writing in English, means that these writers are similar to those of Kachru's era. Thus, their texts, much like the texts of first generation and non-native writers before them, have "shared conventions and literary milieu between the creator of the text and the reader of English [that] can no more be taken for granted" (B. B. Kachru, 1987, p. 136).

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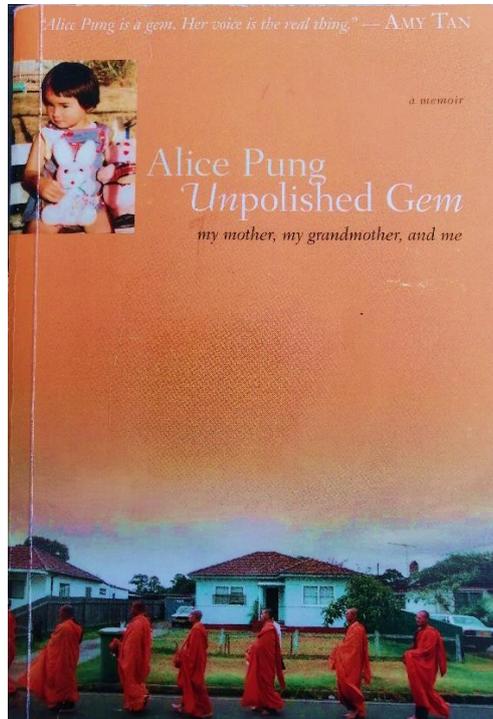
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Appendix A Selected Texts

Unpolished Gem by Alice Pung¹²



This story does not begin on a boat. Nor does it contain any wild swans or falling leaves.

In a wonderland called Footscray, a girl named Alice and her Chinese-Cambodian family pursue the Australian Dream – Asian style. Armed with an ocker accent, Alice dives head- first into schooling, romance and the getting of wisdom. Her mother becomes an Aussie battler – an outworker, that is. Her father embraces the miracle of franchising and opens an electrical-appliance store. And every day her grandmother blesses Father Government for giving old people money.

Unpolished Gem is a book rich in comedy, a loving and irreverent portrait of a family, its everyday struggles and bittersweet triumphs. With it, Australian writing gains an unforgettable new voice.

¹² The images of the selected texts are photographed by me, unless stated otherwise

Laurinda by Alice Pung



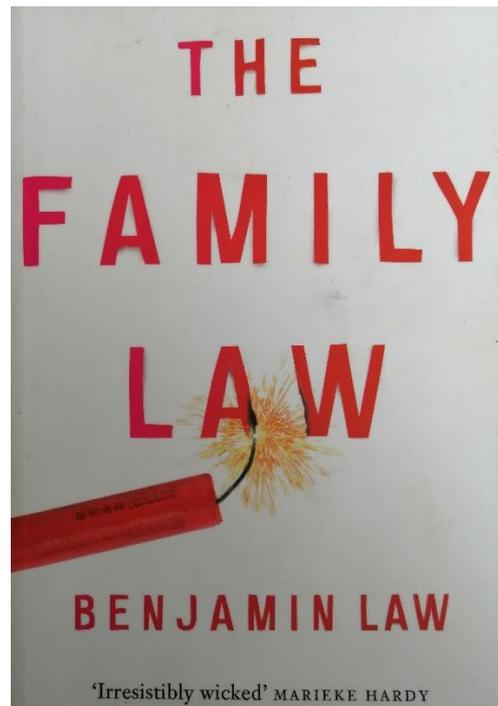
When my dad dropped us off at the front gate, the first things I saw were the rose garden spreading out on either side of the main driveway and the enormous sign in iron cursive letters spelling out LAURINDA. No "Ladies College" after it, of course; the name was meant to speak for itself.

Laurinda is an exclusive school for girls. At its secret core is the Cabinet, a trio of girls who wield power over their classmates - and some of their teachers.

Entering this world of wealth and secrets is Lucy Lam, a scholarship girl with sharp eyes and a shaky sense of self. As she watches the Cabinet at work, and is courted by them, Lucy finds herself in a battle for her identity and integrity.

Funny, feisty and moving, *Laurinda* explores Lucy's struggle to stay true to herself as she finds her way in a new world of privilege and opportunity.

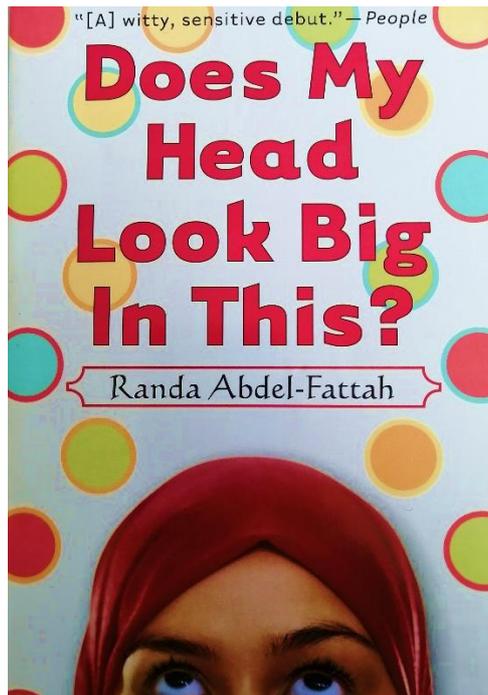
The Family Law by Benjamin Law



Meet the Law family – eccentric, endearing and hard to resist. Your guide: Benjamin, the third of five children and a born humorist. Join him as he tries to answer some puzzling questions: Why won't his Chinese dad wear made-in-China underpants? Why was most of his extended family deported in the 1980s? Will his childhood dreams of *Home and Away* stardom come to nothing? What are his chances of finding love?

Hilarious and moving, *The Family Law* is a linked series of tales from a beloved Australian writer.

Does my head look big in this? by Randa Abdel-Fattah



The slide opened and I heard a gentle, kind voice: What is your confession, my child? I was stuffed. The Priest would declare me a heretic; my parents would call me a traitor... The Priest asked me again: What is your confession, my child? I'm Muslim. I whispered.

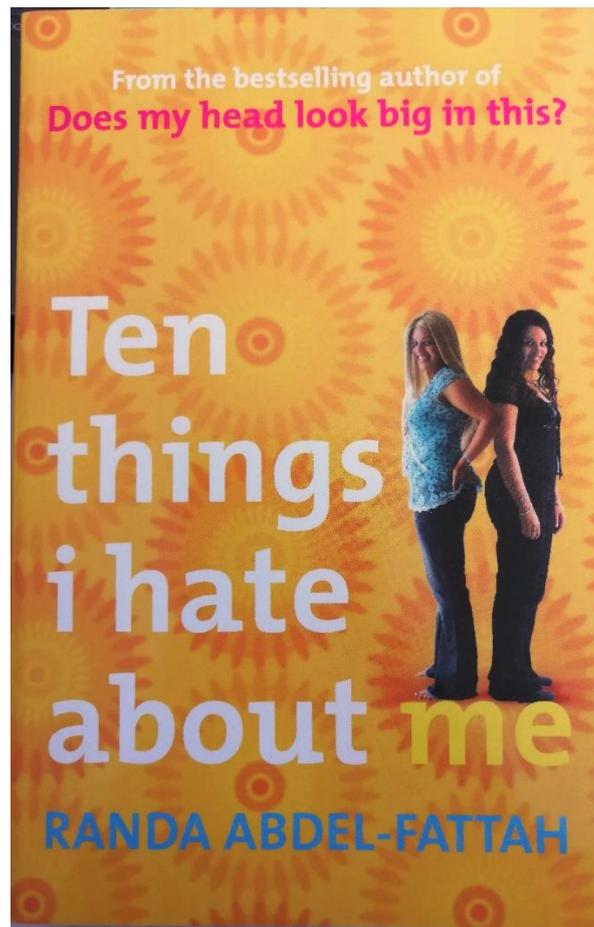
Welcome to my world. I'm Amal Abdel-Hakim, a seventeen year-old Australian-Palestinian-Muslim still trying to come to grips with my various identity hyphens.

It's hard enough being cool as a teenager when being one issue behind the latest Cosmo is enough to disqualify you from the in-group. Try wearing a veil on your head and practising the bum's up position at lunchtime and you know you're in for a tough time at school.

Luckily my friends support me, although they've got a few troubles of their own. Simone, blonde, gorgeous and overweight – she's got serious image issues, and Leila's really intelligent but her parents are more interested in her getting a marriage certificate than her high school certificate!

And I thought I had problems...

Ten Things I Hate About Me by Randa Abdel-Fattah



Jamie wants to be the real thing. From the roots of her dyed blonde hair...

There are a lot of things Jamie hates about her life: her dark hair, her dad's Stone Age Charter of Curfew Rights, her real name – Jamilah Towfeek.

For the past three years Jamie has hidden her Lebanese background from everyone at school. It's only with her email friend John that she can really be herself. But now things are getting complicated: the most popular boy in school is interested in her, but there's no way he would be if he knew the truth. Then there's Timothy, the school loner, who for some reason Jamie just can't stop thinking about. As for John, he seems to have a pretty big secret of his own...

To top it all off, Jamie's school formal is coming up. The only way she'll be allowed to attend is by revealing her true identity. Will she risk it all? And does she know who she is... Jamie or Jamilah?

Appendix B Text Excerpts

Table 16 Excerpts selected for the questionnaire-survey

Excerpt No.	Excerpt
1	<p>In contrast to Hong Kong – a throbbing, stinking metropolis of concrete, where people hung out their laundry thirty storeys up – Caloundra was a ghost town. Literally everyone was white.</p> <p><i>(The Family Law, Benjamin Law, p.22)</i></p>
2	<p>And we grow old, they'll do what they do in this country and cart us off to old people's homes! And we'll be stuck with the <u>old white ghosts</u>.</p> <p><i>(Unpolished Gem, Alice Pung, pp. 148-9)</i></p>
3	<p>I had met some of his female friends – girls with names like Cathy and Gemma and Louisa – girls who gave him big bear-hugs and kisses when they met. It was an Aussie thing, I decided. It was all innocent standard practice and it didn't mean a thing. <i>They</i> didn't have <i>issues</i> with physical contact like we did.</p> <p><i>(Unpolished Gem, Alice Pung, p.249)</i></p>
4	<p>The Cambodians have a saying: "A girl is like white cotton wool-once dirtied, it can never be clean again. A boy is like a gem – the more you polish it, the brighter it shines."</p> <p><i>(Unpolished Gem, Alice Pung, p.216)</i></p>
5	<p>'Look, if you don't call him, I think <i>I</i> will, 'cause you are so stubborn! You put my dad to shame! I thought he had a case of the inflexibles, but you? There's this Arabic saying my mum always tells my dad when he's really stubborn. She says his mind is like a shoe.'</p> <p>'A shoe?'</p> <p>'Yep,' I shrug. 'Lost in translation, I guess.'</p> <p><i>(DMHLBIT, Randa Abdel-Fattah, p.272)</i></p>

6 “‘In the past in the Golden Towers,’ my grandmother began, and I knew she was going to tell me about the other country where everybody lived a life before me. All her stories began with things in the past, in the Long Mountain, China, or Cambodia, the Golden Towers. ‘In the past,’ she said, ‘when your father was small, we had a mattress, one and a half metres wide, two metres long. Your First Uncle, your Second Uncle, your Third Uncle, your Fourth Uncle and your father – all very small then – crammed onto the mattress with me...’”
(*Unpolished Gem*, Alice Pung, **p. 53**)

7 I’ve had enough. ‘Serves you right!’ I suddenly yell, jumping up from my seat. ‘You don’t deserve her!’

 ‘Amal!’ my dad shouts.

 Leila’s mum looks at me in shock. ‘Why you talk like this to me?’ I older than you! You show manners!’

(*DMHLBIT*, Randa Abdel-Fattah, **p.294**)

8 ‘Not much fun there,’ she said. ‘Not much foul play.’

 ‘You mean “foreplay,”’ I said.

 ‘What’s the difference?’

 When I explained it to her, she laughed and shrugged.

 ‘Doesn’t sound very different to me,’ she said. ‘...’

(*The Family Law*, Benjamin Law, **p.12**)

9 Bum-part hair and straight As.

(*The Family Law*, Benjamin Law, **p.36**)

10 Over the course of twenty years, my mother’s body underwent a remarkable and cruel transformation, from a petite, small-waisted Chinese-Malaysian beauty to a pumping sweating baby machine that spat out five children in quick, semi-automatic succession. In some mammals, I think this many children is referred to as a *litter*.

(The Family Law, Benjamin Law, p. 10)

11 Powers that transform Muslim girls into UCOs (Unidentified Covered Objects),
which turn Muslim girls from an 'us' into a 'them'

(Does My Head Look Big In This?, Randa Abdel-Fattah, p.38)

Appendix C List of Linguistic Strategies

(1) Codemeshing

Table 17 Codemeshing – subcategory 1 lexical items

Example No.	Item	Excerpt	Book
1.	Haram	‘BILAL!’ my dad yells. ‘I will not have you discussing such things in this house. Alcohol? I thought you had stopped drinking. <u>You know it’s haram, forbidden</u>(p.22)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	Ya Allah	And as for you , Shereen, stop speaking to me like I have a degree in English literature from Sydney University! How did I manage to breed such <u>silly children, ya Allah!</u> (p.22)	Ten things I hate about me
3.	Son of za sister of za brother of a donkey	‘You <u>son of za sister of za brother of a donkey!</u> ’ ¹ he yells. ‘Get out of za way!’ (p.28)	Ten things I hate about me
4.	Baba	‘Call <i>Baba</i> ’ (p.65)	Ten things I hate about me
5.	Makhalil	Aunt Sowsan is older than my dad by six minutes. She acts as though this gives her a licence to boss him around. She tortures him with lectures about watching what he eats, keeping up with his exercises for the arthritis in his knee, quitting smoking and cutting back on his intake of <i>makhalil</i> (spicy pickled cucumber, radish, onion and carrot) because of his blood pressure. (p.72)	Ten things I hate about me

6.	Amo	Aunt Sowsan is married to Amo (Uncle) Ameen. (p.72)	Ten things I hate about me
7.	Eid	...spoils us with presents at <i>Eid</i> and.... (p.72)	Ten things I hate about me
8.	Argeela	...is content to smoke his <i>argeela</i> , his water-pipe, read his newspaper and eat through a bag of pumpkin seeds after dinner. (p.73)	Ten things I hate about me
9.	(a) Ahwa _____ (b) Konefa _____ (c) Warak ayneb _____ (d) Darabuka _____ (e) Table	‘Big family dinners and a million conversations around the dinner table! Thick Arabic <i>ahwa</i> boiled on a coal barbeque and drunk with syrupy baklava and <i>konefa</i> . Drinking it over stories about back home when we played on snow-capped mountains after school and spent our weekends swimming in the Mediterranean. Picking <i>warak ayneb</i> from the pot while nobody’s looking and scooping hommos into fresh loaves of bread and letting it melt in your mouth! The <i>darabuka</i> and <i>oud</i> and <i>table</i> hypnotising your hips into dancing around the lounge room with your cousins and aunts. A community of aunts and uncles and cousins, even when they’re not blood relations.’ (p.153)	Ten things I hate about me
10.	Labne	‘... <u>labne</u> for lunch... (p.154)	Ten things I hate about me
11.	(a) Oud _____ (b) Ney		

	(c) Riq	Traditional Arabic instruments such as the <i>darabuka</i> , the <i>oud</i> , the <i>ney</i> (like a flute) and the <i>riq</i> (a small tambourine)... (p.165)	Ten things I hate about me
12.	Mujadara	I can smell lamb and potato roasting in the oven and <i>mujadara</i> , brown rice and lentils, cooking on the stove. (p.177)	Ten things I hate about me
13.	Allahyirhamha	Aunt Sowsan laughs. ‘Is that what you think? Your mother, <i>Allahyirhamha</i> – ‘God, rest her soul, ‘- was the loveliest, kindest women I’ve ever known. She snuggled her way into my heart. She was also one of the toughest, strictest mothers. Shereen and Bilal went through what you’re going through but it was your mother who was head of discipline in the house – not your father.’	Ten things I hate about me
14.	Baladna algadeed	Next to it, in my mother’s handwriting, is a small note: <i>Baladna algadeed</i> . Our New Country. (p.191)	Ten things I hate about me
15.	Khalas	...since your mother’s death I’ve fallen in love with her many times over... <i>Khalas</i> . Enough. What is done is done....’ (p.194)	Ten things I hate about me
16.	Mabruk	Bilal follows her lead and kisses my dad. ‘ <i>Mabruk</i> . Congratulations, Dad.’ (p.236)	Ten things I hate about me
17.	Fatiha	The manic cleaning is attributable to a special occasion at our house tonight. My father and Miss Sadja will recite the <i>fatiha</i> , the first chapter from the Koran, to formally announce and bless their intentions of marrying. My dad will then present Miss Sadja with jewellery and gifts. Aunt Sowsan and Uncle	Ten things I hate about me

		Ameen are also invited and my dad has planned a feast. (p.242)	
18.	Alayirhamha	‘I know this must be strange to you,’ Miss Sadja says. ‘Jamilah, I just want to make your father happy. But I want to do that as his second wife, not as a replacement for his first, your mother. <u>Alayirhamha. Please trust me.</u> ’ (p.244)	Ten things I hate about me
19.	Kola Sana Winta Bikhair	My dad eventually manages an appalling parallel park and we then power walk to the mosque, getting stopped every five yards by friends wrapping us in huge hugs and greetings of peace and <u>Kola Sana Winta Bikhair</u> , “May every year bring you happiness,” or else the condensed version of “ <u>Happy Eid</u> ” (For Aussie-born Muslims like me who can’t pronounce Arabic to save their lives). (p.355)	Does my head look big in this?
20.	(a) Ya (Amal) ————— (b) habibti	OK, ya Amal, we understand. That’s all we needed to know habibti...” (p.52)	Does my head look big in this?
21.	In ze name of ze Father, ze Son, and ze Holy Ghost	She’s sitting out on her front porch and I suddenly hear a harsh cough and an “ <u>In ze name of ze Father, ze Son, and ze Holy Ghost.</u> ” (p.53)	Does my head look big in this?
22.	“Why you keeping leave za cigarette pack on my grass?”	“ <u>Why you keeping leave za cigarette pack on my grass?</u> ” She has a thick accent and a voice that seems like it’s bottling up years of anger. (p.53)	Does my head look big in this?
23.	Leui-jae doh hoh	‘ <u>Leui-jae doh hoh</u> ,’ Dad was telling his mother in Cantonese. Girls are fine enough too. (p.17)	The Family Law

24.	Yow-cheh-hoh	Over the Christmas holidays, we'd spend time with my grandmother's myriad siblings, we'd <u>yow-cheh-hoh</u> , a Chinese term that meant driving without a destination... (p.31)	The Family Law
25.	<u>goh-goh goh-goh goh goh goh-goh goh</u>	This means the same syllables, pronounced in different pitches, can mean completely different, incongruous things. Consider this sentence: <u>Goh-goh goh-goh (that older brother there) goh goh (is taller than) goh-goh goh-goh (that older brother over there). Again, that's: goh-goh goh-goh goh goh goh-goh goh-goh</u> . Pause, then add another goh – with a different tone this time – and you're telling the same brother to cross the road. <u>Depending on how you say it, gau can mean 'dog' or 'nine', 'enough' or 'rescue.' Mae could mean 'rice' or 'not yet', 'flavour' or 'tail'. (p.68)</u>	The Family Law
26.	(a) Goh-goh ----- (b) Hae-hoe	' <u>Goh-goh</u> ... man,' we'll say, pointing to someone behind his back, ' <u>hae-hoe</u> ...obese.' P.69	The Family Law
27.	(a) Ngau-gah joong-mun- mehng hae ----- (b) Yuk Nung	When it was my turn, I introduced myself and my Chinese name. 'Ngau-gah joong-mun-mehng hae...Yuk Nung?' I said. My tones were all over the place. 'Yuk Nung?' my teacher asked, peering over her glasses. ' <u>Hae</u> ,' I said. 'My name's spelt " <u>yuk</u> ," like when you're disgusted by something, but it actually rhymes	The Family Law

	(c) Hae	with “book.” Linda pursed her lips. I realised I’d been speaking in English when she’d specifically asked us to speak in Cantonese. ‘And I am twenty-one years old,’ I added in Cantonese, sheepishly.... (p.71)	
28.	Yuk	‘Yuk,’ Sebastian said, repeating my Chinese name. ‘Yuk?’ he pulled out a pocket translator. He punched in some buttons, and then passed it to Linda. ‘Is this the right Chinese character set?’ he asked... (p.72)	The Family Law
29.	(a) Lae-seurng	‘ <u>Lae-seurng</u> ...’ Linda prompted.	The Family
	(b) Mm-seurng	‘ <u>Lae-seurng</u> ,’ repeated the student[...] ‘ <u>Mm-seurng</u> ...’ ‘ <u>Mm-seurng</u> ...’ (p.72)	Law
30.	Ngan-see	‘Benjamin?’ Linda said. When she didn’t get a response, she switched to Cantonese and sounded chillingly like my mother. ‘Yuk Nung. Are you awake? Why are you so sleepy all the time?’ At that everyone started laughing at me. Sebastian glanced over with cool pity. When I realised my eye was crusted over with sleep, I rubbed; the sleep fell onto the desk in clumps. <i>Ngan-see</i> , I thought vaguely to myself. That’s what ‘sleep’ is called in Cantonese: eye shit. At least I knew that. (p.73)	The Family Law
31.	Ngoh ngoi lae	‘Oh, Ben, he’s not that great-looking,’ he said. ‘In fact, I think his face is sort of weird and girlish.’ And just then, with sharp clarity, the Cantonese words for ‘I love you’ darted into my mind. <u>Ngoh ngoi lae</u> . (p.73)	The Family Law

32.	Sam-Gor	A few days later, I had a call from Tammy. 'Sam-Gor,' she said, calling me by my proper family title. (p.97.)	The Family Law
33.	Mm-sae gum haak hae	...stream of thank-yous and are-you-sures from my mother. ' <i>Mm-sae gum haak-hae</i> ,' Aunty Clara scolded my mother over the phone. <u>There's no need to be so polite.</u> (p.112)	The Family Law
34.	Chow sie gauwe knew <u>Ma-Ma</u> was finally at home when she'd planted vegetables, herbs and a bush of <u>chow sie gau</u> , <u>a fragrant plant used in soups</u> . Its name translates literally as ' <u>reeking shit dog</u> '... (p.191)	The Family Law
35.	Moh-moh	"...I am too old to be working late into the night. My eyes – they are getting weaker and <u>moh-moh</u> blurry. Getting old, getting old! And..." (p.154)	Unpolished Gem
36.	O, zhongguo de wo bu yao	Whenever they said haughtily, "O, zhongguo zuo de wo bu yao" – I don't want anything made in China – I couldn't help myself. I would ask with salesgirl innocence, "But sir, aren't you made in China?" (p.214)	Unpolished Gem

Table 18 Codemeshing - subcategory 2, varieties of language

Example No.	Variation of?	Excerpt	Book
1.	Jamie's dad. Ethnolect – Lebanese Muslim English	'I go back to my vegetables. They no talk back to me or rolling their eyes.' (p.248)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	Neighbour. Ethnolect – Greek Australian English	She's sitting out on her front porch and I suddenly hear a harsh cough and an "In ze name of ze Father, ze Son, and ze Holy Ghost." (p.53)	Does my head look big in this?
3.	Neighbour. Ethnolect – Greek Australian English	"Why you keeping leave za cigarette pack on my grass?" She has a thick accent and a voice that seems like it's bottling up years of anger. (p.53)	Does my head look big in this?
4.	Asian Australians. Australian English	I could hear Ivy bellowing down the quiet street that Yvonne had stepped on a crack. " <u>I did not, bitch!</u> " Yvonne screeched back. I noticed the airy curtains of a house ripple. " <u>Be quiet, youse!</u> " you said. "People are watching us." "Let them watch!" yelled Ivy in glee. "We probably interrupted their eleven o'clock croissant." (p.10)	Laurinda

5.	Asian Australians. Australian English	“We will miss you sooo much,” Ivy said. “Don’t forget us when you go to your rich school, <u>bitch!</u> ” (p.26)	Laurinda
6.	Asian Australians. Australian English	“Piss off, Linh. I don’t want to hear your bullshit!” She got up and left (p.27)	Laurinda
7.	Asian Australians. Borrowing an African American variety	We all knew that one of the boys, Hai, had the hots for Yvonne. When we grabbed our bags and headed towards the gate, he and his mates were there to greet us, everyone of them dressed in black T-shirts and jackets and jeans. “ <u>Yo, Yvonne, check this out, me and mah homies are going to sing you a song, baby gurrllll.</u> ” (p.29)	Laurinda
8.	Vietnamese- Chinese Mother, Ethnolect – Chinese Australian English	“ <u>My dawtah she seek,</u> ” she called into the phone... p.265	Laurinda
9.	Asian- Australian English Ethnolect	<u>"do not spick da Inglish velly good"</u> (p.1)	Unpolished Gem

10.	Asian- Australian English Ethnolect	This is the suburb where words like and, at and of are redundant, where full sentences are not necessary. “ <u>Two kilo dis. Give me seven dat.</u> ” If you were to ask politely, “ <u>Would you please be so kind as to give me a half-kilo of the Lady-Fingers?</u> ” the shop owner might not understand you. “ <u>You wanna dis one? Dis banana? How many you want hah?</u> ”	Unpolished Gem
11.	Asian- Australian English Ethnolect	“ <u>Why yu gib me dis one? Dis one no good! Hairy here, here, and dere! Hairy everywhere! Dat nother one over dere better. Who you save da nother one for hah?</u> ” Bang on the counter goes the bag of bloodied body parts, and my father knows that now is the time to scoot away to the stall opposite if he wants hairless ham. (p.2)	Unpolished Gem
12.	Asian- Australian English Ethnolect	<u>Mao-Bin U</u> (p. 233)	Unpolished Gem
13.	Chinese- Cambodian- Australian Ethnolect (and also dialect of a younger child)	Before I drifted off to sleep, I wondered doubtfully whether my “ <u>escoose mi plis I nid to go to da toylit</u> ” outburst would persuade the other kids to share their Play-Doh with me.	Unpolished Gem
14.	Australian English – Broad variation	“ <u>Whaddy</u> mean this is two years <u>outa</u> warranty eh? I want <u>me</u> money back. <u>Youse</u> powerpoints are <u>shifty!</u> ” (p.201)	Unpolished Gem

15.	Australian English	“...brutal streets and you tell me to <u>nick off!</u> ” (p.219)	Unpolished Gem
16.	Filipino English	“ <u>Dey not going to connect me, I know</u> ” (p.202)	Unpolished Gem

(2) Creative and direct translations

Table 19 Creative and direct translations - subcategory 1, direct translations

Example No.	Translation	Excerpt	Book
1.	Loan translation – spoken by Miss Sadja	Miss Sadja shakes her head. ‘My mother, God rest her soul, would have taken that title...’ (p.84)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	Loan translation – spoken by aunt	‘May Allah protect us from any further tragedy and rest your mother’s soul. Ameen.’ (p.181)	Ten things I hate about me
3.	Translation (representation of what the father says in Arabic)	‘Did you hear that, Sowsan?’ my dad cries. ‘Jamilah took my advice. God be praised!’ (p.186)	Ten things I hate about me
4.	Translation (representation of what the father says in Arabic)	‘Then may Allah listen to the prayers of a father and bless you, Bilal. May he make this decision the start of a successful life.’ (p.227)	Ten things I hate about me
5.	Translation (representation of what the father says in Arabic)	...She was and always will be my first love. She is the mother of my children. May Allah rest her soul and grant her paradise... (p.234)	Ten things I hate about me

6.	Loan translation – stranger is addressed	“Keep still, <u>Grandma Giap</u> ,” I told her as I wedged her brown foot between my knees. (p.19)	Laurinda
7.	Loan translation – to wife	“ <u>Old woman</u> ,” my father sighed (though in fact he was five years older), “she is not going to have one of your peasant homemade outfits for this school. What will the teachers think of this cheapskate family? They’re already providing her with a full scholarship!” (p.35)	Laurinda
8.	Loan translation – to close family friend	Whenever there was a large order, <u>Aunt Ngo and Aunt Tee</u> would get together to do the non-sewing tasks: putting buttons and spare threads in plastic envelopes.... (p.161)	Laurinda
9.	Loan translation – to child	“ <u>Child</u> , the doorbell,” my mother said...p.245	Laurinda
10.	Loan translation – to stranger of family	...then noticed Sokkha. “Ah, there you are, <u>brother</u> .” P.246	Laurinda
11.	Loan translation – addressing family	“What do you think, <u>Young Aunt</u> ?” my mother finally asks. (p.12)	Unpolished Gem
12.	Loan translation	When the immigration papers were finally processed, my other set of grandparents had arrived at Melbourne airport in their homemade cotton Mao suits of dark	Unpolished Gem

		blue and earth-brown. My <u>Outside Grandparents</u> . (p.57)	
13.	Translation – referencing family structure	“Wah! That’s not a baby!” exclaimed my <u>outside grandfather</u> . (p.57)	Unpolished Gem
14.	Translation – referencing family structure	“This is your <u>Outside Grandmother</u> ,” my mother instructed me. Outside because my mother had married into my dad’s family. (p.57)	Unpolished Gem
15.	Translation – to wife and husband	My mother and father still call each other “ <u>old man</u> ” and “ <u>old woman</u> .” My mother got her title first. (p.110) [...] “Hey you’ve grown up, <u>Old Lady</u> ,” he said to her...	Unpolished Gem
16.	Translation – narrative style/regarding hierarchy Loan translation	““In the past in the Golden Towers,’ my grandmother began, and I knew she was going to tell me about the other country where everybody lived a life before me. All her stories began with things in the past, in the Long Mountain, China, or Cambodia, the Golden Towers. ‘In the past,’ she said, ‘when your father was small, we had a mattress, one and a half metres wide, two metres long. <u>Your First Uncle, your Second Uncle, your Third Uncle, your Fourth Uncle</u> and your father – all very small then – crammed onto the mattress with me...” p. 53	Unpolished Gem
17.	Loan translation	“That’s what you always say, <u>sister</u> .” (p.137) (Alice’s mother says this)	Unpolished Gem
18.	Loan translation	...happening?’ <u>our eldest aunty</u> asked... (p.153)	The Family Law

19.	Translation	‘Ha, you want to have kids?’ she asked in Cantonese. ‘Don’t even bother. No one should have to have kids. If I had a choice, I wouldn’t have had them.’ (p.9)	The Family Law
20.	Transliteration	When our maternal grandmother – my <u>Poh-Poh</u> – died some years ago.... (p.2)	The Family Law
21.	Transliteration	...I heard that <u>Ma-Ma</u> – Dad’s mother and my last living grandparent – might be moving to a retirement home... (p.190)	The Family Law
22.	Transliteration	‘See, <u>Poh-Poh?</u> ’ they said. ‘Look, <u>Goong-Goong!</u> This place is different. The nurses speak the language!... (p.191)	The Family Law

Table 20 Creative and direct translations - subcategory 2, creative translations

Example No.	Item	Excerpt	Book
1.	Translation – by father	‘It doesn’t matter <u>how much perfume you have on, if you stand immersed in a rotten smell it will rub off on you.</u> ’ (p.30)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	Translation – about ‘ghost’	“In contrast to Hong Kong – a throbbing, stinking metropolis of concrete, where people hung out their laundry thirty storeys up – Caloundra was a ghost town. Literally everyone was white.” (P.22)	The Family Law
3.	Translation – more a play on the	‘Benjamin?’ Linda said. When she didn’t get a response, she switched to Cantonese and sounded chillingly like my mother. ‘Yuk Nung. Are you awake? Why are you so sleepy all the time?’ At that	The Family Law

translation of the word. everyone started laughing at me. Sebastian glanced over with cool pity. When I realised my eye was crusted over with sleep, I rubbed; the sleep fell onto the desk in clumps. Ngan-see, I thought vaguely to myself. That's what 'sleep' is called in Cantonese: eye shit. At least I knew that. (p.73)

4. Translation – of a proverb – “Like a chicken talking to a duck,” my mother calls these conversations (p.1) Unpolished Gem

5. Translation – of a proverb. The Cambodians have a saying: “A girl is like white cotton wool – once dirtied, it can never be clean again. A boy is like a gem – the more you polish it, the brighter it shines.” P.216 Unpolished Gem

(3) Creative manipulations and puns

Table 21 Creative manipulations and puns

Example No.	Item	Excerpt	Book
1.	De-wog	You see, neither Peter no anybody else in my class has any idea about my Lebanese-Muslim background. In fact, my real name is Jamilah Towfeek but I'm known as Jamie when I'm at school because I'm on a mission to <u>de-wog</u> myself. (p.5)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	Loserdom	In my class, loserdom is generally contagious. (p.55)	Ten things I hate about me
3.	Brains of ricotta cheese	'Because I'm deeply disturbed. Because I'm craving the approval of a guy who has the <u>brains of ricotta cheese</u> and probably keeps Mein Kampf as bedtime reading material.' (p.115)	Ten things I hate about me
4.	UCOs	Too many people look at it as though it has bizarre powers sewn into its microfibers. Powers that transform Muslim girls into UCOs (Unidentified Covered Objects), which turn Muslim girls from an "us" into a "them". (p.38)	Does My Head Look Big In This?
5.	Ghost	"In contrast to Hong Kong – a throbbing, stinking metropolis of concrete, where people hung out their laundry thirty storeys up – Caloundra was a ghost town. Literally everyone was white." (p.22)	The Family Law
6.	Crap & shit	'This is going to be <u>crap</u> ,' I said. 'Does anyone else's legs hurt?'	The Family Law

		‘Speaking of <u>crap</u> ,’ Michelle said, rubbing her stomach, ‘I really need to take a <u>shit</u> .’ (p.5)	
7.	‘Staring, staring’	At precisely 4.30pm., Mum terminated the chat session. The <i>Bold & The Beautiful</i> was on, a show she referred to as <i>Staring, Staring</i> . (‘See,’ she’d explain, ‘the whole episode, they just keep talking and staring at each other. <i>Staring, Staring; so much staring.</i> ’) (p. 165)	The Family Law
8.	Foulplay & foreplay	‘Not much fun there,’ she said. ‘Not <u>much foul play</u> .’ ‘You mean “ <u>foreplay</u> ,”’ I said. ‘What’s the difference?’ When I explained it to her, she laughed and shrugged. ‘Doesn’t sound very different to me,’ she said. ‘...’ (p.12)	The Family Law
9.	Discarded & discharged	I wasn’t even there that long, and then they discarded me,’ she said, before correcting her English. ‘ <u>Not “discarded,” sorry. Discharged.</u> ’ (p.14)	The Family Law
10.	litter	“Over the course of twenty years, my mother’s body underwent a remarkable and cruel transformation, from a petite, small-waisted Chinese –Malaysian beauty to a pumping sweating baby machine that spat out five children in quick, semi-automatic succession. In some mammals, I <u>think this many children is referred to as a litter</u> . (p.10)	The Family Law
11.	Goo-goo & Google	‘So I just <u>goo-goo</u> this?’ she asked, when we loaded Google. Goo-goo, we both knew, was a crude and childish Cantonese term for penis. ‘Yes, Mum, very funny.’	The Family Law

		'Goo-goo,' she said again, laughing. (p.164)	
12.	'Divorce'	'Yes!' she said to Scott and me breathlessly. 'Yes! Why didn't I think of this before? It will be like my <u>second divorce. I'll divorce this house like I divorced your father.</u> ' (p.215)	The Family Law
13.	SKI = Spending the Kids Inheritance	'I love track when I'm SKI-ing!' she said. 'Why keep track of the time when you can SKI?' SKI was her new favourite phrase. It stood for 'Spending the Kids' Inheritance'. (p.118)	The Family Law
14.	Ma	So when the child drops the chopstick, clambers off the table and clutches her leg with icky-fish hands and cries, " <u>Ma! Ma!</u> " the mother turns away. "I'm busy clearing up. <u>Go and bug your grandmother.</u> " After all, " <u>Ma</u> " is also the word she uses for <u>grandmother, just two tones different</u> (p.30)	Unpolished Gem
15.	Mao-Bin U	" <u>Mao-Bin U</u> " (p. 233)	Unpolished Gem
16.	Good News	"Have you thought of <u>a proper name</u> for the baby yet?" my grandmother asks her son. She has nothing but disdain for those parents <u>who do not give their children Chinese names</u> . Did they really think that new whitewashed names would make the world outside see that yellow Rose was just as radiant a flower as white Daisy?...Written on the cover are the Chinese characters for Be Ready for the Good News. Some kind-hearted white folks had given him this free literature guaranteed to put an end to all suffering. <u>"Good News."</u> <u>"Good News?"</u> retorts my grandmother.	Unpolished Gem

“Yes, Good News!” claps my father, because this is Paradise, and his baby is born into it. (p.15)

17. Wonder Land My father remembers a story translated from English that he read in his youth... This new daughter of his will grow up in this Wonder Land and take for granted things like security, abundance, democracy and the little green man on the traffic lights. (p.16) Unpolished Gem

18. Pygmalion & pig “So we finally get to meet your little Pygmalion project at last,” Brodie’s mum, Mrs Newberry, said to Mrs Leslie. I had no idea what a Pygmalion was but it had the word “pig” in it so I was sure it was not flattering. She turned to me. “How do you do, Dianne’s fair lady?” she extended her hand, heavy with rings, expecting me to shake it, so I did. (p.166) Laurinda

(4) Linguistic creativity

Table 22 Linguistic creativity: semantic shift, linguistic innovations and borrowings

Example No.	Item	Excerpt	Book
1.	Semantic shift	‘Yes!’ she said to Scott and me breathlessly. ‘Yes! Why didn’t I think of this before? It will be like my second divorce. I’ll <i>divorce</i> this house like I <i>divorced</i> your father.’ (p.215)	The Family Law
2.	Semantic shift + Lexical innovation	‘I love track when I’m SKI-ing!’ she said. ‘Why keep track of the time when you can SKI?’ SKI was her new favourite phrase. It stood for ‘Spending the Kids’ Inheritance’. (p.118)	The Family Law
3.	Semantic broadening + collocation innovation	“This is your <u>Outside Grandmother</u> ,” my mother instructed me. Outside because my mother had married into my dad’s family. (p.57)	Unpolished Gem
4.	Semantic broadening + collocation innovation	My mother and father still call each other “ <u>old man</u> ” and “ <u>old woman</u> .” My mother got her title first. [...] “Hey you’ve grown up, <u>Old Lady</u> ,” he said to her...(p.110)	Unpolished Gem
5.	Collocation innovation	“‘In the past in the Golden Towers,’ my grandmother began, and I knew she was going to tell me about the other country where everybody lived a life before me. All her stories began with things in the past, in the Long Mountain, China, or Cambodia, the Golden Towers. ‘In the past,’ she said, ‘when your father was small, we had a mattress, one and a half metres wide, two metres long. <u>Your First Uncle, your Second Uncle, your Third Uncle, your Fourth Uncle</u> and your	Unpolished Gem

		father – all very small then – crammed onto the mattress with me...” (p. 53)	
6.	Semantic shift - broadening	“Yes but she’s gone with the <u>ghosts</u> already. She’s going to marry one, and then it will be the end of us” (p.148)	Unpolished Gem
7.	Semantic shift - broadening	“You don’t need to learn how to cook. When you get married, you’re going to be making <u>ghost food</u> ” (p.150)	Unpolished Gem
8.	Linguistic innovation, play on phrases	Every journey is one small step for Australians, but one giant leap for the Wah-sers (p.10)	Unpolished Gem
9.	Alliterative play	As she <u>wanders</u> and <u>wonders</u> up and down the aisles... (p.11)	Unpolished Gem
10.	Lexical borrowing	She sees her father sleeping on the floor of the monastery, her mother selling <u>bancao</u> at the market. (p.10)	Unpolished Gem
11.	Lexical innovation	...because my grandmother is a brilliant storyteller and conversationalist when she is not attacking people with <u>bones</u> in her words (p.21)	Unpolished Gem
12.	Innovative collocation	in the future with the money earned from their <u>double-happiness salaries</u> , that they will pay with real Visa cards and drive real Mercedes” (p.15)	Unpolished Gem
13.	Simile	Spreading stories like the Vegemite on my toast.	Unpolished Gem
14.	Metaphor	Boxed into my blue blazer (p.100)	Unpolished Gem

15.	Initialism	Too many people look at it as though it has bizarre powers sewn into its microfibers. Powers that transform Muslim girls into UCOs (Unidentified Covered Objects), which turn Muslim girls from an “us” into a “them” (p.38)	Does my head look big in this?
16.	Lexical borrowing	That’s right. Rachel from <i>Friends</i> inspired me. The <u>Sheikhs</u> will be holding emergency conferences. (p.2)	Does my head look big in this?
17.	Wordplay	<u>We always called my baby brother the Lamb because of our surname, Lam.</u> His real name is <u>Aidan</u> , because Mum always wanted a words that our grandmother in Hanoi could pronounce, even though he had never met her. (p.14)	Laurinda
18.	Metaphor	‘Because I’m deeply disturbed. Because I’m craving the approval of a guy who has the <u>brains of ricotta cheese</u> and probably keeps <i>Mein Kampf</i> as bedtime reading material.’ (p.115)	Ten Things I hate about me

(5) Terms of address

Table 23 Terms of address

Example No.	Item	Excerpt	Book
1.	Baba	'Call <i>Baba</i> ' (p.65)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	Skips	Chris shoots <u>Ahmed</u> a nasty sneer but Ahmed ignores him and turns back to Danielle and Paul. 'All of a sudden <u>my mates</u> and I were surrounded. <u>Most of the skips</u> were off their faces with alcohol. But they knew what they were doing. Anyway, I got struck by a bottle. I didn't even see it coming. It hurt like hell! Man, I was angrier than a constipated giraffe.' (pp.2-3)	Ten things I hate about me
3.	Loser, mate	'Yeah,' Peter adds. ' <u>Don't be loser</u> . Just come. What are you going to tell everybody? Oh, sorry, guys, I can't make it because my dad won't let me? <u>Mate</u> , they'll roast you alive if you pull that one on them!' (pp.15-16)	Ten things I hate about me
4.	Jamie & Jamilah	But even if the laws of probability were suspended for a day and Peter asked me out, he'd be asking <u>Jamie</u> out. He wouldn't look twice at <u>Jamilah</u> . (p.95)	Ten things I hate about me
5.	Address	Dear dad/baba/The Man I Look Up To In My Life (p.142) Jamilah/She Who Holds Two Names (p.147)	Ten things I hate about me

6.	Uncle	...when one of my <u>dad's family friends, Uncle Joseph</u> , walks up to the counter and spots me as he places his order. (p.156)	Ten things I hate about me
7.	Aunt	And then there's Dad and ' <u>Aunt</u> ' Sadja. The 'aunt' is going to take practice. (p.244)	Ten things I hate about me
8.	'Ya' Amal	As I'm amending my list my mother's voice yells out: " <u>Ya Amal!</u> Dinner!...." I knew it wouldn't last. " <i>Yallah!</i> You had all day to study and you wait until we come home? Do you think I'm stupid? <i>Yallah!</i> " Even though my parents speak to me predominantly in English there are some Arabic words which are instinctively part of their everyday vocabulary. <i>Yallah</i> means "come on" or "hurry up." When my parents are in a particularly affectionate mood they sometimes prefix my name with <i>ya</i> so I'm "ya Amal," which means "oh Amal." When I was little, I actually thought my name was Yaamal. (p.22)	Does my head look big in this?
9.	Maa & Dad	"Maa!" I groan. "Tell Dad to give me a break." (p.25)	Does my head look big in this?
10.	'Ya'	" <u>Ya</u> Mohamed..." (p.25)	Does my head look big in this?
11.	Poh-Poh	When our maternal grandmother – my <u>Poh-Poh</u> – died some years ago.... (p.2)	The Family Law

12.	Ah Leung	‘Well, look at you,’ he said to his son. ‘ <u>Ah Leung</u> . Do you know who I am?’ (p.173)	The Family Law
13.	Ba-Ba	‘Hello, <i>Ba-Ba</i> ,’ his son replied quickly. (p.173)	The Family Law
14.	Ma-Ma	...I heard that <u>Ma-Ma</u> – Dad’s mother and my last living grandparent – might be moving to a retirement home... (p.190)	The Family Law
15.	Poh-poh; Goong- Goong	‘See, <u>Poh-Poh?</u> ’ they said. ‘Look, <u>Goong-Goong!</u> This place is different. The nurses speak the language!... p.191	The Family Law
16.	‘Grandma’	Keep still, <u>Grandma Giap</u> ,” I told her as I wedged her brown foot between my knees. (p.19)	Laurinda
17.	Old woman	“ <u>Old woman</u> ,” my father sighed (though in fact he was five years older), “she is not going to have one of your peasant homemade outfits for this school. What will the teachers think of this cheapskate family? They’re already providing her with a full scholarship!” (p.35)	Laurinda
18.	Aunt	Whenever there was a large order, <u>Aunt Ngo and Aunt Tee</u> would get together to do the non-sewing tasks: putting buttons and spare threads in plastic envelopes.... (p.161)	Laurinda
19.	Child	“ <u>Child</u> , the doorbell,” my mother said...(p.245)	Laurinda
20.	Brother	...then noticed Sokkha. “Ah, there you are, <u>brother</u> .” (p.246)	Laurinda
21.	Young Aunt	“What do you think, <u>Young Aunt?</u> ” my mother finally asks. (p.12)	Unpolished Gem

22.	Ah Ly	“ <u>Ah Ly</u> , I know a good young man for you.” (p.22)	Unpolished Gem
23.	Outside Grandmother	“This is your <u>Outside Grandmother</u> ,” my mother instructed me. Outside because my mother had married into my dad’s family. (p.57)	Unpolished Gem
24.	Outside Ma	“How are you, <u>Outside Ma</u> ?” (p.69)	Unpolished Gem
25.	Ah Di	“You know, she looks just like a little brother!” and so that’s what she became – <u>Ah Di – Little Brother</u> . (p.76)	Unpolished Gem
26.	Father Government	“... <u>Father Government</u> is so good to us now!” (p.29)	Unpolished Gem
27.	Ma & Ma	So when the child drops the chopstick, clambers off the table and clutches her leg with icky-fish hands and cries, “ <u>Ma! Ma!</u> ” the mother turns away. “I’m busy clearing up. <u>Go and bug your grandmother.</u> ” After all, “ <u>Ma</u> ” is also the word she uses for grandmother, just two tones different. (p.30)	Unpolished Gem
28.	Little Aunt	“ <u>Little Aunt</u> , have you seen my father?” I said (p.170)	Unpolished Gem
29.	Little Aunt	Even though they had left the plastic-bag factory a long time ago, the <u>respectful name Little Aunt</u> still stuck when they talked about my Aunt Que. (p.112)	Unpolished Gem
30.	Third Auntie	I made berets from the fleecy factory scraps that my <u>Third Auntie Samsu</u> brought home for our family to use as floor wipes.... (p.92)	Unpolished Gem

31.	Round Red- Haired Demon; Horseface; Toothless Aunt; Duck Brother; Big Fat Potato	...they would refer to him as the <u>Round Red-haired Demon</u> , even in Melanie’s presence. They congratulated themselves on their own magnanimity of spirit – after all, we were all known for calling “our own people” such affectionate names as “ <u>Horseface</u> ”, “ <u>Toothless Aunt</u> ”, “ <u>Duck Brother</u> ” and “ <u>Big Fat Potato</u> ”. (p.224)	Unpolished Gem
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32.	Elder Brother	I wondered what was worse, being supported by your husband or supporting him. I thought of those women at home stuck between their four walls and their husband’s whims, calling their spouse “ <u>Elder Brother</u> ” and fighting a daily war against dirt so that their pretend brother could come home to a clean house. (p.249)	Unpolished Gem
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33.	Sister	...pretty good impression of her friend Ah Hua, except seventy decibels louder than the original: “ ‘Wah’, Ah Hua said to me, ‘ <u>Sister</u> , didn’t you say they were just friends? They seem very close for friends.’” (p.252)	Unpolished Gem
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(6) Referential acts

Table 24 Referential acts

Example No.	Item	Excerpt	Book
1.	'Colourful weddings'	The sounds trigger memories of <u>colourful weddings and Lebanese parties and dance floors and live bands and belly-dancers.</u> (p.58)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	'mint tea'	Amo Ameen and Dad are sipping mint tea... (p.73)	Ten things I hate about me
3.	'double standard'	<p>'I can't see why you should be asking him about his girlfriends as though it's the most acceptable thing in the world,' I say, pouting. 'If I so much as receive an innocent, friendly telephone call from a guy, Dad would ground me for life!'</p> <p>'It's called a <u>double standard, Jamilah,</u>' Shereen says without looking up from the photo album.</p> <p>My dad, who hears me use the words 'telephone call' and 'guy' in the same sentence, has suddenly lost the urge to talk about Labor Backbenchers. 'Huh? What's this I hear? Who's calling who?'</p> <p>'Nothing, Hakim,' Aunt Sowsan scolds. 'Nobody invited you into this conversation.'</p> <p>'Did you hear that, Ameen?' my dad says. 'My sister is telling me to be quiet in front of my own children.'</p> <p>'You're right, Shereen,' Aunt Sowsan says. '<u>We're taught to apply the same rules to men and women, but unfortunately that's not how the world works.</u>'</p>	Ten things I hate about me

‘You’re telling me,’ I mutter.

‘We live in a patriarchal community,’ Shereen says,
‘which finds it convenient to manipulate the sacred
text to satisfy the male ego.’ (p.74)

4. ‘ will set up camp in the lounge room, playing cards, drinking Arabic coffee and cups of sweetened mint tea’ My dad has invited a group of his friends over tonight. This means that they will set up camp in the lounge room, playing cards, drinking Arabic coffee and cups of sweetened mint tea. They’ll smoke their water-pipes and cigars, tell Arabic jokes and shake the roof tiles with their roars of laughter. (p.169) Ten things I hate about me
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5. ‘father’s role’ ‘People change, Jamilah. Why your mother passed away your father’s role suddenly changed. When your mother was alive your father’s primary job was to drive the taxi and support the family. He worked long shifts – longer than he does now. The house was your mother’s domain. She cooked, she cleaned, she ironed, she washed, she made sure you all did your homework, she went to parent-teacher interviews, she checked report cards, she threw all her energy and purpose into raising you. Your father threw all his energy and purpose into supporting you. With your mother’s death, the roles merged. Don’t you think he was scared?’ (p.181) Ten things I hate about me
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6. ‘dishonouring her guests’ It is perhaps the one issue on which Shereen and Aunt Sowsan argue. Shereen gets pretty upset about the fact that so much food goes to waste when there are people starving in the world. She’s quite right, but it’s a habit entrenched in Arabic culture and Aunt Sowsan would Ten things I hate about me
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		<u>consider herself to be dishonouring her guests if she didn't make such an exorbitant amount.</u> (p.187)	
7.	'fatiha'	The manic cleaning is attributable to a special occasion at our house tonight. My father and Miss Sadja will recite the <i>fatiha</i> , the first chapter from the Koran, to formally announce and bless their intentions of marrying. My dad will then present Miss Sadja with jewellery and gifts. Aunt Sowsan and Uncle Ameen are also invited and my dad has planned a feast. (p.242)	Ten things I hate about me
8.	'fatiha' and 'god to bless'	Shortly after dessert we all sit down in the lounge room. During the recitation of the <i>fatiha</i> we ask God to bless my father and Miss Sadja's commitment to each other. (p.244)	Ten things I hate about me
9.	'fajr'	My dad wakes me up for the morning <i>fajr</i> , prayer. (p.29)	Does my head look big in this?
10.	'wuduh'	Then I perform the <i>wuduh</i> , the ablution, wetting my hands, face, arms, feet, and crown of my head. And then we pray. My father leads the prayer and his voice as he reads the Koran is soft and melodious. (p.29)	Does my head look big in this?
11.	'selfishness'	I'd never understood the brats on television who threw tantrums when their dads missed their soccer matches, as if the world of adults revolved around their games. If the Lamb grew up to be one of those boys who resented our father working on Saturdays and missing his footy finals, <u>he'd get a slap on the bum from either Mum or me for his selfishness.</u> That was the way things were with our family. (pp.20-21)	Laurinda

12.	'shame'	I felt so <u>ashamed</u> that my mother was grovelling to Uncle Sokkha.	Laurinda
		<p><u>I used to have more time for Mum</u> when I was at Christ Our Saviour. I could easily finish my homework and help <u>her with the sewing</u>. But it seemed now that I never had time for anything but Laurinda.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>I woke up around one in the morning. Somehow, I knew mum was not in bed. I went into our kitchen. The kettle was still warm. I knew she was in the garage.</p> <p>"Argh!" she yelped when I came in. "You scared me! What are you doing up? You should be in bed. You have school tomorrow.</p> <p><u>"Do you need some help, Mum?"</u></p>	
13.	'stars'	<p>For some women I knew, falling pregnant was a difficult business, an exact and fraught science. They needed to synchronise and schedule everything in order to conceive, mark their calendar with the rhythms of their menstrual cycle, analyse their partner's sperm count map out weather changes, <u>ensure the stars were aligned</u>. (p.12)</p>	The Family Law
14.	'death'	<p>Mum had been devastated by every aspect of her mother's death: how she'd been forced into a cramped Hong Kong nursing home; the clinical way the funeral had been conducted; the <u>impossibility of her joining us in Australia in those final years; the fact that she hadn't made it to her mother's beside in time</u>. (p.2-3)</p>	The Family Law

15.	'death'	<p>“We never camped. All those things involved in camping – pitching a tent; cooking on open fires; the insects; shitting in the woods; sleeping on rocks; getting murdered and raped in the middle of nowhere – they never appealed to us. 'Your dad never wanted to camp, and insects eat me alive. <u>See, Asians - we're scared of dying. White people, they like to "live life to the full," and "die happy".</u>' she paused. "Asians are the opposite." (p.43)</p>	The Family Law
16.	'superstition'	<p>Some of the dietary requirements seemed faintly plausible, like avoiding watermelon or pineapple – which, they believed, were just asking for a miscarriage. But other requirements were curve-balls, like the nine month enforced ban on attending circuses and barnyards. The belief was that if she was exposed to living animals for too long, her baby could come out covered in hair (contact with apes) or with a snout-like nose (looking at pigs). <u>All of this also explained why Mum didn't have a single photograph of herself pregnant: Dad insisted the flash could make their offspring cross-eyed or blind.</u>(p.13)</p>	The Family Law
17.	'superstition – pregnancy and miscarriage'	<p>All she needed was some rest and to be treated gently. But when she got home, she was immediately cordoned off and quarantined, like someone with Ebola or swine influenza. <u>Chinese superstition dictated that she be hidden away from the world. Her situation was a bad omen, possibly contagious.</u> (p.14)</p>	The Family Law
18.	'superstition'	<p>When she was twenty-one and pregnant for the first time, my mother found herself subjected <u>to a suite of ancient superstitions that my father and grandmother had imported from mainland China.</u> Having grown up</p>	The Family Law

in cosmopolitan Malaysia and Hong Kong, Mum found them ridiculous, but did her best to play along. (p.12)

19. 'superstition' Then she started telling us those familiar stories of old Chinese superstitions: how she'd been quarantined after her miscarriage, prevented from petting animals, denied being photographed while pregnant. Back in China, she went on, aggrieved mothers would beat themselves between their legs whenever their children misbehaved, slapping their vaginas and moaning horribly until they bruised themselves. It was an elaborate public display of regret, signalling that they wished they'd never had children. (p.19)
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20. 'filial piety' My mother teaches me to obey my elders, and I grow up with filial piety permeating through every pore, so that when we have dinner with my grandmother, no one ever starts eating until she picks up her chopsticks. My grandmother sits at the head of the table, and I am always seated on her right-hand side. Whenever an unsuspecting soul picks up their chopsticks prematurely, she turns to me. "You know, Agheare, when your uncles and father were small, whenever they picked up their old chopsticks before the adults did, or whenever they did not hold their bowls in their hands properly, I would say, 'No manners hah?' and they would plead for me to teach them. 'Ma,' your uncle would say, 'Give me a whack over the knuckles if you catch me doing that again!'" My grandmother loves using this story of my father and his sadomasochistic siblings to prove how well she brought up her children, but after hearing it so many
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times and seeing my father smile over the table every time, I have my doubts about it. (p.25)

21. 'death' I couldn't have cared less about numbers. Cipher was not a number. But my mother and father nodded in agreement – number ones, number eighty-eights, number fours. They understood. Four sounded like the word for 'dead' in Chinese, so if you were Cantonese you could never use that word. Sei lah! Sei Sei Sei! Dead dead dead dead. My grandmother never let us use the word because she was scared of dead, and death, and the dead. But if we were all going to die anyhow, why not live life, why not even wag school? (p.180) Unpolished Gem

22. 'troubles – shrine' "Aiiiiiee," wailed my mother, "it's so glaringly obvious to me now why we have been having all these troubles! I can't understand why we failed to see it before!" "Ahhh," my father muttered, "I am so tired. Tell me about it and then let me rest!" His hands went to his eyes, his thumbs digging into the hollows at the corner of each socket and moving in small circular motions. This was his wake-up massage, learned from his acupuncture training in China when he was sixteen. "It's our toilet!" said my mother fervently. "It's our toilet!" My father's hands stopped moving. Had my mother gone dingdong? "Which one?" "Our toilet! In this room! The ensuite toilet!" cried my mother. "That's the answer to the problems I have been having!" Unpolished Gem

“What do you mean?”

“I just had a dream,” cried my mother, “about our Buddhist shrine, you know, the one downstairs with your father’s picture on it! Aiyoh, how could we be so stupid as to put the family shrine in such a place?”

“Hah?” My father was befuddled. “I thought we agreed that the study was the best place, no kids coming to whack Ah Bah’s photograph off the shelf!”

“No, no, no!” cried my mother, “You don’t understand! The shrine downstairs is directly below our toilet upstairs! That’s why I have been having such troubles! That’s the reason!” We were crapping on our gods and ancestors. That was why there was no peace in this new house, why my mother clutched her heart every day and complained of the largeness of everything. Once we moved the shrine to a more auspicious place, all her troubles would be alleviated. (pp. 125-26)

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| 23. | ‘feng shui’ | When my grandmother’s Buddhist monk came from Vietnam to visit her, she brought him to our house to bless it. Even though our property was an irregular skirt shape, <u>he lauded my father’s fine choice. All the feng shui elements of our house were in balance, and it was to a place of much happiness.</u> | Unpolished
Gem |
| | | “Do not build your house on a hill where the back slopes down,” advised the monk, “because all your luck is going to slip own that hill.” (p.130) | |

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| 24. | ‘the gods’ | “Good. There are some cultures that still do this, aren’t there?” Then she turned to me. “For example, the Chinese. They believe in and worship many Gods. | Unpolished
Gem |
|-----|------------|--|-------------------|
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Don't you, Alice?" And I did not think of my grandmother and her many gods, the chants, the plastic blue meditation mat, the swirls and whorls of the pattern on it – ten thousand shades of blue like a frenzied ocean, the smell of incense in my pores. The red-faced swordwielding God whom we kept outside. The good-for-business God whom we called Grandfather. The Goddess of Mercy with her china-white face, her royal porcelain contentedness sitting serenely on a lotus surrounded by bald little babies, pouring water out of a vase... (p.174)

25. 'the gods' "Er, my grandmother worships many gods. Buddha, Goddess of Mercy, Lord of Business, she prays to them all to bless us." Laughter in the classroom. I didn't know whether they were laughing at my grandmother, at me or with me so I decided to laugh along, so that it would appear to be with me and not at me. I could hear my Grandmother's voice in my head: "Stupid white ghosts don't understand bugger-all about real people, about the need to be protected." They were already ghosts, what need did they have of protection from ghosts? (pp.174-75) Unpolished Gem
-

26. 'funeral' My grandmother's funeral lasted for three days and three evenings, with people from the Bright Moon Buddhist Association chanting prayers around the clock. Granny who used to set me on the table, was now laid out on a table herself, dressed in imperial yellow with a little yellow cap. (p.192-3) Unpolished Gem
-

(7) Speech acts

Table 25 Speech acts

Example No.	Item	Excerpt	Book
1.	'You son of za...	My dad is wearing in and out of traffic. 'It is the most beautiful scent in the world!' he says in Arabic. He suddenly switches to English as a car cuts us off. <u>'You son of za sister of za brother of a donkey!' he yells. 'Get out of za way!'</u> (p.28)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	'Allah'	<u>Praying aloud to Allah to give him patience. Allah must have been listening because I managed to convince him that the sudden change in my hair colour would not mean I'd end up nightclubbing or on the arm of a boyfriend.</u> (p.6-7)	Ten things I hate about me
3.	<i>Assalamu Alaykom & Walaykom Wassalam</i>	" <i>Assalamu Alaykom,</i> " She says, greeting me with the universal Islamic greeting, Peace be upon you. " <i>Walaykom Wassalam,</i> " I reply, smiling back at her. (p.28)	Does my head look big in this?
4.	Ah Jun, Are you in pain?	...Just then, her mother-in-law's head poked through the rear window and hovered above her, like a hallucination. <u>'Ah-Jun,'</u> my grandmother said, still wearing her work apron. 'Are you in pain?' (p.16)	The Family Law
5.	Ha	' <u>Ha,</u> you want to have kids?' she asked in Cantonese... (p.9)	The Family Law
6.	Wah, Ai-ya	' <u>Wah,</u> what is going on?' they'd ask, raising their tattooed eyebrows. 'You need to tell your parents they	The Family Law

		must make an effort to get back together! <u>Ai</u> -ya, why would any parents split up like this? You're only children! And no marriage is a walk in the park, is it?' (p.45)	
7.	Shitty, crappy, povvo	<u>"Dux of a shitty school,"</u> murmured Tully. "And only get into a <u>crappy uni</u> through a <u>povvo</u> scholarship where they bump up your score out of charity." (p.182)	Laurinda
8.	Dibbing, dobbling Bitch	<u>"Dibbing, dobbling bitch"</u> (p.196)	Laurinda
9.	Wah	As we walked, we <u>wah'd</u> over houses with roofs like red bonnets on top of white faces.... (p.10)	Laurinda
10.	Are you cold?	"Agheare," she would coax from the bed, " <u>are you cold? Oh, your hands, so cold!</u> " She would grab my hand in hers and fill my ears with words that made perfect sense to her – visions of her young girlhood self who cried for her mother back in Chaozhou, China... (pp.175-6)	Unpolished Gem
11.	Ayyah	Ayyah (p.3)	Unpolished Gem
12.	Hah	...we buy some <u>hah</u> ?" (p.12)	Unpolished Gem
13.	Aiyoh	Aiyoh (p.148 (3x))	Unpolished Gem
14.	Aiyah	Aiyah (p.150, 152, etc)	Unpolished Gem

15.	<i>Allahyirhamha</i>	Aunt Sowsan laughs. ‘Is that what you think? Your mother, <i>Allahyirhamha</i> – ‘ God, rest her soul, ‘ - was the loveliest, kindest women I’ve ever known. She snuggled her way into my heart...” (p.179)	Ten things I hate about me
<hr/>			
16.	‘May Allah...’	‘May Allah protect us from any further tragedy and rest your mother’s soul. Ameen.’ (p.181)	Ten things I hate about me

(8) Naming acts

Table 26 Naming acts

Example No.	Item	Excerpt	Book
1.	Proper names & reference names	Chris shoots <u>Ahmed</u> a nasty sneer but Ahmed ignores him and turns back to Danielle and Paul. ‘All of a sudden <u>my mates</u> and I were surrounded. <u>Most of the skips</u> were off their faces with alcohol. But they knew what they were doing. Anyway, I got struck by a bottle. I didn’t even see it coming. It hurt like hell! Man, I was angrier than a constipated giraffe.’ (2-3)	Ten things I hate about me
2.	Reference names	‘Yeah,’ Peter adds. ‘ <u>Don’t be loser</u> . Just come. What are you going to tell everybody? Oh, sorry, guys, I can’t make it because my dad won’t let me? <u>Mate</u> , they’ll roast you alive if you pull that one on them!’ (p.15-16)	Ten things I hate about me
3.	Proper name	<u>Miss Sadjja</u> shakes her head. ‘My mother, God rest her soul, would have taken that title...’ (p.84)	Ten things I hate about me
4.	Proper name	But even if the laws of probability were suspended for a day and Peter asked me out, he’d be asking <u>Jamie</u> out. He wouldn’t look twice at <u>Jamilah</u> . (p.95)	Ten things I hate about me
5.	Addressing proper names and titles	Dear dad/baba/The Man I Look Up To In My Life (p.142)	Ten things I hate about me
6.	Address names	...when one of my dad’s family friends, <u>Uncle Joseph</u> , walks up to the counter and spots me as he places his order. (p.156)	Ten things I hate about me

7.	Proper names	The members of our band are Mustafa Moqbil, Samira Abdel-Fahman and Hasan Celik (p.31)	Ten things I hate about me
8.	Proper names	“Uncle Kamil” “Uncle Yusuf” (p.68)	Ten things I hate about me
9.	Proper names	Ihab Towfeek, Amr Diab, Nancy Agram. (p.69)	Ten things I hate about me
10.	Proper names	<u>Saed</u> (p.152)...Having a beer with them made him Aussie, he thought (p.152)	Ten things I hate about me
11.	Proper names	My name is <u>Amal Mohmed Nasrullah Abdel-Hakim</u> (p.2)	Does my head look big in this?
12.	Proper names	<u>Yasmeen</u> is the Arabic word for <u>Jasmine</u> (p.19)	Does my head look big in this?
13.	Property names	...his new restaurant, <u>Happy Dragon</u> (p.25)	The Family Law
14.	Property names	...While Mandarin is the language of mainland China – the future gatekeeper of 21 st -century economics, <u>the Sleeping Giant, the Slumbering Dragon, the Sneaky Chinaman</u> – Cantonese is considered the obscure and irrelevant poor cousin. (p.69)	The Family Law
15.	Proper names	Their international names, <u>Sebastian and Claudia</u> , broadcast loud and clear: <i>We might have been born in Hong Kong, but our parents knew how to name us</i>	The Family Law

properly. Their parents had somehow avoided the Chinese tendency to give their kids jumbled, improvised English names like Daffy and Virgyna, Nester and Cornelium. (p.71)

16. Proper names When it was my turn, I introduced myself and my Chinese name. ‘*Ngau-gah joong-mun-mehng hae...Yuk Nung?*’ I said. My tones were all over the place.
- ‘*Yuk Nung?*’ my teacher asked, peering over her glasses.
- ‘*Hae,*’ I said. ‘My name’s spelt “yuk,” like when you’re disgusted by something, but it actually rhymes with “book.” Linda pursed her lips. I realised I’d been speaking in English when she’d specifically asked us to speak in Cantonese. ‘*And I am twenty-one years old,*’ I added in Cantonese, sheepishly..... (p.71)

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17. Proper names ‘*Yuk,*’ Sebastian said, repeating my Chinese name. ‘*Yuk?*’ he pulled out a pocket translator. He punched in some buttons, and then passed it to Linda. ‘Is this the right Chinese character set?’ he asked... (p.72)

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18. Nicknames and reference names ‘Hey I’m just a skip!’ he kept insisting, ‘I won’t be offended if you all call me that, ha ha!’ he grinned like a good at his own generosity, not realising that all my other relatives had already determined from day one that they would refer to him as the Round Red-haired Demon, even in Melanie’s presence. They congratulated themselves on their own magnanimity of spirit – after all, we were all known for calling “our own people” such affectionate names as “Horseface”,
-

		<u>“Toothless Aunt”, “Duck Brother” and “Big Fat Potato”</u> . (p.224)	
19.	Food names	Back in Cambodia, every canned comestible seemed to have some kind of Lucky This-or-That animal plastered on its label. <u>“Lucky Lion Chilli Sauce.”</u> <u>“White Rabbit”</u> candy. <u>“Golden Star Happy Dragon”</u> noodles. (p.12).	Unpolished Gem
20.	Proper names	She talks about names (p.15) “Lin-dahs and day-vids” “Ao”- name of Cantonese boy across the road (for Australia) “Freedom” – Chinese boy Visa – Vietnamese Girl Richard – for riches “Mercedes” “Sky” “Liberty” “It doesn’t matter, because at this age we do not know that our playmates Lin-dah who used to be Linh and Day-vid who used to be Duong will be jet-setting to their latest holiday destinations in the future with the money earned from their double-happiness salaries, that they will pay with real Visa cards and drive real Mercedes” (p.15)	Unpolished Gem
21.	Proper names	<u>“Mao-Bin U”</u> (p. 233)	Unpolished Gem

22.	Proper names	All this doesn't matter because at the moment they are the ones with the <u>banal unpronounceable</u> names, and we are the children with the special names. We are the ones smiled upon by grown ups, white people and Fortune." (p.16)	Unpolished Gem
23.	Reference names	While renouncing all my doubts to <u>The One Up There</u> my father came home. (p.89)	Unpolished Gem
24.	Food names	...just statements about where were the cheapest Flying dragon vegetables and instant Indo Mie noodles. (p.141)	Unpolished Gem
25.	Other Proper Nouns	I had got into a good school. I got the usual <u>Asian High-Achiever</u> marks. (p.177)	Unpolished Gem
26.	Property names	<u>Victory Carpet Factory</u> and the main hub of <u>Sunray...</u> (p.3)	Laurinda
27.	Food names	The most popular items were the <u>Samboy</u> chips, the <u>Redskins</u> and the 7 <u>Ups</u> that the kids would.... (p.4)	Laurinda
28.	Property names	the only literature she looked at was the <u>BI-LO</u> and <u>Safeway</u> ads that arrived in our letterbox... (p.12)	Laurinda
29.	Property names	Sign declaring <u>Cho Thue Xue Car Rental \$11 a day.</u> (p.247)	Laurinda
30.	Proper names	<u>We always called my baby brother the Lamb because of our surname, Lam.</u> His real name is <u>Aidan</u> , because Mum always wanted a words that our grandmother in Hanoi could pronounce, even though he had never met her. (p.14)	Laurinda

Appendix D List of authors

Table 27 List of potential authors and texts

Book title	Author	Year published	Creative fiction Genre	Publisher	Year of Birth	Generation migrant	Parents	Place of Birth
Unpolished Gem	Alice Pung	2006	Autofiction & fiction	Black Inc.	1981	2nd	Cambodian-Chinese Immigrants	Australia
Her Father's Daughter	Alice Pung	2011	Autofiction & fiction	Black Inc.				
Laurinda	Alice Pung	2014	Young Adult Fiction	Black Inc.				
Growing Up Asian in Australia	Alice Pung	2008	Autofiction, Anthology	Black Inc.				

Our Australian Girl: Meet Marly: Our Australian Girl	Alice Pung	2015	Middle Grade	Penguin Books Australia				
Our Australian Girl: Marly's Business	Alice Pung	2015	Middle Grade	Penguin Books Australia				
Our Australian Girl: Marly and the Goat	Alice Pung	2015	Middle Grade	Penguin Books Australia				
Our Australian Girl: Marly Walks on the Moon	Alice Pung	2015	Middle Grade	Penguin Books Australia				
My First Lesson: Stories Inspired by Laurinda	Alice Pung	2016	Autofiction, Anthology	Black Inc.				
The Family Law	Benjamin Law	2010	Autofiction & Autobigra[hy	Black Inc.	1982	2nd	Chinese (HK)	Australia
Gayasia: Adventures in the Queer East	Benjamin Law	2012	Autofiction & Autobiography	Black Inc.				

Sh*t Asian mothers say	Benjamin Law and Michelle Law	2014	Autofiction & Autobiography	Black Inc.				
Looking for Alibrandi	Melina Marchetta	1993	Young Adult Fiction	Penguin Australia/Orcha rd Books	1965	2nd	Italian	Australia
Saving Francesca	Melina Marchetta	2003	Young Adult Fiction	Penguin Books Australia				
On the Jellicoe Road	Melina Marchetta	2006	Young Adult Fiction	Penguin Books Australia				
Piper's Son	Melina Marchetta	2010	Young Adult Fiction	Penguin Books Australia				
The Place on Dalhousie	Melina Marchetta	2019	Young Adult Fiction	Penguin Books Australia				
Finnikin on the Rock	Melina Marchetta	2008	Young Adult Fantasy Fiction	Viking Press				

Froi of the Exiles	Melina Marchetta	2011	Young Adult Fantasy Fiction	Viking Press				
Quintana of Charyn	Melina Marchetta	2012	Young Adult Fantasy Fiction	Viking Press				
Does My Head Look Big In This?	Randa Abdel-Fattah	2005	Young Adult Fiction	Pan McMillan AU	1979	2nd	Palestinian-Egyptian	Australia
Ten Things I Hate About Me	Randa Abdel-Fattah	2006	Young Adult Fiction	Pan McMillan Au				
When the Streets Had a Name	Randa Abdel-Fattah	2008	Young Adult Fiction	Pan McMillan Au				
Noah's Law	Randa Abdel-Fattah	2010	Young Adult Fiction	Pan McMillan Au				
The Friendship Matchmaker	Randa Abdel-Fattah	2011	Middle Grade	Scholastic				
The Friendship Matchmaker Goes Undercover	Randa Abdel-Fattah	2012	Middle Grade	Scholastic				

No Sex in the City	Randa Abdel- Fattah	2012	Fiction	Pan McMillan Au				
When Michael met Mina	Randa Abdel- Fattah	2016	Young Adult Fiction	Pan McMillan Au				
Loaded	Christos Tsiolkas	1995	Fiction	Vintage Publishing	1965	2nd	Greek	Australia
Jump Cuts	Christos Tsiolkas and Sasha Soldatow	1996	Autobiography	Vintage Publishing				
The Jesus Man	Christos Tsiolkas	1999	Fiction	Penguin Books Australia				
The Devil's Playground	Christos Tsiolkas	2002	Screen Analysis	Currency Press				
Dead Europe	Christos Tsiolkas	2005	Fiction	Vintage Publishing				

The Slap	Christos Tsiolkas	2008	Fiction	Allen & Unwin			
Barracuda	Christos Tsiolkas	2013	Fiction	Allen & Unwin			
Merciless Gods	Christos Tsiolkas	2014	Short Stories Collection				
The Happiest Refugee	Anh Do	2010	Autobiography		1977	1st	Vietnam
The Little Refugee	Anh Do	2011	Children's picture book				
The Arrival	Shaun Tan	2006	Picture Book Fiction	Hodder Children's Books	1974	2nd	Unknown
The Lost Thing	Shaun Tan	2000	Picture Book Fiction	Lothian Books			
The Red Tree	Shaun Tan	2001	Picture Book Fiction	Lothian Books			

Rules of Summer	Shaun Tan	2014	Picture Book Fiction	Hachette Australia			
The Singing Bones	Shaun Tan	2016	Picture Book Fiction	Allen & Unwin Australia			
The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif	Najaf Mazari (and Robert Hillman)	2008	Biography	Insight Publications	1972	1st	Afghanistan
The Honey Thief	Najaf Mazari (and Robert Hillman)	2011	Folktales	Viking Press			
Walking Free	Munjed Al Muderis	2014	Biography	Allen & Unwin			
I, Migrant: A Comedian's Journey from Karachi to the Outback	Sami Shah		Autobiography		1978	1st	Pakistan
Fire Boy	Sami Shah	2016	Young Adult Fiction				

Earth Boy	Sami Shah	2017	Young Adult Fiction					
Little Paradise	Gabrielle Wang	2010	Fiction	Penguin Australia	unknown	2nd	Chinese	Australia
The Race for the Chinese Zodiac	Gabrielle Wang	2010	Picture Book Fiction	Black Dog Books				
The Garden of Empress Cassia	Gabrielle Wang	2002	Childrens Literature	Puffin Books				
The Wishbird	Gabrielle Wang	2014	Childrens Literature	Penguin Australia				
A Ghost in my Suitcase	Gabrielle Wang	2009	Young Adult Fantasy Fiction					
The Pearl of Tiger Bay	Gabrielle Wang	2004	Childrens Literature	Penguin Australia				
Love and Vertigo	Hsu-Ming Teo	2000	Fiction	Allen & Unwin	1970	1st		Malaysia

Behind the Moon	Hsu-Ming Teo	2005	Fiction	Allen & Unwin				
The World Waiting To Be Made	Simone Lazaroo	1994	Fiction	Fremantle Press	1960	1st	Eurasian background	Singapore
The Australian Fiance	Simone Lazaroo	2000	Fiction	Picador				
The Travel Writer	Simone Lazaroo	2006	Fiction	Picador				
Sustenance	Simone Lazaroo	2010	Fiction	UWA Press				
Lost River: Four Albums	Simone Lazaroo	2014		UWA Press				
The Underdog	Markus Zusak	1999	Young Adult Fiction	Omnibus Books	1975	2nd	Germany- Austria	Australia
Fighting Ruben Wolfe	Markus Zusak	2000	Young Adult Fiction	Scholastic Press				

When Dogs Cry	Markus Zusak	2001	Young Adult Fiction	Pan McMillan Australia	
The Messenger	Markus Zusak	2002	Young Adult Fiction	Pan McMillan Australia	
The Book thief	Markus Zusak	2005	Historical fiction	Picador	
<hr/>					
Mercy	Rebecca Lim	2010	Young Adult Fantasy	HarperCollins Australia	Singapore
Exile	Rebecca Lim	2011	Young Adult Fantasy	HarperCollins Australia	
Muse	Rebecca Lim	2011	Young Adult Fantasy	HarperCollins Australia	
Fury	Rebecca Lim	2012	Young Adult Fantasy	HarperCollins Australia	
The Astrologer's Daughter	Rebecca Lim	2015	Young Adult Fiction	Text Publishing	

Afterlight	Rebecca Lim	2016	Young Adult Fiction	Text Publishing	
Fury	Shirley Marr	2010	Young Adult Fiction	Black Dog Books	Australia
Preloved	Shirley Marr	2012	Young Adult Fiction	Black Dog Books	

Appendix E Epitext of selected texts on Amazon

Table 28 Epitext of selected texts on Amazon

Book	Product description	Categories
Unpolished Gem	<p>(REVIEW)</p> <p>'Alice Pung is a gem. Her voice is the real thing.' AMY TAN 'Pung's memoir - is the spiritual descendant not so much of Jung Chang's Wild Swans as of Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar. Pung displays the latter's gift for deliciously wry humour and passionate, pungent prose - like Plath, she manoeuvres mesmerically between the hilarious and the heartbreaking. Her memoir is funny, engrossing and astonishingly wise.' Sunday Times</p> <p>https://www.amazon.com.au/Unpolished-Gem-Alice-Pung-ebook/dp/B009WDY8SQ</p>	<p><u>Books ></u></p> <p><u>Biographies & Memoirs ></u></p> <p><u>Ethnic & National</u></p> <p><u>Memoirs</u></p> <p><u>Family & Lifestyle</u></p> <p><u>Parenting & Family</u></p> <p><u>Family Relationships</u></p> <p><u>Extended Families</u></p> <p><u>Politics, Philosophy & Social Sciences</u></p> <p><u>Social Sciences</u></p> <p><u>Emigration & Immigration</u></p>

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Laurinda

(PRODUCT DESCRIPTION)

When my dad dropped us off at the front gate, the first things I saw were the rose garden spreading out on either side of the main driveway and the enormous sign in iron cursive letters spelling out LAURINDA. No “Ladies College” after it, of course; the name was meant to speak for itself.

Laurinda is an exclusive school for girls. At its secret core is the Cabinet, a trio of girls who wield power over their classmates - and some of their teachers. Entering this world of wealth and secrets is Lucy Lam, a scholarship girl with

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sharp eyes and a shaky sense of self. As she watches the Cabinet at work, and is courted by them, Lucy finds herself in a battle for her identity and integrity. Funny, feisty and moving, *Laurinda* explores Lucy's struggle to stay true to herself as she finds her way in a new world of privilege and opportunity.

Shortlisted, 2015 Indie Awards

Longlisted, 2015 Stella Prize

Shortlisted, 2015 Inky Awards

Children's Book Council of Australia 2015 Notable Book of the Year for Older Readers

Shortlisted, 2015 Australian Book Industry Awards

'Alice Pung totally nails it with *Laurinda*. Funny, horrifying, and sharp as a serpent's fangs.' —John Marsden

'Pung continues to impress with her nuanced storytelling; *Laurinda* will surely resonate with anyone who remembers the cliquy, hierarchical nature of the playground.' —*Sunday Age*

'A candid and powerful exploration of family, culture and class ... it is those of us who take our fortune and privilege for granted that I wish would read this powerful book.' —*Readings Monthly*

'In her debut novel [Pung] successfully dramatizes the high stakes when an impoverished Chinese girl is parachuted into the private system ... Pung's forceful writing reveals the diverse and often difficult lives of her immigrant

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compatriots too often hidden away from us by masks of discretion.’ —the *Age*

‘Based loosely on Pung’s own experiences, the book has an unmissable ring of truth to it, making it all the more compelling and horrifying.’ —the *Sydney Morning Herald*

‘Schoolgirl Lucy Lam was one of this year’s best characters – smart, hardworking and brave. Pung tackles big issues with a light touch.’ —*Herald Sun*

‘Biting yet compassionate’ —Books of the Year, *Australian Book Review*

‘Exquisitely sharp’ —Books of the Year, the *Age*

Alice Pung is a writer, editor, teacher and lawyer based in Melbourne. She is the author of *Unpolished Gem*, *Her Father’s Daughter* and *Laurinda* and the editor of the anthology *Growing Up Asian in Australia*. Alice’s work has appeared in the *Monthly*, *Good Weekend*, the *Age*, *The Best Australian Stories* and *Meanjin*. Alice lives with her husband at Janet Clarke Hall at the University of Melbourne, where she is currently the Artist in Residence.

https://www.amazon.com.au/Laurinda-Alice-Pung-ebook/dp/B00LSCEM94/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1599876477&sr=1-1

"Hilarious and moving, a *The Family Law* is a linked series of tales from a beloved Australian writer. "

(Product Description)

Now a major SBS television series!

Meet the Law family – eccentric, endearing and hard to resist. Your guide: Benjamin, the third of five children and a born humorist. Join him as he tries to answer some puzzling questions: Why won't his Chinese dad wear made-in-China underpants? Why was most of his extended family deported in the 1980s? Will his childhood dreams of *Home and Away* stardom come to nothing? What are his chances of finding love?

Hilarious and moving, *The Family Law* is a linked series of tales from a beloved Australian writer.

'A vivid, gorgeously garish, Technicolour portrait of a family. It's impossible not to let oneself go along for the ride and emerge at the book's end enlightened, touched, thrilling with laughter.' —Marieke Hardy

'Benjamin Law manages to be scatagological, hilarious and heartbreaking all at the same time. Every sentence fizzles like an exploding fireball of energy.' —Alice Pung

'Law is a writer of great wit and warmth who combines apparently artless and

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effortless comedian's patter with a high level of technical skill.' —*Sydney*

Morning Herald

'An addictive read.' —*Courier-Mail*

'Very funny...you may find yourself at times almost barking with laughter' —
the *Monthly*

'An engaging read.' —*West Weekend Magazine, West Australian*

'Wonderful. Everyone should run to their nearest bookshop and buy a copy.' —
Defamer

'Simultaneously weird and instantly recognisable, the Laws are an Australian
family it's well worth getting to know' —the *Enthusiast*

'Enjoyable, easy reading ... Law is a considerable talent with a long future
ahead of him.' —*Literary Minded*

'The eccentric, clever and beautifully resonant *The Family Law*. It's sharply
written, brilliantly observed and infused with an authenticity that makes it
compelling.' —*Saturday Age*

Benjamin Law is the author of *The Family Law* and *Gaysia*, and a frequent
contributor to the *Monthly*, *frankie* and *Good Weekend*. Benjamin writes for
publications, businesses and agencies worldwide, and co-wrote the TV
adaptation of *The Family Law* for SBS and Matchbox Pictures.

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https://www.amazon.com.au/Family-Law-Benjamin-ebook/dp/B005T19K9M/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+family+law&qid=1599876535&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

Does my head look big in this?	(Review) One of the most remarkable young adult novels of the year (<i>The Times, UK</i>) [A] witty, sensitive debut (<i>People magazine</i>) A fascinating look at Islam (<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>) ...the funny, touching contemporary narrative will grab teens everywhere (<i>Booklist</i>) Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing has added another internationally acclaimed, award-winning title to its Arabic list...brilliantly funny and poignant, Randa Abdel-Fattah's debut novel will strike a chord in all teenage readers. (<i>Qatar Tribune</i>) (Review) "This is a superb first novel with clever, entertaining dialogue, language and characters." (Good Reading Magazine) "[A] witty, sensitive debut..." (People Magazine)	<u>Books</u> <u>Teen & Young Adult</u> <u>Kindle Store</u> <u>Kindle eBooks</u> <u>Children's & Young Adult</u> <u>Literature & Fiction</u> <u>Children's Fiction</u> <u>Politics & Social Sciences</u> <u>Social Sciences</u> <u>Anthropology</u> <u>Cultural</u> <u>Sociology</u>
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"More than the usual story of the immigrant teen's conflict with her traditional parents, the funny, touching contemporary narrative will grab teens everywhere." (Booklist)

"Using a winning mix of humor and sensitivity, Abdel-Fattah ably demonstrates that her heroine is, at heart, a teen like any other. This debut should speak to anyone who has felt like an outsider for any reason." (Publishers Weekly)

"Amal Abdel-Hakim is a 17-year-old Australian-Palestinian-Muslim who's asking the same question all teens ask: How do I fit into my world?. She's bright, pretty, popular, and she's just decided to wear the hijab – the headscarf – full time. How this changes Amal's life is recounted in serious and hilarious detail and narrated with authenticity by Rebecca Macauley, who manages both teen angst and adult tones with equal aplomb. While the Australian slang may sometimes mystify American teens, the story's universal appeal and Macauley's gifted narration will keep listeners fully engaged in Amal's struggle to be an observant Muslim while still maintaining an ordinary teenager's life."

(AudioFile Magazine)

"Amal's decision to wear the traditional Muslim veil full-time (including school) takes some guts. Can she cope with the prejudice, keep her friends, "and" attract the cutest boy in school?" (The Guardian)

"Determined to prove she's strong enough to 'wear a badge of my faith,' Amal faces ostracism and ridicule as she dons her hijab with both good humor and

trepidation... Abdel-Fattah's fine first novel offers a world of insight to post-9/11 readers." (Kirkus Reviews)

https://www.amazon.com.au/Does-Head-Look-Big-This-ebook/dp/B004G606N0/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1599876563&sr=1-1

Ten things I hate
about me

(Product Description)

Jamie wants to be the real thing. From the roots of her dyed blonde hair... There are a lot of things Jamie hates about her life: her dark hair, her dad's Stone Age Charter of Curfew Rights, her real name - Jamilah Towfeek. For the past three years Jamie has hidden her Lebanese background from everyone at school. It's only with her email friend John that she can really be herself. But now things are getting complicated: the most popular boy in school is interested in her, but there's no way he would be if he knew the truth. Then there's Timothy, the school loner, who for some reason Jamie just can't stop thinking about. As for John, he seems to have a pretty big secret of his own...

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Social Sciences

Anthropology

Cultural

To top it all off, Jamie's school formal is coming up. The only way she'll be allowed to attend is by revealing her true identity. Will she risk it all? And does she know who she is... Jamie or Jamilah?

(About the Author)

Randa Abdel-Fattah's first novel, *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, was an instant bestseller in Australia. She is a 26-year-old lawyer, born in Australia of Palestinian and Egyptian parents. For years Randa has been active in the inter-faith community, regularly giving talks at high schools, and is one of the original members of a Melbourne-Palestinian/Jewish women's friendship group. Over the years Randa has been a member of a number of Palestinian human rights campaigns, the Australian Arabic council and various Australian Muslim women networks. She lives in Sydney with her husband and baby daughter.

https://www.amazon.com.au/Ten-Things-Hate-About-Me-ebook/dp/B004AM6C7O/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=ten+things+i+hate+about+me&qid=1599876616&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

Appendix F Paratext: Reviews

Unpolished Gem reviews

Goodreads Review 1

3 or was it 3.5 stars?

Book Review 5th Aug 2013

Unpolished Gem by Alice Pung

This is the conflicted tale of a mixed heritage Asian girl, Agheare, born to recent arrivals into the multi-cultural Melbourne suburb of Footsray.

Both her mother and grandmother who are at odds with each other, ruthlessly exploit Agheare's need for love and attention in an ongoing war of point scoring. Ultimately the child must choose her ally in this childish scuffle and learn to live with both the scorn heaped on her by the enemy, her mother, and tolerate being labelled "story teller". As a result of this choice her heart is irrevocably given to her colourful Grandmother and it is through this close relationship that her Chinese cultural heritage is imbedded and her early beliefs are moulded.

Although the book is written through the eyes of Agheare in a suitably self effacing Chinese style, it is also intriguingly Australian. Almost as if Agheare lives 2 lives; one at home and at work with her Asian family and another one with her fellow students at school and university. Her life is blighted by a constant fear of not being successful in every sphere of her existence.

I found the book and Agheare's attitude baffling at times. She constantly stood poised on the edge of happiness but never managed to take the additional step necessary to embrace herself and others, or throw off the shackles of her upbringing.

Well written but vaguely disquieting.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/688262514>

Goodreads Review 2

(MARCH 4 2014) 5stars

I enjoyed this memoir about growing up Asian in Australia. Being Asian myself and having studied abroad, it can be quite hard to fit in with peers from another culture. It must be harder if you are actually living with parents and are pulled in two directions. The book also describes the author's parents' experience of the Pol Pot years in Cambodia, so the book is definitely not all smiles and funny anecdotes. In fact, what happens in the book is not funny at all, though the author did write about most incidents with a kind of dry humour and acceptance.

I was listening to the Audible Audio version of this book (for a challenge), but found that I had to borrow the paperback to read along in order to really comprehend the sentences. Because I had the words in front of me, I wish the narrator of the audio had had help to pronounce some of the Mandarin and Cantonese words used in the book. I know she did her best with it but I cringed every time she had to read foreign words or foreign names because it really sounded very unnatural. I guess I could say I would have enjoyed reading this book instead of listening to the audio.

https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/871306903?book_show_action=false&from_review_page=3

Goodreads Review 3

4 stars

Shelves: non-fiction-memoir

I was hooked by the time I had read the prologue.

I loved the way this explored what it means to be an immigrant in Australia and the way offspring of immigrants have to try to exist in the cultural realities of where they live and where they come from.

Although this occasionally read as a not quite truthful account of past events, it also had a real honesty and poignancy, as the emotion attached to the events and memories always felt genuine.

There was a lot of humour in the book, I laughed a lot and then stopped to examine what had actually just been said, to discover that it was really quite sad; I found this to be very effective – it

made the material accessible instead of confronting, which I like as it enables me to ponder as much or as little as I like.

It was a testament to how much I was involved in Alice's life and her story-telling, that when the book was finished I wondered if there were more – I would definitely have picked up a sequel if there had been one available.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1630436900>

Goodreads Review 4

2 stars

I'd like to preface this review by saying memoir isn't my favourite kind of writing, but I have read some brilliant ones like *In my skin* by Kate Holden. Still, a good piece of writing is a good piece of writing, regardless of the genre.

Unpolished gem takes you into a hidden world of a migrant family. I love the secret language, and their misunderstood ways. But I found the book incredibly jumpy. I felt very distant from the protagonist and found her a little irritating towards the end of the novel. I didn't get to "feel" what it was like to be her. The language used does not allow for this. I found it prescriptive, lacking emotion. In a novel like this I would expect to be crying for her challenges. Instead I was hurrying the book to finish.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/445752248>

Goodreads Review 5

3 stars

Interesting read... I feel like the prose itself could've done with a bit of polishing/editing but considering it's Pung's first novel, it's a decent read. Although her writing voice is intended as witty, it felt overzealous and whingy the more I read, which became tiring. Perhaps Pung was aiming to

squeeze in too much in the one book? It kind of felt like that to me... I get that it was supposed to use some 'tongue-in-cheek' humour, however it came across as condescending and I felt like the author was succumbing to racial stereotypes throughout the book as a device (and not a very effective one at that).

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/983441196>

Amazon Review 1

3.0 out of 5 stars An interesting Asian view of life in Melbourne in the 21st century

26 August 2013 - Published on Amazon.com

Format: Kindle Edition/Verified Purchase

This was an interesting biographical story of Alice Pung's childhood in Melbourne's west. I wasn't engrossed in the early stages of the book, but as it developed it drew me in. The struggles Alice's mother had with the English language, her work and subsequent depression were both touching and enlightening. The emptiness her aunt felt after achieving the dream of the grand house in the suburbs was also very sad. Alice's teenage years juggling Aussie values with those of her Cambodian parents brought back memories of growing up in the 60s. Her parents' values were similar to my parents' values fifty years ago.

Unpolished gem is a worthwhile read for Asian immigrants, Australians interested in multiculturalism and Melburnians in general, particularly those who have lived in Footscray, Braybrook, Avondale Heights and Springvale.

Amazon Review 2

3.0 out of 5 stars Good, but not excellent..

19 January 2014 - Published on Amazon.com

Format: Kindle Edition/Verified Purchase

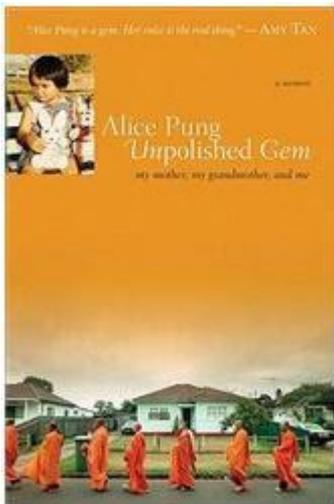
Unpolished gem is a great book to understand the differences between two worlds completely different described by someone who lived them by herself. But, some of the topics treated in here tend to be normal in all kinds of cultures, such as doubt, depression and anxiety in a teenager behaviour, and even though the author blames her culture for those emotions, falling in an unintentional and unnecessary "stereotypification". Anyway, I personally enjoyed reading it, and I feel like every international student and worker that is feeling nervous or afraid of this new country should read it too.

<https://www.amazon.com.au/Unpolished-Gem-Alice-Pung-ebook/dp/B009WDY8SQ>

Book Blog Review 1

Unpolished Gem by Alice Pung – Review

Posted on April 22, 2009 by At Home With Books



Unpolished Gem

by Alice Pung

Publisher: Plume

Publication Date: January 27, 2009

ISBN: 978-0452290006

304 pages

Memoir

Product Description (from the back cover):

Alice Pung's family fled the killing fields of Cambodia, arriving in Australia with only one empty suitcase and Alice in her mother's womb. Her father chose her name because he thought their new country was a Wonderland.

In this lyrical, bittersweet debut memoir – already hailed with several prestigious awards – Alice grows up straddling two worlds, East and West, her insular family and the Australia outside. With wisdom beyond her years and a keen eye for comedy in everyday life, she writes of the trials of assimilation and cultural misunderstanding, and of the tender but fraught relationships between three generations of women trying to live the Australian dream without losing themselves.

There is a Cambodian saying that states, “A girl is like white cotton wool – once dirtied it can never be clean again. A boy is like a gem – the more you polish it, the more it shines.” Alice's memoir shows us the depths of beauty and untapped potential hidden just beneath the surface. Unpolished Gem is a moving, vivid journey about identity and the ultimate search for acceptance and healing, delivered by a writer possessed of rare empathy, penetrating insight, and undeniable narrative gifts.

Quotes:

It was kindergarten photo day and I had been bundled into my pale-blue padded Mao suit with the frog fastenings. Underneath, my grandmother had made me wear my flannel pyjama top and thermal tights. All this clothing made my arms stick out from my sides as if I were a penguin. It was spring Down Under, but my grandmother lived in constant fear that I would freeze like the communist peasants from the Middle Kingdom she had left over half a century ago. Page 51

I realised then that it was the same everywhere. Inside these double-storey brick-veneer houses, countless silent women were sitting at their dining tables. They were living the dream lives of the rich and idle in Phnom Penh, and yet their imposed idleness made them inarticulate and loud. They didn't know how to live this life of luxury and loneliness. Used to working for others all their lives, they did not know how to be idle without guilt, and they could not stop working. Page 147

My Opinion:

Unpolished Gem begins as an entertaining tale about Alice Pung's relatives' immigration to Australia, and progresses to a cultural description of her family's life in Australia.

I was interested in learning about what it would be like to live in an immigrant family, and in that respect the book is a success. Alice's disappointments and frustrations with her life are tangible.

The overall tone of the book is serious and sad. She covers her feelings of alienation from her parents as she learns English and forgets all but the most basic Chinese phrases, and her frustration with their expectations that she assimilate to the Australian society in order to achieve, yet still maintain all of their rules and traditions.

One complaint that I had with the book is that it contained a lot of stories about Alice's family and their lives in the old country, but didn't tell me much about her life outside of her family circle.

Whatever friends or friendships she has outside of the house barely rate a mention, with the exception of the story of her first boyfriend.

I just felt like there was this big void when it came to her life. What did she do at school? Did she form any relationships there? I know that the subtitle of the book is "my mother, my grandmother, and me" so the book is obviously supposed to be focused on family, but since Alice is the author I thought I would learn more than I did about her life outside of her home.

The writing was beautiful, and I had no difficulty reading it at all, but when I got to the end I thought, "This is it? Really? Don't we get to find out anything else about her life? I mean obviously she became a writer, but how and when?"

I also would have liked the book more had there been photographs of Alice and her family somewhere in the book. Other than the small photo on the cover, which I assume is the author as a child, there are no photos. Not even a current photo with an author blurb on the back of the book. (The book I am reviewing was provided by the publisher, but is a finished copy, not an advance copy, so I know that there are no other photos in the book.)

Even though this was not my favorite read, I think it's only fair to state that *Unpolished Gem* was shortlisted for several awards, and Alice Pung won the Australian Newcomer of the Year in the 2007 Australian Book Industry Awards.

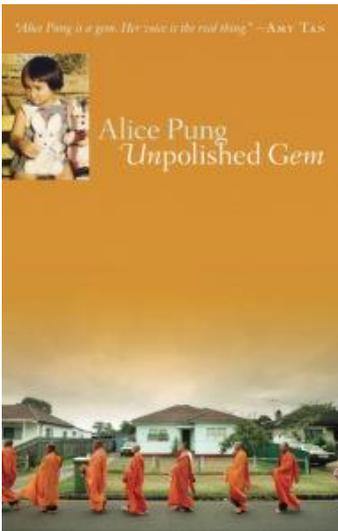
Rating: 3/5

<http://athomewithbooks.net/2009/04/unpolished-gem-by-alice-pung-review/>

Book Blog Review 2

"Unpolished Gem", Alice Pung

July 12th, 2009 · [0 Comments](#) · [Asian](#), [Australian](#), [China](#)



Synopsis: A Chinese family flees war and conflict in Vietnam and Cambodia for the Western suburbs of Melbourne. A young girl grows up Asian in Australia.

My Take: I had a typically ‘old Australia’ childhood in country Queensland. Cricket, football, fishing, “Australia All Over” with Macca on a Sunday morning. It was great fun, but it wasn’t exactly a melting pot of cultural diversity. The pictures of the Queen of England in the school assembly hall didn’t really count as multi-culturalism in my book.

Since moving to Melbourne after university of course, things changed dramatically. It wasn’t long before my friendship group was teeming with those permanent fixtures of Collins St corporate law firms; over-achieving first generation Asian-Australians. In addition to dramatically improving my access to quality Yum Cha, I also managed to pick up a fiancée in the process so I feel like I’ve done pretty well from this cultural enlightenment.

So understandably, I was favourably inclined to enjoying Alice Pung’s ‘Unpolished Gem’. It had been recommended to me by a few of my Asian-Australian friends as strongly reflecting their own experiences of growing up in Australia and I was keen for an insight into a childhood experience that was very different to my own. They were right, it’s a lovely read.

Pung tells her family’s story with an elegant simplicity. Ironically enough for someone who’s edited a collection of stories titled “Growing up Asian in Australia”, I think Pung has a distinctly ‘old’ Australian voice – self-deprecating, laconic and matter of fact. Her writing is both observant and insightful without being introspective or overwrought.

The strength of this book is in the details. The book is packed with endearing little observations of immigrant life. I particularly liked I love how her family “wah”s at the prosperity in Australia and how her grandmother referred to Centrelink reverentially as “*Father Government... like Father Christmas, as if he is a tangible benign white-bearded guru*”. Equally amusing was her parents desire for her to study at “*Mao-Bin U*”. *‘Their pronunciation made the place sound like a shonky university in China for discarded communists.’*

At times, Pung’s story is genuinely sad. The pressures on a young Chinese girl, whether growing up in Australia or in Asia, are not insignificant. Similarly, the strains on mother-daughter-grandmother relations of not just a generation gap, but also a growing cultural gulf are a source of much family tension. At times I just want to wrap her up and say “*It’s all going to be ok! You’ll survive and even better- Eurasian kids are going to be the coolest people in the next generation*”

Highlight:

My father’s idea of getting familiar with someone was to tell them war stories. He didn’t do it to sober them up or edify them. He did it to crack them up.

“This fish reminds me of the Pol Pot years when the starved, dead bodies floated up the river during the flood. I got the job of dragging them to higher, dryer land. We wrapped them up in a dry blanket and me and my mate grabbed on to each end. Every time we tripped, the blanket would get water-soaked and even heavier. Hah hah, so funny! And listen to this – my mate turns to me and says, “Hope you’re not going to be this heavy when it’s time for me to drag you”, and I say to him, “What do you mean when you drag me? I’m going to be the poor soul who will be dragging you!””

He finished by exhorting his guests to eat more fish.

Tags: [Alice Pung](#)·[China](#)

<http://www.bloggingthebookshelf.com/2009/07/12/unpolished-gem-alice-pung/>

Laurinda reviews

Goodreads review 1

Sep 23, 2014

Shelves: first-reads, 2014, autograph, fiction, australian-authors, y-adult, arc, own, favourite

In *Laurinda* we follow the life of 15 years old, Lucy Lin, through a series of letters to unknown friend Linh. Lucy's parents immigrated to Australia by boat from Vietnam, now living in lower suburbs of Stanley. Her mother's place of work is in their garage, sewing clothes till all hours for minimal pay, and as well as her father, who works nights shift (long hours) at Victory Carpet factory – they're battlers trying to get ahead. Lucy attends a catholic school, Christ Our Saviour where she's found her place and can be herself around her peers. For a young girl, she has caring nature and is well grounded.

Life changes for Lucy when she is granted a scholarship at a prestigious girls college, *Laurinda*. She befriends a group of girls called The Cabinet, who are not interested in Lucy as a person but to mold her to become, and think, like them. They are rich, and influential, and just plain nasty. They will use their powers of influence and intimidation to control their peers and teachers. Everyone is too frightening to stick up to them. Lucy eventually loses herself, her identity and integrity. She is shown wealth; and is now ashamed of her illiterate parents and family's home. She's lost her voice; afraid to speak up when she knows someone has done wrong. Somehow the old Lucy has gone and she needs to find a way to bring her back.

Laurinda is Alice Pung first work of fiction. She is best known for several published memoirs. One in which I've previously read called *Unpolished Gem*, a heartwarming and delightfully story of Alice's family whom immigrated to Australia from Cambodia, trying to live the Australian way of life. While I adored this book, it's evident in *Laurinda* that Alice has come a long way in her writing and storytelling. Alice explores a range of serious issue in *Laurinda*, not only of racial prejudice, but also of one's perception and treatment of lower class families, respecting and understanding different cultures and ethnic background, and when people with power abuse it. The extent they will go to keep their status, in the form of manipulation and bullying, targeting unfortunate ones that get in the way or play on individual's weakness. Ruining careers, reputations and self-esteem with no remorse. Alice writing is so tight, her main character, Lucy, is complex and genuine, and her in depth observation of human behaviour is couldn't be more accurate.

Laurinda for me rang true on a very personal level. I was fortunate enough to attend a school like Christ Our Saviour, where I felt accepted and could be myself; it was outside the school grounds where I felt different. I grew up in Maltese/Australia household. I've seen how tired my parents and grandparents were from working hard, long hours in factories or cleaning jobs; occupations some

people looked down upon. I have seen the shame in my grandmother eyes when a banker made her feel inferior, when she asked for help filling out a withdrawal slip - she couldn't read or write. I have witness racial slander directed at my family because of their thick Maltese accent. So whilst reading Laurinda I felt as though I'm home; Alice Pung spoke my language, she knew my family. A remarkable and important book, in each and every way.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1062187675>

Goodreads Review 2

Apr 01, 2017

Shelves: the-secret-history

Laurinda follows a very old but effective formula; technically it is a Bildungsroman in which a young person learns the way of the world. An outsider learns to navigate the unfamiliar world of the upper classes. Only in this case the outsider is a child of Vietnamese boat people. Tho' it's a little more complicated because whilst having been born in Vietnam, Lucy's parents are actually Chinese. They live in a downscale suburb of Melbourne, but the 15 y/o Lucy has won a scholarship to a posh girls' day school called Laurinda.

In some respects, I think posh day schools are the worst of both worlds, offering neither the rough-&-tumble mixture of social classes found in a state day school nor the 24/7 on-top-each-other nearness that creates the condition of belonging in a boarding school. (Lucy would have done much better @ Melina Marchetta's Jellicoe School.) Lucy is adopted by the clique of leading girls called "the Cabinet" (not in the political sense but in the jeweller's) but goes home to her family Warwick & Quyen Lam (I don't think we're told how he acquired the name of an English county). Mother spends day and most of the night doing piecework sewing shirts for a family business. There is also an infant brother called "the Lamb"—frankly that gave me the creeps because every time Lucy mentions him I thought of Sunday roast. Till I was about 70% into the story I'd not realised that mum speaks only about three words of English & that the shirt-making operation is thoroughly illegal. I'd kept thinking it was also unnecessary. We learn that is true, as well as unsafe & unhealthy, esp. for "the Lamb"!

Before attending Laurinda, Lucy went to a Catholic School called Christ Our Saviour even tho' her

father is an atheist. Every time on the audio Lucy enunciates the name of her former school, she pronounces it as if it were an expletive—not the theological designation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God. Which for me was the principal failure of the book—Lucy & her family are totally materialistic, as materialistic as the Cabinet girls with their expensive uniforms and classy motorcars. The school has no ethos but snobbery, but Lucy & family appear equally without spiritual values. Genuine albeit patronising attempts at friendship, as by Amber’s mother Mrs. Leslie, arouse resentment & ingratitude. It is easy to sympathise with Lucy & to understand her touchiness & hypervigilance towards anything that suggests condescension, but she seems to be dying of an ebola level of class envy.

I didn’t sympathise with some other characters Lucy liked better. Ms Vanderberp the history teacher whom the Cabinet’s prank involving a tampon & red ink drives into early retirement should have been grateful. Tho’ I loved & am proud of my career as a teacher, one should retire early enough to develop other sides of one’s personality, & when we learned that she had subjected her 89 y/o father who was dying of cancer to chemo, I realised if she had become a hospice worker she could have spared him a lot of unnecessary agony. Mr. Sinclair, the politics teacher (a subject, btw, that ought never to be taught below university age in my opinion) starts out as the girls’ heart throb & then @ about 30 goes all defensive lest he be accused of harassment. Lucy blames the Cabinet for creating suspicions, but sorry, goes with the territory—cute junior master is a very ephemeral role. A 15 y/o cannot be expected to have an accurate take on things, & I think Lucy needed very much something every young person must have: a grown-up friend & mentor who is not a parent, & can model for her what an adult should be.

Tho’ listening to this book was often an unpleasant experience, I’m not sorry to have read it. (Love this dual feature on Kindle where you can listen & read simultaneously or alternatively.) Witnessing the educational deformation both Christ Our Saviour & Laurinda offered Lucy, I really came to appreciate what good schools like those in *Along the Jellicoe Road* & *Friendly Fire* can accomplish. Both Taylor & Sophia—main characters very much outsiders too—emerge with so much better formations spiritually, emotionally & intellectually, than I have hope for Lucy. Perhaps we can learn something worthwhile from reading about bad schools too.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1314707918>

Goodreads Review 3

Oct 12, 2014 it was amazing

Shelves: arc-are, provided-by-publisher

Alice Pung has received critical acclaim for her memoirs, *Unpolished Gem* and *Her Father's Daughter* which explore her experience as an Asian-Australian.

Laurinda is Alice Pung's first fiction novel and features a teenage girl, Lucy Lam, who is awarded the inaugural 'Equal Access' scholarship to the exclusive Laurinda Ladies College.

Lucy is the daughter of Chinese/Vietnamese 'boat' immigrants who live in a 'povvo' area of suburban Australia. Her father is a shift worker in a carpet factory while her mother, who speaks almost no English, sews in their garage under sweatshop conditions while caring for Lucy's baby brother. As an Asian-Australian scholarship student without a background of wealth and privilege, Lucy is an outsider at Laurinda in more ways than one, but wants to fit in and take advantage of the opportunities the school affords her.

Initially Lucy feels confident she will be able to hold her own at Laurinda but she soon realises that there is a cultural and social divide she is at a loss as to how best negotiate. In particular, Lucy is both fascinated with and horrified by the dynamics at the school which contrast sharply with her experience at Christ Our Saviour College. Laurinda is in thrall to three young women known as the Cabinet who wield a frightening amount of influence within the school with the tacit approval of the headmistress, Mrs Grey. Amber, Chelsea and Brodie are manipulative and cruel yet have cultivated an aura of power that none of their peers, and few of their teachers, are willing to challenge. As Lucy is absorbed into the school's insular environment she is caught up in the ethos of Laurinda, and nearly loses herself, but eventually finds a way to forge her own path.

The narrative is presented in the form of a series of letters addressed to 'Linh' whom we assume is a friend of Lucy's from her previous school (view spoiler)[but we later learn Lucy is actually writing the letters to herself, Linh being her middle name (hide spoiler)] The author's portrayal of Lucy is compassionate, sensitive and achingly real. Lucy is smart, capable and strong, but she is also a

teenager and as such is beset by bouts of insecurity and vulnerability. Though I do not share the same ethnicity nor background as Lucy, I found her, and several of her experiences, easy to relate to.

Part satire, magnifying the pretensions of private school and the aspirations of immigrant families, part poignant coming of age tale, Pung draws on her own experiences which gives the story a sense of authenticity. Privilege, racism, class, identity and integrity are all themes explored in the novel. Pung also skilfully captures the almost universal experience for teenage girls negotiating high school where a small number of students often have an inexplicable cache of power and wield it without mercy. While Lucy is not the only victim of the Cabinet's bullying, she also has to negotiate the additional stress of cultural discord and the expectations of Laurinda's principal who demands Lucy is suitably grateful for, and repays, the privilege she has been given.

The writing is sharp and witty with characters and scenes that are vividly portrayed. The pace is good and the structure works well to deliver an interesting surprise. Laurinda is a clever, entertaining and insightful novel, suitable for both a young adult and adult audience and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to either.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1078249037>

Goodreads Review 4

Feb 18, 2015

Lucy Lam talks a lot in this book. She talks a lot about how ambitious she is, about how poor her neighbourhood is, about how hard working her parents are. She talks about the snobby girls at her school and about the down-trodden teachers and especially about the Cabinet.

The thing is, she talks about it so much that she doesn't let us see any of it. *Looking for Alibrandi* is one of my favourite books, and it's hard not to compare it to this (Pung herself mentions its author in her acknowledgements). Melina Marchetta rendered such a truthful, painful and whole picture of her characters' lives: rather than just saying "I don't fit in", they take readers through the whole experience.

It's not in *Laurinda*. The setting isn't anywhere. I didn't realise it was supposed to be the 90s until mention of Wonderwall on page 194. That's true of the characters too - they're kind of trapped under this layer of Lucy's episolar storytelling. While *Puberty Blues* perfectly executes the stereotypes everyone who's ever been at high school knows, I closed *Laurinda* and found that not a single character came with me.

There's no doubt that the subject matter is important. I started at a (co-ed) private school when I was five years old, and the kind of behaviour Pung has addressed here is rife. There's a great story within her book, of prejudice and unfairness and the luck of the draw, about privilege and what money can really buy you, but to be honest, I struggled to find it.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1205049925>

Amazon Review 1

4.0 out of 5 stars Opens up the inside world of teenage girls with the delicacy and unflinching precision of a forensic anthropologist

19 January 2015

Format: Kindle Edition/Verified Purchase

Lucy Lam, Vietnamese boat refugee, has the advantage of several years at a local Western suburbs high school where she is well-liked and confident. Then she wins a scholarship as Laurinda's inaugural Equal Access student, beginning in Year 10. Her story is told through letters to her buddy, Linh, the soul-mate she has left behind and is growing ever more distant from, as the weeks and months pass by. At Laurinda, she discovers "mistakes mean annihilation" and she has "to think very, very carefully every time (she considers) opening her mouth."

Laurinda's girls and teachers, it seems, are unofficially governed and disciplined by a trio of girls dubbed 'the Cabinet'. These include Chelsea who was "prone to say snide things every seven

minutes or so, as if she had bitch Tourette's", Brodie with her eyes that "seemed to absorb rather than reflect your image", and Amber Leslie with her "mesmerising" beauty. Amber's mother, Mrs Leslie, who is also Lucy's remedial English teacher, takes Lucy under her wing and encourages the Cabinet to do the same. Somewhat reluctantly and with self-conscious virtue and condescension, they do this, giving Lucy a rare opportunity to see into and behind the sometimes-sinister power machinations of this terrible (but pathetic) trio.

'Laurinda' did not grab me straight away, and there were many points through the story where I felt the voice of the narrator was too sophisticated, mature and insightful for the main protagonist, Lucy. I also had difficulty suspending belief at the blatant lies and bullying the Cabinet were allowed to get away with by head staff at the school. However, my doubts were allayed as the story progressed and the motivations of the central characters grew clearer.

Alice Pung does a superb job of building suspense and intrigue throughout this novel, including one masterful twist late in the story, which will have you reassessing everything you've read so far. Her writing is original, sharp and insightful, her metaphors are striking and apt.

Pung opens up the inside world of teenage girls with the delicacy and unflinching precision of a forensic anthropologist, revealing the horror and the beauty, the cowardice and the courage, the insecurities and the dreams that clamour all together in the making of a woman.

'Laurinda' is a stunning portrayal of the complex and many-layered life of young Vietnamese girl, struggling to come to terms with a culture that is often cruel and trivial, with hidden prejudices couched as righteousness, and with the tug-of-war between conformity and pretence versus authenticity and integrity. Her home-life, the simplicity and hard-working ethic of her parents and her loving care for her baby brother makes a stark contrast to the web of spiders she has landed in for her schooling and 'betterment'. Will Lucy be trapped and muted in the silken-silver webs being woven around her, or will she fly free to find her own voice and her own pattern of being?

My heart lurched and soared with Lucy's and I ached for her battle against the subtle forces of destruction and conformity that I recognised only too well: "It was like being bitten by a spider...with venom you couldn't squeeze out because you couldn't locate a raised red welt. No one would believe it if you told them, because the spider had left no evidence...That was how it was at

Laurinda with the Cabinet running the show.”

All in all, a gripping read which gave me new insights and some confirmation in recognising the suffering of those girls who never quite ‘measured up’ at Laurinda. With the benefit of hindsight, I believe this is an achievement, not a failure: to resist emulsification by the masses. As Lucy says, “...I knew now that success had to mean something to me, not only to those around me.”

https://www.amazon.com.au/Laurinda/dp/B010G0EIOW/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=laurinda&qid=1599878819&s=books&sr=1-1

Amazon Review 2

4.0 out of 5 stars Clash of cultures

4 March 2015

Format: Kindle Edition/Verified Purchase

A novel about 15 year old Lucy Lam, from a Chinese/Vietnamese background, who wins a scholarship to a prestigious private school for girls. It shows her struggle to gain acceptance in this unwelcoming environment and to cope with the contrast between the lifestyle (often ludicrous) of the wealthy girls, and her own family, where Mum sews night and day while caring for the Lamb (snotty toddler), doing piece work and Dad works in a carpet factory.

The Cabinet is a group of three girls, all daughters of a previous Cabinet, who wield power over the other students and even bully some of the teachers. Lucy quietly watches and studies this society and comes to her own conclusions. Beautiful writing, funny, down to earth, scary, and honest. Nice that it’s set in Melbourne.

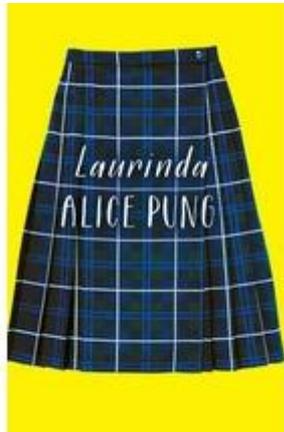
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Book Blog Review 1

Oct 24

Review: Laurinda – Alice Pung

by 1girl2manybooks on October 24, 2014



Laurinda

Alice Pung

Black Inc Books

2014, 340p

Copy courtesy of the publisher

Lucy Lam has just received the first Equal Access scholarship to Laurinda, an exclusive girls school. Her parents are immigrants from Vietnam (although were born in China) and she comes from a very different background to the other students. Her father works long shifts in a factory and her mother sews clothes in the family garage. When she's not at school or doing her homework, Lucy spends a lot of time helping her mother work or looking after The Lamb, her younger brother.

Laurinda is ruled by 'the Cabinet' – a trio of girls who not only control their classmates but also some of their teachers. Although Lucy sees through them she can't help but also be fascinated by them and she finds herself increasingly drawn into their world when taken the mother of one of the Cabinet takes Lucy under her wing. Then the Cabinet themselves begin showing an interest in her and Lucy sees what it can be like when you're a part of that, a part of them.

But all things come with a price and Lucy struggles to hold onto herself and her beliefs against the will and pressure of the Cabinet.

Alice Pung breathes fresh life into the Aussie YA world with her debut novel *Laurinda* a look at a student from a non-wealthy background being accepted into a very prestigious school. Along with several of her friends from her Catholic high school, Lucy Lam sits the scholarship exam for

Laurinda but it isn't that she's the smartest girl to take the test. Laurinda is looking for more than that. They want someone they can shape, someone who will grow from the experience they have at the school and Lucy's creative writing exercise is what clinches the scholarship offer. When she arrives at Laurinda to begin year 10, Lucy must undertake some remedial English catch up work and her tutor is Mrs Leslie, mother of Amber Leslie one of the three who make up the Cabinet.

I didn't go to a private school – actually apart from the standard Catholic high schools like the one Lucy attends before Laurinda, there weren't even any private schools in my area. But the thing about high school is that fundamentally no matter where you attend, there's a lot of the experience that's the same across the board. No matter where you go, there are ways that you're struggling to fit in, especially when you're new and clearly a bit different, like Lucy is. Because Lucy didn't seem to desperately want the scholarship, unlike one of her friends who has been tutored since she was small, she seems almost removed from it. She's able to sit back and observe Laurinda and those who populate it with an almost detached air. Her observations are expressed through the novel as letters addressed to someone named Linh, describing her experience both before she is accepted into Laurinda and also after as well as her struggles with what her role is to be there.

I always feel a bit awkward trying to assess how someone like Lucy must feel, attending her new school, commenting on a situation and culture that I know nothing about. I'm not an ethnic minority and I've had relatively little experience understanding that. She doesn't make mention of any other Asian students there and much is made of her past, the fact that they are immigrants who arrived on a boat, that they are quite obviously not well off. Lucy's mother doesn't speak English and spends a lot of the time working, contributing to the family. People constantly mistake her heritage – she's at the 16th birthday of one of the Cabinet when one of the girls relatives, upon seeing Lucy remarks "I didn't know our Amber had any Jap friends" and once she tries to explain to someone that although she and her family did come on a boat from Vietnam, they are actually not Vietnamese and her family had already left China to go to Vietnam during the Chinese famine. It clearly doesn't compute. She seems to be taken on almost as a charity project at times, despite the fact that she doesn't actually need any charity. When Brodie, one of the Cabinet comes to visit her unexpectedly at home, although she's not ashamed of her family, Lucy can't help but look around and see her home and family through the eyes of Brodie, seeing what she sees. Nevertheless she refuses to answer Brodie's curious questions about what goes on in the garage as well as who the mysterious man was that turned up around the same time. Another time in the book, Lucy's father wants her to invite her friends over to watch a movie on Vietnam but she knows they won't be interested and so

she doesn't ask them. She can't express to her father that they won't be interested and it's clear that he's disappointed when she doesn't invite them.

When the Cabinet court her, although Lucy has clearly been able to see through them and is appalled by some of their antics, it's hard to go against the sway of being accepted, even if it all balances on tenterhooks. There are times when Lucy seems to enjoy being part of them, being included in that group but it doesn't take long for her to see the ulterior motives. How they are cultivating Lucy and her friendship mostly for their own use and in ways that benefit them, attempting to tie her to them in gratitude. Lucy retreats and I was reminded of times when I was fighting with school friends, especially this one girl – I would always pretend to be sick and try and get a few days off school to put some distance between myself and her because she'd always forget about it and things would go back to normal – until the next time and the cycle would start again. At one stage Lucy doesn't even want to go back to Laurinda but over the course of the holidays, she changes her mind and to her surprise, things seem to have changed. It reminded me how tenuous things in high school can be, how the shift of power can happen in an instant.

Although I didn't attend a school like Laurinda, this book did take me straight back to my high school experience. It was both the best time of my life and the worst time of my life. I made some great friends in high school and had some great times. At the same time, I also learned a lot about whether or not people are genuine and how it can not always pay to put your trust in someone. This is set around the time when I went to high school so cyber bullying and social media don't exist and when one girl pulls out a mobile phone, it's an extreme novelty.

Laurinda is a very clever, funny portrayal of the school portion of life as well as gender and the role of friendship and power. Lucy is frank in her observations in her letters and yet at the same time, she can see herself changing, the more time she spends at Laurinda. She is adapting in some ways, to what they want her to be, forgetting her old life and her old friends – she recognises this and she wants to find her old self again, the one that stands up and questions things and doesn't just go quietly, ignoring things when they happen. Lucy's is a wonderful voice, full of life and she gives real vision to the life she leads and how Laurinda and the lives of the other students there, is very different to hers. My words for this book actually feel inadequate – I wish I had an eloquence as beautiful as Lucy's piece in her scholarship paper to describe how wonderful I think this book is!

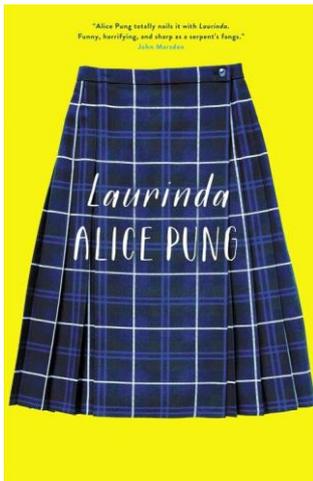
8/10

Laurinda is the 80th book read for the Australian Women Writers Challenge 2014

Book Blog Review 2

"'LAURINDA', BY ALICE PUNG: A REVIEW', BY MADELEINE CROFTS

March 2, 2015 [The Lifted Brow](#)



Some people approach art the same way they approach choosing what to eat. Classics, literature, arthouse movies are broccoli, spinach, and oatmeal porridge; chick lit, romantic comedies, and young adult novels are ice cream, chips and sauce, fairy floss, and sugary cereals.

This set of attitudes has fed into the debate around young adult fiction, and whether adults should be reading – and indeed, celebrating – the genre. In *Slate*, Ruth Graham writes ‘Read whatever you want. But you should feel embarrassed when what you’re reading was written for children.’ My response: shut up. You’re boring me, Ruth. There’s something suspicious about the idea that to read young adult fiction or watch romantic comedies is to indulge in a ‘guilty pleasure’ that’s no good for you.

You can read what you want to read, and you can do so with thoughtfulness and awareness. There is a balance to aim for here. As a primary teacher, it is something about which I try to teach my students: if you always choose the same kinds of books, what could you be missing out on? I don’t want to read young adult fiction exclusively: but not because it isn’t good for me. Rather, I read beyond YA because I want a reading diet that is diverse and varied. I want to push myself to read books I wouldn’t instinctively reach for, to read different forms and genres and authors. It’s too

easy to read only what we know and feel comfortable with. When Ruth Graham tells me to be embarrassed about reading young adult fiction, she unintentionally reminds me of what I want my reading habits to be. I'm not embarrassed about reading young adult fiction, but I would be embarrassed to dismiss a whole collection of books just because someone had told me that they weren't written for me.

Reading your favourite kind of book is a damn good feeling.

That said, reading your favourite kind of book is a damn good feeling. And I love reading fiction, be it young adult or not, set in high school. It started with Enid Blyton's *Mallory Towers*, *St Clare's* and *The Naughtiest Girl at School* books – how I wished I was getting on the train with Darrell, holding our breath for the first glimpse of the hallowed halls, playing pranks on our French mistresses and eating midnight feasts in the dormitory. A large part of my enjoyment of reading *Harry Potter* was reading about Hogwarts itself, the professors and the classes and the homework (though don't get me started on how pedagogically backwards that place is).

I also love reading about young women. Isobelle Carmody's *Obernewtyn* was the first book that got me, that I really got, that made me gasp with the recognition that this was what fiction could do. Elspeth's struggle to understand herself and her place in the world showed me how fiction can be a kind of mirror – how it can help us understand not just other people, but also ourselves. Classic young adult books such as L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, Melina Marchetta's *Looking for Alibrandi*, and of course J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* are examples of the common narrative structure of a young person searching for a sense of identity and belonging.

So when I heard that Alice Pung's debut novel was to be a story set in an exclusive girls' school, I was more than a little excited. Pung has previously written two memoirs, *Unpolished Gem* and *Her Father's Daughter* and edited the anthology *Growing Up Asian in Australia*. She is also a kind of hero of mine, working as an Ambassador and Board Member for 100 Story Building, a centre for young writers in the west.

Pung's debut novel follows Lucy Lam, a girl who gets a scholarship to attend Laurinda, a private girls' school. Lucy's parents are Chinese-Vietnamese refugees, her mother works from home sewing clothes and her father works at a factory. They respond with pragmatism at Lucy's acceptance to Laurinda, pleased that they won't have to get a refund on the payment for the entrance exam. The love with which Pung describes Lucy's family is evident – surely she has drawn from her real life. They are tenderly rendered, from her baby brother Lamb and his constant

emission of bodily fluids, to the description of her mother eating so quickly that she barely chews, to the time her father brings home McDonalds for all of Lucy's (non-existent) private school friends. Sometimes adults in young adult fiction can be blandly written caricatures of annoying grown ups who don't understand what being a teenager is really like. Pung, however, has done what Rainbow Rowell also did so well in the similarly striking *Eleanor and Park*, and given the adult characters almost as much complexity and interest as the teenage protagonists.

When she starts at Laurinda, Lucy is determined to not get involved or let the school change who she is. But she is slowly drawn into the politics surrounding the three central popular girls – known as The Cabinet – and becomes entangled in their machinations. The Cabinet are at first indifferent to Lucy, then fascinated with her foreignness and then finally confused by her unwillingness to play their games. She witnesses cruel pranks on teachers and the callous and calculated bullying of girls around her. She is subjected to incessant casual, 'well-intentioned' racism; her peers tell her she doesn't understand their pranks on teachers because she's 'Asian and respectful', and when one of The Cabinet's mothers, Mrs Leslie, invites Lucy to her house to show her how to make 'authentic' rice-paper rolls, she exclaims 'Well, would you look at those dexterous Asian fingers. So fast!'

Figuring out who you are is hard; figuring out that it isn't a process that will ever end can be freeing.

Lucy is caught. When she's at Laurinda, she is made to feel again and again like she doesn't belong, clapping enthusiastically when a classmate performs the piano, not realising that everyone else is simply clapping politely. When she walks around her suburb wearing her uniform, she is just as out of place. Being a teenager is hard. Being a scholarship girl at a private school is harder. Lucy feels like she is being asked who she is or who she wants to be every second – the principal reprimands her for not being involved in school life enough, the Cabinet have their own ideas of what a scholarship girl should be, and of course, her parents have their own expectations. When Lucy begins to take herself back from all these expectations, I was cheering for her. Figuring out who you are is hard; figuring out that it isn't a process that will ever end can be freeing. Exhausting, but freeing. In her final reflections on her year, Lucy writes 'I learned that to have integrity means piecing together all the separate parts of yourself and your life.' Lucy understands that this is an ongoing process, one she'll have to keep on doing for the rest of her life.

Teenagers go through those awful years when they begin to see their family through society's eyes – or at least they think they can see what others see. Bringing your friends home, introducing them to your parents, becomes excruciating – you realise that your parents are *so not cool*, and then you

worry that, by extension, neither are you. When describing the colour of her house in Stanley, she writes ‘I mean blue the colour of that bubblegum-flavoured ice-cream all kids love until they older and find out how many chemicals are in every scoop.’

Slowly, Lucy begins to see her family, her house, her suburb through the eyes of the Laurindians: ‘Everything was so cheap and tacky here, I now saw.’ This superficial perception of teenage life happens to us all, but the strength of this book is that Pung doesn’t allow Lucy to believe that life in the working class suburb of Stanley is romantic or dreamy. She can understand why her parents want her to work hard and achieve – economically and educationally – what they couldn’t, but her position between the two worlds also allows her to see the worth of her parents’ world.

I try to read consciously, with an awareness of my biases and preferences. I am biased towards reading young adult fiction featuring female protagonists. With *Laurinda*, Alice Pung has joined other Australian writers like Vikki Wakefield, Cath Crowley, and Gabrielle Williams who are writing smart, funny YA fiction full of complex and engaging characters. As long as these authors continue to write, I will continue to read their work. Without embarrassment.



Madeleine Crofts is a primary school teacher living in remote NT, sometime writer, co-hosted [JOMAD I Heard You Like Books](#) and is a general loudmouth. She tweets at [@croftsmadeleine](#).

<https://www.theliftebrow.com/liftebrow/laurinda-by-alice-pung-a-review-by>

The Family Law reviews

Goodreads Review 1

Shelves: read-in-2011

I started reading this while on a bus, sitting next to a middle-aged Asian lady. The more I got into the book, the harder and louder I laughed, and the more I tilted the pages toward the window -- away from the lady in the aisle seat. I could feel her glancing curiously over my shoulder, but there was NO WAY IN HELL I was going to tell her I was laughing at Mr. Benjamin Law's mother's recollections of childbirth and descriptions of her 'dingly-dangly bits' in the aftermath of said childbirths. It was embarrassing.

Seriously, though -- *The Family Law* is a hilarious and wonderful quick read by one of my favourite people. I have never even met Ben Law, but I found myself relating to him more than I ever thought I'd relate to a twenty-eight year old gay Asian man who jokes about childbirth being like squeezing lemons out of one's penis-hole.* Maybe it was his large, Asian family with the distant — typically so — father and the crazy-adorable, melodramatic mother that reminded me of my own. Maybe it's the bit about growing up Asian in Australia. Or the shared experience of waking up in his childhood household to the sounds of various pieces of technology being turned on (minus the rooster clock), of people peeing noisily, and of siblings dry retching as they brushed their teeth because of an “abnormally weak gag reflex”. (Admittedly, the latter sibling would actually be me in my family.) His experience of watching Stephen King's *It* wasn't much different from when I saw *The Shining* as a kid and couldn't sleep — or use the bathroom at night — for weeks. He, like his sister, also has scoliosis. (What are the chances of having that in common with someone?)

I would definitely recommend it -- I just probably wouldn't recommend reading it next to little old conservative-looking Asian ladies on the bus.

Awkward.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/247296881>

Goodreads Review 2

Aug 17, 2012

Shelves: favorites

In 2010 I had the rare pleasure of loving a book I'd been anticipating for as long as I'd been stalking the author.

Benjamin Law is a freelance writer who first blipped onto my radar when I started reading his pieces in hipster-darling magazine, 'Frankie'. He also contributes to 'The Good Weekend', 'The Monthly' and has written for 'The Best Australian Essays' and even appeared on ABC's Q&A. I love him. He's enviably witty, self-deprecating, and writes brilliant argumentative pieces with first-

hand experience as his weapon of choice. I'd been looking forward to his novel debut for so long, and when 'The Family Law' came along in 2010 I was not in the least bit surprised by the novel's brilliance. . .

'The Family Law' is a biography in 23 parts – as Law recounts mundane and extraordinary familial events through 23 short stories.

Benjamin Law is gut-achingly funny – so funny he's sometimes freakin' painful to read. But he's at his funniest when describing his family and their weird, endearing mannerisms and quirks – like in 'Baby Love', in which he writes about his Cantonese mother's horror-filled stories about raising Benjamin and his four other siblings.

Mum also said childbirth was unbearably, gratuitously painful. When I once asked her to compare and rate each of our births – which was easier, which was faster – she balked. 'No birth is easy!' she exclaimed. 'Of course a man would ask that question. Men can't even begin to imagine. Can you imagine a lemon coming out of your penis-hole? Yes, yes! That's what it's like! I'd like to see a man squeeze lemons out of his penis-hole. OUT OF YOUR PENIS-HOLE, BENJAMIN. You can't even imagine, can you? A whole lemon – with the points on each end and everything, except this lemon has limbs. Out of your penis-hole. PENIS-HOLE.'

Going into 'The Family Law', I knew it would be a cackling-good read. I've been a big admirer of Benjamin Law's sense of humour for years now, but actually it was the stories in which he balanced humour with introspection that stood out for me. Even more were the stories that started out lightly humorous, but masked much wider (often political) issues that really bowled me over. Benjamin Law sneaks up on you like that – he comes across as quite the joker, quick with the quips about being the only Asian not good at maths – but he's masterful at using his personal anecdotes to ask big questions of the reader.

Now, I should also point out that Benjamin Law is gay, and a very vocal supporter of marriage equality in Australia. Law writes beautifully, self-deprecatingly and most importantly earnestly about realizing he was homosexual and coming out to his family. But I was sort of surprised to discover that it wasn't his story about being gay in Australia that really struck a chord with me (though it did that too). In fact, it was the story 'Skeletons' that I think wonderfully illustrated

Law's talent for combining humorous anecdote with striking persuasion. In this short story, he talks about how his mother and her family moved to Hong Kong from Malaysia when she was fifteen-years-old, after they heard reports that ethnic Malays were murdering Chinese people. From Hong Kong, Law's mother and father decided on Australia to escape the Chinese-run government after colonialism. After his parents arrived in Australia, gained citizenship and started a family, his mother's family members started migrating to the land down under to start a new life too. As Law explains: "*They let their visas expire, quietly and without ceremony*" - they started having babies, taking out mortgages and opened a restaurant. And then when Benjamin was just a boy, the Australian Federal Police landed on their doorstep – raided the family restaurant, and arrested his uncles, and later returned to take his aunts and cousins to Villawood Detention Centre to await their fate. The family's plight made national headlines, but in the end it did no good;

They left in stages, family by family, newspaper report by newspaper report. No matter how any applications were filed, petitions sent or campaigns established, nothing was of any use. Then, only weeks after my mother's thirty-second birthday, she said goodbye to her two elderly parents at the airport. They were the last to leave, having been asked by the government to go voluntarily after their application for sponsorship was rejected. Mum was four months' pregnant by then. When they left, her parents asked what the use of crying was.

After his mother's sixteen deported family members left Australia (and all their worldly possessions behind with her), Benjamin's mother developed a hoarding problem. For a long time she kept every family memento and school project; stacks of magazines littered his family home and as Benjamin puts it; "*we were sentimental to the point where it became pathological.*" His mother couldn't let go, she kept the last physical links to her family for as long as she could. I love this story for a lot of reasons. Re-reading it now, when the 'boat people' debate has sparked all over again and Tony Abbott's current buzz-word, 'illegals', is being repeated by every ignorant asshole, 'Skeletons' is a really beautiful and quiet story that puts a face and real heart into the whole debate. Benjamin Law's family are not what the majority of Australian's would consider to be the idea of queue-jumpers, and that's what makes it so powerful and highlights Benjamin Law as a funny guy with a lot to say.

One of the great things about all of Law's stories is the way he instantly hooks readers and draws them in. All his opening lines are a little bit kooky and fabulous. One of my favourites is from

‘Amongst the Living Dead’:

For as long as I can remember, I've thought about my mother's death on a daily basis. This wouldn't be such a strange exercise if she were actually dead, but the thing is, my mother's alive – perhaps aggressively so.

Like I said, I first read and loved this book in 2010 – but it's only recently that the book has returned to my shelf, after being passed around to every friend, family member and stranger on the street that I could convince to give Law's debut a read. My copy of 'The Family Law' is now a little bit bruised and battered from being so lovingly read by so many. I'm so happy that Benjamin Law has his second book coming out next month, 'Gaysia: Adventures in the Queer East' – I can't wait for his second outing, which will no doubt further my obsession with this heartfelt and humorous writer-extraordinaire.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/394437566>

Goodreads Review 3

Mar 11, 2017

Shelves: autobiography, essays, humour

A quick funny read in which Benjamin Law looks back on life with his kind of crazy family with love and humour. In a collection of essays he covers serious issues like the cultural differences he had to navigate as an Australian child of immigrant parents from Hong Kong and figuring out how to be gay and silly issues like the heinous farts protein shakes create and cockroach smashing. He's less cynical and more gross than David Sedaris but there are a lot of similarities here. I liked it a lot but it is not for the squeamish - my husband made me stop reading the essay on childbirth to him and I almost barfed reading the cockroach one.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1855374390>

Amazon Review 1

4.0 out of 5 starsA great read!

10 January 2016

Format: Kindle Edition/Verified Purchase

I really enjoyed this book from Benjamin Law. The book is full of quirky short-essays (of sorts) about growing up Asian in Australia - but it's much more than this. Funny, insightful, thought-provoking. A great read!

Amazon Review 2

3.0 out of 5 starsThree Stars

4 May 2017

Format: Kindle Edition/Verified Purchase

Many, many laughs to be had. Also the right balance of sentimentality.

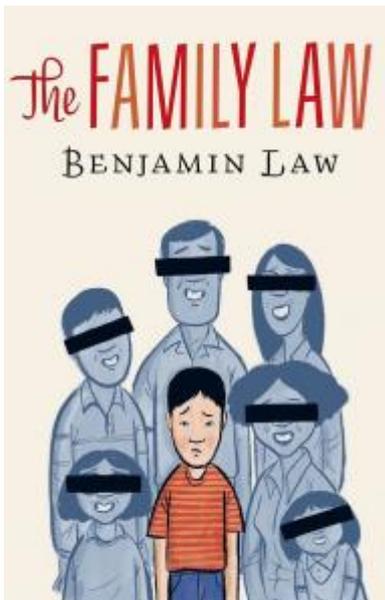
https://www.amazon.com.au/Family-Law-Tie-Benjamin-Law/dp/1863957952/ref=tmm_mmp_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1599879095&sr=1-1

Book Blog Review 1

Review: The Family Law by Benjamin Law.

Emma Maguire

Recently I saw Benjamin Law speak on a panel at international non-fiction conference NonfictionNow Melbourne 2012. As is my usual nerdy way, I wanted to read some of his work to get an idea of what he has published. To this end I read his memoir *The Family Law*. Props to Law for treading contentious political terrain like it's no biggie and totally pulling it off: this is kind of his shtick, and I like it. Read my thoughts below.



In his debut memoir *The Family Law* Benjamin Law explores the complexities of contemporary Australian life through the lens of his rollicking, bickering, intensely lovable Malaysian-Australian family.

Wry, honest, fresh and funny, *The Family Law* will alternately have you in stitches and tears as Law regales you with tales from his family history. Law portrays the weird, embarrassing (totally relatable) family moments that reveal what it means to be connected to sisters and brothers and mothers and fathers: in short, what it means to be human. Made up of twenty-three chapters that work as short stories and could easily stand alone, as a collection they form a fragmented history of the Laws.

At the book's centre is Law's mother: the linchpin of the family and now the sole occupant of an empty nest. As Law traces the history of his family through memories of theme parks, family-owned businesses, trips to Malaysia, and his parents' divorce, he reveals the enormous presence of this resilient, endearing woman. Self-sacrificing, generous, stubborn, and infuriating in equal measures, Mrs. Law is a wonderful force to be reckoned with. Law attributes hilarious and revealing commentary to his mother: see the second chapter 'Baby Love' in which, as the Law children sit around the table discussing the how-when-if of their reproductive futures, his mother implores Ben to imagine the male equivalent of childbirth: "I'd like to see a man squeeze lemons out of his penis-hole. OUT OF YOUR PENIS-HOLE BENJAMIN. ...A whole lemon... except this lemon has *limbs*. Out of your *penis-hole*. PENIS. HOLE." Mrs Law also meditates wryly on her

distaste for outdoorsiness, attributing it to what she sees as a key cultural difference. She muses, “White people, they like to ‘live life to the full,’ and ‘die happy’ ...Asians are the opposite.”

Law addresses the hard stuff of growing up a young, gay, Asian boy in nineteen-nineties Australia such as tensions of class and race, questions of place and belonging, and the fleeting popularity of eyebrow rings. Law’s instinct for humour shines through even in the telling of traumatic events, where some memoirs might adopt a tone of quiet gravity. His parents’ divorce, his grandmother’s death, the strained relationship between Law and his father, his mother’s hoarding habit, and the arrest and deportation of his illegally emigrated extended family: these stories are told with a compassion and integrity that is deepened by Law’s charming and intelligent wit.

In case you can’t tell, I’m really glad that Benjamin Law wrote this book. If only for the fact that now, when I bend forward to dry my legs after a shower I begin to giggle, as I think of the part where Law describes the anxiety-ridden day trip that he once took with his two sisters to the fully nude public baths in Japan, despite their shared prudishness and anxiety about their own and each other’s nakedness. As Michelle crouches before a hot onsen tub, reluctant to get in beside Tammy, Tammy hisses “Michelle, your *udders*! Get them away or shield them!” *Udders!* I chuckle to myself and stand upright. Also on the win list for this little comic gem are absurd generalisations like, “Australian primary schools are hellmouths of violence and misbehaviour,” and just-plain-wrong scenarios in which seven year old children in sex-ed try to imagine and describe the particular *hardness-but-not-hardness* of an erect penis.

In depicting the changing tide of a family in which the children have grown and are starting to make families of their own, Law strikes the balance between humour and reflection, and offers readers a glimpse into his chaotic, tragic, complex, troubled, outrageous and completely ordinary family.

<https://emmamaguire.wordpress.com/2013/02/19/review-the-family-law-by-benjamin-law/>

Book Blog Review 2

Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Book Review: The Family Law by Benjamin Law



The Family Law - Benjamin Law

Synopsis:

Benjamin Law- the third of five children, born to Chinese immigrants who settled in Australia- tells some of the stories of his childhood in this humorous, often cheeky biography. As one of the first Asian families to live in Caloundra, Queensland, in 1975, Law's parents soon set up a popular Chinese restaurant, making the Law family an exotic household name for the white families living in the area. With the restaurant so popular, Law's dad embarked on several business enterprises, which meant that while the family wasn't poor, they also didn't get to see their father that much. You could probably say that Law's father is the absolute definition of a workaholic.

Regardless, Law recounts some memorable stories about life as a Chinese-looking, Aussie-speaking boy in Queensland.

Along with his three sisters and one brother, Law's family life has been anything but ordinary- from hearing graphic accounts of birth and babies from his mother, to having the house raided when he was only four-years-old, by federal police looking for his illegal immigrant cousins.

In one chapter, Law tells of trying to learn Cantonese at a language school so he can better communicate with his extended family. While he understood some of the language, he found that he couldn't actually communicate back, and hoped that lessons would help him improve, at least a little bit. He wasn't terribly successful.

In another chapter, he recounts family holidays to the amusement parks in Queensland. His mother would act as a stereotypical Asian tourist, documenting everything on film, and he and his siblings would speak in loud, bogan voices so that other tourists wouldn't think that they were tourists.

Law also tells of cockroach invasions, dangerous school camping trips, his Home and Away acting dreams, seeing his family naked, his mother's aversion to technology, and gift-giving issues, among other unusual things...

What I gained from reading this book:

Family is an important theme in this biography, as anyone can tell simply from looking at the title! It's obvious to anybody reading this book that Law shows deep respect and love for his family, even when they behave in seemingly dangerous (his brother, occasionally) or outrageous ways that would be considered out of the norm for most people. Even so, there is an underlying tone throughout the entire book that seems to say: 'They're my family- I have no choice, I have to put up with their wacky ways. But, boy, do I love them!'

This highlights the fact that although there can sometimes be friction between some family members, occasional bouts of stupidity and hilarity, and limited communication due to technology issues, there is nothing more important than the comfort of knowing that you have a loving family behind you.

Positives:

This book is quite funny, written with trademark Law wit (not unfamiliar to those who have read his contributions to Australian magazines). This self-confessed 'double-minority' writer (he is gay, as well as Chinese-Australian), paints a hilarious portrait of his life, and really makes you wish that you could meet his family, simply to be a part of it all.

Negatives:

There is a little bit of swearing and indecent language in this book, which some people might not be too happy about. But if Law had left it out, the stories wouldn't be nearly as entertaining. If you can handle a little bit of cursing, this book is well-worth reading!

Rating: 7 out of 10

Genre: Biography

Recommended for: People who enjoy reading Benjamin Law's articles and anecdotes in Australian magazines like *frankie*, and want to learn more about him and his childhood.

<http://catsbookreviews.blogspot.com/2010/11/book-review-family-law-by-benjamin-law.html?m=0>

Does My Head Look Big In This? Reviews

Goodreads Review 1

Sep 08, 2008

Shelves: fiction, ya, religious, humour, 2008, australian-women-writers

This was a random buy, picked up mostly because, flipping through it, the word *Tasmania* caught my eye - and then I read that the author is Australian. For purely nostalgic reasons I just had to read it.

Amal is a year 11 student in her third term at a posh private school in Melbourne. She's also Muslim. An only child, her parents are health-care professionals, she has a large extended family and friends from all backgrounds and religions. Before third term begins, she decides she's ready to wear the hijab "full-time". She doesn't come to this decision lightly - okay, so an episode of *Friends* helped - but she's sixteen and there are some serious repercussions to her decision. Like, the stereotyping and insults she'll get at school, and trouble finding a job. It's 2001, before the attack on the Twin Towers, but prejudice has been a part of her life for a long time already.

Her friends Eileen and Simone stick by her and don't see her any differently, and after a few days, the boy she has a crush on, Adam, starts talking to her again. Her friends from the Islamic school she used to go to, Leila and Yasmeen, are different kinds of Muslim again - Leila is incredibly smart and wants to be a lawyer, but her mother is uneducated and comes from a traditional background, and keeps bringing eligible men over for Leila to marry, while Yasmeen has no intention of wearing the hijab at all.

A great many stereotypes and misconceptions are confronted, questioned and explored in this humorous book. Amal's voice is natural and believable, and her story is an open window onto what many young Muslims deal with - and others. Her elderly neighbour, Mrs Vaselli, has estranged herself from her only child when he converted to Jehovah's Witness; Josh has certain Jewish traditions to contend with; Adam's mother left when he was young without so much as a word - all he gets are postcards on his birthday. Eileen's Japanese parents have their own expectations of her, and Simone's mum constantly tells her she has to lose weight if she ever wants boys to notice her. There's a whole gamut of what teens go through and put up with in this book, and it may sound like it would be crowded, but it's not. It may seem kinda pushy and too in-your-face, too, but it's handled with both delicacy and Amal's flair which gives things a very fresh look.

Aside from teen issues, the racial and religious prejudices are equally visible, appearing in many subtle and overt ways. I particularly loved the conversation between Amal and the school president, Lara, after 9/11 - Lara wants her to give a speech on the topic of Islam and terrorism, mistakingly

making the connection, as many did/do, that since she's Muslim Amal must therefore understand why they did what they did. Her response was excellent:

"You're Christian, right?"

"...Yeah... what's that got to do with anything?"

"OK, well I'll give the speech if you give a speech about the Ku Klux Klan." (p256)

That Abdel-Fattah had an agenda in writing this book is obvious, and quite welcome too. It's a book that needed to be written. Some of it shocked me - the misconceptions and attitudes, I couldn't believe Australians - anyone - would think, say and do those things. But of course they do. It's a balanced approach, though - Leila's family shows that there are some who fulfill negative expectations, though the emphasis is made on the difference between Islamic teachings and cultural traditions, which are often confused by some Muslims themselves, like Leila's mother. Amal's parents are always encouraging her to see other people's perspectives and understand them better, where they are coming from and why they say and think as they do.

It's a quick read, and entertaining, and Amal is a great character. It's written well, over the space of a few months, and really engages you to think, question yourself, and react. A great book for teens and adults alike - and one Rosalind Wiseman should definitely add to her glossary of books to read at the back of *Queen Bees & Wannabes*.

I have only two issues: firstly, this edition. There's a reason why I don't like Scholastic books. Namely, they're cheaply put together, the pages are crinkled and they start to fall out. If you can get hold of a different edition, you should get it instead.

The second is the translation. You've heard me rant and rage about this before, but here's a prime example of Americanising a text until it's virtually unrecognisable. Even though there were familiar place names like Bridge Road and Luna Park (I used to live not far from St. Kilda, in Elwood - beautiful suburb!), so much had been changed I often forgot it was set in Melbourne at all. If something can be depersonalised, this book has been de-place-ised! It was so jarring I actually wrote the changes down - and the words that hadn't been changed, which was sometimes even stranger.

Aussie word: --- Changed to:

serviette --- napkin
primary school --- elementary school
tram --- streetcar
kilograms --- pounds
ABC/SBS --- PBS (not available in Australia)
biscuit --- cookie
grade/year 11 --- eleventh grade
rubbish bin --- trash can
milk bar/corner shop --- convenience store
mum --- mom
maths --- math
roundabout --- traffic circle
university/uni --- college
car park --- parking lot
pedestrian crossing --- crosswalk
000 --- 911
fringe --- bangs
plait --- braid
take away --- take-out
mobile (phone) --- cell phone
nappy --- diaper
4WD/four-wheel-drive --- SUV
thongs --- flip-flops
chilli --- chilli pepper
rubbish --- garbage

I don't want to know what would happen if a tourist, needing urgent help, was to dial 911 in Australia, but changing it in books is not doing anyone any favours. I actually think it's irresponsible and dangerous - and who couldn't figure out, at least from context, what was meant by "000"?? Also, changing "ABC documentary" (or SBS) to PBS really jolted me - I'd never even heard of PBS before moving to Canada; we certainly don't get any US channels!

Also, they put in some brand names we don't have, like Chips Ahoy, Q-Tips (which are commonly called ear buds or cotton buds) - I'm sure they would have changed "Vegemite" if they could have! They put in "medical school" and "pre-law" instead of ... whatever they replaced - in Australia, both law and medicine are offered as undergrad degrees, medicine is an 8-year degree, law 4. In short, I don't think you'd actually learn anything much about Australia from this book.

Curiously enough, there were some words they didn't change, including:

four-wheel-drive (they used this once, and in another place changed it to "SUV" - a slip?)

doughnuts

beanie

mince

wuss (maybe not as Aussie as I thought?)

veggies

lollipop lady

fish and chips

Plus a couple of cultural references, such as Luna Park, *Women's Weekly* and *Home and Away*.

Having been dislocated from the country itself by all the other changes, seeing these words made me even more confused. I wish they'd just leave well enough alone!!

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/32356966>

Goodreads Review 2

Nov 20, 2012

Shelves: annoying-mc, middle-east

I have a massive amount of respect for Randa Abdel-Fattah for at least *attempting* to show that Muslims aren't these extremists that the media portrays us as, but instead just normal people. So props to her for her bravery.

BUT, being a Muslim myself, I feel like the author did not do a very good job of representing Islam, and on top of that, provided unrealistic scenarios that are very *unlikely* to happen.

Amal is *very* annoying. She is one of those stereotypical teen girls authors think they understand, but in reality, do

not know ANYTHING about. The author tried WAY too hard to sound like a teenager, but she really made Amal sound like a shallow, whining 12-year-old.

I appreciate the feminist ideals in this book, which I think were necessary, but the author did not do well in actually *integrating* these ideals into the novel. She provided unrealistic scenarios, as I mentioned before. For example, the main character's best friend has a daughter who wants to get her married at a young age, an arranged marriage. As much as I loathe arranged marriages. I for one find it hard to believe that these kind of people exist in Australia. I don't know, maybe they do, but I know TONS of Arabs families who do not make their daughters marry who they want them to marry, or even at a young age. Who is going to marry a teenage girl who hasn't even finished high school yet?

The dialogue was **So. Annoying.** It was UNBEARABLE. No teenager repeatedly brings up religion in a normal conversation with her friends without being labeled as some preacher or overly-religious person.

I also found it very far-fetched that the main character would go through so much racist comments and discrimination in the course of one story, which I believe was about half a year. Come on, I wear a Hijab (scarf) too, and the most discrimination I face is the occasional rude comment (VERY rare) or just curious stares. It just was not believable that so much discrimination would be directed at one person.

The points that the author was trying to get across were so unsubtle and awkward. It felt like a teacher trying to shove everything in your mind all at once. In addition, she failed to explain what's the point in wearing a scarf. Duh, because of religion, but WHY do we have to wear it? What's the symbolism and what role does it play for a Muslim woman? Sadly, Abdel-Fattah doesn't answer any of these questions.

To tell you the truth, I recommend this book to people who are completely ignorant about Islam and know nothing about it, rather than people who actually know about Islam and are actually *interested* in learning about.

<https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/14778159-summer>

Goodreads Review 3

Nov 26, 2015

Shelves: 3-star, aussie-authors, contemporary, read-2015, young-adult

I have an odd relationship with this book because on *one hand* I think **it tells an incredibly important story (!!)**, but on the other hand...**I can't honestly say I think the writing is good.** GAWSH. That sounds horrible to admit. This could just be my personal preference!! But the dialogue felt weird and unnatural. And the story didn't seem to

have much *flow*. It was just the happenings of Amal's life and I can't even say it had a conclusion. It just...stopped. I HAVE PROBLEMS WITH THIS, OKAY?

But...like I said...**SUPER IMPORTANT STORY!!** Maybe I just don't see these kind of books out there, but seriously...where are the books on religious prejudice? It can only imagine how tough it'd be to be a Muslim, when so many people are utterly uneducated and think they're all crazy extremists. It's really interesting to see Islam from a 16-year-old Aussie's perspective too. The story is basically about **Amal choosing to wear her hijab everywhere and be more committed to God**. It's VERY about religion, of course, but at the same time, I didn't feel smacked in the face or preached at about Islam. At all. Which was awesome. I really like to learn stuff, but I haaaate being preached at.

(Although, I kind of will contradict myself here and say the book WAS preachy...but about racism and sexism. Which are topics I'm passionate about, so I didn't mind them being REALLY highlighted in the book. I...just...wanted more *story* to go with it?!)

Amal herself was super interesting. I LIKED HER. I mean, she was soooo forthright and had such snappy and sassy comebacks and she was really vibrant. HUZZAH. I like a vibrant protagonist every now again in the sea of moody poetic morbid teen fossils. But she DID go off at people a lot, and was a little immature (but, c'mon, she's 16). And she does scream at her mother for. no. reason. **But Amal was still really admirable**. She was deciding to be public about being a Muslim and to be true to her religion even when she got so much flack for it. I AM IN AWE.

"You don't judge *people*. We're not a plural, or some big bloc, all acting and feeling and saying the same things. You judge individuals.

Also I felt like **I learned a lot!** About what it's like to be a Muslim. AND multicultural. Awk, do you know how diverse this book is?! IT'S SO SUPER DIVERSE IT'S AMAZING. For example:

- Amal is Muslim and Australian and Palestinian.
- She has a friend who's considered "fat" and is struggling with self-image (although I'm annoyed her story line didn't get any closure at all)
- Amal's neighbour is Greek and awesome
- There are Jewish characters

So a million points for actually being so multi-cultural (which I think Australia IS really diverse so I'm glad it represented this).

But...gah, like I said. The writing? Nooooope. When Amal was just interior-monologuing it was fine, but as soon as they started talking, it was just HUGE lumps of dialogue text that didn't feel realistic at all. And everyone's voices were *the same*. Amal has like 4 friends, but they all felt the same to me. And there are a lot of "bully"

cliches that felt plastic. And NO CONCLUSION TO THE STORY. I get it! It's kinda like real life...but I think books need more of a conclusion. And I'm not really sure Amal even changed throughout the book...

I did like it though!! Don't get me wrong! So it's a half-and-half sort of love/hate relationship here. It felt so educational but it was FUNNY at times and the witty comebacks were golden. I really loved taking a stroll in Amal's shoes and I LOVED that it's Australian. (Woot! Woot! For Aussie YA!)

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1452838170>

Goodreads Review 4

Nov 18, 2007

Shelves: teen, 2007

This is another quick read. I finished it within 2 days of starting.

It is 2002, and Amal is the only Muslim at her private prep school in Australia. She is a fairly new student, as her previous school – a private Islamic school – only went to 10th grade. While watching a Friends episode during a break from school, she has an epiphany. She decides to wear a hijab (headscarf). It isn't the first time she has worn it, but unlike before, this is her decision, not part of her school uniform. She faces opposition from family, from school officials and from classmates. She also receives encouragement from members of the same groups.

Not only does Amal struggle with the effects of wearing the hijab, but she also is challenged with a crush (she doesn't believe in dating or kissing before marriage), school bullies/racists, friendships, and other typical teenage events.

Overall, it was an OK book. I didn't love it, but I didn't hate it either. I did feel that it was a little too candy coated at times, and at others a little too preachy. Some of the conversations between Amal and her friends read as lessons on Islam and what it means to be Muslim. They just didn't flow as a conversation between friends normally would. I was a little thrown by some of the references in the book, as I didn't think of them as Australian things ("stuffed like a thanksgiving turkey") or because the American version is different. An example of the latter – Amal states that a large body of water looked like a pool of lemonade. As I've recently learned (thanks to my sister's trip to Oz and

talking with a friend who lives there), lemonade in the US (yellow drink made of lemons, water and sugar) is different than lemonade in Australia (think Sprite). So, Amal's vision of a pool of lemonade was a crystal and sparkling lake, and mine was of a lake filled with urine. Yeah...I think that was a bit lost in "translation"

Would I recommend this book? Eh, maybe. If someone was looking for a book with a strong Muslim female as the main character, then yes, as there is a short supply of such material for any age group. Just for something to read, I would probably suggest something else. Although I learned more about being a Muslim teen than I already knew, the entertainment value was missing from this book.

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/9275056>

Amazon Review 1

3.0 out of 5 stars A oblique look at religion and adolescence

24 July 2016 - Published on Amazon.com

Verified Purchase

Contemporary Young Adult fiction has developed a greater sense of sophistication and maturity in its approach to a wide range of issues that concern adolescents in meaningful ways—race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, violence, domestic abuse, and sexual abuse (among other themes) are examined sensitively and plausibly in any number of well written works of Young Adult literature. The topic of religion, however, consistently challenges writers of YA fiction. I've yet to come across a novel that features religion and faith as integral narrative elements and issues that profoundly affect characters in ways that compel them to develop and think independently. **Does My Head Look Big in This?** comes pretty close but falls somewhat short.

The novel focuses on Amal, a high school junior living in Australia. At the start of the final term of the school year, Amal decides to begin wearing the hijab full-time as an expression of her Islamic faith. The novel follows her through some quite typical high school experiences—she and her friends develop crushes on boys, contend with bullying “mean girls,” deal with body image issues,

worry about upcoming exams, and cope with overbearing/controlling/unsympathetic/embarrassing parents. Amal has a fairly diverse group of friends—some are Islamic, some are Jewish, some are Palestinian-Australians (like Amal), others hail from other parts of the world, including Mrs. Vaselli, Amal's elderly Greek-Australian neighbor who reluctantly befriends Amal. Throughout all of these encounters and the rest of the minor conflicts that arise throughout the course of the plot, Amal's decision to wear the hijab—which seems to be the driving force behind the novel's primary conflict—increasingly fades into the background. Until the latter portion of the novel, when Amal's friend Leila runs away from home because of her mother's strict opposition to her desire for education and independence.

Ultimately, Amal's assertion of her faith creates few problems for her. It does, however, provide her with an enlightened perspective on the actions of others. It seems as though once Amal has resolved her feelings about her own faith and becomes comfortable with her decision (she even rejects a mere kiss from Adam, her crush, and explains that any form of intimacy is forbidden before marriage)—only then can she develop insight and understand the beliefs and action of others, particularly Mrs. Vaselli and Leila.

Although the novel is rather lighthearted and avoids serious drama, it sends a powerful albeit tangential message about faith in oneself and the value of empathy.

https://www.amazon.com.au/Does-Head-Look-Big-This-ebook/dp/B004G606N0/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=does+my+head+look+big+in+this&qid=1599880049&s=books&sr=1-1

Amazon Review 2

*4.0 out of 5 stars*Both hilarious and serious

3 May 2016 - Published on Amazon.com

Verified Purchase

I read this book for a reading challenge and found it absolutely delightful. The teenage voice was just sassy and sarcastic enough to be hilarious. The main character dealt with many issues, not just her faith and decision to wear hijab full time. Through it all, she learned a lot about herself. I admire her being woman enough to not only stand up for her faith, but also for her friends and convictions, but most of all to admit to herself and others when she's wrong. This is why reading challenges are good. Ordinarily I would not likely choose a young adult novel about a Muslim teen. I am so glad I did. Although my faith is different and my age is three times Amal's and then some, there is a lot I can learn from her character. Well done!

Book Blog review 1

REVIEW: Does My Head Look Big In This? by Randa Abdel-Fattah & Narrated by Rebecca McCauley

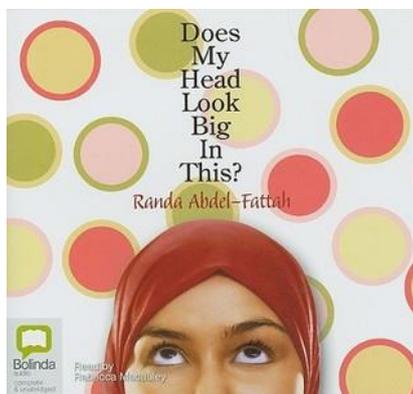
[December 30, 2016](#)

Published: 1st January 2005

Publisher: Bolinda Audio/Publishing

Format: Audio book – Hired from the Library

RRP: \$29.95 (for audio book on cd)/ \$16.95 (Paperback)



4.5/5 Stars

The slide opened and I heard a gentle, kind voice: What is your confession, my child? I was stuffed. The Priest would declare me a heretic; my parents would call me a traitor ...The Priest asked me again: What is your confession, my child? I'm Muslim. I whispered. Welcome to my world. I'm Amal Abdel-Hakim, a seventeen year-old Australian-Palestinian-Muslim still trying to come to grips with my various identity hyphens. It's hard enough being cool as a teenager when being one issue behind the latest Cosmo is enough to disqualify you from the in-group. Try wearing a veil on your head and practising the bum's up position at lunchtime and you know you're in for a tough

time at school. Luckily my friends support me, although they've got a few troubles of their own. Simone, blonde, gorgeous and overweight – she's got serious image issues, and Leila's really intelligent but her parents are more interested in her getting a marriage certificate than her high school certificate! And I thought I had problems.

I read this book earlier this year now (back in late April/Early May to be exact) and it tackles some major and rather topical issues that the world was facing then, and still is today, despite having been published in 2005.

Does My Head Look Big In This? Was Randa Abdel-Fattah's debut novel back published in 2005. More than ten years on this book is still not only astoundingly perfect, but it's extremely relevant and topical and I honestly urge everyone to pick it up and read the book. We always talk about the books that changed your life, but I seriously believe this one not only holds the power to change your mind, but your heart, as it tackles the heavy topics of racism, culture, religion and teenage expectations and life in current society. It's a book that made me understand a culture and religion that is so pushed down and harshly judged for the actions of a few radicals who are so far off book.

With **Does My Head Look Big In This?**, Randa Abdel-Fattah has crafted the most wonderful and moving story that will not only entertain you, but it will capture your heart and mind, allowing you to glimpse a very misunderstood culture and it's people in the most relaxed way all within the safety of your lounge room.

Amal is just a typical Australian teenage who has a love/hate relationship with school, loves her best friends, loves fashion and shopping and has a crush on *the* guy in year 11. But she is also Muslim, and just as she prepares to start her third term of year 11 she makes the personal decision to wear the hijab 'full-time. Feeling she is ready to take on this role and everything it represents Amal believes she is strong enough to endure everything society can and will throw her way; but her parents feel otherwise and warn her constantly how hard the transition and reality can be. Not one to be persuaded, strong headed Amal powers through misconceptions, mistreatment and plain religious and ethnic prejudices in the most remarkable and uplifting way. No, **Does My Head Look Big In This?** Is not a story for the faint of heart, or prejudice. But it is a story that is humbling, uplifting, and at times quite confronting. It's a story that has the power to turn your world on its head and leaves you wanting to know more ... to find a person in similar circumstance and hug them and tell them you are on their side.

What's astounding about this book, is the way that Randa Abdel-Fattah has balanced the light heartedness of every day life with the serious and comical teenage years, as well as dealing with

racial difference and prejudice. *Does My Head Look Big In This?* Could have so easily have been a frustrations rant or dressing down, but Randa Abdel-Fattah was able to take the story and make it so much more.

Simply put this book was inspiring. It opened my eyes to another culture in such a humours but down to earth way, all the while maintaining it's beliefs, integrity and most importantly respect. I really enjoyed Amal's insights and loved her gutsy and take no-prisoners approach to life. Amal is a character that demands your acknowledgement, if not your respect and I loved how true and hard she believed in everything. Her conviction and faith made me stop at times and contemplate my own beliefs and perceptions and whether I would be strong enough to endure what Amal does for her hard earned beliefs.

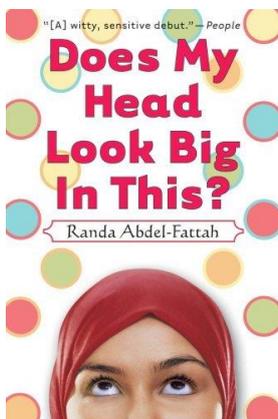
I highly recommend this book to everyone no matter their nationality, ethnicity or religious background. Regardless of whether you are 12, 42 or even 102, *Does My Head Look Big In This?* Is a universal book that everyone should and needs to read at least once within their lifetime.

<https://nevendbookshelf.wordpress.com/2016/12/30/review-does-my-head-look-big-in-this-by-randa-abdel-fattah-narrated-by-rebecca-mccauley/>

Book Blog Review 2

Review for *Does My Head Look Big In This?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah

December 4, 2016 Review Australian-Palestinian, Contemporary, Muslim, Own Voices, Young Adult, The Shenners



Note: I read this book as part of the #DiversityDecBingo reading challenge. You can find out more about it [here](#).

My Summary: Amal, an Australian-Palestinian girl living in Melbourne, is about to start her junior year, and she has decided to start wearing the hijab full-time. After making this decision, she must confront judgment and prejudice from classmates, neighbors, strangers, and more. On top of that, she's developed a crush on a classmate. Soon, junior year becomes the year for herself to struggle with and explore her identity and figure out how to remain true to herself and her principles in the face of social pressures to conform.

Review:

This book was first published in 2005, but it's still relevant and important, given the current political climate and rise in Islamophobic sentiment. Amal's story stands against hatred and prejudice by centering the perspective of a Muslim hijabi, someone who is very vulnerable to vitriol and violence due to her hypervisibility.

The book is very explicit in its handling of stereotypes and Islamophobia. It directly calls out the biases and assumptions that even well-meaning people hold. Since the narrative is in first-person, readers get to experience Amal's visceral responses to prejudice and harassment. We get to empathize with her frustration, fear, and fury.

Amal is a great character. She's snarky and strong-willed, but she has her flaws. She doubts herself sometimes, makes poor decisions, judges people unfairly and has to confront her own biases, etc. She's capable of being sensitive and insightful, but she's still a teenager who has a lot to learn.

Aside from having a strong protagonist, this book features a diverse supporting cast that add to the richness of the story. One of Amal's two closest friends at school is Japanese, having bonded with her over shared experiences of blatant racism and classism from a horrible classmate. The other friend is fat and struggling with her body image, but supported by friends who love her unconditionally. Amal also manages to build a friendship with an elderly neighbor who's a Greek Orthodox Christian immigrant.

The supporting cast showcases the diversity within Muslims and within Arabs. One of Amal's Muslim friends, Yasmeen, has a Pakistani father and white British mother who converted to Islam. The other, Leila, has roots in Turkey, where her mother grew up. Amal's family attends a family friend's wedding where the bride is Syrian and the groom is Afghani. Beyond their ethnic

differences, each of these characters has a different relationship with Islam and interprets and expresses it differently.

Amal's thoughts, actions, and interactions with others actively debunk the notion that Muslim women are all oppressed and that Islam is inherently oppressive. Her agency and choice are emphasized throughout as she fights multiple people who assume her parents forced the hijab on her. The book very clearly calls out [white] feminists "who don't get that this is me exercising my right to choose."

Furthermore, Amal makes the distinction between cultural/social norms and religious doctrine, which are often conflated by people who are ignorant about Islam. She also reflects on the way culture and religion change over time, and how often immigrants cling to traditions and ideals that have become obsolete in their homeland since they left. These situations and thoughts bring nuance to Muslim identity.

Overall, I enjoyed the book. However, there were certain patterns I noticed that interfered with my ability to fully embrace the book. Specifically, there were several cases of ableism and [internalized] misogyny.

Humor and sass feature prominently in Amal's character, but a number of her quips were dismissive of people with disabilities, especially mental illness. For example, she disdains her mother's "neat freak" tendencies (which are never explicitly labeled as OCD or OCPD but could be interpreted as such), calling her "neurotic." She also refers to her decision to don the hijab at her snobby prep school as "psychotic." In facing down another girl's prejudice and meanness, she thinks that the other girl was probably dropped on her head as a child. Those are just a few examples.

Although the book tries to champion the woman-power, it doesn't succeed completely because there are still noticeable instances of misogyny. Despite Amal's discussion of how wearing the hijab is her choice and not something she should be judged for, she judges other girls for showing too much skin. She disdains girls as "bimbos" if they seem to care too much about their appearance and dress to get attention (by her assumption), which is hypocritical given her own tendency to spend a long time getting dressed and made up and her own insecurities about how she looks to other people. Although one character called out a white girl for making a racist statement, his comeback fell flat for me because the implied insult hinged on slut-shaming based on the girl's perceived promiscuity.

Recommendation: Despite its flaws, I'd recommend this book for its strong character voice and nuanced representation of Muslims.

<https://readingasiam.wordpress.com/2016/12/04/review-for-does-my-head-look-big-in-this-by-randa-abdel-fattah/>

Ten Things I Hate About Me reviews

Goodreads Review 1

Jan 30, 2010

This is a better than average teen problem book from an Australian author, perhaps a 7 on the Peachworthiness scale because I like that it deals with a culture for which there hasn't been a lot of representation in YA lit. Yes, a 10th grader who dislikes WAY too many things about herself and can't choose an identity that works at home, with friends, and with boys, a girl that can't decide whether to accept the attentions of a popular A-hole at school or to speak up for the guy who is ridiculed instead--all these plot components have been done and are comfortable and familiar to readers. I could even complain that while I enjoyed the story, there was too much predictability here: Jamilia/Jamie will find a way to get to her formal, even though her father is too strict to permit it; the boy with whom she strikes up an anonymous bare-my-soul-to-the-bone email relationship with is most likely to be someone she knows; her widowed father and her language & culture school teacher would be perfect together.

So what makes this decent but run-of-the-mill story special is what makes the main character special: her Lebanese-Muslim identity in an anglo-centric country. Jam has chosen to split her identities rather than deal with the teasing and name-calling at school that other Muslim teens there face. She is "passing" for Anglo through bleaching her hair and wearing blue contacts, but she feels torn and isolated and can't tell her friends the truth about why she can't go out at night or anywhere with boys besides school. She can't tell them that she plays in an Arabic music band and loves it or that she's devoted to her exuberant, but embarrassing family.

American teens could benefit from this mixture of the typical YA story with the culture infusion that will teach them about an experience that might vary in some ways from their own--fighting

prejudice and stereotypes, unique aspects of Muslim identity--but will allow them to see commonalities they might not expect. At some point, most teens feel as if they come from another planet,so Abdel-Fattah's story will provide more resonance than they expect. (less)

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/87433608>

Goodreads Review 2

Jul 27, 2016

Oh, I think I lost IQ points while reading this. I have never read a book as see through as this. I support books that have an agenda, I think literature should want to say something. But come on, that was just invisible, like the author should just write a manifesto.

First of all, Jamilah is an utter idiot. I think most young unpopular girls have battled the question of "will I change myself to fit in?". That said, I can't see Jamilah is willing to hang out with a guy that mocks her people. Jamilah is so shallow and has the maturity of an 8 year old. Teenagers aren't that dumb. Give us some credit.

Secondly, I thought I'd sympathize. I used to struggle with the conflict of being both Israeli and American. The solution was the accept that I'm both. Yes, I'm an American, at least partly. And I'm Israeli and I can blend their cultures to become me. There's no conflict and I would never give up on any side of me. In this book, Jamilah gives up on her Australian side.

This leads me to a question that's been bothering me. I'm all for individuality and sharing culture (without appropriation, obviously). That said, if she sympathizes so much with Lebanon, why doesn't she go there? I feel that when a person immigrates, they should accept the culture of the place. I feel that it's a blend of both accepting the given culture and still cherishing your own. Jamilah doesn't do that and to me, that's problematic. If she wants pure Muslim culture, why is she looking for it in Australia?

Her sister who's acting towards change is perceived as dumb. The plot twist was so obvious, I saw it a mile away. The dialogue is unrealistic. That's not how bullying works. That's not how racism

works. Racism is horrible because sometimes, it's not someone telling you you don't belong, it's people hinting it, making you feel wrong. There's so much more that's problematic here but I'll stop because thinking about this book annoys me.

I will say that it was a quick read which was nice. I don't see myself reading more of this author.

What I'm taking with me

※ Apparently I know a lot of Arabic culture already.

※ Timothy is an annoying name.

※ How to not write dialogue. (less)

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1710608738>

Amazon Review 1

5.0 out of 5 stars Good, easy read that empowers teens to accept who they are

27 October 2011 - Published on Amazon.com

Verified Purchase

This book is written more for a teen audience and I am not a teen. However, I came across the title and thought it sounding like a good book. It really addresses being comfortable with who you are and choosing your own identity. Many of the other reviews are basically summaries so I will not retell the story but its an easy read and I definitely recommend it. It does deal with some racial issues. It is set in Australia and the main character is Muslim.

Amazon Review 2

4.0 out of 5 stars Absolutely brilliant

8 January 2014 - Published on Amazon.com

Format: Kindle Edition/Verified Purchase

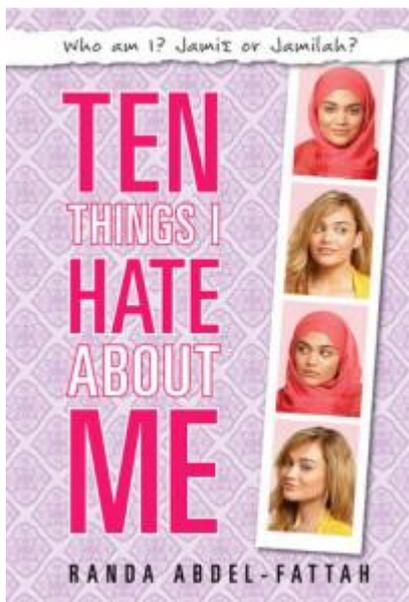
I read this book a while ago and I was interested in reading it again, it is as good as I remembered it. It gives you the perspective from all age groups, about how:- discrimination, stereotypes and being judgemental impacts individual, families, society etc etc

https://www.amazon.com.au/Ten-Things-Hate-About-Me-ebook/dp/B004AM6C7O/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=TEN+THINGS+i+hate+about+me&qid=1599880782&s=books&sr=1-2

Book Blog Review 1

Review: 10 Things I Hate About Me by Randa Abdel-Fattah

October 8, 2015 Paige Diversity 3, Reviews 0 ★★★★★



10 Things I Hate About Me by Randa Abdel-Fattah

Published by Orchard Books on January 1, 2009

Genres: YA, YA Contemporary

Pages: 304

Format: Hardcover

Source: Bought (Used Bookstore)

Goodreads



Jamie just wants to fit in. She doesn't want to be seen as a stereotypical Muslim girl, so she does everything possible to hide that part of herself. Even if it means pushing her friends away because she's afraid to let them know her dad forbids her to hang out with boys or that she plays the *darabuka* in an Arabic band.

But when the cutest boy in school asks her out and her friends start to wonder about Jamie's life outside of school, suddenly her secrets are threatened. Can Jamie figure out how to be both Jamie *and* Jamilah before she loses it all? Jamie's attempt to stop being the girl everyone expects her to be, and to start being the girl she wants to be, is a poignant, smart, hilarious journey that will speak to all readers.

Diversity Rating: 3 – Closer to Reality

Racial-Ethnic: 5 (lots of POC characters)

QUILTBAG: 0

Disability: 0

Intersectionality: 3 (major point is Jamie's dissatisfaction with the lack of freedom she gets as a Muslim girl)

Look at this cute cover. Look at the legendary-rom-com-referencing title. Does this book look serious to you? No it does not, and that's how it goes right for your jugular with its talons and shows us anyone who stays silent when someone is being bullied for their identity is complicit in the related -ism (racism, ableism, etc.). So no, you're not in for something cute with a swoony romance. There's not really a romance at all. You're in for a modern-day take on the inner and outer struggles of someone who works hard to pass as white, racism and what makes someone complicit in it, and learning to respect your own culture while living in another. AND IT'S GREAT.

Jamilah went to all sorts of lengths to get what she wanted—dying her hair blonde in sixth grade and going by Jamie instead of her full name—and now she's on just the right spot on the popularity ladder to have friends and be generally invisible, but it came at the cost of the pain she feels every time popular boy Peter is racist (which is often) and stays silent. None of the other Aussie YA books that have come across the pond to the US have even mentioned racial relations, which are as difficult there as everywhere else on the planet. You understand why Jamie works so hard to hide that she's a Lebanese Muslim and hurt for her because she felt she *needed* to do that. When Peter opens his yap, you understand *exactly* why she felt it was necessary.

I do, however, wonder how she pulled off the ruse. I guess none of her friends ever heard her full name, which is ethnic enough the more racist people would question her about it, because she'd interrupt teachers and substitutes while they called role and say her name was Jamie. An explanation of that would have been nice, and if anyone had been in school with her prior to sixth grade, they might have remembered things and thrown a wrench in her plans. It's handwaved in usual "just go with it" style.

Essentially, the novel has two major subplots: Jamilah learning to shrug off her internalized self-hatred and her evolving relationship with her strict-Muslim-father-headed family. Like a number of girls would and do, she chafes under his rules that she can't go out alone or hang with boys because it would sully her honor, she's jealous of her brother's freedom, and she's embarrassed by her sister's open activism and how she sports the hijab. Many of these conflicts *are* rooted in Lebanese Muslim culture, but they will still cross cultural borders and speak to readers of all kinds.

Islam and her family's beliefs aren't presented as Better Than or Worse Than either; they simple Are and have strengths and flaws just like any other set of cultural beliefs. The Southern Baptist family I grew up in didn't forbid me from hanging out with boys, but I couldn't walk the same 100 yards by myself at night at age 16 when my brother could at 12. No religion wins in the "who treats women better?" contest. So I feel Jamilah on her father limiting what she can do just because she's a girl. Whether the problem is a racist suitor or judgment from the rest of the Lebanese Muslim community around them because their family isn't _____ enough, Jamilah's family has her back.

But remember, this novel won't let you pretend you're not part of the problem just because you aren't actively racist. It makes sure you know silence is consent, complicity, *wrong*. I have no better way to say it than this quote does:

"We buy tickets as audience members only. We never volunteer for the show itself. I know that's not an excuse. In fact, maybe we're worse." (p. 13)

This sweet little backlist title got lost in the shuffle of publishing and time, which is a shame because it's so smart. Go find a copy somewhere. You *need* this book. Also go watch both the movie and television series for *10 Things I Hate About You*, which is referenced in the title, because regardless of sexual orientation, we'll all swoon over Heath Ledger serenading Julia Stiles.

<http://www.theyakitten.net/2015/10/08/review-10-things-i-hate-about-me-by-randa-abdel-fattah/>

Book Blog Review 2

Ten Things I Hate About Me

by Randa Abdel-Fattah

Jamilah is leading a double life. At home she's a dutiful daughter, the "good girl" in her Lebanese Muslim family. Her older sister is a devoted Muslim --- she even wears the *hijab* in public --- but much to their widowed father's dismay, she has foregone college in favor of social and political activism. Her older brother parties, drinks and dates girls; he gets away with it because he's a boy. As for Jamilah, she's convinced that the only outings her father will let her go on are her weekly trips to *madrassa*, Arabic school. Jamilah loves *madrassa* --- she's the drummer for a talented Arabic band --- but she'd also really like to, say, go to a boy-girl party or even to her upcoming 10th grade formal dance. She knows he would never let her go, though, and she also knows that her friends from school would never understand his strictness.

That's because at school, Jamilah is known only as Jamie, and no one knows about her Lebanese heritage or her Muslim background. With her dyed-blond hair and blue contact lenses, Jamie looks just as much like a "skip" as any Anglo kids in her school. Racism and ethnic prejudice run rampant at Jamie's Sydney, Australia, school, however, so, as Jamie explains, "I've hidden the fact that I'm of Lebanese-Muslim heritage from everybody at school to avoid people assuming I drive planes into buildings as a hobby."

Unfortunately, Jamie's crush, Peter, is one of the prime instigators of those kinds of racist taunts --- and because no one knows her real identity, she just has to sit idly by while the other Muslim kids take the verbal abuse of the "in group." When Jamie learns that Peter, one of the most popular and cutest boys in school, might just like her back, she's determined to find a way to go to the formal dance *and* keep her ethnic identity a secret from Peter.

But, as usual, fate has a way of intervening, and when Jamilah finds herself baring her soul --- both sides of it --- to an online correspondent known only as "John," she discovers the liberation of being truly honest about who she is and where she comes from. But can she translate that cyber-bravery into real-life honesty? And can she trust her true friends to stick by her true self?

Randa Abdel-Fattah's first book, DOES MY HEAD LOOK BIG IN THIS?, was widely praised for incorporating Muslim culture and identity into a "typical" young adult novel about a normal teenaged girl. In it, the heroine makes a decision to wear the *hijab* to her mainstream school as a gutsy declaration of her Muslim pride and identity. TEN THINGS I HATE ABOUT ME has a

somewhat less positive tone. In case you couldn't tell from the title --- which, despite its play on a popular movie title, manages to convey some real self-loathing --- Jamilah spends most of the book feeling down on herself, her family, even her choice of friends.

TEN THINGS I HATE ABOUT ME does raise important questions about trust and self-confidence, and it, like its predecessor, does a good job of showing that Muslim families live everywhere and share many of the same concerns as their non-Muslim counterparts. Jamilah questions her father and her Arabic school teacher about the contradictions she sees within Muslim culture, and she certainly asserts her own will against her oppressive father's. But she also appreciates, and eventually embraces, her religious and ethnic identity in a positive way.

Reviewed by Norah Piehl on May 1, 2010

<https://www.teenreads.com/reviews/ten-things-i-hate-about-me>
