

**A STUDY OF ETHNIC IDENTITY SEARCH OF
THE MAIN CHARACTER IN MY PLACE**

**A THESIS
BY
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

The study of ethnic identity formation of the main character presented in My Place by Sally Morgan rises from the observation of the researcher that novels give us more than their literary values, and that they embody the cultural heritage of the people they have presented. For instance, Maxine Hong Kingston, in her novel, The Woman Warrior (1976), applies Chinese traditional talk-stories as a device of communication between the mother and her daughter. These talk-stories later influence the daughter to embrace Chinese values. In Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon (1977) and Beloved (1987), the characters search for their past by taking journeys which lead them to the truth of their family histories, and eventually to their identities (Priesmeyer. 1994). In these two novels, Morrison uses folklore as a device by which characters find their heritage.

In My Place, Morgan does not only exhibit cultural heritage of the writer's ancestors which leads to the discovery of her true identity in the end, but also confirms that identity is an essential factor for an individual to place him or herself in a society successfully, a stage which goes beyond the works by Kingston and Morrison.

Since it was first published in 1987, the book has attracted a tremendous major reaction from the readers in the West and particularly in Australia because the story reveals the suffering and agony of the suppressed Aborigines, who have been deprived of their cultural heritage and identity by the European. Ray Coffey, the editor of

Place, states that it is ‘a potential for a very distinctive book, something never done before’ (Laurie. 1999: 15-25). Through the process of discovering her deprived culture and identity, Sally learns the truth about her family’s past, embraces the values her grandmother has tried to pass on to her, and eventually gains pride and self-esteem. Sally becomes an inspiration for others who consider themselves minority or oppressed and whose identity has long been shattered to follow her footsteps and once again get back their pride and a sense of belonging in the society. For this merit, My Place received an award from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission for literature, film and media coverage of human rights subjects in 1987. It also received the FAW Patricia Weickhardt Award and the Order of Australia Association Book Prize in 1988.

Y 4 B In this study, the researcher examines the main character’s ethnic identity formation, which is a survival strategy in coping with a feeling of insecurity caused by her concealed origin, and which enables her to have a sense of belonging in the society. K. Lewin (1948) explains in his social identity theory that a person has to know his/her ethnicity because he or she needs a firm sense of group identification in order to maintain a sense of well-being. Rogler, Cooney, and Ortiz (1980) maintain that a person who has ethnic identity will get involved in cultural activities, which could involve verbal expressions, beliefs, and values, of an ethnic group.

In studying the main character’s ethnic identity formation, the researcher has, therefore, applied ethnic identity formation model developed by Jean S. Phinney (1989). In this model, there are three stages in the process of ethnic identity formation: unexamined ethnic identity, exploration of one’s own ethnicity, and ethnic identity achievement. In addition, the four indicators developed by Phinney (1990)

have been used to measure the character's achievement in forming her identity. They are self-identification as a group member, a sense of belonging to the group, positive attitude about one's group membership, and ethnic involvement in social and cultural activities.

Objectives of the Study

1. The factors that cause the main character to search for her ethnic identity
2. The main character's process of ethnic identity search
3. The main character's process of ethnic identity formation
4. The effect of ethnic identity formation on the main character

Significance of the Study

1. As this study exemplifies the readers how an individual treated with inferiority, injustice, and racial discrimination could go through her hardship and emerge as a better person through the process of ethnic identity search, the readers especially of an ethnic group, may be able to apply this process as a survival strategy in order to cope with racial discrimination as well as social injustice.
2. As the ethnic identity search examined in this study results in cultural heritage preservation, it may provide some guidelines for Thai students to use ethnic identity search as a device to further explore the issues of identity in Thai society and how it affects cultural change in the face of European economic and cultural invasion.

Scope of the Study

1. The main character's family background, school environment, and her personalities are examined in order to understand how they drive her to search for her family history.
2. The study examines how the main character searches and forms her ethnic identity.
3. Jean S. Phinney's ethnic identity formation model is applied to analyze the main character's ethnic identity formation.

Chapter 2

Review of the Related Literature

This chapter is an overview of the related literature including historical background of the Aborigines in Australia, Sally Morgan's life, her works, and psychological theories on ethnic identity search.

Historical background of the Aborigines in Australia

The historical background presented in this chapter covers pertinent beliefs and ways of thinking of the Aborigines in Australia, which reflect in the novel and are crucial to the analysis of the main character's search for her identity; the relationship between the Aborigines and the European, which include the impacts of the European's settlement on the Aborigines' land right, child custody, and deprivation of other fundamental rights including proper residents, foods, and mobility.

Before the arrival of the European in 1788, the Aborigines had inhabited Australia for at least 40,000 years (Rickard. 1994). As the first people in the pristine land, they had special bondage with nature and, consequently, adopted it as part of their living in order to survive. The Aborigines' strong relationship with land could be seen in the Aboriginal concept of the "Dreaming," in which they believe that their ancestor traveled across the continent at the beginning of time and built the land and the sacred sites (Australian Info International. 1993: 11). Through the "Dreaming," the Aborigines are able to explain natural and supernatural phenomena and make senses of inexplicable things. For them, the land is full of stories about origins of people, animals, hills, trees, and other natural and supernatural beings (Mattingley and

Hampton. 1988). The Aborigines believe that the land is a spiritual phenomenon: “the earth is formed by the world’s creative powers, which appear in the form of ancestral being who mysteriously move over the surface and shape the landscape” (Bourke, Bourke, and Edwards. 1994: 36). According to Edwards (1994), the ‘Dreaming’ is the foundation of economic, social, political, and cultural activities of the Aborigines. The roles of men and women have also been described. Men are expected to be hunters, tool makers, and custodians of male ritual and law, whereas women are expected to rear children, gather food, catch small animals, and observe their own law and rituals, which includes teaching young women and girls. Since the Aborigines believe that all things were created by the spiritual powers, they have spent much of their time at their sacred sites to perform rituals and religious ceremonies in order to maintain their bondage with the land and to feel protected.

During the European’s settlement in Australia, the land was taken over for sheep and cattle grazing or mining and the sacred sites were destroyed. The Aboriginal people were forced to reside only in “the native reserves” as they were, regarded by the European, inadequate to govern themselves. The living condition of the Aborigines in the native reserves, however, was very poor and beyond what they used to once live. There was an article illustrating the Aborigines’ resentment of their living under the protection of the European:

It is not our fault that we are forced to live as so many of us are living in squalid huts and humpies on native reserves. That is your fault. You took our land away from our forefathers, all of it, and all you give them in return was the right to live on unwatered, unlighted, barren or swampy reserves always situated well outside the boundaries of your cities and towns.”

(West Australian, 11 October 1952)

In addition to the deprivation of land, the Aborigines' fundamental rights were also abolished. By the Aborigines Act of 1905, Aboriginal people were prohibited from hotels. They would not go from place to place at their own will and had to get permission for any mobility. They were not allowed to travel at night. They were forced to be labors and servants in the institutions controlled by the white Australians without wages. Even their food was limited and sometimes poisoned (Reid. 1988). If they were caught stealing food from the European, they could be killed at once with no inquiry nor trial. The Aborigines' agony and pain due to such injustice and malevolent treatment of the European was described as follows:

...Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means? If you prick us, do we not bleed, if you tickle us do we not bleed, if you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?

(West Australian 10 October 1952)

The European themselves had their own view of the Aborigines. The Melbourne Argus in 1856 stated that an Aborigine was like a child in the sense that he could not control himself or distinguish between good and evil, and that he lacked foresight and experience (Roberts. 1981). The Aborigines have been in fact considered by many European the lowest class of human being, even inferior to horses and dogs since they have been perpetually described as having "no intelligence," being "brutish, faithless, vicious", and a natural born liar and a thief" (Stannage. 1979: 265-266). Morally inadequate to raise their own children who were born of white fathers, Aboriginal mothers were not allowed to bring up their own children. The government officials often regarded Aboriginal families homeless or living in poverty, and hence these children had to be taken away from Aboriginal families and placed in the care of government or the missionaries (Bourke and Edwards. 1994). The

Aborigines Protection Board was established in 1889 to oversee the Aboriginal people and part-Aboriginal children. In 1911, the Board stated that these children were a positive menace to the society and henceforth reinforced the policy on separating the children from their mothers for a better welfare. These part-Aboriginal children were named the *Stolen Generation*. They were placed in institutions under the pretext that they needed protection. At the institutions, these children were trained to be domestic servants or farm laborers. Nobody knows how many Aboriginal children were taken away or what happened to them since there has never been complete documentation. Most of the children grew up not knowing who their parents were. Brothers and sisters were always separated and many of them never met one another all their lives. They were not allowed to return homes, and as any movement of the Aborigines were controlled, it was difficult for their parents to visit their children. Nevertheless, parents and children remembered the events that they were separated from each other with pain. Donna Meehan, the author of Joy Ride, a story about a train journey that took Donna and her siblings away from her mother, described how her mother, who lost seven children overnight, reacted when Donna asked her why she gave her away, “She was so nervous and I knew when I asked her it was like a bomb going off. Her eyes just filled up with tears and she said, ‘I don’t know why they took you away’” (Meehan. 1989: 12). Connie Nungulla McDonald, one of the stolen generation people and the author of When You Grow up (1996), expressed her painful experience of separation in an interview with Jill Finnane:

Every person needs to belong and I am no exception. Not knowing very much about my family has weighed heavily on my mind all my life. It was government policy that Aboriginal mission children were not told where we came from or who our parents were... Thus, I grew up knowing almost nothing about my background or my early childhood.

(Finnane. 1996: 7)

The Aboriginal people, who were removed from their families when they were very young, had identity crisis because they had been “raised to think ‘white’ and ‘be like white people’”(Bourke and Edwards. 1994: 85). They had to face difficulties in adjusting themselves in the European society. However, at the same time they want to be reunited with their Aboriginal families.

Sally Morgan’s life

The life of Sally Morgan, the author, is the primary source of this autobiographical novel. Therefore, to better understand the character of Sally, it is crucial to look at the life of the author.

Sally Morgan is the first child of the Milroys. She was born in 1951 and grew up as Sally Milroy in suburban Manning, Perth. Morgan has two sisters, Jill and Helen, and two brothers, Bill and David. The Milroys Children are all successful in their careers. Jill Milroy now works with Morgan at the Centre for Indigenous History and the Arts at the University of Western Australia (UWA). Helen became a child psychiatrist. Brother Bill is a senior public servant in the Ministry of Justice. And David is a theatre director with Yirra Yaakin, Western Australia’s first full-time indigenous theater company.

Sally Morgan’s father, Bill Milroy, is a white Australian. Before his marriage, Bill served in the army and became a prisoner of war and experienced a very cruel treatment, which later led him to be a heavy drinker, and to suffer mental illness. He died when Morgan was 9 years old. Due to his illness, Bill did not do properly as a father or a husband. The family was poor and it was the mother, Gladys Corunna who

is part-Aboriginal, who had to work very hard to support the family. Morgan and her siblings were brought up mostly by Gladys and their grandmother, Daisy Corunna or Nan in the story. Daisy was one of the Stolen Generation. She was separated from her mother, Annie Padawani, a full-blood Aborigine, by the European's policy and later became a domestic servant for the Drake-Brockman, the white Australian family. Daisy's life as a young woman is one of the family secrets. The name of the father of her children has never been verified. However, what we know is that as soon as Gladys was born, she was taken away from Daisy by the European's policy. Both Daisy and Gladys had experienced suffering caused by the ruling white, and they, therefore, tried to cover their true ethnicity. When Morgan decided to write a book of her family history, My Place, Gladys became nervous as she said in an interview with Marry Wright (1987), "I think the problem was that as a child I'd been made to feel so ashamed" (Rutherford. 1988: 95).

In 1972, Sally Morgan married Paul Morgan. They have three children: Avril, Blaze, and Zeke. Avril is now a lawyer, Blaze is a graduate student in history at the UWA, and Zeke is a high school student (Laurie. 1999).

Sally Morgan graduated with a BA. from the University of Western Australia (UWA) in 1974, majoring in Psychology. While studying, She got a Repatriation scholarship and an Aboriginal scholarship (Wilde, Hooton, and Andrews. 1994). She also has post-graduate diplomas from the Western Australian Institute of Technology (now Curtin University of Technology) in both Counselling Psychology and Computing and Library Studies. Now she is a professor and a director at the Centre for Indigenous History at the UWA (Laurie.1999). The center works on indigenous oral history and arts research, helps Aboriginal people to attend the university more

easily, and protects Aboriginal intellectual property right of art works and the biological property right. The center also helps many *Stolen Generation* to search for their family's history.

Sally Morgan stated in The Australian Magazine (1999) that after many years of hard working for her family and other Aboriginal people, she began to appreciate her life. Victoria Laurie (1999) described Morgan's character and success in The Australian Magazine:

Morgan is now 48, outwardly stronger and more purposeful than ever. Life has been eventful since her sudden rise to prominence –she “grew out of” her Christian faith and into a deep Aboriginal spirituality rooted in “the old people and the land.”

(Laurie. 1999: 20)

Morgan is now an author of many books, works for her people, and has her own painting collections exhibited in Australia and the United States.

Sally Morgan's works

Morgan started her writing career with an autobiographical novel, My Place. She spent 7 years since 1980 to finish the book. With the first publication in 1987, My Place received a warm welcome and became a bestseller. Over half a million copies were sold in Australia and later the book was published in the United Kingdom, the United States, China, Malaysia, Italy, Indonesia, Japan, Germany, France, Switzerland and Holland (Frenmantle Arts Centre Press. 2000). The book's popularity encouraged Morgan to write other books: one novel, five children books, and one play. Morgan's other novel is Wanamurraganya (1989), an autobiographical story of her tribal grandfather Jack McPhee. The book reveals the truth about the Aborigines' life in harsh conditions during the settlement of the European in Western

Australia. It received the Human Rights Awards. The other five books for children are *Little Piggies*, *Pet Problem*, *Just A Little Brown Dog*, *Dan's Grandpa*, and *In your Dream*. Sistergirl, which is to date the only play she has written, is a story of two alcoholic women: an Aboriginal Rosy and an Irish woman, Miss Murphy. The two ladies were cured together at a hospital. In addition, Morgan works on painting. Some of her pieces are exhibited at the Australian National Gallery and also in the United States (Hammond, O'Neill, and Reid.1988; Laurie. 1999).

Initially, Morgan wanted My Place to be a family record for her children to keep.. As Morgan talked with Wright (1987), she did not want her children to be deprived of a family history like her. Now her will is fulfilled as she said, "My kids have grown up knowing their history" (Laurie.1999: 25). The other reason of her writing this book is explained in an interview with Sheila Browne (1987|): "I've always been the kind of person who gets cross at injustice, so I got very angry and I thought right, I'm going to write a book, and I'd never written a thing in my life." The merit of the book apparently goes beyond a personal story as it has been accepted as a historical record that has never been written before. The book includes the stories of the Stolen Generation, land invasion, as well as suffering from being oppressed. In

Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia, My Place is reviewed as:

My Place has played an extremely important role as a text, which has popularised Aboriginality for thousands of non-Aboriginal readers. The warmth of its reception as to reflect the burgeoning public interest in black Australian stories which characterised the late 1980s and early 1990, a phenomenon which has important implications for all areas of Aboriginal affairs.

(David.1994: 748)

In addition, My Place has tremendously attracted the public attention because it appeared in the year that the federal government established the Royal Commission

into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in order to find out a number of those who died in white custody (Laurie. 1999: 22). They also found that more than half of the deaths had occurred during the time of the *Stolen Generation*. This led to the Stolen Generation Inquiry in 1997, when the government investigated a number of the Stolen Generation people.

The stories of Morgan's uncle, mother, and grandmother unfolded in My Place are the records of the Australian history, the truth that had long been covered, and the history. Helen Daniel stated in The Age (1988):

Sally Morgan's 'My Place' is history but not the kind of history that is finished. This is the kind of history that still shapes the present and its tentacles will reach into the future if these voices are not heard...It tells our collective past and draws black face of the 20th Century.

(Daniel. 1988)

Mark Macleod stated in Time on Sunday that it was surprising that Sally Morgan who did not have direct experience of being oppressed by the European like many authors of autobiographical books, had a motivation to search for her family history. Besides being the book of a family history search, My Place is known as a story of finding *one's place*, a thematic concept that is universal (Jefferis. 1987). With the discovery of Sally's family history, she identifies herself as an Aborigine. She knows who she really is and she knows where she belongs. Thus, Sally, after her ethnic identity search, finds her place.

My Place is also known as a journey of discovery, a struggle for the truth, as Sally and Gladys traveled to the north to Nan's birthplace. The journey provides not only the knowledge about the family origin, but also a sense of place and a sense of belonging. Helen Daniel stated in The Age (1987) that the journey is not only a search for knowledge, but it is also a spiritual and emotional pilgrimage.

The cover of My Place itself depicts the journey, which is an important step in Sally's ethnic identity search and also pictures her family history.

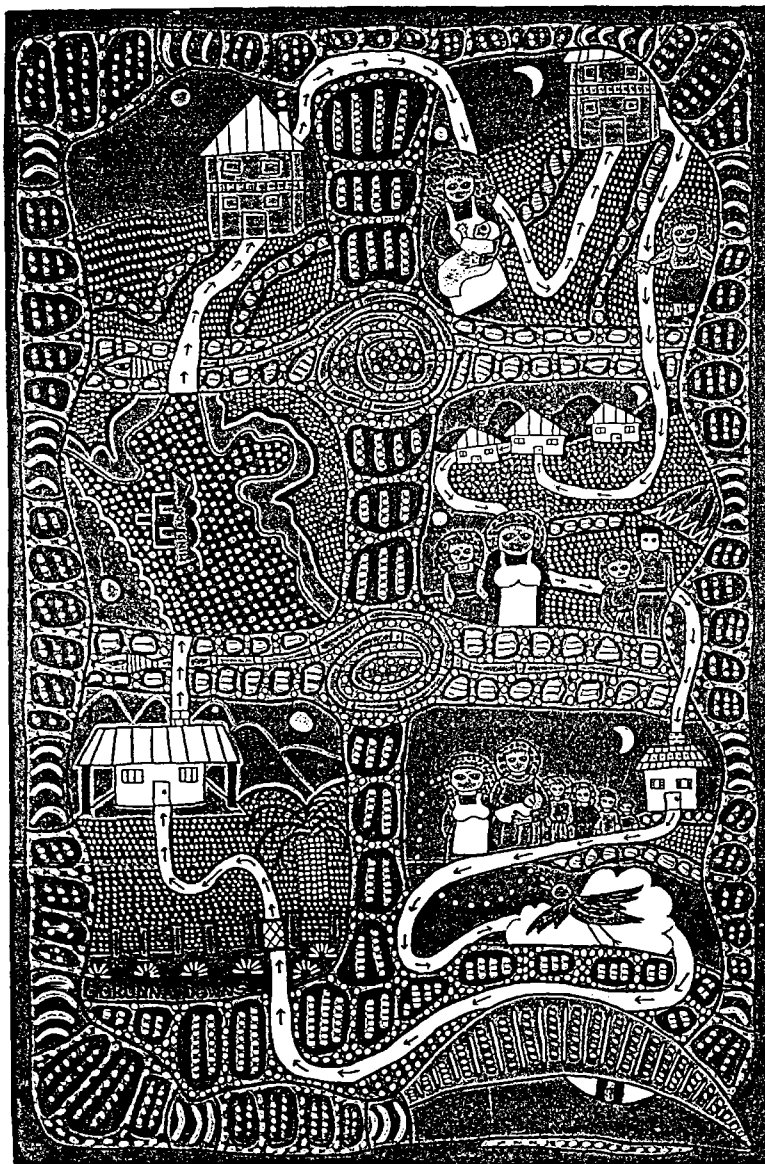


Figure 1 the picture on the cover of My Place

Jenny Gillam, the sale representative of the Fremantle Arts Centre Press, explains the picture on the cover of My Place:

The white house on the left hand side is Corrunga Downs Station where Sally's grandmother, Daisy Corunna lived. Follow the arrow to the upper figure, it is "The Mindaroo" the boat that takes Gladys, Daisy's half caste daughter, away to Parkerville Children's home, the next building on the painting. The next picture shows that Gladys was nursed there and the girl on its left show that Gladys is growing up. The section below is Daisy and Gladys at Ivanhoe where Daisy worked now. There is a soldier (Bill Milroy) standing with Gladys. He was her future husband and Sally's father. The group of people in the lower section includes Nan, Gladys and her children. The figure of the bird symbolises Nan's death. We'll see the arrow travels back to Corrunga Downs, it explains Sally's journey back to her family's home.

Psychological Theories on Ethnic Identity Search

From the psychological perspective, the term "ethnic identity" can be defined as an attitudes toward one's group (Parham and Helm.1981; Teske and Nelson.1973) and self-identification, or feelings of belonging and commitment (Singh.1977; Ting-Toomey.1981; Tzuriel and Klein.1977). Tajfel (1981) explains the term as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel. 1981: 255) In the book, Adolescent Development, John Decey and Maureen Kenny confirm that the term refers to "that part of a person's self-concept that comes from their knowledge and feeling about belonging to a particular cultural group" (Decay and Kenny. 1976: 188).

K. Lewin (1948) asserts that a person needs a firm sense of group identification, so he or she can live happily. In their social identity theory, Tajfel and Turner (1979) conclude that to be a member of a group, a person needs to have a sense of belonging which later results in a positive self-concept.

In an ethnic group, which is regarded by the majority of the society as having a lower status, it is found that its members have difficulty in forming ethnic identity and tend to develop a negative social identity, such as low self-regard and self-hatred (Banks, 1976; V. Gordon. 1980). Some of them may lean on the culture or values of the dominant group in order to develop their statuses and acceptance in the society. There are solutions that result in positive attitude toward one's group such as to develop their pride toward their group. Cross (1978) states, however, that in order for ethnic group members to regain their self-esteem and positive attitudes toward themselves, they need to be able to develop pride in their ethnic group. Moreover, they need to reinterpret characteristics deemed "inferior" by the majority (Bourhis, Giles, and Tajfel. 1973) and to stress the distinctiveness of their own group (Christian, Gadfield, Giles, and Taylor, 1976; Hutnik. 1985).

Psychologists have proposed and developed a number of models for ethnic identity formation. The model applied in this study to examine the main character's process of ethnic identity formation is developed by Jens S. Phinney (1989). In his model, there are three stages of ethnic identity formation: unexamined ethnic identity, exploration of one's own ethnicity, and ethnic identity achievement. According to Phinney, in the unexamined ethnic identity stage, individuals are mostly young and they may not be interested in their ethnicity and do not have experiences of ethnical events. Thus, they absorb their parents' attitudes or may prefer the majority culture. In the second stage, the exploration of one's own ethnicity, a person experiences some events that arouse him or her to pay attention to his or her family's history. This frequently occurs through activities such as reading, talking to people, going to ethnic museums, and participating actively in cultural events. Some people in this stage may

also reject the dominant culture. In the last stage, ethnic identity achievement, people understand their ethnical history better than they used to and are also proud of it.

Phinney (1990) suggests that the stage of achievement includes an ability to identify themselves with their real identity as well as a sense of belonging to their ethnic group. Generally, there are four indicators used to measure whether a person has successfully formed ethnic identity or not in this stage. They are self-identification as a group member, a sense of belonging to the group, attitudes about one's group membership, and ethnic involvement.

The first indicator, self- identification as a group member, is an important aspect of ethnic identity. It refers to an ethnic label that one uses for oneself. The second indicator is a sense of belonging to one's own group. To measure a person's sense of belonging to his or her own group is to deal with feelings, so it is difficult to find effective measurement. A person who labels him or herself as a particular ethnic group member may not feel strongly bound to it. There are a number of psychologists who create questionnaires in order to measure a person's sense of belonging such as "I am a person who (never, seldom, sometimes, often, very often) feels strong bonds toward my own group," "My fate and future are bound up with that of my own group," or "I feel an overwhelming attachment to my own group" (Driedger.1976; Der-Karabetian.1980; Zak. 1973, 1976; Krate, Leventhal, and Silverstein.1974; Parham & Helms.1981, 1985a,1985b).

The third indicator is an attitude toward one's ethnic group. In a social identity theory, a person can have both positive and negative attitudes toward his or her group. The negative one can be seen as a denial of one's ethnic identity (Lax and Richards.1981). The positive attitude can be described by such feelings as being

proud to identify himself or herself with his or her own group and to consider his or her culture rich and precious (Driedger. 1976). The last indicator is ethnic involvement. A person will be involved in language, friendship, social organizations, religion, cultural traditions, politics, or different ethnic or cultural activities and attitudes. Many psychologists describe in their research that ethnic or cultural activities can refer to music, songs, dances, and dress; newspapers, books, and literature; food or cooking; entertainment --movies, radio, sports; traditional celebrations; traditional family roles, values, and names; visits to and continued interest in the homeland; or knowledge about ethnic culture or history.

Chapter 3

An Analysis of the Main Character's Ethnic Identity Search and Formation in My Place

In this chapter the researcher examines the factors that drive the main character, Sally, to search for her ethnic identity, the processes of her search and formation. The main character's family background, school environment, and her personalities are analyzed as main factors leading to her ethnic identity search. Then the process of her search is studied to see how she could form her ethnic identity and how the formation affects her. In addition, Phinney's model of ethnic identity formation and the four indicators are applied to measure the main character's ethnic identity formation and achievement.

Factors for ethnic identity search

There are three dominant factors in the life of Sally, the main character of My Place, that instigates a search for her true identity. These three factors are prevailing from her early childhood to adolescence. The first contributing factor for her search is the background of her family including the relationships she has with older family members. The second one stems from the environment she has been put in at school, which is in a sense different from home, even more hostile. The last one is Sally's own personalities, the important factors that keep her going through the search.

Family background

The portrayal of the life of Sally, the main character in My Place, reflects not only the fact about the life of Sally Morgan, the author, but also her feelings and perception towards people and things around her. The story reveals Sally's thought about her family status as well as about the family members who influenced and shaped her outlook towards the world at large and towards her inner self in particular. Of all the family members, it is clear that Sally loves and admires her father most. He is the idol for Sally as a representation of courage and social figure.

In My Place, the story begins with Sally's accompanying her mother to visit her father at a hospital. Her father, Bill was a veteran soldier and because of his war experience, he suffered from mental illness and consequently was admitted to the hospital several times. Sally did not like the feeling of not having her father at home as she felt insecure and lonely. He died when Sally was nine. Nevertheless, his influence on her was considerable. Sally felt very close to her father and thought of him as a beloved father whom she always admired and looked up to. Most of Sally's recollection of her father was favorable and filled with warmth. During her first nine years, she spent a great deal of times with him. When her father was drinking at home, she loved to pour beer and light cigarettes for him. She described how fun it was when he took the family on a picnic. He often let his children search for chocolate out of his pockets.

Sally always enjoyed listening to her father and his friend talking about the war experiences, particularly the one about his saving his friend's life. To Sally, Bill was a real hero. She felt that he was brave and she wished she were like him. With his presence, Sally found herself safe and strong. Once at school, she was called upon

to perform in front of the whole class and with pride and confidence, she sang an Italian song—the one that her father taught her. She came home and told Bill how she had impressed her teacher and friends, expecting him to be proud of her too.

However, the story reveals the other dark side of Bill as a heavy drinker and an abusive husband. Sally observed that her father was an oppressor. At one point in the story, Sally pondered: “I was grateful Dad didn’t belt Mum. Although, one night, he did push her and she fell” (Morgan. 1987: 21). Sally remembered that when her father had been drunk or not in a normal state of mind, he approached everyone in a different way. Sally observed that her father was aggressive towards her mother and grandmother. In Sally’s memory, there were the times when her father could not control himself and started arguing with or even hurting her mother. Many times at night, when he was likely to be a monster, everyone in the family had to avoid him. Sally remembered when she was eight, there was one night that her father got worse and everyone had to sneak out to the neighbor’s house. Sally was sent to calm him down and ask him to let everyone come back. Nevertheless, Sally took pity on him and managed to put a blame on his bad experiences in the war and on alcohol: “I associated Dad’s bad fits with the darkness and never realized that by dusk, he’d be so tanked up with booze and drugs as to be just about completely irrational” (Morgan. 1987: 41).

In the story, Bill was the only one in the family who was practically connected to the outside world because of his being white. His interacting with people in the society enabled Sally to see what was going on in the real world. For instance, Bill loved to go out to drink with his friends at a local pub, the Raffles. He often took the children with him, but instead of taking them inside, he made them stay in the car

waiting for him for many hours. Sally did not explain why they had to wait outside for long hours but later on she recounted an incident revealing that her father was ashamed of his family. Once only Jill went to the pub with him and she waited outside for hours before entering the pub to find him. Someone put her on the counter and asked, “All right, who owns this one?” (Morgan. 1987: 28). Bill was very angry and felt embarrassed: “He felt she’d show him up in front of his mates” (Morgan. 1987: 28). Bill did not want other people to see his children who were part-Aboriginal. This realization disturbed Sally as a young girl.

The relationship between Sally and Bill influenced on her rejecting her true ethnicity. Bill was a role model for her to cling on to. He had power and was accepted in the society, where she wished she could belong to or be accepted. Sally, then, developed self-denial, in other words, she denied her true being and her ethnicity. Bill also influenced on Sally’s mental strength. When he was in a bad condition and was aggressive towards her mother and Nan, Sally is the only one who could make him sober and bring him back to the harsh reality. This event made her strong when confronting hostile circumstances.

Sally’s memory of her mother is different. While her father represents a strong person, her mother, on the other hand, represents an obedient and submissive person: “Poor Mum. She had a heart like sponge and the most flexible will in the neighbourhood” (Morgan. 1987: 80). Her mother did not like an argument. She always surrendered to her father. No matter what he did, she ignored it. Sally was furious when he stole her money and her mother did not blame him. Because of Sally’s strong character that she absorbed from her father, she did not like her mother’s submissive and obedient character. To her, Gladys was a weak character.

Once, when her mother argued with her father and he pushed her until she fell down. Her mother sat still not doing nothing. Sally was upset that her mother was too weak to fight against this ill treatment: “Mum just lay in a crumpled heap. I wondered why she didn’t get up” (Morgan. 1987: 21). Gladys ~~was~~^{wasn't} not only submissive to power, she also tried to make Sally to be so and even to please other people. At the beginning of the story Sally recalled that, at the hospital, Gladys tried to make her talk to a man who looked appalling to Sally: “Mum would try and prompt me to talk: ‘Say hello, darling.’ She encouraged, as she gave me a quick dig in the back” (Morgan. 1987: 12).

From the story, it is apparent that the young Sally did not realize that her mother and her maternal grandmother were part-Aboriginal. Sally thought that she had no difference from other children as the truth about her mother’s background was always avoided in the family conversation at all cost. Gladys tried to stop Sally from arguing with Nan about the family origin. Sally felt that her mother always let things stay the same. The story shows that it was Gladys who helped conceal the truth about their origin from Sally. Whenever, she asked Gladys about her family’s origin, the latter persistently avoided the subject and even managed to convince Sally to believe that Nan, the grandmother, traveled in a boat from India long time ago. She also tried to stop Sally from pestering Nan about the truth:

You’re not to bother Nan any more. She’s not as young as she used to be and your questions are making her sick. She never knew when you’re going to trick her. There’s no point in digging up the past, some things are better left buried.
(Morgan. 1987: 99)

The mysterious background of the family that was kept from her affected a great deal on young Sally’s willingness to associated with the outside world. When

her mother encouraged Sally to try her best in the last year of high school, Sally said to herself:

How can I tell her it was me, and her and Nan. The sum total of all the things I didn't understand about them or myself. The feeling that a very vital part of me was missing and that I'd never belong any where never resolve anything.
(Morgan. 1987: 106)

Nevertheless, Gladys did not totally fail as a mother. Sally thought of her mother as a responsible and hard-working woman who tried her best to keep the family together as she claimed: "That was one thing you could say about Mum, she wasn't afraid to work. She had always kept some money coming in all the years Dad was sick,..." (Morgan. 1987: 54). Because of her mother, the family could go through the economic crisis. Her mother tried to make everyone happy. She always pulled the family together by encouraging them to join activities such as toasting marshmallows and having a bonfire. She also tried to satisfy every one in the family. At one time she pleased Nan with a suitcase filled with biscuits. One thing about her mother that Sally definitely remembered was her strong support for the children's education, which later was the topic in the argument, as Sally did not want to further her study after a high school. It was her mother who insisted on Sally's going to a university. Though Sally admired Gladys as she worked hard to support her family and tried hard to support her children's education, Gladys's surrender to her father made Sally felt sorry for her and wanted to find out why Gladys would not fend for herself.

Another influential person in Sally's life and search for her true identity is the grandmother, Nan. She had gradually and continually introduced the Aborigines' world to Sally until Sally unconsciously absorbed Aboriginal beliefs and values as part of herself. Sally recalled how interesting and fun she had with the presence of her

grandmother, especially while they were sitting quietly to observe small creatures in their yard such as birds, toads, and crickets. They spent many times together reviewing the world of nature. Sally recalled that Nan once told her a story about how the Aborigines hunted: “There are men, you see, three men. They are very quiet, they’re hunting. Here are kangaroos, they’re listening, waiting. They’ll take off if they know you’re coming” (Morgan.1987: 100).

Nan taught her to observe everything around her and in this way Sally learned a lot from observing Nan. Sally learned that Nan had her own way of curing, which she called the ‘Old Cure.’ Nan used castor oil, pepper, beets, and kerosene to cure and got rid of diseases. When Sally was very sick with rheumatic, she noticed that Nan moved her hands along her body without touching to cure her.

Sally found that Nan is very self-protective when she had to contact a stranger. With her curiosity, she wanted to know why Nan behaved like a defender and later it led to Sally’s family history search. Sally noticed that her grandmother did not like her grandchildren to bring friends home. One day, Sally walked into a kitchen with her friend and Nan was very angry. She said, “You’re not to keep bringin’ people inside, Sally. You got no shame. We don’t want them to see how we live” (Morgan. 1987: 78). When Sally was fifteen, she once returned home from school and saw Nan was crying. Nan said, “You bloody kids don’t want me, you want a bloody white grandmother, I’m black. Do you hear, black, black, black” (Morgan. 1987: 97). More than that, Sally noticed Nan’s peculiar reaction to the authority. Sally tried to ask Nan why she had to please the man who came to collect the rent. The following is the dialogue in which Nan tried to reason why she had to please this man and it made Sally was more puzzled:

“You don’t know nothing, girl. You don’t know what it’s like for people like us. We’re like Jews, we got to look out for ourselves.”

“What do you mean people like us? We’re just like anybody else, aren’t we! I didn’t even know you knew Jews existed, how on earth could we be the same as them?”

(Morgan. 1987: 105)

It was also at this time that Sally began to realize with pain that her maternal relatives were Aboriginal:

Inside, I felt all churned up, but I didn’t know why. I had accepted by now that Nan was dark, and that our heritage was not that shared by most Australians, but I hadn’t accepted that we were Aboriginal I was too ignorant to make such a decision, and too confused.

(Morgan.1987: 105)

The other person who helped feed Sally’s curiosity and later the search for her identity was Nan’s brother, Arthur. Early in the story, when Sally was about eight years old, Arthur and his children visited her family. Because she was told that Nan had traveled from India, Sally thought that they spoke Indian and wanted to learn to speak Indian too.

In chapter 23--The Visitor--Arthur revisited Sally’s family. It was in 1978. After that, he came more often and stayed longer. Each time Sally heard and remembered the past stories told by Arthur. Arthur, different from Nan, was willing to talk about the past. He also showed some old photographs of Nan. Everyone was excited to see Nan when she was young. Arthur also told why Nan wanted to be white: “Aah, she’s bin with whitefellas too long. They make her feel’ shamed, that ’s what white people do to you” (Morgan. 1997: 148). In addition, he mentioned how Aborigines’ birth and death was neglected: “I got no papers to prove what I’m sayin. Nobody cared how many blackfellas were born in those day, nor how many died” (Morgan.1987: 157).

Arthur's regular visits in later years gave Sally new knowledge about the Aborigines and her family history, which contributed to her decision to write a book about her family history.

All these four family members had a considerable influence on Sally. Bill was a model of courage and social acceptance who also opened up another world where only the White belonged. Gladys was the image Sally despised yet wanted to protect. Nan and Arthur were the source of rich life, with which Sally decided to join later.

School environment

At school, Sally became gradually aware that her family was different. Sally observed that other students treated her and her siblings in an unusual way and that they were not well-accepted by the community. At school, other student rarely talked to them. Sally, Jill, and Billy were left to play alone by themselves and to walk home alone. The realization that she was different and unaccepted in a small world at school led Sally to isolate herself from other people.

Moreover, she realized that the values and beliefs she had absorbed from Nan became peculiar to others. At school, Sally found that her bondage to nature was unacceptable and even caused her difficulty in interacting with students and teachers. In the first year of primary school, Sally's teacher assigned the students to draw a picture of their parents. Sally's picture was of her naked parents. The teacher was furious and threw the picture in a bin. The whole class mocked her. She did not understand why and found that it was not easy to be at school: "I had developed an active dislike of school. I was bored and lonely. Even though the other children talked to me, I found it difficult to respond" (Morgan. 1987: 19). When asked about

her family, Sally said that her family was ordinary Australian, but her friends laughed saying that Sally's family was abnormal: "You've got the most abnormal family I've ever come across. Don't get me wrong, I like you mother, I really do, but the way you all look at life is weird" (Morgan. 1987: 107). Sally did not asked them to explain why because she felt embarrassed. The painful experiences and embarrassing with her teacher and classmates made Sally more alienated. Sally felt that staying at home with Nan was safer and better.

Personalities

Sally was the only one child in the family who tried to find out her true heritage, partly because her personality was different from those of the other siblings. Unlike her sister and brothers, Sally found that it was difficult for her to speak up. Sally as a child was taught to conceal self-expression by her mother. When her father made Sally a shoulder-bag, she did not like it, but it was Gladys who encouraged her to say things against her will:

Mum said brightly, 'Isn't Daddy clever to make that for you?... 'Don't you like it?' I was trapped. I mumbled a reluctant yes, and let my gaze slip from the bag to the large expanse of green grass nearby. I wanted to run and fling myself on the grass. I wanted to bury my face so Dad couldn't see. I wanted to shout, 'No I don't think. Dad's clever. Any one could have make this bag'

(Morgan. 1987: 15)

Eventually, it was difficult for Sally to express her true feeling. When her father asked her whom she would choose between her mother and him, Sally wanted to shout, "Don't do this to me, I'm only a kid!" (Morgan. 1987:43), but she could not. Once in the story, her father pushed her mother against the wall, Sally thought she should say something to help her poor mother, but she could not: "I tried to think of

something to say that would make things all right, but my lips were glued together”
(Morgan. 1987: 21).

She also developed a fear of darkness because of the experience of sneaking out of the house when her father was not in a fit stage. At night, she was always suspicious that there would be something terrible happened such as a quarrel between her parents. Even after her father died, Sally was still afraid of the dark:

There were no more midnight flits to Auntie Grace’s house, no more hospitals, no more ambulances. We were on our own, but peace had returned. I was still afraid of the dark, but I didn’t burrow under my pillow any more.

(Morgan. 1987: 51)

The experience of having abusive father and a submissive mother together with constant preaching from the mother to be silent made Sally not only unable to express her thoughts and feelings freely but also afraid of the unknown.

Furthermore, the experiences at school drove her to create her own world where she felt safe and peaceful in order to protect herself from any painful or embarrassing moments. She preferred staying at home with her grandmother and enjoying observing animals and the nature as she described these moments later: “What a magical it had been, I sighed” (Morgan. 1987: 14). Another way of her escape from the cruel world was through reading. Sally spent a lot of time reading fairy tales. She was always the first one who finished a book assigned in class, and she was always eager to read more. Sally once imagined that she was a friend of Pooh, the bear in the book, Winnie the Pooh, because she felt no longer alienated and lonely:

He made me feel more normal. I suppose I say something of myself in him... Pooh lived in a world of his own and he believed in magic, the same as me. He wasn’t particularly good at anything, but everyone loved him, anyway”

(Morgan. 1987: 45)

When Sally grew older and had more experiences, she became stronger and gained more positive characteristics which were the ingredients of her success in her identity search and formation.

One of Sally's positive personalities is her mental strength, which she learned from her father. Sally was not easily influenced by other people. She was strong in her belief and attitude. When her father bribed her with chips to make Sally accompany him at night when he was not in a fit stage, she did not accept it.

Sally was also self-confident. She did not care what people would think of or talk about her. She often missed the Sunday school, and when her sister Jill complained, she replied, "Aw, I don't care what you say. It's none of their business." (Morgan. 1987:63) And when her mother encouraged her to use cosmetics to cover her patched skin around her neck and shoulders, Sally felt annoyed. She decided to let it appear to the public:

I decided that, from then on, I would bare that part of my body and if people were repulsed, that was their problem, not mine. It was the first time my lower neck had seen the light of day for years.

(Morgan. 1987:83)

By nature, Sally was also a curious and daring person. She was interested in things and eager to learn as much as possible about them. She was a girl full of questions. When she was young, for instance, she let her father sit on her sharp-end pencil because she just wanted to see his reaction. When her mother bought Nan a scythe, Sally wanted to know how Nan would use the scythe in the old days and in whose garden: "My curiosity was piqued. I tried to picture Nan as a young girl, swinging a scythe. Where would she have used a scythe, and why?" (Morgan.1987: 109). She was curious about the past of her family. When she was told that Nan and Arthur were from Indian, she kept asking them a lot of questions and even wanted to

learn the Indian language believing that by this way the mystery of the past could be revealed to her.

Sally was observant, the ability not shared by her other siblings. From the study of her family background, this quality was nurtured by her grandmother to observe all creatures, and by being curious and observant, she did not fail to see her parents' and grandmother's strange behaviors as well as other people's reactions toward them.

Another quality that led to her successful search was determination. When Sally made a firm decision to do things she would not let anything stop her. For instance, She determined to pass the Junior exam for her mother: "for the first time in my school life, I actually sat up late studying my textbook" (Morgan. 1987: 100). Sally really passed all the subjects, which surprised everyone. Sally always had her way that made her mother nervous. "She was like a terrier," said her mother in an interview with Marry Wright (1987).

The negative traits of Sally such as intimidation and alienation were caused by bad experiences she had had during her childhood. These characteristics did not hinder her search for identity and in fact, they disappeared after Sally was able to identify herself. Sally's positive characteristics such as her curiosity, eagerness to learn, observant mind, and determination are the predominant factors which drive Sally to search for her true identity and to be successful at last.

In conclusion, the family background, school environment, and Sally's personalities influence her ethnic identity search. At home, her parents and grandmother provided Sally a microcosm of the Australian society, in which she witnessed injustices in the society. Her grandmother's influence on Sally's bondage to

the Aboriginal culture helped her easily accept her true ethnicity. Experiences at school made Sally aware that she was different from others. Sally's personalities of being strong, curious, observant, self-confident, and determined, and her interest in Aboriginal people and culture encouraged her to search for the true ethnicity.

Ethnic identity search process

In *My Place*, the main character's identity search began practically from chapter 22— BEGINNING, in 1972 when Sally was 22, to the very end of the book. The starting point of the search process occurs when Sally realized that she was part-Aboriginal. It was after Sally experienced many events in her childhood and teenage years. After Sally got married in 1972, Gladys let her know that her family was Aboriginal for the reason that her children were old enough to know the truth. In Sally's ethnic identity search process, there were five devices that she used in order to find out her true identity: asking, self- identification, reading, writing, and taking trips. The device that was used the most was asking questions.

After she learned that she was part-Aboriginal, Sally with her curiosity and determination started her quest by asking her mother, grandmother, Arthur, and other people for everything about the past as she said to her sister, Jill, "I'm going to keep pestering her now till she tells us the whole story" (Morgan. 1987: 136). The obstacle was when Sally tried to make Nan and Gladys speak about the past; however, it was her determination that helped her get through. When Jill warned her that Gladys would not tell anything any longer, Sally did not give up saying: " Maybe not', 'but the way I look at it, it's a beginning. Before we had nothing. At least now we've got a beginning" (Morgan. 1987: 136). It was in 1978 that Arthur began making a regular

visit to Sally's family. Sally, full of curiosity, got the idea that Arthur might tell her about the past. Different from Nan and Gladys, Arthur was willing to tell Sally about the past. He even shown her some old photographs. He, in fact, provided his life story for Sally to write in her book.

After the truth about her true identity was revealed Sally admitted to herself that she was an Aborigine. Consequently, she applied for an Aboriginal scholarship in 1973. This incident demonstrated her ability to identify herself with the true ethnicity: "It wasn't the money I was after, I was still receiving the Repatriation scholarship. I desperately wanted to do something to identify with my new-found heritage and that was the only thing I could think of" (Morgan. 1987: 137). Sally was granted the scholarship, and after that the neighbors made fun of her. Everyone in the family felt embarrassed. Sally insisted on revealing her true identity to the world: "In keeping with my character, I had leapt in feet first. I wanted to do something positive. I wanted to say, 'My grandmother's Aboriginal and it's a part of me, too'" (Morgan. 1987:137). Sally was not ashamed to tell people at the university that she was Aboriginal. Sally began to speak up for herself. In the same year that Sally received the Aboriginal scholarship, she was asked for an interview by the department that gave her the Aboriginal scholarship. The officer thought that she told a lie that she was an Aborigine in order to get the scholarship. Sally was very angry and for the first time she realized that it was not easy to tell people that she was Aboriginal. She felt very upset and wondered whether what she did was wrong:

Had I been dishonest with myself? What did it really mean to be Aboriginal? I'd never lived off the land and been a hunter and a gatherer. I'd never participated in corroborees or heard stories of the Dreamtime. I'd lived all my life in suburbia and told everyone I was Indian, I hardly knew any Aboriginal people. What did it mean to someone like me?

(Morgan. 1987: 141)

However, Sally strongly confirmed who she really was with the officer and she later said to Jill, "I don't know how I did it, either"... 'But you know what, I'm really glad I did. From now on, I'm going to say more, be more assertive" (Morgan. 1987: 142). At one point, however, Sally almost gave up her scholarship and went back to self-denial. The strong relationship with Nan helped her go through this stage as Sally reasoned that giving up the scholarship would mean denying her own grandmother and all the values they both cherished:

Just then, for some reason, I could see Nan. She was standing in front of me, looking at me. Her eyes were sad...I knew that, for some reason, it was very important I stay on the scholarship. If I denied my tentative identification with the past now, I'd be denying her as well.

(Morgan. 1987: 141)

After this incident, Gladys felt sympathetic with Sally and revealed to her information about Nan's birthplace, Corunna Downs Station.

Another device Sally used in her search was reading for more information. She went to a history library, Battye Library, to read about the Aborigines. Sally learned how poorly and unfairly the Aborigines had been treated. She returned to tell her mother what she found. Although Gladys asked her to stop finding out the miserable truth of the past, Sally did not quit and reasoned: "it's already hurt people, It hurt you and me and Nan, all of us. I mean, for years, I've been telling people I'm Indian! I have a right to know my own history" (Morgan. 1987: 152). Sally also went to the Registrar General's Office to get copies of the birth certificate of Gladys, Nan, and Arthur. Sally got only Gladys' certificate, and it did not state the name of Gladys' father.

Writing was another tool in Sally's search process. In 1979, she decided to write a book of her family's story and she was very determined about it as she said to

her mother, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way, Mum” (Morgan. 1987: 150).

Gladys and Arthur were very helpful. Arthur was interested in Sally’s writing a book about the family. He asked her why she wanted to write it before he allowed her to put his story in her book. Sally’s reply showed her pride in her origin:

Well, there’s almost nothing written from a personal point of view about Aboriginal people. All our history is about the white man. No one knows what it was like for us. A lot of our history has been lost, people have been too frightened to say anything.

(Morgan. 1987: 163)

It was Arthur’s story that made Gladys changed her negative attitude about herself.

Gladys also became proud of the family history. Her writing became the first concrete evidence of her family’s heritage: “Like me, Mum now felt that at last we had something from the past to hang on to” (Morgan.1987: 214). Arthur’s story made them realize that there were many things about Nan and their ancestors that they did not know. Thus, Sally decided to travel to the North, where Nan and Arthur were born.

The last device, which Sally used in her ethnic identity search was taking trips. Sally went to visit many people and places, and she got more information about Nan and Gladys.

The trip to Corunna Downs Station where Nan and Arthur were born led Sally and Gladys to be proud of their family and had a sense of belonging to their homeland and people. They met many old Aboriginal people who could tell about Nan. Some of them were Nan’s cousins. These people were very grateful that Sally’s family came to visit their homeland. After they returned to Perth, they told Nan about their experiences of finding their family history. Nan was surprised that some people whom she knew were still alive.

During this trip, Sally met Judith Drack-Brockman, the white Australian whom Nan used to work for. Sally learned from Judith that her mother was taken away from Nan, and brought up in a children's home, Parkerville. Sally had thought all these years that her mother had lived with her grandmother. Sally kept asking her mother about it, but Gladys did not want to because the painful past hurt her too much. Sally was stuck, and did not know where to further her search. So, she spent a few months transcribing the cassettes that recorded Arthur's story into a written form. The first one who read the story was Gladys and she liked it as she said, "It's a wonderful story" (Morgan. 1987: 214).

When Nan was terribly sick and came to stay with Sally she later had a chance to try again to encourage her to talk about the past. At first, Sally read to Nan a story of Arthur's boxing days. Nan liked it, and she was surprised that Arthur had such a good story. Listening to Arthur's story and the trip Sally and Gladys made to the North, Nan eventually decided to tell her story for Sally to include in her book.

Finally, Sally fulfilled the second stage of exploring her ethnicity. She gathered all information from everybody she could reach: her mother, her grandmother, her uncle; as well as from documents she was able to obtain. Her search for her true identity was complete and she was proud of her true identity.

The Effects of the Main Character's Ethnic Identity Search

According to Phinney, the young Sally was a person in the unexamined ethnic identity stage. She did not have any knowledge about the Aborigines. Sally understood that she was like other Australians. Influenced by her father, Sally

preferred to be accepted by the majority. Even when her mother told her that her family was Indian, Sally easily accepted it.

Sally entered the second stage as she grew up and faced many events that drove her to search for her family history. She was successful in her identity search. During the search process, she acquired self-identification, a sense of belonging to her ethnic group, a positive attitude toward her group, and some ethnic involvement. Sally finally identified herself as an Aborigine when she applied for the Aboriginal scholarship, and when she began to tell her friends at the university that she was Aboriginal. This indicates that Sally develops self-identification as a group member, which is the first indicator to judge that a person reaches the ethnic identity formation.

Sally obtained a sense of belonging to her ethnic group after the visit to Nan's and Arthur's birthplace. She was overwhelmed when she met an Aboriginal woman who accepted her as a member of the ethnicity: "I wanted desperately to tell her how much it meant to us that they would own us. My mouth wouldn't open. I just hugged her and tried not to sob" (Morgan. 1987:229). Moreover, when the old Aboriginal people stressed that Sally and her family could come back anytime because they now belonged to each other, it made Sally's sense of belonging was stronger: "It was one more precious thing that added to our sense of belonging" (Morgan. 1997: 232). She appreciated all the objects in the station, which were mentioned by her uncle. To her, they were precious things: "I suppose these would be items of no interest to most people, but to us, it was terribly important" (Morgan.1987: 229). Finally, Sally announced that she was home again: "Like we'd suddenly come home and now we were leaving again. But we had a sense of place, now" (Morgan. 1987: 230).

Her pride of her identity and achievement in forming her identity were demonstrated in her declaration: “We were different people, now. What had begun as a tentative search for knowledge had grown into a spiritual and emotional pilgrimage. We had an Aboriginal consciousness now, and were proud of it” (Morgan. 1987: 233).

Sally then began to get more involved in cultural activities of the Aborigines. She was eager to learn the language. She was excited when she overheard Nan and Arthur talking Aboriginal language. When she traveled to the north, she developed good relationship with Aboriginal people there. It can be concluded that Sally completed the three stages of forming her identity.

Able to form her ethnic identity, Sally became happier and more secure than she had been. Her negative personalities faded away. She became a brave person and was able to speak up for herself. As mentioned in the analysis of Sally’s personalities, the young Sally did not dare to speak although she wanted to comfort her mother when abused. But now Sally could express her feeling freely. For example, when her grandmother compared herself to “a beast of the field,” Sally sharply responded: “You’re not to talk about yourself like that... You’re my grandmother and I won’t have you talk like that. The whole family loves you. We’d do anything for you” (Morgan. 1987: 352). When Sally was suspected of lying about her ethnicity in order to get the Aboriginal Scholarship, she strongly confirmed to the senior officer of the organization, who granted her the scholarship, that she was Aboriginal. Sally was also able to rid of her fear of darkness after she achieved ethnic identity formation as she stated, “For the first time in my life, the darkness comforted me” (Morgan. 1987: 353). Moreover, as Sally became a new person with a positive attitude toward her

Aboriginality, she could come out of her isolated world, which she had built to protect herself as a young girl.

In the book, Sally eventually could fulfil her mother's expectation. Before the discovery of her true origin, she used to argue with her mother about her goal of life. At that time, Sally did not have an ambition in doing anything at all. She did not know what she was capable of. But when she learned that her family was Aboriginal, she felt that she got something to do: "In a strange sort of way, my life had new purpose because of that...I was anxious to learn as much as I could about the past" (Morgan. 1987: 138). Then Sally decided to write a book of her family's history. It can be said that Sally really made something of her own. She could fit in the society feeling safe and secure.

In real life, Sally Morgan became a successful career woman. Victoria Lurie talked about Sally Morgan in The Australian Magazine:

Morgan is now 48, outwardly stronger and more purposeful than ever. Life has been eventful since her sudden rise to prominence –she "grew out of" her Christian faith and into a deep Aboriginal spirituality rooted in "the old people and the land."

(Laurie. 1999: 20)

Morgan now is a professor and a director of a center with Aboriginal programs at the University of Western Australia. She works hard for the Aboriginal people. Morgan also began her drawing again after she quit for a long time because her teacher and friends criticized her picture. Morgan even has her own collections exhibited in Australia and the United States. Moreover, the feeling of being proud of her heritage results in her motherhood. She would not let her children be deprived of their family's history as she said in an interview with Mary Wright (1987),

“...because we had been deprived of that crucial knowledge as children, and I didn’t want my own children to be deprived.”

Chapter 4

Conclusion and Recommendation for Further Studies

The family background, school environment, and Sally's personalities were influential in Sally's ethnic identity search. Sally, as a young girl, was growing up thinking that her family was just like other Australian families. As she grew older, Sally realized that her parents and grandmother covered the Aboriginal part of the family. When Sally was at school, she encountered discrimination from the society due to her Aboriginality.

Sally then started her quest for her ethnic identity by asking questions, reading the Aborigines' history at a library, writing about her family history, and travelling to her uncle's and grandmother's homeland. Her curiosity, mental strength, and determination contributed to the success of her search. When Sally achieved her ethnic identity formation, she felt that her family history was precious. She was proud of her Aboriginality. It was a very meaningful and critical change to her family as illustrated in the epigraph of the book: "How deprived we would have been if we had been willing to let things stay as they were. We would have survived, but not as a whole people. We would never known our place" (Morgan. 1987: 7).

The ethnic identity search affected Sally's identity formation, which later resulted in her psychological growth and social adjustment. Sally had formed her ethnic identity during the search process. Accepting her identity, Sally possessed a sense of belonging to her group, and she was proud of her family history. She was willing to pass on Aboriginal values and culture to her children.

The result of the study proves that ethnic identity is important to an individual to live happily in a society as K. Lewin (1948) states, “ individuals need a firm sense of group identification in order to maintain a sense of well-being.”

Recommendation for Further Studies

1. The effects of identity search and discovery on characters in other stories could be studied to compare with this study.
 2. There should be research on ethnic identity search of other indigenous people such as the Torres Strait Islander in Australia or of other minority groups in other countries in order to investigate effects of the mainstream culture to these people's self-realization and esteem.
 3. The problems caused by ethnic deprivation such as those in Us Mob (1995) by Mudrooroo, an Aboriginal writer, could be studied to determine distortion of ethnic values.
 4. There should be a further study of the effects of parents who are either abusive or submissive on their children during the formative years.
 5. As Thai society has long been comprised of several ethnic groups and intermarriage among ethnic groups has become common, there should be a study on how children adjust themselves to their parents' beliefs and values and the factors contributing to their success or failure in the society.
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A STUDY OF ETHNIC IDENTITY SEARCH OF
THE MAIN CHARACTER IN MY PLACE

AN ABSTRACT
BY
WARANGKHANA CHINNAPAS

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts degree in English
at Srinakharinwirot University

March 2000

This study examines the ethnic identity search of the main character in My Place. The family background, school environment, and the personalities of the main character were analyzed as the main factors that drive her to search for her true identity. The ethnic identity formation model developed by Jean S. Phinney (1989) was applied to analyze her ethnic identity formation and achievement.

The result of this study shows that having true identity is an essential factor for the main character to place herself in a society successfully.

การค้นหาเอกลักษณ์ทางเชื้อชาติของตัวละครเอกในนวนิยายเรื่อง มายเฟลส

บทคัดย่อ
ของ
วรางคณา ชินภาส

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัยมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต วิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษ
มีนาคม พ.ศ. 2543

ในงานวิจัยครั้งนี้ได้ศึกษาการค้นหาเอกลักษณ์ทางเชื้อชาติของตัวละครเอกในนวนิยายเรื่อง My Place โดยมีการวิเคราะห์พื้นฐานทางครอบครัว สิ่งแวดล้อมในโรงเรียน และลักษณะนิสัยของตัวละครเอก อันเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญที่ผลักดันให้ตัวละครเอกค้นหาเอกลักษณ์ที่แท้จริงของตน ในการศึกษาได้มีการนำรูปแบบของการสร้างเอกลักษณ์ทางเชื้อชาติ ของ Jean S. Phinney (1989) มาใช้เป็นเครื่องมือในการวิเคราะห์การสร้างเอกลักษณ์ทางเชื้อชาติ และการพัฒนาทั้งทางด้านจิตใจและสังคมของตัวละครเอก

จากผลของการศึกษาพบว่า การมีเอกลักษณ์ที่แท้จริงเป็นสิ่งสำคัญที่ทำให้ตัวละครเอกประสบความสำเร็จในการที่สามารถวางตัวในสังคมได้ดี