

# The Theme of Violence in Kim Scott's *Taboo*

Subhendu Nayak

Phd Research Scholar, Department of English, Ranchi University, Ranchi

## Abstract:

*The Kukenarup massacre, which took place in the wake of John Dunn's fatal spearing in 1880 on the Wirlomin Noongar people's ancestral grounds, is the focus of Kim Scott's 2017 book Taboo. Taboo explores the complexities of silence that follow a slaughter in the lives of Noongar people and their settler descendants. The story emphasizes that even while a massacre may take place at a specific location and be honoured with monuments, rituals, and plaques, its reality is ultimately inextricably linked to the interior lives of those who survived and their offspring. This study makes the case that Scott's depiction of the massacre terrain is primarily extimate- a term established by Jacques Lacan to characterize the private outside of psychic reality. The idea of the extimate aids in naming the place that is regularly left out of the liberal capitalist system's deployment of public and private realms, where social pain is relegated to a privatized interior and private violence is rendered inconsequential by meaningless public declarations.*

**Keywords:** Noongar, Eximate, Violence, Indigeneity, Taboo.

---

## Introduction:

Kim Scott's *Taboo* tells the story of a group of Noongar people who visit a taboo location for the first time in many years: the scene of a massacre that followed the assassination of a white man who had stolen a black woman by these Noongar's descendants. The story takes place in the present, in a rural South-West of Western Australia. Dan Horton, the elderly owner of the farm where the killings took place, has invited them to visit. By giving the group a place to stay, he intends to fulfil his wife's final wishes and remove a moral blemish from the land his family has inhabited for many centuries. The past transgressions, however, will be more difficult to forgive. As we stroll through this forbidden territory with the motley crew, we observe glimpses of their renewed connection to the language, culture, and land. Accompanying them, we discover how numerous Noongar generations may have coexisted well with the earth. This book is ultimately about hope as much as despair; it is about survival and renewal as much as destruction.

## Main Thrust:

*Taboo* follows the Wirlomin tribe as they return to their homeland one hundred years after a local massacre turned the area into a 'taboo' area. This is based on an actual event that happened in the South-West of Western Australia in Cocanarup, a rural area just outside the small town of Ravensthorpe. The author is originally from this region, which is still considered taboo and is avoided by First Nations Australians. This book examines the long-term effects of settler-colonialism and the brutality that took place on the frontiers during Australia's colonization. This novel is distinctly post-colonial, with a strong emphasis on modern Australia, the concept of reconciliation, and the question of whether or not it can ever be realized. It examines Australia's continuous border and dismantles the bonds between white Australians and First Nations people. *Taboo* also examines the enduring trauma and its effects on Indigenous communities, which further deconstructs the Aboriginal experience. Scott makes no attempt to minimize the complexity of the situation or to sanitize the problem.

Like the main protagonists, Kim Scott is an Aboriginal Australian novelist who identifies as Wirlomin. As a result, it's noteworthy that an Australian author of her own voice is telling a tale that emphasizes Indigenous

voices- a technique that isn't very common in Australian publishing. In addition, I believe that many of my non-Australian followers have probably not read many, if any, books written by or about Aboriginal Australian characters. It may be believed that more people, both Australian and foreign, should read more about this group to increase their knowledge of them. This book literally emphasizes the value of words and voices as well. In fact, Scott is actively working to preserve Nyoonghar by running a program that teaches the language to those who have lost contact with it.

This book emphasizes the value of voice and language in particular, examining the ways in which language links individuals and their cultures. It was a truly lovely method to examine language and the expressive power of words from an Indigenous point of view. *Taboo* is genuinely gothic, drawing on themes from both the Australian and wider gothic subgenres. Additionally, it employs the gothic to investigate post-colonial Australian themes and inquiries. I adore the gothic style, and this is such a creative and enjoyable use of it. Not only does it employ the gothic to respect Indigenous connections to land and ancestors by showing ancestral voices as vibrant and alive, but it also uses the gothic to emphasize how haunted the land and place are. Gothic devices like as doubling are employed to examine the after-effects of colonization. The gothic element in this work not only deconstructs post-colonial ideas in a highly perceptive and creative way, but it also adds a whole other level of intrigue.

In this novel, characters who have experienced a great deal and are incredibly imperfect are presented in a compassionate and understanding way. Instead than trying to clean up the aftermath of colonization, it examines how it continues to affect the community and how it has contributed to drug misuse, violence, and other issues. However, it constantly tries to portray the characters' struggles and losses in a way that shows empathy for the themes it is dealing with.

Tilly, the primary character, has experienced a great deal, including sexual servitude. Tilly receives kind treatment, and the story aims to empower her by giving her a voice. One of the most exquisite aspects of her character development that permeated the entire book was her understanding of the importance of place and space in healing, as well as the ways in which ties to family and culture may aid in this process. It would be hard to read this book and not feel sympathy for Tilly and the other main characters, in my opinion, because of the wonderful manner these people relate to and interact with one another.

### **Conclusion:**

The novel is mostly melancholic and introspective, yet it is broken up by humorous banter and satirical passages. By satirizing some of the ridiculous exchanges that frequently take place between white Australians and Aboriginal Australians, Scott highlights the irony and heightens the humor in these exchanges. You'll find the conversation and character interactions to be frequently sardonic, humorous, and full of laugh-inducing double meanings. Because of his skill as a writer, Scott uses snappy, brilliant language throughout the entire book.

### **Work Cited:**

Scott, Kim (2017). *Taboo*. North Fremmantle WA: North Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

Bhabha, Homi K (1994). *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Lacan, Jacques (1959). *The Seminar. Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*: Trans. Dennis Porter (1992). London: Routledge.

Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. Trans. Alan Sheridan (1977). London: Tavistock Publications.