# Migration, Colonial Australia, and the Creative Encounter: An Anthropological Perspective



Translations, an autoethnography: Migration, colonial Australia and the creative encounter (Anthropology, Creative Practice and Ethnography) by Emma Lombard

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Migration and colonialism are two of the defining forces in Australian history. Since the arrival of the first British settlers in 1788, Australia has been a nation of migrants. Today, over 30% of Australians were born overseas, and almost half have at least one parent who was born overseas.

Colonialism has also had a profound impact on Australia. The dispossession and oppression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the of a European legal and political system, and the imposition of a foreign culture have all shaped the nation's development.

The relationship between migration, colonialism, and creativity is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, migrants have often been seen as a

source of creativity and innovation. They bring new ideas, skills, and perspectives to their new country. On the other hand, migrants have also been subject to racism, discrimination, and exclusion. This can make it difficult for them to express their creativity and participate fully in society.

In this article, I will explore the relationship between migration, colonialism, and creativity in Australia. I will draw on anthropological research to examine how migrants have negotiated their place in Australian society through creative expression. I will argue that creativity has been a powerful tool for migrants to resist, adapt, and negotiate their position in a new and often hostile environment.

#### **Creativity as Resistance**

Creativity can be a powerful form of resistance against oppression. By expressing their experiences and perspectives, migrants can challenge dominant narratives and disrupt the status quo. For example, the Aboriginal artist Emily Kame Kngwarre has used her paintings to depict the history and culture of her people, and to challenge the racism and discrimination that they have faced.

Migrant musicians have also used their music to express their experiences and challenge dominant narratives. For example, the Iraqi-Australian musician Omar Musa has used his music to speak out against the war in Iraq and the racism that he has faced in Australia.

Migrant writers have also used their writing to express their experiences and challenge dominant narratives. For example, the Iranian-Australian writer Behrouz Boochani has written a book about his experiences as a refugee on Manus Island.

### **Creativity as Adaptation**

Creativity can also be a tool for adaptation. By creating new forms of art, music, and literature, migrants can adapt to their new environment and make it more welcoming. For example, the Vietnamese-Australian artist Dien Tran has used her art to create a sense of home for herself and other Vietnamese migrants.

Migrant musicians have also used their music to adapt to their new environment. For example, the African-Australian musician Ngaiire has created a unique sound that blends African and Australian influences.

Migrant writers have also used their writing to adapt to their new environment. For example, the Chinese-Australian writer Amy Tan has written novels that explore the experiences of Chinese migrants in America.

### **Creativity as Negotiation**

Creativity can also be a tool for negotiation. By creating new forms of art, music, and literature, migrants can negotiate their place in Australian society and create a more inclusive and welcoming nation. For example, the Torres Strait Islander artist Judy Watson has used her art to negotiate the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

Migrant musicians have also used their music to negotiate their place in Australian society. For example, the Lebanese-Australian musician Joseph Tawadros has created a unique sound that blends Arabic and Australian influences.

Migrant writers have also used their writing to negotiate their place in Australian society. For example, the Filipino-Australian writer Michelle de Kretser has written novels that explore the experiences of Filipino migrants in Australia.

Creativity is a powerful tool for migrants to resist, adapt, and negotiate their place in Australian society. Through creative expression, migrants can challenge dominant narratives, create a more welcoming environment, and build a more inclusive and vibrant nation.



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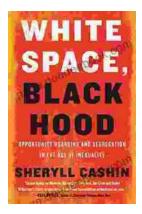


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