

APPENDICES

Synopsis of The Plays

The Floating World

Les Harding is a middle-aged man and he is an ex-prisoner of war held by the Japanese in World War II. While he was in a prisoner camp, he experienced brutality from Japanese soldiers, moreover, he has to suffer from a spreading disease. Thirty years have passed by, yet, Les Harding has not been able to forgive his past enemy. He possesses extreme fear and hatred towards Japanese, or xenophobia. In 1974, Les Harding joins a trip to Japan with his wife, Irene Harding. This cruise triggers Les Harding's repressed fear and hatred of the Japanese to come out.

While on the cruise, Les Harding meets Robinson, who is a retired Vice-admiral of the British Navy. They soon get into a conversation. Les Harding brings up his bitterness; he blames the British Navy, which is his country's motherland, for causing his country's loss; furthermore it reveals that Les Harding is still haunted by his past.

Slowly, Les Harding, who still lives in denial and is still haunted by his past, starts losing grip at the real world. He suffers from schizophrenia because of his repressed fear and hatred towards the Japanese. The symptoms are seen through Les Harding's recollections of war back to when he was at the prisoner camp. In his mind, the cruise becomes more military, it turns the time back at war time. The memories of war are very clear for Les Harding; he has been possessed

by his past; as a result, he becomes unable to separate reality from imagination. This is shown in the play through several characters that take additional roles in Les Harding's mind. Les Harding excludes himself from a real life and lives in his own imagination.

His imagination brings him back to war. As a result, he steals an AIF (Australian Imperial Force) costume from the costume party at the cruise, and then he wears it as if he was going to war. He feels he becomes a soldier again and has to defend his nation. At the end of the trip, when the cruise arrives at Yokohama, Les Harding stabs the first Japanese he sees. His repressed fear and hatred comes out and he carries out his revenge towards the Japanese. In the end, Les Harding has to spend his life in an asylum.

Norm and Ahmed

The time shows that it is nearly midnight; however, Norm, a middle-aged man, moves around restlessly. Then, when he hears the sound of some approaching footsteps, he suddenly changes his attitude. Norm pretends not to have a lighter; therefore, he hails Ahmed, who passes him, asking for a lighter. Ahmed is a young Pakistani student, and he is wearing a Nehru-style suit and is also carrying a briefcase.

Being aware that it is midnight, Ahmed edges away, tries to leave Norm. He steps away from Norm as he takes back his lighter. Norm feels offended by Ahmed's attitude. Ahmed then apologizes for his bad behaviour he degrades himself to make Norm forgive him. Although he wants to go away, he feels afraid to leave Norm, because it can make Norm offended again. So, Ahmed stays with Norm and has conversation with Norm about many things. Norm tells about his experience in joining the war, but suddenly he gets carried away and grabs Ahmed's neck. Norm apologizes for what he has done. Repeatedly, Norm's seem-to-be-friendly attitude to Ahmed turns to be unpleasant. Norm asks several things to Ahmed and asks Ahmed to be brave in expressing his own opinions as a foreigner in his country. However, Norm always shows his strong disapproval of what Ahmed has said. Furthermore, Norm often shows off; he tells about his 'white-collar' job and his son's education. By doing all of these actions, he wants to show Ahmed that he has power.

Continuously, Norm seems to welcome Ahmed and tells Ahmed that he will get comfortable living if he stays in Australia. He wishes Ahmed to be successful and settling down in Australia. Yet, his friendly sayings are in contradictory to his action. In the end, Norm says that he is pleased to see Ahmed and offers his hand; yet, he punches Ahmed in the stomach and leaves Ahmed over the handrail.

Biography of the Playwrights

Biography of John Romeril

John Romeril was born in Melbourne in 1945. He got his education at Bentleigh West State, Highett state, Brighton Technical and Brighton High Schools. In 1970, he got his degree as Bachelor of Arts from Monash University. While he was still studying for his first degree, he had already written his first plays, which are quite prominent: I Don't Know Who to Feel Sorry For (1960), Chicago, Chicago (1969-1970)

In 1968, he joined the Australian Performing Group (APG), by which he was given a chance to perform some of his plays. He gave contribution to some APG's successful performances, for example, Marvelous Melbourne, The Hills Family Show and Waltzing Matilda. Besides that, he also gained success through his own plays that are I Don't Know Who to Feel Sorry For (1969), Chicago, Chicago (1969-70), Mrs. Thally (1971), Bastardy (1972), The Floating World (1974) and many more. In 1972 and 1974 he was a recipient of Literature Board grants from the Australia council. Then, in 1973, he was a writer-in-residence with the APG, a period which enabled him to write The Floating World. In 1976, he won the biennial Canada-Australia literary Award and traveled to Canada and the United States.

John Romeril now lives in Castlemaine, Victoria, with his wife, Christine Berkman, who works as a painter. He is stepfather to Angus, Sibyll and Tessa and he has already become a grandfather of Finn.

Biography of Alexander Buzo

Alexander Buzo was born in Sydney in 1944. He is the son of a civil engineer that is Albanian-born and an Australian mother of Anglo-Irish descent. He grew up in Armidale, N.S.W., and got his education at The Armidale School and later at the International School of Geneva and the University of New South Wales. His play Norm and Ahmed, performed by The Old Tote Theatre, Sydney in 1968, brought him to get national public attention.

Since then, he has written more plays, Rooted (1968), The Front Room Boys (1969), The Roy Murphy Show (1970), Macquarie (1972), Tom (1972), Coralie Lansdowne Says No (1975) and Martello Towers (1976). Alexander Buzo was given a Commonwealth Literary Fund Fellowship in 1970 and one-year grant from the Literature Board of the Australia Council. Then he was also granted gold medal by the Australian Literature Society for the category best work by the Australian writer. This medal is given for his plays, which is entitled Macquarie (1972), Tom (1972) and Batman's Beach-head.

Alexander Buzo now lives in Sydney with his wife and daughter.