

Asians are known for their unhygienic attitude, less civilized and many more constructed-stereotype. This stereotype is in fact social construction and proved to be a myth only. Yet, the 'myth' leads Australia to possess xenophobic attitude towards its Asian neighbours. Being isolated geographically from other European countries, Australia feels threatened by the flow of Asian immigrants. The coming of Asians in great number, combined with the imposed stereotype about Asians, makes the Asians undesirable in Australia. Being culturally different, Asians are seen to endanger Australia's social, economical, and political structures. The white Australians feel that Asians have various different cultures, that are obviously different from their mainstream culture. As a result, the White Australia Policy is created to restrict Asian immigrants.

The similarities between the two plays can be seen through the protagonists of the play; Les Harding and Norm. Both Les Harding and Norm possess extreme fear and hatred towards Asians. Les Harding possesses xenophobia towards the Japanese as a result of his joining the Second World War. Les Harding's experiencing brutality at the prisoner camp brings him to conclude that the Japanese are identical with brutality. Besides Les Harding's traumatic experience at war, his xenophobia is fueled by the Japanese's imperialism over Australia through their internationally-sold products. Based on the setting of time of The Floating World in 1974, Australia at that time has been filled by the Japanese's products, such as cars. The other protagonist, Norm, possesses xenophobia towards the harmless Ahmed simply because of Ahmed's distinctive cultural background. Norm and Ahmed depicts the period when Australia is on the process of changing 'one nation' policy to multiculturalism, which is full of

uncertainty. The uncertainty is because multiculturalism is viewed not to represent Australia's nationalism, which has been dominantly white for many years. Therefore, multiculturalism is felt to emphasize only on the minority rather than the majority. The play questions whether the changing of the policy can bring Australia to be a better country or not.

The differences of the two plays can be seen in how each protagonist deals with his xenophobia towards Asians. Les Harding deals with his fear and hatred towards Japanese by running away to his imaginary world where he can fulfill the constructed 'myth' of being a superior race. On the other hand, Norm deals with his fear and hatred by doing harsh actions to intimidate his 'enemy'. Norm represses Ahmed to confirm his superior identity and to make Ahmed believe that he is the inferior one.

After reading the two plays, I am of the opinion that people with different culture are not to be afraid of. People from different cultures are supposed to be viewed as an asset to enrich the mainstream culture; they are not supposed to be viewed as opposing the mainstream culture. I guess that the purpose of Romeril and Buzo's creating these plays is not for spreading fear and hatred towards Asians. I think by showing the white's xenophobia, both Romeril and Buzo try to be objective; to see from the realistic point of view. I believe these plays are made to show that all human beings, although we are not the same in physical qualities, remain humans and should not be classified into inferior or superior nations; no matter what nation they come from.