

Rosa was born at Bromelton on the Logan River, Queensland. The daughter of a pastoralist, and educated at home by her mother, Rosa had a comfortable childhood. Influenced by her father's political career she also joined imperial politics and the reflection of the same is to be found in her novels. She was perhaps the first internationally acclaimed woman novelist of Australia. From her very teens she started contributing to her family magazine "Marroon Magazine". In 1872 she was married to Arthur Campbell Bulkley Praed, a younger son of an English banking and brewing family, who had come to Australia to make a pastoral fortune. After their marriage they spent two years in the cattle station Monte Christo, on Curtis Island near Gladstone. These two hard, miserable years were formative in contributing to the novel writing of Rosa. The impact of the experience garnered at Curtis Island is to be felt in her early writings such as "The Romance of a Station" (1889) and "My Australian Girlhood" (1902). In 1876 the couple returned to England where Rosa took to writing her first novel—"An Australian Heroine" (1880). But, the manuscript of the novel was twice returned to Rosa by George Meredith with valuable critical inputs. After its publication Rosa gained much acclaim and rave reviews. This novel was about her experience of isolation on Curtis Island and her unease with which she started settling in English society. We are in no position to consider rest of her work as they were written in England or were not quintessentially nineteenth century Australian literary works.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter, we have learnt about the women writers of nineteenth century Australia who despite being considered the "second sex" were finally able to etch a niche for themselves in an otherwise patriarchal colonial Australia. They, through documentation of tales, poems and narratives, which are mostly autobiographical, have been able to throw into a sharp relief the socio-literary world order of colonial men of Australia. These women belong to the "First Wave Feminism" of Australia whereby they try to roll the women's ball of progress from the adapt phase (where women take cognizance about the world of man) to the adopt phase (where women by dint of their right take control over their claims). Although the women novelists of nineteenth century may be critiqued for their adoption of the colonial paradigm and depiction of whiteness, racial hierarchies, and colonial patriotism in full glory, yet they were successful and historically significant to provide a woman's politico-cultural perspective of the colonial life of Australia. Representing the woman's experience in white settler colony, any feminist critique of these writings would surely acknowledge them as expressions beyond mere skittish diversions. These writing were creative deconstructive spaces that performed from within the hegemonic white masculine power systems. Putting forth a more domesticated version of white Australian nationalism, these women writers help us reminisce the colonial Australia from a non-masculine perspective.

3.6 QUESTIONS

Q.1. Write an essay about the contribution of nineteenth century women writers of Australia.

Q.2. Document how the women writers of nineteenth century Australia were able to delineate the outback life from a woman's perspective.

Q.3. Write a note on the autobiographical elements in the writings of nineteenth century women writers of Australia.

Q.4. “Women writers of nineteenth century Australia were First Wave Feminists.” Justify the statement.

Q.5. Make a distinction between the writing style of nineteenth century male and female authors of Australia.

3.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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