

# Australia : an Asian-Australian Offers Bicultural Fiction

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DALMENY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA, November 6, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The author, Raja Arasa Ratnam, of 'Pithy Perspectives: a smorgasbord of short, short stories' was acculturated in a traditional Hindu family in British Malaya. While they were being westernised, the family co-existed with a range of other immigrant families, as well as with the host-peoples, the Malays. The British were not part of the social equation.

In time, the author's extended family came to include 2 Chinese, 1 Indian-Chinese, 1 Malay, 1 Burmese, and 1 Anglo-Australian (with German and Italian genes) – and their offspring. Communalism, with mutual support, is the ambience of the multiculturalism prevailing in these communities.

However, since the author's destiny was to be an integrated member of a nation whose ethos is individualism (as in the other Western nations created by immigrants), he is clearly bicultural. That is, his head (and the associated cultural values) are with Asia, while his feet (and the associated operational values) are firmly planted in Australian soil. He is completely at home in both cultural domains.

For instance, he takes his shoes off at the door in Asian homes, but leaves them on in Australian homes. In Asia, he is discreet in speech, whereas in Australia he finds it beneficial to call a spade by a word more earthy.

More seriously, his biculturalism enables him to understand better the shenanigans in the international sphere; and he crosses cultures in his dissertations. 'He is an intellectual who cannot be categorised,' said Prof. G. Melleuish of Wollongong University, Australia.

During a period of intense creativity, he wrote these pieces of fiction. These two reviews say it all.

REVIEW in Writers Voice, June 2112

"I recently had the chance to read 'Pithy Perspectives' by Raja Arasa Ratnam.

Raja has lived a most interesting life and proved to be a very valuable addition to Australia since he arrived here over six decades ago. His time here spans the period from White Australia to the Multicultural Australia of today. Raja is 82 years old and lived for four years under the Japanese Military. He has held a variety of leadership positions during his residence of more than 60 years in Australia, Raja has tried to impart some of the wisdom he has gathered over the years to you, the reader. ... some of Raja's work can be seen on our FAW Bookshelf.

This is an interesting book of 20 or more short stories to really engage the mind. Each story actually has a good opening and dramatic ending. The stories have a wide ranging background; crazy, frightening, weird, some really lovely, some making fun of human ambitions, and cross-cultural issues.

The last story is really quite intriguing – it is so different – and will have you feeling really wonderful. I say no more.

It is a very clever book – a real smorgasbord for the reader – one to sit back and really enjoy. Raja Ratnam is one writer who relishes his craft and has a special ability to impart his knowledge and experiences in written form in an enjoyable way.”

Trevar Langlands, State President (NSW), Fellowship of Australian Writers Inc.

Review by US Review of Books  
reviewed by Maria A. Hughes

“Memory is not a function of age but of significance.”

“Ratnam conveys his insight into multiculturalism, human psychology, spirituality, what it means to be human, and the unknown in this collection of bite-sized, esoteric short stories. The reader is not bogged down by heavy-handed philosophical or religious quandaries.

Ratnam’s stories are peppered with various forms of intelligent life, including djinns and sentient animals, lending a mythological bent to reality. They especially lend themselves to fans of science fiction, the fantastical, or even the odd. There are stories that speak to the frailty and limitations of the human spirit while others are of curiosity and redemption. Some are full of hilarity as they jest over the human condition while others are frightening. The stories are whimsical, engaging, unpredictable, a little weird, highly imaginative, and will appeal to a wide audience.

They often end on an unexpected, dramatic note, keeping the reader at guessing the outcome. The last story, “Of Mice and Morality,” is perhaps Ratnam’s best piece. It is captivating, thought-provoking, poetic, and will leave the reader feeling inspired by the end of it.

The author has truly written a smorgasbord of stories which will appeal to a wide array of people. Pithy Perspectives is perfect for the person who desires to read something that is intellectually stimulating but at the same time entertaining, easy to understand, and short enough that the book can be read and enjoyed in snippets.”

The book is available as an ebook at Amazon at \$US 2.99.

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