

# CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS' *THE SLAP*: MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA NOW

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## Abstract

This study focuses on the use of narrative techniques, especially point of view, in a novel entitled *The Slap* written by an Australian author, Christos Tsiolkas. This novel begins with a barbecue party hosted by a couple in a suburban Melbourne. The party is attended by many of their friends, families and co-workers who came from many different ethnic backgrounds, mostly immigrants or immigrant descents in Australia. The story takes an interesting turn when a man slaps an unruly boy who is not his own. The boy's parents become so furious and decide to report the incident to the police. The story then continues with a revelation on how the case goes. What is special about this novel is how the aftermath of the incident is written in multiple chapters, narrated by a different character for each chapter. The characters come from different ethnics; Greek, Indian, Jew, and British Australians, thus readers will be able to see what happen after the incident through the eyes of each character, who not only talk about the incident but also inform the readers about their life and the people around them. Christos Tsiolkas claimed that he wanted to show the real Australia, which often not represented in other novels through this novel and he has chosen to use the third person limited point of view as a means to deliver his message. At the end of this research, it can be concluded that there is a shift in position between white Australians and immigrants or immigrant descent nowadays in terms of superiority and inferiority.

**Keywords:** *narrative technique, point of view, multiculturalism, immigrant, white Australians*

## I INTRODUCTION

Since 1945, more than 7 million people have come to Australia as new settlers. The point that triggered a large-scale immigration program was the end of World War II. Australian government launched a massive immigration programme, since they believed that they had narrowly avoided the Japanese invasion and that they need to have more people living in the vast land of Australia. (Price, 1998) The programme has been proven to be successful, as a research has shown that the population growth in Australia depends more on immigration than on natural growth, as stated that:

With time replacement fertility would lead to a stable population but this is not likely in Australia as long as immigration remains high. Today net migration is more than ever, a significant factor in Australia's growth. For example, in 2013-14, the population grew by 352,88 people: 44.5 percent from natural increase and 55.5 per cent from net migration. (Betts)

Until today, Australia is still a country that attracts many immigrants from various countries across the globe, such as India, Indonesia, and many other European countries.

However, some believes that the coming of immigrants in Australia is a good thing, while others may not think so. Some believes that immigrants will enrich Australia in one way or another, while others perhaps see immigrants as threat to the British or white Australians. There was even a history of limitations for immigrants to come to Australia to protect the white Australians from the *invasion*. Furthermore, immigrants are often seen as inferior compared to the white Australians as the owner of the land.

Another thing is, with the coming of immigrants, Australia has since become a multicultural country. This condition leads to a problem of cultural clash since people with different culture and different perspective are forced to live side by side in one surrounding. Racism and prejudice are also an inevitable side effect in this condition. Although it seems that nowadays, Australia has already passed the phase of culture clash (a very big issue threatening this country), but what becomes the new Australia is still very much debatable.

One of the novels that touches the issue of multiculturalism in Australia is *The Slap*, which is published in 2008. The novel has won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize 2009 and was shortlisted for the 2009 Miles Franklin Literary Award and the ALS Gold Medal. (Christos Tsiolkas) *The Slap* also has been turned into a TV series, both in Australian and in the United States of America. The author of the novel, Christos Tsiolkas, is an Australian author, playwright, essayist and screen writer. Some of his

books are *Loaded* (1995), *The Jesus Man* (1999), and *Dead Europe* (2005). (Christos Tsiolkas). Tsiolkas was born in 1965 to parents who had emigrated from Greece and he grew up in suburban, working class Melbourne. On writing *The Slap*, he stated: *I was hungry to write about an Australia I rarely saw represented on the pages of Australian literature or on screen.* (Christos Tsiolkas on how he wrote *The Slap* – Guardian book club) With this statement, he claims that the Australia written about in many works of fictions are not the true Australia. This can mean that *The Slap* is a novel which truly captures the real Australia that Tsiolkas sees and experiences.

However, Tsiolkas believes that his realistic portrayal of Australia in *The Slap*, especially which concerns the issue of multiculturalism, is challenged by some members of the society. In the novel, Tsiolkas contrasts the life of immigrant descents and British Australians in such a way and he becomes aware to the fact that there is a resentment against his way of portraying the success of immigrants in the land but as an immigrant himself, he believes that he needs to say something about this matter, as seen below:

The multiculturalism and resulting vigour that I wanted to champion in my writing was being challenged by the rise of populist, xenophobic parties and politicians who decried the loss of *British* Australia and reacted vehemently against the increasing self-confidence of both immigrant and Indigenous Australians. Such politics were distressing for myself and for my circle of friends and family. At the same time I was aware that in the push-pull between a vision of a cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic Australia and the resentments such a vision gave rise to, there was something exciting and dangerous occurring: contradictions are a wonderful source for stories and ideas...It was also a challenge to the founding racial injustice of this new nation, the enshrining in the first legislation passed at the Federation of the White Australia Policy, a policy only fully dismantled in my own lifetime. (Christos Tsiolkas on how he wrote *The Slap* – guardian book club)

The novel sets place in a suburban barbeque, hosted by *Hector* and *Aisha*, who have invited many of their family, colleagues and friends. *Harry*, *Hector's* cousin, then slapped *Hugo*, an unruly child whose parents are *Aisha's* friends, *Rosie* and *Gary*. They are enraged by this event and report this incident to the police. The story then follows the aftermath of this incident, from 8 different point of views from 8 different major characters, who has witnessed what has happened. The most interesting part in the story is that these 8 major characters come from different ethnic and religious identity; Greek, Indian, Jew, and Australian.

Based on that, I am interested to further investigate the novel, as I believe that the narrative techniques, particularly the point of view used by the author may reveal something more on the life of multi ethnics Australians. Other researches have been conducted on *The Slap*, some of them are *The Slap's Resonances: Multiculturalism and Adolescence in Tsiolkas' Australia* by Davis Glyn, *Christos Tsiolkas and the Pornographic Logic of Commodity Capitalism* by Andrew Mc Cann, and *The Virtue of Self-Discipline: Reading Tsiolkas and Foucault* by Peter Mathews. This research is different in a way that it is solely dedicated in the discussion of narrative technique, to be more specific, point of view and what it gives the readers.

Narrative techniques refer to how a writer chooses ways of telling a story to manifest effects that he wants the reader to feel. The discussion of narrative techniques focuses on four elements in particular, namely; point of view, style, time and tempo, and distance (Eastman, 1965, pg. 111). In this research, the focus would be the point of view as it can give new insight on different life of the characters with different ethnic background.

## II MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article is methodologically qualitative and interpretive by gathering the data qualitatively and presenting them descriptively. The writer uses library studies in conducting this research. After reading the novel, the research is continued by reading some references and browsing the internet for further information that can help enrich the analysis. The writer analyzes the novel based on the theory of narrative technique, particularly the point of view and what it provides to the readers.

### III RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Eastman (1965), point of view may be defined as the restriction of the reader's observation to a limited point of consciousness. There are four types of point of view, namely; first person point of view, third person limited point of view, third person dramatic point of view, and third person omniscient point of view. Tsiolkas' *The Slap* uses a third person limited point of view which means that the story is told from one certain character who is now referred to as the third person. This point of view will become more objective compared to the first person point of view while at the same time still hold the readers close to the character. In third person limited point of view, the readers will be able to see how this character feels and thinks. The character will freely and honestly express their thoughts and feelings towards the events that happen because one is always true to his/her own feeling. This creates a sense of empathy and understanding of the character's feeling and actions.

*The Slap* consists of eight chapters and each chapter has different narrator. The narrators are, respectively, *Hector*, *Anouk*, *Harry*, *Connie*, *Rosie*, *Manolis*, *Aisha*, and *Richie*. The readers will find the story interesting because each narrator may have different opinion on the incident. Some will support *Rosie* and Gary as the parents of Hugo, while some may take side with *Harry* and blame *Rosie* and Gary for their misbehaving son. However, I am of the opinion that Tsiolkas has more to say in this story than parenting and educating a child. He has a certain message to be delivered in this novel and he uses 3rd person limited point of view to deliver it. As stated in the previous paragraph that the use of 3rd person limited point of view will make the voice of the narrator more objective than 1st person point of view, then Tsiolkas uses the point of view to deliver his *objective* opinion, which, I believe, is about the rise of immigrants in Australia, contrasted with the fall of the supremacy of the white Australians.

Even from the very beginning, from the choice of characters that become the narrator, Tsiolkas has shown his message. He uses 8 different characters who have different ethnicities. Among 8 characters, only 3 are the so-called white Australians while the rest are all descendants of immigrants in the land of Australia. *Hector*, *Harry*, *Manolis* are Greek, *Anouk* is Jewish and *Aisha* is Indian. *Rosie*, *Connie* and *Richie* are white Australians. The number of narrators has shown the majority and importance that Tsiolkas would like to emphasize in this matter.

Following the story through the eyes of the narrator in each chapter, Tsiolkas not only manages to give the readers the full account on what happens after '*The Slap*' happens. He also manages to deliver information after information about the life of those characters involved in the incident. In each chapter, the narrator explains about themselves, about their past, about other people around them, in an honest, matter of fact way because - as the author chooses to employ 3rd person limited point of view - the characters are simply expressing their own thoughts and ideas about somethings. The readers then will be able to get a clear picture from all the stories told by the narrators. It seems that immigrants or immigrant descents in Australia are leading a good life in many aspects while the white Australians are pictured to be in a desperate condition, leading a life which is far worse than those of the descendants of the immigrants. The following paragraphs will highlight that contrasts.

The first chapter is narrated by *Hector*, an attractive man of Greek descent in his early forties. He is the husband of *Aisha*, and they are the host of the barbeque party. *Hector* lives comfortably with *Aisha* and his two children. From *Hector*, the readers are made aware of the strike contrast between all the guests coming to his house, especially between the two families, who at the end, end up fighting because of *The Slap* incident.

When *Rosie*, *Aisha*'s very best friend and her husband, Gary, arrive with Hugo, their children, it is told that Hugo is such a spoiled child and Gary always ends up drunk in parties. Even *Hector*'s family know about this bad habit of his, as seen below:

Gary was going to get drunk. Gary always got drunk. It had become a running joke in his family, one *Aisha* disapproved of because of her loyalty to her friend... *Hector*'s mother would turn to the other Greeks, raise her eyebrow and exclaim *Australezi*, what do you expect? It's in their blood! (Tsiolkas 21)

Another couple then are introduced in this chapter. They are *Harry*, *Hector*'s cousin, *Sandi*, his wife and *Rocco*, their child. *Harry* is a successful businessman and now *lived in prime blue-ribbon real estate* (22). As an immigrant who has been successful, *Harry* now is enjoying a luxurious life. It is told in the story that he plans to send *Rocco* to a private school because he thinks that government school *was inadequate for their son, that the facilities were degraded and the class sizes are too large* (22).

However, Gary *immediately challenged him* (22). This reaction makes *Harry turned away from Gary and whispered in Greek to Manolis 'the Australians don't give a fuck about their children* (22).

Even from the very first chapter when the readers are introduced to the characters, the contrast between the immigrants or immigrant descents and the white Australians have become apparent. It is also highlighted with the fact that from all the guests coming to the party, there are only a few white Australians and more of immigrant descents.

From *Hector's* point of view, the readers are informed about how he feels about this event. *Hector* actually takes side with *Harry* as he realizes that Hugo is such a spoiled child. *Hector* shares the same feeling with *Koula* and *Manolis*, his parents, who soothes *Harry* as they walk him to his car and *that their anger would be directed against that bloody Australians* (Tsiolkas 46) Seeing the incident, *Hector* reflects what has happened to his life. He realizes how good *Aisha* is as a wife and a mother. Thus, *Hector* promises *Aisha* that he would try to be a better father to their children.

The second chapter is narrated by *Anouk*, *Aisha's* friend, a Jewish woman who writes script for crappy television show and struggles to write a novel. Although she is struggling with her career, *Anouk* is described as a very independent, straight forward, open minded woman. She clearly shows her empathy to *Harry*. Although she is also best friend with *Rosie*, she disagrees with the way *Rosie* raises Hugo. *Anouk* is of the opinion that Hugo needs to be disciplined and that his parents has failed to do that. In other words, Hugo deserves *The Slap*. Unfortunately, having been known as a carefree, single woman who does not want to commit herself to be a wife, moreover, a mother, *Anouk* has no right to say anything, according to *Aisha* and *Rosie*. Their conversation about this matter can be seen below:

'I [*Anouk*] saw *Harry* slap Hugo. And I saw that Hugo deserved it.'

'No one deserves to be hit, let alone a child.'

'That's just platitude, a new age bullshit platitude. You need to teach a child discipline and sometimes that discipline has to be physical. That's how we learn what is acceptable and what is not.'

*Rosie* was furious. 'Just shut it, *Anouk*. You have no right to say what you are saying.'

.....  
'Hugo's problem is not that *Harry* has slapped him. Hugo's problem is that neither you nor Gary had the control over your child to stop him acting like a brat.'

.....  
*Aisha* is holding *Rosie's* hand. 'You don't have the right to say any of that, *Anouk*. *Rosie* is right.' *Aisha's* tone was icy, her eyes were black steel... 'You don't like babies and you don't like talk about babies and children. You've made that clear over the years and we've respected that. But don't then assume that you can start being an authority now.' (78)

In this chapter, readers can see how *Rosie* is in contrast with *Anouk*. *Rosie* is stubborn and lack of motherly character because she spoils her child so much as can be seen from her opinion in the quotation above that she does not think that what she does is wrong while *Anouk* is, ironically, a better mother figure because she believes in teaching children discipline. Little do *Aisha* and *Rosie* know that *Anouk* has just found out that she is actually pregnant with her boyfriend's child. *Anouk* meant to ask her best friends for advice about whether or not she should keep the child. However, because of their argument before, *Anouk*, again showing her independent nature, makes up her mind about having an abortion so that she has no children to worry about and she can continue catching her dream as an author.

The third chapter is narrated from *Harry's* point of view. Again, the readers are given details about *Harry's* life and at the same time continues the story. *Harry* is a descendant from Greek immigrant. He is married to *Sandi* and has a son named *Rocco*. *Harry* grows up poorly. Moreover, his parents often quarrel. *Harry* has seen his father hit his mother many times although they stay together. However, all of that are in his past because *Harry* now owns a garage which is very successful and he enjoys a luxurious life.

After the incident, *Harry* decides to hire the very best Greek lawyer to defend him against the charge *Rosie* and Gary make. The lawyer assures *Harry* that he will win the case, there is no doubt. *Harry*, who at first feel furious toward *Rosie* and Gary, now realizes that it is useless to spend negative energy on them. He thinks that *Rosie* and Gary are not his equal:

"...he realized that he and *Sandi* had nothing to worry about. The people ...were vermin, no more than animals. He was a drunk and she was a fool. It was no wonder that the child

was a brat...They were scum. He and Rocco and Sandi weren't even part of the same species. They were as far above them as the moon was from the earth." (135)

*Harry's* comment in this quotation clearly shows the contrast between him and *Rosie*. He is far superior, both mentally and financially.

*Harry* now feels more grateful that he has a good life and that his past was buried a long way from where he is today. He decides to keep his good life and he thanks God for that:

He thought of his house that he loved, with the pool and the new kitchen, the double garage, the sound system, the plasma television, he thought of his barbecue and fishing lines, and then he thought of his beautiful wife and his beautiful son... He was a lucky man, he was such a lucky man...Thank you, God. He parked the car in the garage, he pressed the remote and the garage door began to roll down. Thank you, Panagia. He was home. (135-136)

The next chapter is narrated from *Connie's* point of view. *Connie* is *Aisha's* part timer and she is best friend with *Richie*. Both of them are white Australians and they are still very young and immature. The very first thing that the readers can learn from the beginning of this chapter is the fact that *Connie* is a very brilliant student and that *Richie* is a gay who has trouble coming out to the society. This chapter does not directly connect to the incident because *Connie* is not directly involved. However, in this chapter the readers are informed that *Connie* has a huge crush on *Hector*. It is also revealed that *Richie* also has a crush on *Hector*. *Richie* steals a photograph of *Hector* from *Rosie's* album when they babysit Hugo and when *Connie* finds out about it, she is so upset because actually she desperately wants to have that photograph but she cannot tell *Richie* that she almost has an affair with *Hector*. Thus, she lies to *Richie* that *Hector* has raped him to explain the reason behind her being upset seeing *Richie* has taken the photo. This chapter may have not contrasted white Australians with other ethnics but this chapter has a significant role later on in the story.

The next chapter is narrated by *Rosie*. If *Connie*, in the previous chapter makes a comment that Gary and *Rosie* often argue and their marriage life is not harmonious (161 – 162), then this chapter completes the picture that *Connie* has drawn earlier in her chapter because it clearly shows the life that *Rosie* and Gary are leading. They often argue about many things. One of them is because Gary dislikes that fact that *Rosie* is still breastfeeding Hugo despite the fact that Hugo is almost 4 years old (162). *Rosie* prioritizes Hugo in such a way that she even sometimes refuses Gary's advances for intimacy. (225) On the other hand, *Rosie* finds that Gary is indifferent towards Hugo. He does not really care about his son and he does not interact much with him. Every day after work, Gary will sit in front of the television, drink beer and do nothing. (226-227). The fact that they live in a small shabby rented house is also something that *Rosie* dislikes about his husband. They live poorly because Gary's job does not really pay well and *Rosie* cannot work because she has to take care of Hugo. Gary considers himself a talented painter. Thus, he often thinks of becoming a fulltime painter. Unfortunately, his paintings do not sell really well and he is stuck in a job that he does not like because he needs the money. Reading this chapter, readers cannot help feeling the desperation exuding from *Rosie* and Gary's life.

The worst thing about *Rosie* and Gary relationship is that they often blame each other on their situation and they try to get back on and hurt each other. An example is when *Rosie* helps Shamira and Bilal look for a house. *Rosie* knows that what she does will hurt Gary because it reminds Gary of his own incapability to buy a house for them. Returning home, *Rosie* finds Gary, *Richie*, and Hugo are reading the Playboy magazines. Gary does that to get back to *Rosie* for what she does:

They all looked up when she entered the shed. She felt as if she had intruded on some masculine game, as if she had walked into an exclusive club. Gary's face was expressionless. *Richie*, who was sitting cross-legged on the dirt floor, a pile of magazines across his lap, looked up at her, his mouth open, shocked, guilty. Hugo's face expressed only uncomplicated adoration and pleasure. He rushed to her...

.....  
'Mummy,' he exclaimed. 'We've been looking at boobies.'

.....  
...She knew exactly what Gary was doing. He's planned this moment, deliberately chosen to show the boys the magazines when he knew she could be home any moment. He was

paying her back for going off to look at houses...Because the prick was spoiling for a fight.  
(251-252)

*Rosie* and Gary's life together is described as full of disappointment, frustration and anger. Both of them cannot stand each other and they do not communicate very well. Another thing about their life highlighted in this chapter is the existence of Hugo, their child. Gary, who always seems distant at home and *Rosie*, who lets Hugo do whatever he likes, have created a child with attitude problem. *Rosie* and Gary as parents seem unable to control and discipline their child. In the end, Hugo adds to the tension between them. In this chapter, readers are informed of the better life that *Rosie* used to have in the past and how it all ends after she marries Gary and gives birth to Hugo. It gives the impression that instead of getting better, her life is falling apart and she cannot do anything to mend it. All these, in turn, will create a contrast between the life of the characters portrayed before this chapter with *Rosie's*.

Another thing revealed in this chapter is that Bilal, an Aborigine, asks *Rosie* to stay away from his wife, Shamira. Bilal disagrees of *Rosie's* being friend with Shamira and he asks *Rosie* to leave his family. Bilal thinks that *Rosie* and Gary are a bad influence for them, as seen from his speech to *Rosie*: *I don't want you or your husband or your son in my life. You remind me of a life I don't ever want to go back to. I don't want you to talk to my wife. I don't want you to be her friend. I just want to be good. I just want to protect my family. I don't think you're any good, Rosie. Sorry, it's just your mob. You've got bad blood* (288). This quotation shows that even Aborigines, who are marginalized by the white Australians in history, are more superior and now are leading a better life.

The next chapter is narrated by *Manolis*. *Manolis'* chapter talks mostly about his memory as a young Greek immigrant in Australia and how he meets Koula, his wife. The memories are described full of hardships and obstacles, especially because he was new in Australia. However, this chapter describes how the Greek immigrants are like one big family because they share the same experiences and difficulties that they have to endure when they first arrive in the land. *Manolis* realizes that now he is getting old and he loses his friends one by one. However, although they seem to grow apart, they are still one big family. This chapter does not contrast the white Australians and other ethnics in Australia, but the life that *Manolis* described shows that immigrants are close knitted and despite the hardships, they have a fulfilling life.

The next chapter is narrated by *Aisha*. *Aisha* is of Indian descents and a successful veterinarian. *Aisha's* chapter gives information about what happens after the trial in which *Harry* wins the case. *Aisha* has been in a dilemma since the incident because she does not know which side she should be. At first, she takes *Rosie's* side, but she realizes that she is being unfair to her husband *Hector* so she promises *Hector* to visit *Harry's* house to show her support. What she does not expect is *Rosie's* reaction. *Rosie* gets really upset and she hurts *Aisha* by saying things about *Hector*:

'I'm sorry.' *Aisha* said it flatly, unconvincingly. Then with passion, 'I'm going to visit Sandi. I promised my husband.' *Aisha's* eyes were pleading with *Rosie*. 'Sweetheart, let it go, it's over.'

.....  
'Fuck you,' screamed *Rosie*. 'Fuck you, fuck your cunt of a husband, fuck your children, your whole perfect, middle-class family. I fucking hate you.'

*Aisha* watched her friend storm off as she wiped *Rosie's* spray off her cheek with a napkin... She felt intoxicating relief. (425-426)

It is clear from the quotation that *Rosie* is such a sore loser that she cannot accept losing the case. *Rosie's* speech also indicates that she is actually quite jealous of *Aisha's* life and this shows the superiority of the immigrant descents compared to the white Australians.

The last chapter is narrated by *Richie*. This last chapter gives closure to all the characters after the incident. What is interesting in this chapter is how, again, the readers are given a glimpse of the life of *Rosie*, Gary, and Hugo through *Richie*. *Richie* often babysits for Hugo when *Rosie* and Gary are busy. *Richie* experiences first hands how naughty and how unruly Hugo is, as described below:

It was at the traffic lights on Gold Street that Hugo spat at the old man.

.....  
Hugo let out a peal of laughter. 'Got ya,' he taunted.  
The old man made no reply

*Richie* reached up and gripped the boy's arm. 'Hugo, apologize.'  
 He turned to the old man. 'I', so sorry, sir,'  
 'No.' The boy on his shoulder was still laughing, still thought it a joke.

.....  
 'Say you're sorry.'

'I don't have to.'

'Now!'

The boy was wriggling, and *Richie* let go of his arm and gripped his leg, fearful that he would fall. He saw Hugo's other foot kick out and strike the old man across the shoulder. (455-456)

Upon returning to *Rosie* and Gary's house, *Richie* is surprised because Hugo tells *Rosie* that *Richie* has hurt him. He becomes even more surprised seeing *Rosie* and Gary's reaction. *Rosie* acts as if it were not Hugo's fault and Gary completely ignores Hugo's outrageous action:

... 'He hurt me.'

*Richie* backs away, onto the verandah. 'I didn't do anything,' he protested, wanting to point at Hugo, needing to know how unfair all this was. 'Hugo spat at an old man. I told him off. That's what happened.'

The two adults looked stunned. *Rosie* shook her head. 'I can't believe that.' She stroked Hugo's hair. 'Did the old man scare you?'

*Richie's* mouth dropped open. Hugo had not answered; his mouth was pulling at *Rosie's* tit.

Gary stepped out onto the porch. 'Hugo,' he shouted. 'Did you spit at an old man?'

The boy buried himself deeper into his mother's breasts.

'Hugo!' the scream startled all of them. 'What the fuck did you do?'

The boy started to wail and Gary went to grab him out of his wife's arms.

*Rosie* struggled, evaded him and started running down the hall, her son still in her arms.

Gary shrugged, turned around to *Richie*. 'Come on, mate, come and have a beer.' (458)

*Richie* feels even more miserable because right after that, *Rosie* seems to dismiss the problem and Hugo begins to play again innocently like nothing has happened. Furthermore, *Rosie* demands that *Richie* should apologize to Hugo:

'Okay,' his mother sang out. 'Friends again. We're all friends again.'

Hugo rubbed at his arm. 'He hurt me.'

*Rosie* winked at *Richie*. 'I'm sure he's sorry. You're sorry aren't you, *Richie*?'

What about the old man? What about what Hugo did? *Rosie's* eyes were boring into *Richie*, forcing an apology out of him. Tears stung his eyes and he blinked them back, confused. Don't cry, you little bitch, he scolded himself, don't you dare cry.

'I'm sorry,' he gulped. (459)

From the quotation above, the readers are informed how dysfunctional the family is. Gary and *Rosie* are terrible parents, but more than that, what happens afterward gives a better description on their nature. Feeling even more embarrassed for crying and for being forced to feel guilty of hurting Hugo, *Richie* blurts out that he has met *Hector* to *Rosie* and Gary. However, when he is asked how *Hector* is connected with this incident, *Richie* feels too embarrassed to admit that he likes *Hector*. That is why *Richie* blurts out how *Hector* has raped *Connie* (460).

The event that follows show how *Rosie* and Gary think that this is their chance to get back at *Aisha*. They seem proud and happy to be able to get a chance like this, as seen from Gary's reaction: *For just a moment, Gary looked elated, like a footballer who had just scored a goal* (460). Gary also encourages *Rosie* to tell *Aisha*, the *stuck-up bitch exactly what kind of man her husband is* (461). *Rosie* realizes that it is her chance to hurt *Aisha* back so she decides that this terrible news *...should come from me* (461). She would like to make sure that *Aisha* feels so hurt.

Together, they all go to *Aisha's* clinic to meet her. In front of *Aisha* and his mother, *Richie* cannot utter a word when Gary proudly informs *Aisha* that *Hector* has been sleeping with *Connie*. In that very moment, *Connie* comes in. *Aisha* turns to her and demands for an explanation. *Connie* denies everything

and tells everyone in the room that it is *Richie* who has an obsession with *Hector* so *Richie* has made up sick things about *Hector* and *Connie*. *Richie* cannot deny it and he simply watches his mother cry of hearing the shocking news (466).

As a result of this event, *Aisha* ends her friendship with *Rosie*, who is so surprised on how things have turned out to be that she cannot say a word. *Aisha* asks her to: *Just fucking go. Get out of my life* (465). Meanwhile, *Richie* tries to commit suicide by taking his mother sleeping pills. Luckily, his mother finds him on time and takes him to the hospital, where later on *Connie* shows up and apologizes to *Richie*. She admits that she has made the story up about *Hector* raping her and they mend their friendship. *Connie* tells *Richie* that *Aisha* is very angry at Gary and particularly to *Rosie*. She also expresses her anger towards *Rosie* because she feels that *They didn't give a fuck about me, did they? If they did, they would have come to me first. They just wanted to hurt Aish. They're fucked* (470).

This last chapter gives a conclusion to what happens to all the characters, especially those directly involved in the accident. *Hector* and *Aisha* mend their relationship, *Aisha* ends her friendship with *Rosie* while *Rosie*, and Gary continue living their life as it is. The ending emphasizes on the contrasts between the white Australians and the immigrant descents characters.

*Connie* and *Richie*, being young, immature, and naïve are victims who get dragged into the confusion after the incidents. *Rosie* and Gary, as the adults, use them to get back to other characters which turns out to be backfired. *Rosie* and Gary are described as spiteful, miserable people who cannot deal with the reality of losing and what is worse, seem incapable of making their life better and blame other people instead for their failure. In contrast, there are *Hector*, *Aisha*, *Harry*, *Anouk*, and *Manolis*, who prove to be leading a better life (despite some obstacles and affairs) as immigrants or immigrant descent who are used to be taken as inferior compared to the white Australians.

#### IV CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis above, it becomes clear that Tsiolkas deliberately chooses to use 3rd person limited point of view and he chooses 8 different characters to be his narrator in 8 different chapters. The use of 3rd person limited point of view enables the readers of the novel to follow the story through a certain character chosen by the authors in every chapter. It is interesting to see how each character may have different opinion on the matter while at the same time, the events following the incident are revealed. However, Tsiolkas is believed to have a certain aim in writing this novel, and it is more than just to deliver an interesting story. By changing the character as the narrator of the story in every chapter, Tsiolkas manages to give a variety of opinions, thoughts and information as seen from the point of view of the 8 different characters. By using 3rd person limited point of view, Tsiolkas manages to be able to give a voice to each of the characters so they are free to express their honest opinions and thoughts. The character from each chapter reveal their past life, what they have gone through, and their present condition. As an addition to that, the character also makes comments about how they see other people around them and how they feel about those people.

By reading the characters' thoughts and opinions as well as following their life, readers are informed about the kind of life they are leading. One thing that stands out is the fact that the life that the white Australians are leading is described as bleak and unfulfilling. Moreover, they are also described as people who are clueless about how to make their life better. Instead of working hard to improve their life, they choose to dwell on their own frustration and blame other when things do not work out for them. Readers of the novel cannot help feeling the frustration, anger, as well as desperation coming from these characters. In contrast, the immigrant characters are leading a life which are comfortable. They have worked hard for it but now they start to be able to enjoy the result of their hard work. They know exactly what they want and they dare to pursue their dreams. Readers will feel a sense of hope and positivism coming from these characters. I believe, Tsiolkas has successfully delivered the realistic portrayal of life in Australia through this novel, that there is a shift of power in the people of Australia. The superior white Australians seems to be inferior now and the immigrants are certainly on the rise.

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