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Oral Traditions for Retrieving History through Stories: A Reading of Jack Davis' *The Dreamers*

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Abstract: *The Dreamers* (1982) by Jack Davis is a story of a country-town family and old Uncle Worru, who, in his dying days, recedes from urban hopelessness to the life and language of the Nyoongah spirit which in him has survived 'civilisation'. Davis uses this setting to depict Aboriginality through language and other aspects of Nyoongah life, like song, dance, religion or mythical yarns. Davis's use of oral tradition not only enlivens the past but also enriches the present. This article analyses how such oral traditions are employed by the playwright to retrieve stories about the Aboriginal past.

Keywords: Orality, myth, history, Aboriginality

'Orality' is

a term used to denote an extended complex of elements associated with oral cultures – that is, cultures either unaffected by literacy and the written word or only marginally affected by them. (Hawthorn 246)

Ramanuj Konar