

Humane Savages: A Cultural Reading of Kate Grenville's *Colonial Trilogy*

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This article examines the values, norms, ideologies and beliefs of the aboriginal culture in Kate Grenville's *Colonial Trilogy* and how these were smashed by the so called 'civilised race'. It also intends to divulge the black history of white Australia. Culture is a fundamental element of human living. Eminent anthropologist, Edward. B. Taylor had defined culture as that which includes all of human experiences: "Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (qtd. in *Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 247). Culture encompasses the shared practices and understandings within a society. In Taylor's view, culture includes every aspect of human behaviour which is acknowledged and practised by a set of people. "In the past, most anthropologists accepted a broad conception of culture as a shared way of life that includes values, beliefs, and norms transmitted within a particular society from generation to generation" (*Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 247).

People living in a particular territory form a society and adhere to certain common cultural traits. Such traits differ from one society to another. Culture is obtained through the process of enculturation. "Enculturation is the process of social interaction through which people learn and acquire their culture" (*Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 248). In this context it becomes pertinent to read the indigenous society and its unique form of cultural practices according to its geographical landscape. As nomadic tribes the Australian aborigines lived as a hunting community dividing themselves into clans. They lived in small groups and did not believe in agriculture though the tribal groups in neighbouring islands cultivated their crops. Bernal Diaz del Cartillo in *Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective* remarks:

Although aboriginal peoples of northern Australia must have known about foods cultivated in neighbouring lands, they maintained nomadic, foraging societies until European peoples migrated to Australia in large numbers during the nineteenth and twentieth century. As a result of their mobile and nomadic way of life, aboriginal Australians frequently met and interacted with peoples of neighbouring societies. Because Australia is a continent of enormous climatic and ecological diversity, different peoples enjoyed access to food and other resources unknown to others they encountered during their seasonal migration. Even though as nomads they did not accumulate large quantities of material goods, groups regularly exchanged surplus food and small items when they met. (493)

The aborigines had a cultural practice of going 'walkabouts'- moving from one place to another according to seasonal changes. They did not cultivate crops: rather they lead a life which was totally dependent on nature. The geo-climate of Australia did not favour them in all seasons by providing them with food and shelter, so they shifted their dwellings according to the availability of food, shelter and resources. Grenville in her novels *The Secret River*, *The Lieutenant* and *Sarah Thornhill* has described this particular aspect of aboriginal tradition and has highlighted how the whites took advantage of it: "Because the nomadic foraging peoples of Australia did not occupy lands permanently, British settlers considered the continent *terra nullius*—'land belonging to no one'—that they could seize and put to their own uses" (*Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective* 862). The Australian natives have a few unique aspects present in their culture. "Values are the standards by which members of a society define what is good or bad, holy or unholy, beautiful or ugly. . . . Values are the central aspect of a nonmaterial culture of a society and are important because they influence the behavior of the members of a society" (*Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 251).

The aborigines valued human life more than the white settlers. They did not encourage any kind of atrocity against humanity. They would not go for war unless the situation demanded, as it happened during colonisation. In the novel “*The Lieutenant*” when a convict steals potatoes from the government garden he was ordered by the white governor to be flogged. Warungin was an aborigine kidnapped by the whites on the advice of the governor to teach them English and convey the good intentions of the colonisers. He was also brought to witness the flogging, considering it as part of education being offered to him regarding the English culture. He grew restless on seeing the white man being flogged by another of his own kind and the rest of the white community watching it rather than stopping it. The governor who tried to accuse and prove the victim as a thief does not realise that he himself was a usurper framing rules and breaking it according to his convenience.

The hundred years of British civilization had found ways to punish but not to pardon. The whites had turned indifferent towards humanity. “Rooke saw Warungin trying to rush forward, shouting at the flogger, his face distorted. He strained against the governor holding him back and looked wildly around at the marines in their ranks. He met Rooke’s eyes and shouted to him, some words over and over” (*The Lieutenant* 196).

Most of the time, the convicts were flogged for hurting the aborigines because the whites were aware of the fact that they could not tame the harsh Australian landscape without the help of its natives. The natives felt sorry for anyone who was flogged, unconcerned about the reason behind it. The whites adhered to rules without any concern for fellow human beings. The settlers watched it as a mere spectacle which could not be tolerated by the natives.

‘Dreamtime’ is the next and most important aspect of the aboriginal culture. “Beliefs are cultural conventions that concern true or false assumptions, specific descriptions of the nature of the universe and humanity’s place in it” (*Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 251). This belief of the aborigines was difficult for the settlers to comprehend. WEH Stanner in his essay “The Dreaming” has defined dreamtime as “An illuminating example of a cosmic religion among foragers is the Australian Aborigine notion of dreamtime” (*Reader in Comparative Religion* 513). According to this belief creation takes place during dreamtime. The ancestral spirits came down to earth and created all what is on earth. In “The Dreaming” Stanner writes:

The dreamtime exists in the ‘other world,’ the world associated with the time of creation, where a person goes in dreams and visions after death. It is believed that at the time of creation the ancestors deposited souls of all living forms near watering holes. Eventually these souls or spirits were embedded in all matter, from rocks and water to trees and humans. The unification of all substances and spirit was a by-product of the work of these ancestral beings. All of these spirits come to the world from the dreamtime; the birth of the universe is like a fall from the dreamtime. (*Reader in Comparative Religion* 514)

The aborigines believe that the ancestral spirits still remain in dreamtime controlling the lives of all plants, animals and human on earth. “The dreamtime is a fundamental and complex conception that embraces the creative past and has particular significance for the present and future” (*Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 393).

When viewed through an anthropological lens, this concept has given rise to the concept of metamorphosis. Without dreamtime, life on earth will be unsatisfactory for the aborigines. They firmly believe that the invisible side of things can become visible through myths, rituals, ceremonies, arts and dreams and believe that these help them to communicate with the ancestral spirits. Though the dreamtime ancestors do not punish the wrongdoers for their crimes, a code of conduct has been framed to ensure that the aborigines lead an ethical life. The aborigines imitate the lifestyle of their ancestors.

Land and other resources are an important aspect of aboriginal culture and tradition. They are spiritually connected to natural things—both living and non-living. The aborigines strongly believed that the entire land was connected to them by spirit. They lived as a community and felt no need to produce any evidence to affirm that the land belonged to them. But the whites, hailing from a competitive industrial society, were materialistic in their approach and started fencing the land and wrote documents to prove that the land belonged to them. The land was a mere property for the Whites but for the natives it was spiritual wealth.

The whites who were brought up on western philosophy sought the land as a possession to be owned. They were ignorant of the relation the aborigines had with the land and as a result they devalued the native’s tradition. The aborigines conducted their rituals in a dignified manner and even had a ritual ground for that purpose.

Kath Walker, an outstanding aboriginal poet of Australia, expressed in her poem “We are Going” anguish on seeing their ritual ground used by the whites for dumping wastes. The aborigines were not able to tolerate the contempt the whites had for the natives. The aborigines found it difficult to tolerate the Whites’ behaviour and expressed their disapproval on a few occasions. It is clear that one has to understand the rituals and traditions of the aborigines to lead a life of peaceful co-existence with them. The aborigines, who were considered savages by the whites, demanded self-respect and space to lead their life, as they did before the arrival of the whites.

In spite of the aborigines’ unique culture and tradition there were a few ‘limiting’ aspects of their culture, which helped the settlers gain advantage over them. They lead a hunter-gatherer life. It was customary for them to exchange women who go astray, as a commodity in return for goods. After the arrival of the white settlers aboriginal women were forcefully abducted, sexually abused and exploited in large numbers. Such women and those who had given birth to illegitimate children were thrown out of the tribe. So they were forced to stay with the whites who had fathered their children. In a few cases the women who were sent out for immoral behaviour found it difficult to come back to their tribes and decided to stay with the white men.

The settlers practised a different set of beliefs. The very difference in the physical appearance between the whites and the natives highlights the stark difference in their cultures. The nakedness of the natives contrasts with the well-dressed whites. The skin colour gave room for racial prejudice. The next element of discrimination was language. The inability of the aborigines to speak and understand English forced the whites to look down upon them. The aboriginal languages were nothing but a blabber to the settlers.

The civilized race had gone through the phase of industrialization and as a result a materialistic culture had crept in and human beings were interpellated into mere subjects. Secondly, the Puritan spirit was at its peak in London during the phase of industrialization. Those who were caught red handed and found guilty of thefts and other wrong doings were hanged mercilessly. England wanted to reform its social and ethical condition and prisons were overflowing. The whites, because of their racial imperialism, had developed contempt for the primitive cultures.

Grenville’s protagonists with a colonial legacy begin to understand the culture and traditions of the aborigines. But the rest of the settlers did not share this perspective with regard to the aborigines. They knew it quite well that culture was the golden strand connecting all the aboriginal groups living in Australia. But this golden thread which was valuable and fragile was handled with carelessness.

The whites tried to rip the aborigines off from their culture, diffuse their identity and belongingness. The aborigines lived in groups and their togetherness was their strength. The settlers tried to disturb the harmony and the structure of family—a strategy they followed with the other colonized nations. Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra point out the universality of cultural imperialism. They state in *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind*:

Australian Aborigines have much in common with other indigenous peoples who suffered under the impact of European colonisation. But there are a number of distinctive features about the Australian Aborigines and the formation of the Australian colony that need to be recognized, in order for us to understand the particular forms of the representational complex which was constructed on their behalf. (24)

Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Kenya’s most distinguished writer and East Africa’s leading critic of cultural and political repression in Kenya, delivered a lecture on “Postcolonial Politics and Culture” at the University of Adelaide in Australia. He argued that cultural repression was the instrument of colonisation:

We became a settler colony alongside other colonies in Africa which were settled by European settlers. But right from the beginning, military and subsequently political domination went hand in hand with cultural repression. The route to the establishment of effective control lay through cultural dominance. Whenever and wherever there were national festivals or communal festivals which would mean a gathering of people, they were stopped. (*Southern Review: Literary and Interdisciplinary Essays* 5-6)

The indigenous cultures were suppressed under the colonial rule. Their rituals and ceremonies became part of history. The history of the indigenous groups was passed on from one generation to another during the rituals. The songs which they sang during the performance of rituals narrated the history of their culture, particularly for the benefit of the younger generations. The oral tradition could not be severed from their life because they communicate through songs in their

everyday life. Penny Van Toorn writes: “The oral tradition incorporates not only a set of songs and stories but also a set of rules and protocols for their transmission” (*The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature* 21). The retaliation against the settlers was propagated through songs.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o in his lecture “Postcolonial Politics and Culture” elucidates: “One of the most important aspects of our pre-colonial literatures is the oral tradition . . . The oral tradition has always been very rich, and it’s interesting that it is the oral tradition, or orature, which was often utilised by the anti-colonial forces, to make very important statements in our society for the resistance” (*Southern Review: Literary and Interdisciplinary Essays* 6).

The strategies used by the whites to wipe off the cultural traits of the aborigines were futile. So they fixed on to another strategy of glorifying their own culture and stifle the indigenous culture. The civilising whites feared the savages, for they were aggressive. Therefore, the whites handled the natives in a wild manner so as to tame them which aroused violent instincts in the colonised. Noted ethnologist Konrad Lorenz in his article titled “Human Aggression: Biological or Cultural” remarked:

Non-human animals usually do not kill within their species and that aggression among males within species is highly ritualized and rarely leads to death. Male deer, wolves, and other social animals fight each other, but this fighting establishes a hierarchy of dominant and submissive males and, therefore, helps to ensure order within the group. Thus, nonhuman animals have an instinct for inhibiting aggression that is activated by ritualized fighting behaviour. (*Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 422)

Anthropologists like Montagu and Shalins have argued that cultural factors are responsible for clashes: “Humans can be extremely violent or extremely pacific, depending on the prevailing cultural values and norms” (*Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 423). In short, both biological and cultural factors are considered responsible for violence. The cultural differences between the two cultures led to clashes. The materialistic and objective attitude of the whites, along with their cultural habits, was one of the reasons for the clash between the two cultures. The clash moved one step further and the strategy of cultural cringe which the colonising nation brought into play to uphold their Eurocentric way of life. The clashes between the two cultures are the impacts of colonialism. The settlers found it a herculean task to uproot the aborigines from their culture because the aborigines were firm in their culture, tradition and belief systems, for they were spiritually connected to them. This failure has instigated the whites win the war by vicious means. As a result, there were violent cultural clashes culminating in cultural genocide. Eric Wolf writes:

In other situations, aboriginal peoples faced genocide, the physical extermination of a particular group of people. The Tasmanians of Australia . . . were deliberately killed so that the colonists could take their lands and resources. The attitudes of the Europeans toward these indigenous peoples reflected racism and ethnocentrism, which resulted in many massacres of these aboriginal people. (*Anthropology: A Global Perspective* 522)

The colonisers could not erase the cultural traits off the aborigines but they found erasing off the aborigine’s existence from the earth was quiet an easy task for them. Even the written records denied the possibilities of aboriginal existence. The white histories were crafted in such a way that they did not provide any hint about the aborigine’s existence. “It has been estimated that when the first British settlement was established there were perhaps 300,000 aborigines. Today they number about 50,000, and the majority are to be found in north-western Western Australia, Northern Territory and the Queensland outback” (*The British Commonwealth: A Family of Peoples* 118).

The settlers started outnumbering the natives. The reduction in the population of the aborigines was recorded as a mere statistical data but the reasons behind it were not inquired into. “Increasing migration also fuelled conflict between European settlers and native populations. Large settler societies pushed indigenous peoples from their lands, often following violent confrontations” (*Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective* 862). The aborigines did not cultivate their food. They believed that their rituals pleased nature and provided them with what they needed. They consumed plant food, roots, nuts, seeds, berries, shoots, green leaves, kangaroos, fish, waterfowl and small birds. On the contrary, cultivation of English crops in an alien land did not yield the expected harvest and left the increasing population of the settlers hungry. So the settlers started relying on the aborigines’ food. This left the actual owners of the land with little food. Subsequently this became a major reason for violent conflicts between the two groups.

The colonisation of the indigenous societies by the Europeans had negative consequences like depopulation, succumbing to epidemics, increase in war-fare, and loss of political freedom and control over their future. A few settlers proclaimed that the Australian aborigines were submissive with regard to the settlers' arrival and failed to resist the usurping of their land. The truth is that they resisted and communicated their disapproval and unhappiness over the whites' arrival immediately but the whites ignored them. Bernardino de Sahagun writes: "Although European mariners explored Australian coastlines in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they made only brief landfalls and had only fleeting encounters with indigenous peoples" (*Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective* 614). The aborigines were harmed for no reason and the whites considered them as an object on which they could vent their anger and frustrations to satisfy their sadistic pleasures. Violence unleashed by the whites and the diseases which afflicted the natives wiped out their population.

The whites understood that the natives would never surrender as long as they were strongly rooted in their culture. So, the colonizers resorted to a new strategy and this cultural genocide was called 'Stolen Generation'. The half-castes who had a European paternity and aboriginal maternity were made into stolen generations. Mongrel is a word used for a cross-bred dog. People were mocked at with such names if they were half-castes. They were forcefully taken away from their parents so as to break their relation with their cultural traditions and aboriginal ancestry. A streak of white blood running in the half-castes cannot be allowed to degrade by allowing these children to lead the aboriginal way of life.

The half-castes were taken to special camps so that English ways could be taught. The word 'stolen' refers to being taken away or removing forcefully. The main idea was to wash away the blackness out of white Australia. Films like *Rabbit Proof Fence* and *Australia* trace the history of the stolen generations. This was the strategy the whites used to create the 'Cultural Cringe' in the Australian society. Sally Morgan's *My Place* is a novel exclusively about the stolen generation children, the sufferings and humiliation they faced and the way they overcame this terrible plight to declare their native legacy proudly.

These children were alienated from their culture and were left without any culture or tradition. Though they were brought according to the English ways, traces of other racial blood running in them did not allow the whites to accept the blacks into their society. Stolen generations did not belong to any particular group and were uncertain of their belongingness. The whites used these children as mere domestic servants. They were also sexually abused in the Welfare Homes. The Welfare Homes would brush the children during their first visit. 'Brushing' refers to brushing away all that is impure and native about them. The elder ones were assigned with the responsibility of brushing the younger ones and newly arrived kids.

During weekends the children were picked and sent to the houses of their foster parents thinking that they needed a home to get nurtured properly. 'Picking' refers to the segregation of colours. Not all children were taken in by the foster parents. Only those who had a fair skin were chosen. Unaware of what was happening to those kids who were picked, the children longed to be picked by foster parents so that they would experience the luxury of being in an English man's house. When the kids did not get picked due to their dark complexion they developed an attitude of rejection towards their own culture, ancestors and birth. "In the first instance this produced practices of cultural subservience, characterized by one post-colonial critic as 'cultural cringe'" (*The Empire Writes Back* 12). Thus the alienation from one's own culture slowly turned into rejection of the native culture giving rise to 'Cultural Cringe'.

Australian sociologists Brian Head and James Walter believed that the idea of cultural cringe is one where one's own country occupies a subordinate position with regard to its culture. A person who has such a belief will devalue his/her own culture and try to venerate the culture which he/she considers superior. The term 'cultural cringe' was coined in Australia after World War II by the Melbourne critic and commentator A. A. Phillips and defined in an essay bearing the same title. Phillips proclaims:

The numbers are against us, and an inevitable quantitative inferiority easily looks like a qualitative weakness, under the most favourable circumstances—and our circumstances are not favourable. We cannot shelter from invidious comparisons behind the barrier of a separate language; we have no long established or interestingly different cultural tradition to give security and distinction to its interpreters; and the centrifugal pull of the great cultural metropolises work against us. (*The Macmillan Anthology of Australian Literature* 348-49)

The term 'cultural cringe' was framed when the whites and blacks together were considered Australians. Yet, the ingrained feeling of inferiority towards one's own culture was very much a phenomenon of the past as it is of the present. Just as the Australians today are made to feel inferior about their culture, the aborigines were made to feel inferior about their culture by the white settlers. Leonard John Hume in his book *Another Look at the Cultural Cringe* examined the idea of cultural cringe as an oversimplification of the complexities of Australian history and culture. His essay argues that "The cultural cringe that pervasive, unthinking, admiration for British and foreign things — did not exist, but it was needed, and so it was invented" (36). It was created by the whites for their convenience.

Grenville's *Sarah Thornhill* deals with instances where the concept of cultural inferiority is dealt with. In the novel Jack Langland and the grand-daughter of Thornhill are half-castes. The entire story revolves between the two with Sarah as the connecting bridge between them and the past hidden secrets. Jack was Langland's son born not to Mrs Langland but to an aboriginal mother. It could not be maintained as a secret because Jack had inherited the dark coloured skin from his aboriginal mother. Mrs Langland and Margaret Sarah's mother had contempt for Jack in spite of his good nature. The whites justified the sexual immorality of their men. They only blamed the aboriginal women. They considered the blacks to be savages but it did not strike them when they derived carnal pleasures from black women.

Sarah's opinion about Jack confirms that he was not different except for his skin colour. He was brought up by the English family and so nothing of his aboriginal ancestry had influenced him. Sarah proclaims: "But he was no different from the rest of us. Talked about the blacks the same way everyone did. They were strange to him the same way they were strange to us. He knew Mrs. Langland wasn't his real Ma. But he'd never known the native woman. She died when he was too young" (*Sarah Thornhill* 34). Jack could be considered the first scoop of 'stolen generation'. Any child who had the slightest trace of white blood in them was taken by the whites to teach them the ways of the English. The nativity in them was completely wiped out except for their skin colour. Even their skin colour was slowly washed away in the successive generations.

Such children were deprived of love and never experienced the warmth which a family gave. Jack had the privilege of being called Jack Langland but never experienced it.

"He was on the outer in that family, though. Called Mrs Langland Ma, but she had no warmth for him, and there was no love lost between Jack and his half brothers and sisters. Didn't know them that well, because he'd been away on the ships since he was a lad, didn't have the easy life they'd had" (*Sarah Thornhill* 35).

Sarah's mother was very conscious of Jack's double race and kept him at a distance. She never liked him to stay with them in their house. Jack too was aware of it but seemed to take it lightly and concealed his pain from Sarah. The aborigines were brought up in such a way that they developed an idea unconsciously that white ways are superior to the blacks' way of life. Jack tells Thornhill about the dead Will's daughter born to an aboriginal woman from New Zealand. Thornhill wanted to bring the girl to Australia. Jack tells Sarah about his decision to bring the native girl to Australia:

Says to me, she's an orphan girl, he said. Best here with her kin. Wants me to fetch her. Not let her grow up a native, see. Thinks she'll be better off here. Grow up white.

Well and she is, I said. Half white.

Half white, that's right, Jack said. Half black too. (*Sarah Thornhill* 106)

Jack, being a half-caste, was able to think about the consequences of bringing the girl born to Will and an aboriginal woman from New Zealand to another country. Thornhill could not accept a girl with white blood in her but living as an aborigine, following the savage way of life. He thought it would bring dishonour to the white community. Mrs. Thornhill looked at the aboriginal girl as an orphan because she could not accept a black fellow into their family. Sarah did not think like her parents but thought that the presence of the girl would replace the loss of Will. Jack thought about the girl's kin living in New Zealand and he proclaims: "She got kin over there too, Jack said. Way they work things, everyone's kin. I doubt they got a word even, for orphan" (*Sarah Thornhill* 107).

The word orphan and its connotations were something strange to the natives, for they live as a community and enjoy kinship. Their togetherness was their strength but the whites disturbed the harmony and togetherness of the aborigines by

taking away the half blooded children born to the natives. It resulted in a loss of identity to the children. They grew up not knowing to which tribe they belonged to.

The aboriginal girl was brought from New Zealand to a new nation where everything seemed strange for her. She got hold of Jack for safety because he was the only soul she knew in that new country. The fear of the unknown affected her psychologically and she did not feel like smiling at anything. She was not surprised to find new people coming into her life. She felt happy when she heard her mother's name being uttered by the whites in the middle of their conversation in a language that was unintelligible to her. Thornhill was happy to see his son's image in his grand-daughter. But Margaret did not share his opinion. "Our Will married this Rugig fair and square, Pa said. But a heathen woman! Ma said. A black!" (*Sarah Thornhill* 110). She felt uncomfortable with her aboriginal name and so she gave her another name. "She'll be Rachel, she said. Good Christian name" (*Sarah Thornhill* 110).

Thornhill had great love and affection for the girl and appreciated everything the girl did and did not feel ashamed of her aboriginal heritage. "It was the first life in him since Will died. Almost laughing with the pleasure of watching the girl eat" (*Sarah Thornhill* 111). He, unlike his wife, was not very particular about teaching her the English ways.

Margaret made her sleep alone on the very first day. The girl went to Jack when she woke up because she had never slept alone. Sarah who went to Jack's room to comfort him found the girl lying with him. She tried to comfort her and allowed them to sleep as they wished. The girl was made to experience something unpleasant when she woke up. She did not allow herself to be scrubbed by Mrs Thornhill. The whites scrubbed the native children hard so that they could wash away their blackness and black ways along with the dirt and impurities. Everything the whites did to the native children scared them and drifted them away from the English culture. Mrs Thornhill's lessons grew torturous and she locked up the girl in her bedroom so that she would not run to Jack's room. "Only a little thing, Jack said. Bit of kindness don't go astray" (*Sarah Thornhill* 114). But Margaret was not ready to listen to Jack, a half-caste. The next strand that the whites focussed on was language because it connected them to their culture.

Hugh Lunn, an award-winning journalist and author, wrote the books *Lost for Words* and its sequel, *Words Fail Me*. They were a collection of Australian sayings that were dying with Australia's older generations. According to him this death was a cause for great sadness because when a language is lost, so is the personality and character of a people. Traditions and cultural values are bound together with the language people use.

Thinking that English could be taught to the girl only when she forgets her aboriginal language, Mrs Thornhill asked Jack not to utter a word in her language. The colonizers considered English superior to the aboriginal languages. The whites who colonized the innocent aborigines were ignorant in a real sense. Thornhill wanted Jack to convey the love he had for the girl as a grandfather in her own tongue so that she could understand it. But Mrs Thornhill remained rigid in her views and prevented the girl even from hearing a kind word. She asserts:

Tell her, will you lad, he said. Tell her how much she means to her Grandpa.

No William! Ma said. Got to get her in the way of English. Longer we leave it, harder it'll be.

That's well and good, Meg Pa said. But I want her to hear a kind word. (*Sarah Thornhill* 115)

They wanted to make Rachel a product of the English society and prevent her from seeing the people who knew her aboriginal ancestry and language. "Not cling to what she knows" (*Sarah Thornhill* 117). With Jack beside the girl, Mrs Thornhill realized that it would be difficult for her to make the girl forget her language. So she asked Jack to stay away from her for a fortnight till she got accustomed to her surroundings. He agreed to do so thinking that it would help the girl to get on well with her new surroundings. The more she was alienated the more she thought about her 'home'.

Mrs Thornhill tried to get slippers for the girl but she refused. Sarah asked her mother to leave her barefooted as she wished. "I won't have her a barefoot savage" (*Sarah Thornhill* 124). Sarah waited for Jack to return to start a new life at Sullivan's along with the girl so that the girl could live without any restrictions. The thought of starting a new life of her own consoled Sarah and gave her space to hope for a better future.

Jack returned after a fortnight. The girl rushed to him and narrated the tortures she underwent. Tears gushed out from her eyes and it changed his attitude. He realized that he had done a mistake by bringing her to Australia. He decided to take her back to New Zealand but Thornhill did not agree to this. The discussion between the two ended up in an argument.

Thornhill argued that he had legal rights over his grand-daughter. The girl was abducted from Jack and was made to live alone in an alien land with its people speaking an alien language. The disclosure of the ugly secret hidden in the Thornhill family came as a big blow to Jack and he decided to leave Sarah permanently. Sarah married an Irish since she did not have any information about the whereabouts of Jack Langland.

One fine day Sarah received a message from her home. The news from Sydney that the native girl from New Zealand had died with a child came as a blow to Sarah. She herself was a child and it shocked Sarah. She was able to guess as to what had happened. "With child, I know that, they say it was the darkie in the stables, the lad Phillip" (*Sarah Thornhill* 236). As soon as she reached her home she found her mother blaming the native girl as the one responsible for Thornhill's illness. "It's the bad blood, she said. The mixed blood. For a moment I knew what it must of been like for the girl. Living with that hatred till she died of it" (*Sarah Thornhill* 241).

Sarah was able to understand the closeness between the girl and Phillip and compare it with her relationship with Jack. She sympathised with the girl who had died like an orphan. "Dead on her own, with no one near who could speak her tongue or hold her hands" (*Sarah Thornhill* 242). The girl's death made Sarah regret the part she had played in bringing the girl to Australia from New Zealand. It was too late to regret and it cannot bring back the past and undo what had been done. Thus the girl who stood as an iconic figure representing the stolen generation faced death, after being taught to live through civilization.

A culture can sustain and preserve itself only through its succeeding generations. When the traditions are passed on from one to another generation the culture survives. If its own people stop carrying on the tradition it would mark the death of that culture. The children of the convicts were born free unlike their parents but the children born to the aborigines were treated like slaves and suffered the same degradation as their parents.

However, in the early twentieth century these half-castes who belonged to the stolen generations articulated the miseries they underwent for generations through reports and magazines which supported their cause. A half-caste named Carol expressed her feelings to the world through a magazine *Bringing Them Home Report*: "Four generations of my family went without parental love, without mother or father. I myself found it very hard to show any love to my children because I wasn't given that, so was my mother and grandmother" (CreativeSpirits Web). On 13 February 2008 the Australian Parliament apologised to the Stolen Generations who were taken away from their families from 1900 to the 1970s. The Australian nation should include the aboriginal population and their contributions too. C. D. Narasimhaiah writes:

The tragedy of this confrontation, between the first industrial nation of the world and the last continent of nomads, was that neither civilization could understand the other. Only in the last twenty years has a widening circle of white Australians come to appreciate the achievements of the black Aborigines; and even that appreciation stems in part from the current phase of disillusionment with the western civilization and its cult of high technology. (*The Flowering of Australian Literature* 195-96)

Every country that was colonized by Britain had undergone a phase called freedom struggle and independence. Australia was never offered an opportunity to think about the nation as a whole. It was only very recently that the half-castes voiced their opposition to crimes against humanity.

Compensation has to be given to the aborigines and stolen generations by the Australian government. Equal opportunity should be given to the aborigines. The whites have to let the remaining natives revive their ancestral culture and traditions and make them one among the different traits of Australia's national culture. It is high-time that the Australians shed their fears about being dominated by the multicultural immigrants. The solution to live harmoniously in the global world is to forge a unique cultural identity.

Firm belief in one's culture is a healthy notion but sticking firmly to it at all costs may result in violence as it happened during colonization. A culture should be framed in such a way that it absorbs the goodness in other cultures. This responsibility is in the hands of the present generation and work towards a harmonious future.

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