

**Religious Hypocrisy, Protection Acts and Trauma of Being an Aboriginal in Doris Kartinyeri's *Kick the Tin* and Glenyse Ward's *Wandering Girl***

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**Abstract:** The process of colonisation in various parts of the globe proliferated in multiple ways. It was not just the battle of “the steel and the stone”<sup>1</sup> as Jack Davis (1917-2000), the famous Australian Aboriginal dramatist, calls it, but also of “draining the colonised brain of any form or substance” (Fanon 149) through the imposition of religious and cultural supremacy of the so-called civilised over the savage. In Australia, too, the strategies of colonising the Aboriginal population varied from frontier wars, violent shootings, and beheadings to the more disruptive Assimilation policies, Protection Acts, and Christian missionary teachings. While the former strategies claimed lives instantaneously, the latter ones proved to be lifelong traumas to cope with. Assimilation aimed at removing the half-caste Aboriginal children from their biological parents and keeping them in the mission homes and, after that, with the white families as servants.

It is the pain, suffering and trauma of such children that this paper seeks to explore through the personal narratives of Doris Kartinyeri (1935-2007) and Glenyse Ward's (b.1949) *Kick the Tin* (2000) and *Wandering Girl* (1988), respectively. The paper exposes the devastating role played by Christian missionaries in adding to the woes of the members of stolen generations. The paper takes into account women's memoirs to expose not only the sexual abuse that Kartinyeri is subjected to but also the prejudiced/alienated treatment that Ward faces in a white family as a 'dark servant.' It also shows how writing had a healing purpose for Kartinyeri and how the wandering of both authors comes to an end only when they find their connections and the ultimate bonding of the family members. The journeys of both authors since infancy remain strewn with insurmountable sufferings, which they overcome with the sheer willpower and resilience of character.

**Keywords:** Trauma, Aboriginals, Protection Acts, Pain, Suffering, Missionaries

## I

Missionaries, teachers, and government officials have believed that the best way to make black people behave like white people was to get hold of the children who had not yet learned Aboriginal life ways. They thought that children's minds were like a kind of blackboard on which the European secrets could be written.

(Read 1)

The colonisation process in various parts of the globe proliferated in multiple ways. It was not just the battle of “the steel and the stone”<sup>1</sup>, as Jack Davis (1917-2000), the famous Australian Aboriginal dramatist, calls it, but also of “draining the colonised brain of any form or substance” (Fanon 149) through the imposition of religious and cultural supremacy of the so-called civilised over the savage. In Australia, too, the strategies of colonising the Aboriginal population varied from frontier wars, violent shootings, and beheadings to the more disruptive Assimilation policies, Protection Acts, and Christian missionary teachings. While the former strategies claimed lives instantaneously, the latter ones proved to be lifelong traumas to cope with.

“In all parts of the colony, men were bashed, women raped and children stolen from their families” (Reynolds et al. 178). Assimilation aimed at removing the half-caste Aboriginal children from their biological parents and keeping them in the mission homes and after that with the white families as servants. It is the pain and suffering of such children that this paper seeks to explore through the personal narratives of Doris Kartinyeri (1935-2007) and Glenyse Ward's (b. 1949) *Kick the Tin* (2000) and *Wandering Girl* (1988), respectively. The paper exposes the devastating role played by Christian missionaries in adding to the woes of the members of stolen generations. The paper takes into account women's memoirs to expose not only the sexual abuse that Kartinyeri is subjected to but also the prejudiced/alienated treatment that Ward faces in a white family as a ‘dark servant.’ It also shows how writing had a healing purpose for Kartinyeri and how the wandering of both authors comes to an end only when they find their connections and the ultimate bonding of the

family members. The journeys of both authors since infancy remain strewn with insurmountable sufferings, which they overcome with the sheer willpower and resilience of character.

Children were stolen because it was said that the Aboriginal culture was inferior, “Thousands—no, tens of thousands—of people were taken from their parents under misguided policies which held sway over decades, beliefs which arose from the view that Aboriginality is deficit, that Aboriginal culture and heritage are worthless” (Baume 285).

Doris Kartinyeri decided to write this memoir when she was in a hospital suffering from a long illness. Her daughter Jennadene encouraged her to pour her bitter-sweet memories into this work. She records how the very act of writing about her life from various mental institutions started “healing” (1) her as it was a therapeutic experience. Other Aboriginal writers like Eva Jonson (b. 1946), Jimmi Chi (1948-2017) and Sally Morgan (b. 1951) inspired her tremendously to weave her agonising experiences in *Kick the Tin*. She further acknowledges, “In writing this book, I have been fulfilled and healed of all my anguish and disillusion” (112). She also consults many other stolen brothers and sisters to record their claustrophobic experiences, giving the memoir more legitimacy.

The title *Kick the Tin* refers to a game that Kartinyeri played with other Aboriginal children at Colebrook Home. In the game, one child would keep the tin in her/his custody and simultaneously search the other hiding children. If any child would come and touch the tin before the searching one, it would imply defeat for the latter. The author painfully records that, like the tin, her life has also been “kicked about” (1). She laments that all the children have “scattered in different directions following their dreams and discovering their roots” (2). This going in different directions implies the scattering of many brothers and sisters due to the assimilation policies, which caused great havoc in the lives of Aboriginals. *Bringing Them Home*<sup>2</sup> (1997) report clearly brings many confidential submissions from such affected people for whom survival became too hard to attain. The report clearly tells how children were taken for no rhyme or reason, “A common practice was simply to remove the child forcibly, often in the absence of the parent but sometimes even by taking the child from the mother’s arms” (3). It was the most disruptive and devastating practice that left the victims

traumatic throughout their lives. “A dire consequence of these policies... was a generation of Aboriginal people cut off from their families, communities, and culture” (Cerwonka 12).

Both Kartinyeri and Ward were stolen in their infancy. While Doris Kartinyeri was stolen from the hospital itself when she was just one month old, Glenyse Ward was put into an orphanage at the age of one. Being stolen as young infants deprives them of any chance of remaining connected to their families. Their knowledge of Aboriginality, culture and identity remains abortive and surviving without having any Aboriginal roots disquiets them. The ill-treatment that is meted out to them at the missions and foster homes shatters them completely, as the pressure to be white is tremendous. Looking back and penning these bitter experiences of childhood gives authenticity to these memoirs as they stem from their lived experiences.

Doris Kartinyeri calls her birth a “life-shattering” experience for her family. Her mother dies of birth complications, and she is stolen from the Murray Bridge Hospital just one month after her birth and is never sent back to her family for fourteen years. Her mother dies partly because she is taken from Raukkan to the Murray Bridge Hospital “on the back of acute” (7), which causes higher temperature and eventual death. Sadly enough, when the narrator’s father goes to receive the baby, he is asked to sign a paper to keep her at the Colebrook Home until. He is misled as he assumes he is “signing the forms for child endowment” (8). In many cases, illiterate mothers were made to sign papers to give consent for the removal of their children. One survivor in Tasmania says, “[Mum] could not read or write, and obviously would not have understood the implications of what she was signing” (Anthony and Rijswijk 96). The police and Governments would also threaten the mothers that “if they did not consent to the adoption of their babies the father of the child would be prosecuted for carnal knowledge” (Anthony et al. 96). Such unnatural acts of the government prove too much for little Kartinyeri as she is stripped of the bliss of parental nurturing, family ties, Aboriginal heritage, and the privilege of growing up with her brothers and sisters. Though she acknowledges that the time spent at the Colebrook Home with other children was a bit enjoyable, it deprived her of “family

affection” (12). She rues, “How could anyone think that apologies or money could make for the lost years and the terrible trauma and emotional damage caused to my family?” (12).

The Colebrook Home came into existence in 1924, and the children survived there by simultaneously laughing and crying. From “many brothers and sisters”, Kartinyeri learns many languages and ways to survive. They all remain connected and develop bonds with each other as they are tied by what Adam Shoemaker calls “the shared experience” (233) of Aboriginality. Another contributing factor to their survival at home was the kindness of Sister Hyde and Sister Rutter. She feels grateful for these two ladies, “Being in the presence of these two ladies gave me a sense of security, belonging and love that I was unable to receive from my true family” (17). Living at Home was not a problem for her as long as these kinds of women were there, and she would even call the cook grandpa. Moreover, on spring afternoons, they were allowed to visit the hills, where they would search for wild food like bush tucker, berries, chow, maise, and yallacus. She notes how the propensity for searching for food was greater in them despite having been cut off from such cultural knowledge; “We had our heritage taken from us, but we still had the natural instinct for finding the right foods. None of the children suffered illness from the food we discovered” (26). It shows how the bush food, considered unhygienic by the whites, did not affect the health of these kids in any way.

Both the novelists critique Australian policy to use religion as a subtle tool of oppression and conversion of the Aboriginal children and people. Enforcement of religious practices on the native children leaves Kartinyeri traumatised. After the departure of both the Sisters, the new Superintendent and his wife impose strict religious discipline on the children, which she finds “most humiliating and embarrassing” (31). Even Catholic bishops in Australia acknowledged that:

The abhorrent practice of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families will remain forever a blight on our nation... There was an underlying view that conversion to Christianity required the weakening of the spiritual influence of Aboriginal elders and culture on the younger generation. This led almost inevitably to accepting the idea that the physical separation of Aboriginal children from those families who were not in

reserves or missions was necessary for their ultimate spiritual and material well-being. (*Irish Times* n.pag.)

The author hates Sunday the most, called the Lord's Day, when they are not allowed to play but only to worship and read the Bible, which she terms as "brainwashing" and questions "Is this called religion?" (31). Going for the Bible-based quiz each night and white men humiliatingly throwing lollies at them "like animals" deeply affects the little girl. Kartinyeri attacks these Christian institutions, which "rammed Christian beliefs into children, brainwashing them into a system that stripped them of their people, their culture, their beliefs, their rules, their traditions" (110). Though the Christian missionaries wanted to protect the Aboriginals from white violence and sexual abuse, they eventually did not only ensure conformance to Christian teachings but also, in many cases, punishments were put in place. Thus these "missions in many ways served to replace one system of oppression with another" (Chesterman and Galligan 37).

She dislikes how hygiene is practised in the Home, and their heads are shaved if any louse is found. To be hygienic is welcomed, but even needles are inserted in the children's ears, which causes infections also. She has to get both her feet operated as "a result of wearing poor shoes" (36). The washing and polishing of bedrooms and floors are other chores that the little children have to perform, along with washing the dishes. Little children are also punished for wetting their beds at night. Cold showers in winter, standing meals, and preparing food are other punishments that these kids have to suffer. She considers these punishments responsible for these young children's later ending up in "jails/gaol or mental institutions" (43).

Kartinyeri also foregrounds that the practice of removing children completely disrupted the families. In the case of the removal of very little babies, parents would never get to know who their kids were and vice-versa. She discusses the question of identity when, on one occasion, a full-blood Aboriginal claiming to be an Aboriginal girl's father is not recognised by his own daughter. Assimilation was thus carried out in such a way that children would themselves forget their identities in the due course of time. In a Christian Convention in Adelaide, the sight of Aboriginals at a station

fills the children with shame when they introduce themselves as their uncles and aunts. The author recalls with pain, “We hung our heads feeling shame” (42). Even Sally Morgan in *My Place* (1987) reveals that while she identified with Aboriginals, her little sister did not; “I don’t know much about them. They like animals, don’t they? We like animals [sic]” (Morgan 21). Children are thus so much so ingrained in Christianity that everything Aboriginal seems humiliating for them. Ann McGrath writes, “Association with their own Aboriginal parents and kin was said to be degrading or subjecting them to neglect” (2).

The whites present/introduce these Maru kids to other white children as orphans who had no families, which she terms as “another white lie” (54). In the strict religious atmosphere, no sexual education is imparted to these children, and she attacks the Colebrook Home as “a haven for sexual deviants” (54). At this place, the sexual promiscuity of the school staff finds its outlet in the little children who undergo sexual abuse. Kartinyeri is also forced into such “ungodly behaviour” of the same staff. When the time comes to leave the Colebrook Home, the stolen kids have to face countless ordeals. Some children receive very bad homecoming, others meet opposition, and others feel rootlessness, while only a few get reunited and succeed. As claimed by the whites, the children are not trained in skilled courses but are only prepared for domestic and manual work.

The *Bringing Them Home* speaks about the difficulties Stolen Generations faced afterwards:

Psychological and emotional damage renders many people less able to learn social skills and survival skills. Their ability to operate successfully in the world is impaired, causing low educational achievement, unemployment and consequent poverty. These, in turn, cause their own emotional distress, leading some to perpetrate violence, self-harm, substance abuse or anti-social behaviour. (178)

Ordeals for the Kartinyeri go unabated after the Colebrook Home; she is forced to stay with a white family with four kids. She is enrolled in a school to be instructed in cooking and partial teaching. During this time, she comes across Elsie, who turns out to be her cousin. However, she does not divulge about these secret visits to the white family. Just after a brief period, she is dropped out of

school by the white family to “look after the four kids, prepare meals and [do] general house-keeping” (60). She is paid no wages here in lieu of the work.

The author’s wandering does not end as she is further removed from the Edwardstown family to another house at Coromandel Valley. It is here that a lay minister of the church exposes himself to her and forces her into the dairy farm. He masturbates now and then before her, sexually abuses her whereby her innocence is violated. She condemns such religious preachers; “I had lost all my pride. My God! Are these people God’s people?” (62). Vivid cries emanating from the boys’ dormitory make her realise that even boys are not spared. Another girl, Bessie’s brother, is also raped, and when she goes to him, she finds him “lying in his cot, wet and alone, screaming his little heart out” (116), eventually causing the death of the boy. Kartinyeri thus questions the real objective of Christian missionaries who were trying to be the protectors but were dealing mighty blows to Aboriginal stolen children and their families; “I and many others were forced into believing in Christianity and at the same time confronted with sexual abuse. How does one justify the years of pain” (116). It is not only Kartinyeri, but another girl is also raped in the same home. When she turns sixteen, her molester leaves her at Malvern nursing home, where she starts doing chores in the kitchen, for which she is also paid. It is here that when her sister Doreen visits her, she feels another surge of pain. The Methodist Nursing Home here strictly warns her against keeping any contact with the full-blood Aborigines as she writes; “I should not have any contact with my family or visitors” (65).

Being a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of two people unsettles Kartinyeri during their teenage. Eventually, she has two children from a white man, but the relationship bitters, and they get divorced. Even her marriage to a man after this, ends in divorce after the birth of one baby. Like Sally Morgan in *My Place*, the author feels desperate to search for her people now and make connections. Her friend Margaret now takes her to Raukkan, where she had been stolen as an infant. She suffers lifelong for adjustments in life as her kids do not get fair treatment from other white kids at the school.

The biggest hurdle that the stolen Aboriginal children faced was fitting in the Aboriginal community. Their spilt identity mars their chances of leading a balanced and happy life now. The



author suffers the same problem of complete identification with the Aboriginals. She is ridiculed when she pronounces the Pitjantjatjara language incorrectly. Thereafter, she moved to the Murray Bridge, where the Nungas Housing Committee provided them with a comparatively better house. She takes numerous jobs to support her family: picking peas and grapes, working in a factory and cleaning the office. At this stage, when the news of her father's death reaches her, she feels utterly dejected; "I felt no emotions and couldn't cry. The emptiness I felt left me hollow. I really never got to know my father" (77). By 1983, she had worked as a secretary at the Murray Nunga's Club in Aboriginal alcohol programmes. She again encountered many difficulties in identifying with her family extended family and in learning the local Nunga language. The negative reception of the half-castes by the Aboriginals creates trouble, and since she speaks and acts differently, she is "treated as an outsider" (79). It leads her to take to drinking copiously to overcome this trauma of baffled/mixed identity, but it deteriorates her health.

Now, she begins to have mental illness attacks. These symptoms manifest in multiple ways—becoming oblivious to the surroundings in a park and nearly attacking her nephew Robert, making it incumbent for her to be admitted to the Glenside Hospital. Feelings of isolation and alienation wreck her. She compares her manic-depression with maggots as they destroy her by eating away her "body, mind and soul" (84). She recalls one episode during this mental illness as the most bizarre; "I was a full-blood Aboriginal lady walking with my dog, hunting and searching for a lost baby" (85). It is indicative of her agitated state of mind where even in her mental illness, she has this vision of considering herself as a full-blood Aboriginal, and her looking for her lost baby is reflective of Aboriginal mothers looking desperately for their lost children. When her mental illness is controlled by medication, she tries to put a stop to her life by overdosing or driving rashly. She ascribes such a pathetic state to the past abuse she had to suffer away from her family. Her loneliness becomes painful as she relives the past, and this trauma makes her take refuge in excessive alcoholism. Though she feels grateful to the Scottish psychiatrist Kenny, who helps her immensely in recuperation, she also simultaneously feels as to how a stranger could compass what happens inside the mind; "How was

she going to get inside this Maru head when she didn't know the Aboriginal culture that was stolen from me?" (98). Franz Fanon, in his last chapter in *The Wretched of the Earth*, "Colonial War and Mental Disorders", also says that mental disorders are borne out of very bitter experiences, war being one of the major factors. Carmel Bird, in her Introduction to *Stolen Generations; Their Stories*, writes about the aftermaths of forced removal:

It is clear that subsequent generations continue to suffer the effects of the separations of the earlier generations and that these separations are largely to blame for the troubled lives of many Indigenous Australians today. The complex, ongoing and compounding effects of the separations result in a cycle of damage from which it is profoundly difficult to escape. (10)

Doris Kartinyeri affirms her unshakeable faith in Aboriginal spirituality, which acts as a strong force. She once saw visions of a foetus appearing repeatedly on the clock radio. Symbolically, this foetus was of her unborn child. It was a white man's child, which she had to abort as he did not want his honour to be sullied. Another incident of some mysterious spiritual force occurs when she visits the Murray Bridge to see Jacob, the newborn infant of her son John and his wife, Jennifer. Not in good health, she seats her five grandchildren in the car unbelted and feels as if she "was being driven by some power" (107). The third spiritual experience takes place when she places two flowers on the bed and forms a cross in the Murray Bridge Hospital. It was the same hospital and, who knows, the same bed where her mother had delivered her. She recalls; "It was a meaningful symbol for my soul, a sign of purity of connection, nothing was in the way between me and my mother" (108). She feels as if she were placing flowers on her mother's grave, which she had missed performing earlier. It reconnects her with her mother in the hospital now. These visions and rituals play an important role in Aboriginals' lives and guide them through trying times.

The author does not only resist through writing but also through active participation in the Aboriginal cause, as a complete sense of Aboriginality implies an "impetus towards action in both the social and political spheres" (Shoemaker 233). The Australian Government's decision to develop a bridge from Goolwa to Kumarangk (Hindmarsh Island) affects the local Ngarrindjeri people. Since

the said project badly affected the Ngarrindjeri women's business, it became a world-known protest. As her culture and heritage were stolen from her, she did not know anything about these women's businesses. However, she believes in and identifies with the struggle of these women and reaches the site to join the protesting group. It is representative of the bonding between women where the sense of being Aboriginal melts away all other differences of tribal, cultural and dialectical identities.

There is a strong note of survival rings in nearly all Aboriginal life writings. Of course, many get decimated in the whole process of colonisation of Australia, but being alive and standing firm after facing so much speaks volumes about not only the resistance of the wronged people but also their stoicism and resilience. Doris Kartinyeri feels honoured to be invited to a conference in Alice Springs 1996. The event turns out to be emotionally quite overwhelming as it discusses the subject of stolen generations. She is invited to represent the stolen generations of South Australia. Photos of children who lived at the Colebrook Home from 1930 to 1969 are displayed, making the event a mix of pleasure and pain.

After forty years, Doris Kartinyeri's journey to the Colebrook Home further brims up the memories of the fourteen years she spent there as a child. It is the Blackwood Reconciliation Group that asks her to undertake this journey to this place where she was physically, sexually and mentally abused. Eventually, the Colebrook Home was developed into the Colebrook Memorial Site/Heritage and the memorials there since then "have touched many hearts" (129). The site is devoted to the memory of three hundred children who lived there during the turbulent years when the policy of assimilation was in full swing. The Fountain of Tears constructed at this site represents the tears of the stolen Aboriginal children as well as their parents. At this place, Doris Kartinyeri's face is engraved on a rock. Thousands of people gathered here on 30 May 1999 for the Journey of Healing, and a plaque was also dedicated to the benign influence of Sister Hyde and Sister Rutter. A poem by Doris Kartinyeri is embossed on a rock, which she calls "my rock", "to make the non-indigenous people and younger Nungas aware that this did happen" (131).

Furthermore, the Statue of the Grieving Mother and Aunt Muriel's Story unveil "32 years of separation" (131). For Doris Kartinyeri, this is a symbol of survival and an acknowledgement of the pangs of separation that Aboriginals suffered. The writer stands commemorated in the memoir itself, and she rightly claims, "I am a survivor, one with a sense of pride and dignity" (110).

## II

*Wandering Girl* charts the unhappy journey of the author from infancy to adulthood, as most of her years during this time are spent in utter desperation, resulting in the unfair treatment she receives as a servant with a white family. At the age of one, she was taken from her Nyoogar parents and dumped in an orphanage, from where she is again transplanted to live at the Wandering Mission, a Catholic Mission run by nuns and priests of German descent. Little children here were punished for minor offences. Imprisoning the children in a dark room at night and darning socks till 2 am were a few punishments in place. After the age of six, children were given further duties of milking cows, collecting eggs, feeding the cattle and so on. Though such punishments were common, as Doris Kartinyeri also tells in *Kick the Tin*, Glenyse Ward still feels happy because of the good-natured nuns there. Though she misses her home at the time of Christmas, she does not have the option to go back to her family. She calls these nuns "real mums" (8) as they also miss their families in Germany. Moreover, the nuns remain humane in their treatment of the kids. When, at the age of sixteen, she is adopted by a white family, she expresses her love for the nuns; "I am going to miss these dear nuns" (13).

The foster home brings along many miseries to her. Discrimination starts from day one as her landlady, Mrs Bigelow, pours tea in beautiful cups for herself and her husband and in a tin mug for Ward. Her request to have tea in a cup is bluntly dismissed. Not only this, but she is also given a "dirty room" in a garage, and Mrs. Bigelow continues passing a "fierce tirade of orders" (15). She is treated like an outcast. It is reminiscent of Om Prakash Valmiki's (1950-2013) autobiography *Joothan* (2003), wherein Savita tells her lover Valmiki that they have kept separate mugs and glasses for Mahars and Muslims; "The SCs and the Muslims who come to our house, we keep their dishes separate. How can we feed them in the same dishes?" (97). It further implies that every culture has

its own downtrodden groups. Though the grounds of oppression vary, the nature of oppression remains nearly the same.

Many hard chores that she has to perform here dampen her spirits. Waking at 5 am in the dark and sweeping the pavement, going to the paddock, fetching two oranges from the orchard, and making juice for the landlady are a few demanding tasks that she is assigned. Her other works include polishing and shining silver and brassware, cleaning windows, woodwork, and fireplace bricks, and washing the carpet.

Moreover, when she goes to serve in the dining room, she is again dismissed, “I was not allowed in the dining room while any member of the family was there unless she rang the bell” (21). For her, it is again humiliating that she has to eat even her breakfast from a tin plate and is not offered the same bacon and eggs as her mistress was having but only *weeties*. Despite working so much, the differential and humiliating attitude towards her continues. She is not even allowed to be at the parties. When she once goes down to the party to help Mrs Bigelow, the latter scolds her, saying that she “had disgraced and embarrassed them” before their VIP friends. She painfully records, “I went to my room crying with shame and anger. I wondered what could be so bad about me” (29).

Apart from this, Mrs Bigelow shoos her out of the car as her hair is wet. She again humiliates her when she does not allow her to sit in the front seat. Moreover, she is asked to wash the seat she sits on when they reach home. Mrs. Bigelow represents such demanding white ladies whose list of works never comes to an end. It can be further seen when, on one Saturday, she goes out and orders her to do a plethora of odd jobs. Cleaning all shoes, locking the turkeys in the yard, collecting the eggs and stacking, cleaning the old shed and sixty preserving jars sink her heart as she complains; “I was beginning to feel a sense of debility creeping over me” (56). Martin Renes also writes about the demanding and unkind temperament of Mrs Bigelow, which Ward finds intolerable before the affection and attention she receives from the nuns, “She entertains warm memories of the mission’s Christian charity, which starkly contrast with the Bigelow environment, where the never-ending list of domestic chores at scant pay, daily drawn up by the mayor’s wife, is short shrift for economic

exploitation” (38). At another point in time, when she sits down to fix her injured foot, Mrs. Bigelow again pounces on her, “How dare you sit down when you have work to do? I won’t tolerate this behaviour, especially coming from my slave” (83).

Ward shows how a bond develops between an old man called Bill, a farm worker at Mrs. Bigelow’s house, with whom she shares everything. Bill is shocked to learn that she is given tea in the same type of tin mug in which he asks her to pour the tea for the cat. She reveals to him; “I’ve a mum, but I don’t know where she is. I’ll find her one day, I suppose. My dad I’ve never seen. He died when I was in the home [Wandering Mission]” (74). Sympathising with her, Bill helps her in chopping and stacking the wood. Their state of being alone and away from home binds them together, and they sing the famous Australian song “Waltzing Matilda”, which is also symbolically about a bushman who is away from home in search of food and work. Eventually, she expresses her gratitude to this old man, “I didn’t know how I would cope without him. He was making me see another side of life, and by thinking differently, I was becoming bolder towards the boss” (106). It is this “reliance on each other” (Shoemaker 252) which makes them both overcome their vicissitudes.

She is not only used as a slave by Mrs Bigelow, but even Bigelow’s daughter Janet treats her in the same fashion. Bigelow’s taking Ward to her daughter’s house in working clothes and handing over a list of duties to be done before she and her daughter return from the town is indicative of the cyclical nature of suffering at both ends. As mothers themselves and their children become the victims of being stolen, the white mother and her daughter become the cyclical class of oppressors. So, this oppressor-oppressed binary would not remain confined to one generation only but would pass to the children as well.

Eventually, when she meets Anne, another Aboriginal girl who spent time with Glenyse at the Mission, she feels emotionally overwhelmed. This meeting brings another sad facet of the Mission as Anne reveals that the priest didn’t like Glenyse’s letters and the latter reasons why she never received any letters back. It shows that the children and parents were kept ignorant of each other’s whereabouts in most of the cases, which further deprived the children of any connection with their

families. It completely left them rootless, hopeless and dejected even when they were set free after attaining the age of eighteen years, as there was no one to welcome them from their families.

The departure of old Billy from Mrs Bigelow's house fills her heart with unfathomable pain and triggers her to leave the racist landlady and the oppressive ambience of the house. This urge becomes more intense when she and her friend Anne are dropped off in the town by their respective landladies as they do not want them to be part of the Christmas celebrations. Broken and distressed, they visit a hill where a Christian nun welcomes them in, offering sweets and gifts, which brings out the compassionate trait of the nuns. Since she always receives only abuses from Mrs. Bigelow, she leaves the latter and goes to the house of another mission girl, Kaylene who secures for her a job at a hospital. Her leaving her bad-tempered owner is an act of resistance as she never receives humane treatment from her despite rendering countless services. Like Doris Kartinyeri, she also survives this hard time and eventually finds happiness in her husband Charlie and their son and daughter. She resolves to carve out a happy future for her children:

There'll be no washing other  
People's dishes, or  
Getting dropped off at bus stops,  
For any of my children.  
Kids will be given every opportunity [to be]  
Equal in the one human  
Race. (183)

To conclude it can be said that the Protection Acts and the policy of Assimilation ruined the lives of many other Aboriginal children like Ward and Kartinyeri. While some nuns like Rutter and Hyde were humane and sympathetic towards Kartinyeri in *Kick the Tin* and Genyse Ward in *Wandering Girl*, the sexual victimisation of Kartinyeri by the religious preachers and the punishments meted out to children by the so called 'godly people' and alienated, prejudiced treatment meted out to Ward by Mrs. Bigelow remain crushing experiences for both the authors. Dispersal after dispersal

lock these authors in “cultural death” (Renes 30) but timely family ties in marriage becomes a defence shield. All the efforts to disempower and deculturalise the Aborigines through these ill-conceived policies are contested by these writers. Moreover, it has been acknowledged now by the formal apology offered by Kevin Rudd in 2008 and reconciliation efforts at place. Though the trauma remains lingered and deep imprinted on their minds, the note of survival also rings throughout. Since the children were “emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and psychologically deprived, and scars might never heal” (Read 13), the legacy left by such policies and acknowledgement thereof is symbolic of guilt-ridden conscience of non-Aboriginal population.

Today, the legacy of these policies haunts the conscience of white Australia as it has haunted the memories of generations of Aboriginal families. The residue of unresolved anger and grief that blankets the Aboriginal community has had a devastating effect on the physical, emotional and mental being of so many (Wilkes v).

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