CHAPTER IV
PLUNDERING LIVESTOCK
(EARTH)

In 2008, the Labor government of Australia offered an apology to compensate for the shameful past, to the ‘Stolen Generations’ – the Aboriginal children of mixed descent who were taken away from their families at the time of their birth during 1860s to 1970s by the Australian Federal and State Government agencies and Church missions. The governmental policies of few people inflicted great pain on thousands of Aboriginals that blighted the bond between mother and child. It is estimated that around 100,000 Aboriginal children were stolen from their families and were sent to Christian homes run by European settlers, leaving their mothers heart-broken. These children are forced to learn the European habits and English language to work as servants. The government stated it as a process to provide a better life and welfare to the Aboriginal children who they think, lead an aimless and immoral life in the interiors of Australia. Rebecca Burke and Tracy Lay reveal the objective of European settlers in the issue:

It was commonly believed by white settlers that the Aborigines would soon die off, and the reserve land would be sold and used for farming… When it became clear that the Aboriginal people would not die off, the protection board for the Aborigines decided to break up all Aboriginal communities. They would then sell the land to the newly arrived Europeans for farming. The board started by taking away all the rights from Aborigines to own or use reserve lands, the Aborigines could own nothing. The reserves were made a
training ground for Aboriginal children to become servants… plans to remove Aboriginal children from their reserves and place them under the control of white employers. After these children were removed, they were never allowed to return home. (Burke, Rebecca and Tracy Lay. 1998)

The children of Stolen Generation are not only separated from their families but also from their community and Aboriginality. These children lost the memories of Aboriginal way of life. They are devoid of constant exposure to the traditional customs, ignorant of the greatness of their cultural history and the wealth of knowledge of their elders. They’ve lost the opportunity to listen to the stories and songs; or participate in customary rites and sacred ceremonies. It resulted in the loss of their identity. As they grow up there’s a question of belongingness among these children who are caught between two cultures. They never really fitted into the European way of life. Since ages, Aborigines believe that they are inherently linked to the land. Displacing them from their homeland caused anguish that white man cannot comprehend.

The outcome of governmental policies is the erosion of Aboriginal culture. The following statements make it quite clear that the white settlers don’t want any full-blood Aboriginals living in Australia. Dr. Cecil Cook, Northern Territory Protector of Natives, proposed a solution in the 1930s, for the problem of rise in numbers of ‘half-caste’ children:

Generally by the fifth and invariably by the sixth generation, all native characteristics of the Australian Aborigine are eradicated. The problem of our half-castes will quickly be eliminated by the complete disappearance of the
black race, and the swift submergence of their progeny in white… The Australian native is the most easily assimilated race on earth, physically and mentally. (Gaita, Raimond. 64-65)

Similarly, AO Neville, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia stated in 1930:

Eliminate the full-blood and permit the white admixture to half-castes and eventually the race will become white. (Van den Berg, Rosemary. 75)

The people of colonized nations are inferior races to Colonial powers. The natives are considered as a dying race. Scott Veitch in *Law and Irresponsibility: On the Legitimation of Human Suffering* (2007), states that the white Australians believed that the ‘full-blood’ Aboriginal culture would quickly die out as a result of its technological and civilisational inferiority. The policies operated to separate Aboriginal children from their families would result in Aboriginal extinction and eventually Aboriginal culture wouldn’t be reproduced.

*Earth* (2001) deals with the identity of half-caste Aboriginals; stealing of full blood children including those of mixed Aboriginal and European parentage and the treatment meted to the Aboriginal women. It’s a known fact that Aboriginals are the most deprived section of people in Australia both socially and economically. Unarguably, the Aboriginal women have suffered most, than men. They’ve been subjected to gruesome physical violence. And they’ve been the victims of homicide, rape and brutal killing. The role and responsibilities of Aboriginal women were significant in the Aboriginal society. They are the thread that binds the community together. Sharon Payne in her essay, “Aboriginal Women and the Law”, says that
women traditionally have a status equal to men in Aboriginal culture. They have their own ceremonies and sacred knowledge, besides being custodians of family laws and secrets. They supply most of the reliable food and have considerable control over its distribution. They are the providers of child and health care. Under the kinship system, the woman’s or mother’s line is essential in determining marriage partners and the moiety of the children.

Women in Australia represent different classes of society. There are European women and European women who married native men; native women and native women who married white men. Then there are the wives and daughters of European convicts besides girls born to Aboriginal women who were sexually abused by white men. Women are harassed wherever they are and to whatever they belong. Women of all the above mentioned classes are being humiliated. But in majority cases the sufferers are native women. The European women at least have the right to ventilate their opinion, which is a rarity among the native women. Throughout the history, Australian Aboriginal women struggled for equality. Their survival itself is a question. They’ve been subjected to violence and endless crimes. It’s been argued that the treatment of Aboriginal women constitute a continuing violation of human rights in Australia.

Displacement of these women shattered the whole Aboriginal community. Governmental policies resulted in constant social stress among Aboriginal women. They’ve been marginalized socially and economically, and governmental policies separated Aboriginal families and communities. It has pushed the women into extreme poverty, which made them homeless. Majority of the children born to black
women don’t know their fathers. The white men molested/raped the black women and the children born to these women are taken away at the time of their birth to Christian homes run by the church.

Contemporary feminists have considered Indigenous issues same as theirs and integrated them into their causes and championed Aboriginal cause through their own struggles against patriarchy. But some non-White feminists argued that White feminism is not concerned with race issues. Post-structuralist feminism has provided an excellent framework for the development of Indigenous critical perspectives which question the basic theory of feminism. Moreover, White feminism hasn’t given much importance to the issue of suppression of Aboriginal women, for fear of facing condemnation for prioritizing sexism over racism.

Mainstream feminism actually talks about white, Anglo, First World, able-bodied, heterosexual women. It demands equal rights for women on par with men. But the feminism of the Third World and Fourth World urges for basic human rights. Whatever may be their nationality, women have been suppressed, out of which, Aboriginal women were doubly oppressed. There’s no determined analysis of the position of indigenous women in the white Australian feminism. The situation in Australia is different from that of other countries that have Fourth World people. As far as Australia is concerned, it has a different history and is different from other countries as far as colonization of the land is concerned. Resistance against women suppression and Fourth World feminism began very early in Australia than in other nations.
For the white man, Australia was a land of punishment, where all the convicts were sent, who started farming and cattle industry for their masters. The white man is known for his class discrimination, brought the practice to Australia. Not all the Europeans form the upper class. There were European settlers, convicts, natives, children born to European settlers and Aboriginal women; to European convicts and Aboriginal women besides children of full blood. All the full-blooded Aboriginals have been sent to reserves and the half-castes are allowed to reside in the towns. How these half-castes lead their life in an environment of suspicion and distrust, and their struggle for identity form the basis of the novel. Frank J. Hardy in his book, *The Unlucky Australians* (1968) defines the treatment of Aborigines:

To this day the Aborigine is treated as less than a man, his situation is appalling. His destiny and very identity is decided by his white superiors. He can live only on terms dictated by the people, who despise him. He is paid less, educated less, segregated, rendered landless, discriminated against, insulted, deprived of dignity, his women molested. (Hardy, Frank J)

Frank Palmer is a half-caste Aborigine, doesn’t know his parents. Frank was brought up in Christian homes, run by the church. As soon as he was born he was brought to the church mission from the hospital, like all inmates. Colin Bourke says:

The removal of Aboriginal children from their parents has been official policy in all states of Australia since the so-called “protection era”. Missionaries established the practice in the early 1800s to instill Christian virtues of obedience, punctuality and religious observance. They wish to
create an Aboriginal working class by developing marketable skills which
would make Aborigines employable. (Bourke, Colin, et al. 101)

In the homes they were advised “It’s for your own good” (115) and all the boys were
too scared to ask them anything. If they asked, they were belted. When they sent
Frank to work, they gave him a paper that states his mother was dead. He worked
the odd jobs, filthy jobs, all the time. He repents his life spent at those homes.

Frank married Claudie, a white lady, nurse by profession. The family lives in
Geelong. They have a daughter, Gertie, who married a native, Angus, against their
will and has a son, Alf. Angus leaves her and she works somewhere leaving Alf with
her parents. Frank is unaware that his roots are black. He is white in complexion, has
been living the life of a white man, and attends church. Frank builds fences around
the property owned by Sir William Angliss and Snodgrass, with the help his
grandson. It’s rigorous hard work for them daily but paid very low.

R.J. Rummel remarks in his Conflict in Perspective (1977) that Karl Marx’s
most influential sociological explanations to social conflict hypothesized a class
struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie central to capitalist, industrial society.
Marx viewed the structure of society in relation to its major classes, and the struggle
between them as the engine of change in this structure. He clearly states that class is
determined by property. European settlers, the bourgeoisie, have occupied large
pieces of land in which they farm and build stockyards. European convicts, full-
blood and half-caste Aboriginals belong to proletariat. These people are exploited by
the white lords who make them work in their property or farms for small wages.
Moreover the settlers have totally eliminated the natives from their properties and
have confined them to reserves. The relations aren’t too good between the masters and the working class as the capitalist bourgeoisie is suspicious of the natives. Even the utmost honesty of the natives can’t save them from the White lords. Rummel quotes:

… the division between classes will widen and the condition of the exploited worker will deteriorate so badly that social structure collapses: the class struggle is transformed into a proletarian revolution. (Rummel, R.J.)

Claudie attends pregnant ladies during their delivery. She is popularly called-scissors mother among the Aborigines, for cutting baby’s cord. She is a European but comes from a poor family. She is Christian by birth and believes that faith in Christ would make her family, a happy one. She fears that if Frank comes to know of his roots, he may work against whites, which may result in his murder. She always wants him to live like a white man, attending the church every Sunday and being obedient to the white lords. With the incomes that they earn they build a small house, bring up their grandson, Alf and live a content life. She doesn’t want her family’s name being associated with Aboriginals. The thing that worries Claudie most is when her daughter, Gertie informs her that she stays with one of her dad’s aunties, Aboriginal woman. Not only the settlers, everybody with a European descent hates the natives. Socially, financially or in every aspect there’s not much difference between the natives and the second class Europeans except the colour of skin.

Bruce Pascoe’s works always depict a boy prodigy, who is adaptable to every situation and understands life better than anybody of his age. He is comparable to
the boy heroes of Charles Dickens (1812-1870). He undergoes all sorts of troubles and turmoil, and is a main hope to lead the resistance. Alf is resourceful and a boy with endless energy, like all Pascoe’s boy protagonists. He has a good rapport with his grandfather and helps him in doing the odd jobs. Both of them plan to build a boat, Tuppeny Bark, for fishing. He, though a boy, works and questions like a man. Frank says to his wife about Alf, “he could sleep on a barbed wire fence that one. An’ he spent all afternoon shovellin’ clay like a man. I kept thinkin’ he’d stop, but not that one, he’s a bloody Trojan. And a thinker. Got more brains than most men I know. He worries away at things. Won’t let ‘em go.” (6)

Billy Wurrun, an Aboriginal, is related to the family. When Alf asks, Frank immediately warns him to keep quiet. Claudie doesn’t like them to know or lead the life of Aborigines at the riverbanks. She’s annoyed when she learns what Billy Wurrun’s told Alf. She forgets her husbands Aboriginality and strongly feels that all the half-castes should be sent to the Reserve. But the government’s passed a law that all half-castes will be treated as whites. It may sound like liberty. But the reason is there’s no need for the government to spend money for their welfare. The law hasn’t done any good for the half-castes. Frank says, “they pass a law to make all half-castes honorary whites just so they don’t have to feed them and hope like hell the rest will die. They’re tryin’ to forget they ever existed.” (6)

The post-colonial Australian state has brutally violated the right to culture for thousands of indigenous Australians and usurped their cultural identity. The ancient old cultures have been wiped away. When the colonists kill and frighten the natives, and send them to reserves, who else is there to practice Aboriginal customs and
traditions? They haven’t walked over their ancestral lands, cannot speak in their mother tongue, cannot narrate their ancestral or people’s stories, cannot sing their songs and don’t know the face of their mother.

Aboriginal people learn about the environment in their traditional society through stories and songs. That’s why; they are able to make out the characteristics of animals and their behaviour and all types of plants. They’ve a great idea on every source of food and water, useful materials besides a detailed knowledge on weather. The ancestors narrate them stories, which provide them a plan of their environment and information on land routes, and aid them in finding out the available resources. This information on resources and land facilitate them to travel and explore the Australian landscape. Aboriginal children are introduced from a very young age to the spiritual world through the stories and songs, which make up their identity. They believe that their relationship with the land is a very complex and spiritual in nature.

Bruce Pascoe has used the spirits of black people, who are killed by white men, as prominent characters of the novel. They speak their agony and anguish. They consider it as their duty to teach and instruct the living Aborigines and half-castes, the culture and civilization of blacks, in which the Earth is considered as God. Pascoe makes the Earth (‘Da’ in Aboriginal language) ventilate her views. The spirits whisper into the ears of half-castes about their identity and responsibility:

…all we can do is tell story’ sit roun’ fire an tell story ‘bout time before, tell story like now, how our mob have to live like beaten army, lost souls. (70)

In the beginning, black people killed many white men. But they were all convicts working as servants or shepherds. Then the white man burnt the houses of blacks
and killed them. Very few people with Aboriginal roots are left, like Frank and Billy Wurrun.

Billy Wurrun calls himself King Billy. He belongs to the land in which he lives, treated as a lunatic, thrown in to the streets by the settlers. He hails himself as King Billy. “Who’s he got, poor thing? No peoples left. Some mission people, some of that other mob, some old people’s along the river, back in the bush, but this one he’s all gone on the grog. He was a good one. But his pride, you know, he lost his pride.” (11) This state of madness in Billy is because of the deprival of his culture, land. He can’t digest the fact that his community and Aboriginal way of life have been wiped out. “He didn’t mean to waste his life, … he just felt left out, … Most of his family gone, kicked out of his country, a terrible thirst to replace it.” (126)

When Billy is walking on the road, he is severely hit by a carriage driven by Mrs Fyans. She hasn’t seen him but hears the bump sound. When she sees the body of Billy, crushed under the wheels, she turns her face. The life of blacks is nothing, not a life at all for the whites. Frank witnesses the accident and many others do. Nobody reacts. For them he is dead long back. Frank rushes to his house and brings Claudie to the accident place. She is reluctant but tries to nurse him but to no hope. Before he dies Billy informs that Frank’s real name is Parwung, means Magpie, a bird of two colours. He means that Frank is both black and white. Claudie is worried and warns Frank to keep the matter out of his mind. She stops him when he wants to attend the funeral of Billy. But he secretly attends and watches it from behind the trees. He pleads to Alf to be silent when he asks him about his presence at the Billy’s funeral. Frank says that he is hiding the secret and keeping himself away.
from these issues for the happiness of his wife. He reveals to Alf that Billy is their uncle. The boy is advised to study well and when he finishes his schooling he can worry about these issues.

The funeral of Billy Wurrun reveals the attitude of white man and his servants towards blacks. Even the old spirits are upset over the funeral of Billy. They say:

We saw them put that Poort Poort Burrun in the ground. Piece of rough old ground down near that shed. Si Craddock diggin’ a ‘ole with the bangik of ol’ Poort Poort (Billy Wurrun) lying there right beside him … not even a bit of cloth. Should been paperbark an’ smoke, but no ol’ Craddock jus’ dug an’ dug an’ then got out a’ the ‘ole an’ jus’ rolled poor old Poort Poort in like he was dog or something’. You could hear him hit the clay like … terrible it was … no paperbark to hold him … no smoke to send away spirit. (16)

The above example is totally new to the world, which Bruce Pascoe brings into light. It’s been a known fact that the settlers killed and committed many atrocities on the natives. The funeral practice touches the fundamental, personal, cultural, religious, and philosophical ideas and beliefs of Aboriginal people. They believe in the concept of life after death. But, the settlers have no respect for the Aboriginal customs and practices.

Moorabool, is one of the three convicts who stole sheep from Sir William Angliss’ farm. His wife Betty Morlgalyu, is pregnant. She wants to bring up her child on her own. But like all black children the baby will be sent to Christian
homes. To calm her down during delivery Claudie brings Betty’s mother inside. This frustrates Mrs. Pakington, the warden of the hospital.

“Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Palmer, what’s this woman doing in here?”

“Mrs. Pakington, she, she’s helping her daughter.”

“I thought you were the famous midwife, Mrs. Palmer.”

“Betty was upset, Mrs. Pakington, I thought it best ...”

“You thought it best? Well, we’ll do the thinking about what is best in our hospital. Now get that woman out of here: look at the state of her hands! And you shouldn’t have let the girl see the baby. This is most unsatisfactory, Mrs. Palmer.”

“Mrs. Pakington, the girl’s mother was very helpful and it was the only thing to calm Betty down.”

“I’m sure, but there are more important things to worry about, such as this poor bairn’s future. Now, if you wouldn’t mind, Mrs. Palmer, I think we can handle it from here.” (24-25)

Racial discrimination has been latent in Australia since the days of first settlement. There have been instances of systematic racism all over and the natives are sick of it. The presence of blacks in and around the hospital infuriates Mrs. Pakington. She discriminates them and sends them away immediately.

Betty gives birth to Woorer Woorer, (English name- Augustus) and tries to feed the child. But the police, Officer McCallum, in particular, forcibly seize the baby. She tries her best crying and requesting them but the rock hearts don’t melt.
She is kicked and thrown away by McCullum. Brian Butler, in his essay, “Aboriginal Children: Back to Origins” says:

Children are the guarantee of the survival and reproduction of any people. They are our future generations who we will entrust with the laws, practices and customs which we in turn have tried to keep alive. Our laws, practices, languages (where they survive) and customs are at the same time our reason for survival and the guarantee of our survival. Without them we have no distinct identity. We believe it is necessary to keep these customs alive because the alternative is destructive, individualistic, and short-sighted. It does little or nothing to contribute to the future survival and advancement of the population of the world, let alone that of Australia. (Butler, Brian. 12)

They plan to send the baby to Berry Street and Betty to the mission. Mrs. Pakington says, “…tell Betty that her son is going to a very good Christian home where he will have the best of everything he should ever desire. He has been baptized in the name of the Lord as Augustus.” (43)

Allan D. Cooper points out the removal of Aboriginal children:

White Australians first established schools for aboriginal children in 1869. By the end of the nineteenth century the eugenics movement had become popular throughout Europe and North America, and European leaders in Australia became interested in “civilizing” Aboriginals through breeding and socialization schemes. Beginning around 1900 the Australian Government began working with church missions to remove aboriginal children from their families and to force them into boarding schools that typically were far
removed geographically from their homes. At least 35,000 children were abducted from their parents between 1900 and 1972, constituting approximately 30 percent of all Aboriginal children born during this period. Mixed race children were especially targeted. (Cooper, Allan D. 142)

In the name of better hygiene, education and spiritual upbringing the children are taken to the Christian houses. The white man says the blacks are provided with fresh water, blankets and nutritious food at the mission, which is far from reality. Even if they provide them all these basic amenities there is no freedom for them. Whatever the blacks do is looked at distrustfully. Every theft is linked to them.

Frank wants to adopt Betty’s son. Claudie tries to convince her husband not to adopt the boy as she herself is pregnant and they are already looking after Alf.

“The mission is not a gaol, Frank. There is fresh water and blankets and all the food … “

“And bars on the windows …”

“Frank, please, we are doing all we can for Alf, we can’t offer a home to every child in need. It’s because of who he is that upsets you, isn’t it?”

“How can they look after their babies when the church takes them away.”

“The church is not taking them away, it’s providing a home that otherwise they’d …”

“Oh, don’t go on about it, Claudie, even you don’t believe that rubbish. How can a baby be better off away from it’s mother? And what about the mother? Who is there to care how she feels?” (33)
There is no way Frank can get Betty’s baby. The boy will be sent to the station owned by William Angliss, to make another slave. Claudie requests Mrs. Pakington that they would bring up the boy. Mrs. Pakington questions her about the Aboriginality of Frank. ‘All very well, Mrs Palmer, but if what I hear is true, your husband might be of the same blood.’ (44) Claudie assures her that Frank is Christian and they will bring up the child according to the Christian principles. This calms Mrs. Pakington down. Frank, with his aboriginality behind him can’t influence them. He is working on the roof of the barn at Angliss’ property. Actually, Angliss thought he is going to get a boy of 13 years old, to look after the sheep and other works. Frank informs him that the boy is an infant and lies that he has many physical deficiencies. Before this event Frank has found and returned two Arab fillies, owned by Angliss, which went missing a month before. Angliss is really pleased with Frank’s effort as he has planed to train the fillies to win top races of Australia. He asks the Pakington’s to give the baby to Frank.

Frank’s mother was a girl when she delivered him. They say that she died delivering Frank. But he knew that she was black and was shot to death by Foster Fyan’s Shepherd, his father. He feels it as his responsibility to adopt Betty’s son, to give life to another of his race. Claudie fears that he would end up with a life on riverbanks, full of poverty and superstitions. She believes that aboriginal superstitions are against to the Christian principles. Of course they might be, but helping other aborigines has nothing to do with Christian rules. Infact, Christianity strongly supports it. She can’t understand this simple thing. She has her reasons. She was brought up in severe poverty and never wanted to go back to that pitiable life
that she led as a child. He promises her that he will not leave her and will not become an idolater, and tries to convince her that his plans are not anti-Christian.

The role of missionaries in the colonization of Australia or Africa or Asia, was immense. Its part is significant as it helped the whites to dominate the natives culturally and politically. The missionaries proclaim that their responsibility was to make the native people accept the Bible and its teachings and Christ as the saviour. In the essay, “Missionaries and Colonization”, Hilde Arntsen says that Christianity was turned into an ideology which could be used to convince people not to resist white domination and white rule. Religion was used to legitimate, sustain and even promote political tyranny and oppression. People who did not convert to Christianity were killed or enslaved. This attitude is popularly known as religious prejudice as the settlers and colonists oppressed the natives to a basic form of racism. Europeans defended their intrusion by voicing a paternalistic need to save the unfortunate and ignorant peoples from themselves.

Bruce Pascoe, through Frank raises a pertinent question that religion is used as a means by the white settlers for their selfish reasons.

“Listen, Claudie … The milk a’ human kindness might be in the Bible, but that doesn’t mean you’ll find it in a Christian heart. Half the Geelong church stood around gawkin’ when ol’ Billy got killed, and when Moorabool took one sheep from his land six of God’s flock come an’ shot him down in cold blood. Is that the work of the Lord, Claudie?” (36)

It is very hard to find Christian virtues like patience, kindness, humility, charity and universal brotherhood among the Colonists. If the natives attend church,
obey the orders of white lords, they can escape the wrath. Dr. Stephen B. Bevans says:

All missionaries, all Christians, like Jesus, should relate to others solicitously and not arrogantly, compassionately not pretentiously, altruistically not opportunistically, for such behavior is conducive to personal/social justification, salvation, peace and civility. The Christian/Human Mission is indiscriminately universal and individual, characterized in authentic relationships and service of people to each other and to life on earth. (Bevans, Stephen B)

Alwyn Angliss is the wife of William Angliss. She is against the crimes on blacks. And William is the main offender for all crimes on blacks in the region. He is a man with all the pride and arrogance of being a white. He has a low opinion on blacks. “They’re like prehistoric animals, they can’t compete, they’re not of the same clay … Look at their faces. It’s quite clear they’re an earlier form of humanity that must give way before the superior development …” (73) He owns a lot of property at Lockington station. All the half-castes are sent to the stations in the name of adoption and Christian upbringing. But they are made to serve the white lords. Whenever something goes missing, the blacks residing in the station are accused and punished, many a time, to death. Alwyn gets angry and supports the blacks when William accuses them of all the crimes:

“When something goes missing Alwyn, where do you think it’s gone?”

“But are you accusing our station blacks of taking …?”
“Them or their cohorts.”

“But they’ve been so reliable, William, I’ve heard you brag to other graziers about how pliant they are.”

“Oh, they’re handy enough, but untrustworthy, you never know when they’re going off next or what they’ll take with them.”

“You mean holidays, William, they have the gall to take holidays?”

“But they never tell you, they just go.”

“Such disrespect, William, so little loyalty in return for what you lavish on them. What is it, William? A plug of tobacco, a pair of trousers at Christmas and a bag of flour and sugar for the whole camp once a month, goodness, they’ll have us destitute in no time!”

“I’m sick of that schoolmistress tone of yours, Alwyn. What I mean is they should be grateful they’ve got a place to stay at all. If it wasn’t for me …”

“In their own land, they should be grateful to have a lean-to by the creek in their own land?” (45-46)

She believes that blacks should own the land. But these European settlers and people like her husband forcibly occupied large properties and deprived them of their land and everything. They deceive the British government that they are working towards increasing the commerce.

Lucian M. Ashworth in his paper titled, “Ibn Khaldun and the Origins of State Politics” says that the spread of Western power and influence, whether in the form of ideas, economic development or, raw military force, owes much to the
development of the modern state. The Western state, as it emerged out of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was primarily a war fighting machine designed to maximize the application of military force by combining social organization with technological developments. It was the evolution of the Western state that allowed European governments to extend their control over the globe. The notion that the Europeans are good administrators and able organizers of the state is far away from truth.

The Europeans came as sailors to Australia. In a short period their population grew quickly, which surpassed the native population. Half of the Europeans were convicts, while the remaining were military officers and free settlers who took up land and developed farms in the rural areas. Early European settlers “found life in the new colony much harsher than did the Aborigines, who had a superior knowledge of what the land had to offer. The Europeans came to rely heavily on kangaroo meat for sustenance, thereby encroaching on Aboriginal hunting areas to obtain their supplies.” (Turnbull 1948, 38). “As the Aborigines came to be deprived of their own food by Europeans, incidents began to take place in which Europeans’ houses were raided for flour” (Turnbull 1948, 42), sheep and food grains.

Aborigines own not only the land, but the resources, cattle, sheep, what not, everything. The white man came, killed the blacks and declared that he owned the land. He drew borders and built fences and claimed that it’s his property. May O’Brien describes the occupation of Australia:

In this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander country now called Australia, we did not have fences or hedges around our land to signify European-type use
of ownership, so they assumed that nobody owned the land. It is incorrect to say that Captain Cook was responsible for the myth of terra nullius; Cook had been dead for more than a decade before European settlement of this country. As the son of an agricultural labourer, Captain Cook knew what poverty meant. In his log he expressed envy of the comparatively affluent and contented state of Aboriginal people compared with what he knew at home in England, so he did not pretend Aboriginals were not here. There is evidence of dependency by early settlers on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Despite the legal position of terra nullius, we were here, we were recognized, we were used and our knowledge was exploited. (O’Brien, May. 25-26)

Tom O’Lincoln says that from 1820 onwards the economy of Australia grew rapidly in the hands of British capitalists with wool industry. Capital accumulation was driven from quite early on by the needs of global capitalism. Nothing could stop the occupation of Australia, which is driven by the imperatives of capital accumulation. Aborigines traditionally shared food and labour. They always had difficulty understanding the selfish and greedy nature of European approach to private property. Marxism strongly opposes ownership of any kind. The cultural differences were especially great when it came to the land, which the indigenous people did not see themselves as ‘owning’ in the capitalist sense.

As per the Marxist perspective:

The growth of white capitalism ensured the blacks’ demise. As the Aborigines began to understand the economic basis of white society, they
waged economic warfare to undermine it, raiding livestock and attacking loaded drays in an attempt to starve out the more isolated settlements. They targeted horses, having seen how the whites depended on them. They used fire. Pioneers were driven off stations all over the continent at one time or another. When Thomas Mitchell was exploring northern NSW in the 1840s he wrote of one district where ‘humiliating proofs that the white man had given way were visible in the remains of dairies burnt down, stockyards in ruins, untrodden roads’. (Reynolds, Henry. 1987)

Moorabol, Parnum and Mariwun, three Aborigines stole a sheep from the farm of William Angliss. With the help of Officer McCallum, Angliss killed all of them. They were shot to death. But Moorabool escaped, with a wound on his chest. The case is fought in the court. Officer McCallum is accused of the murder. With false witnesses, it’s proved in the court that they have stolen rifles from the house of Angliss. Captain Reginald Hindsmith, the Police officer-in-charge, is not in favor of the crimes on blacks. He tries to prove McCullum wrong. He knows his subordinate McCallum has shot them but can’t prove that in the court. He complains to the court:

“I have been investigating crimes against the Wathaurong group for some time, your honour, and believe some of the defendants were involved in earlier violence against these people.”

“You believe, Captain Hindsmith? Do you have any evidence which might have any bearing on those beliefs? Not that such evidence could be admissible in relation to the incident in question.”
“Your honour, I have charged Officer McCallum with several counts of dereliction of duty in relation to very similar incidents.” (62)

It’s unfair to kill three people for stealing a sheep. He knows that witnesses are participants in the crime and the judge is a good friend to Angliss. To the surprise of the court the prosecution’s called in Frank Palmer, the only person who’s seen the guns while working at Angliss’ house, which are reported to have been missing. Frank has to be scared to keep him away from the case. His witness can certainly be of great danger to the culprits. Out of the blue and to his utter shock, Frank is questioned his identity and his relation to Moorabool. The judge says that he is the nephew of Billy Wurrun, and brings up Moorabool’s child. Hence, his witness is of no value. The accusation on Officer McCullum is proved wrong and the court’s called for an investigation into the welfare of Moorabool’s child, Woorer Woorer. As per the court order a committee investigates the welfare of the child. They question Frank of the number of people living in the house and the means and nature of their earnings. Frank is asked whether he has approached Department of Native Affairs for help to run the family of five members.

Aborigines always have a disadvantage as far as legal matters are concerned. Their evidences were not accepted because the whites viewed them as incapable of understanding the intricacies of European courts, who couldn’t understand the oath by a witness in the court. There was a great uproar on the legal system for marginalizing the natives. Soon after the situation was corrected, this in no way helped the Aborigines. They’ve never been made to serve as a prosecutor or judge. All the Court procedures and the legal codes were written in European languages,
which confused Aborigines. During the court proceedings native customs and law were not taken into consideration. Communication was a major problem as both Europeans and natives couldn’t understand each others language. It was felt by many natives that the whites could change their alibi when it was translated in to English. J. Maria Pedersen writes:

Colonization meant that Aboriginal people came under the direction and control of the British Empire and, as such, were British subjects when it came to matters of the law. However, they were not legally defined as being citizens of Australia; thus, they were denied the legal, social, and economic rights that the European citizens enjoyed as a matter as course. This was largely due to the assumptions that the Aboriginal Australians were a simple, childlike race, lacking in the morals and the intellectual capacity that Europeans possessed. It can be seen that the Europeans arrived in Australia with preconceived ideas of how human beings behaved; thus, Aboriginal people were considered little more than animals that could be bred out. (Pedersen, Maria J. 70)

In the essay, “The Breaking down of Aboriginal Society”, Dr. Jane Resture comments that Aborigines also became victims of bias and prejudice in courts, which were anxious to uphold white dominance and did not acknowledge Aboriginal title to the land. The punishment system made matters for worse – its basis was not understood and it left Aborigines confused and very fearful. Dr. Jane Resture also says that the failure of Europeans in considering Aboriginal law and customs was part of the pattern of white supremacy. This made no allowance for
Aboriginal practices. In traditional society, Aborigines were bound by strict obligations and codes of conduct, which whites simply refused to recognize. Imprisonment was not part of the native law. Aborigines settled disputed by different means, involving actual or ceremonial punishments and not detention. Whites didn’t or couldn’t understand the Aboriginal system. They failed to observe obligations which Aborigines thought should apply to whites as well as themselves. This caused much Aboriginal resentment – especially the practice of whites trespassing on Aboriginal land and the troubles arising from the whites’ desire for relationships with Aboriginal women. The judiciary of Australia is biased against Aboriginal people and discriminated them at all levels.

The criminal justice system of Australia is known for its discrimination and unfair treatment of the natives. They should not enter the towns without prior permission from the Commissioner of Native Affairs. The relationship between the natives and police has strained because of removal of Aboriginal children by the later. The way Aborigines “are treated by the Australian justice system is atrocious, and getting worse. It is officially-sanctioned racism … Politicians, police, jailers, magistrates, judges and the Australian community as a whole must take responsibility for moving urgently to correct this example of discrimination against Indigenous Australians.” (Rowlings, Bill)

Angliss rewards Redmond, the judge, for helping him and Officer McCallum in the case. Redmond senses some trouble from the British government as the London Missionary Society and Pantheists raise a question in the House on colonial
treatment of blacks in Australia. These are societies working against the atrocities on blacks, like Anti-Slavery Society, Liberal Bible Fellowship etc. He alerts Angliss:

“Your vineyard might become the next black’s camp. The rolling western plains of Australia Felix returned to emus, niggers and possums. Don’t laugh, Angliss, I’m telling you that unless we can convince Gillies to fob off London we can wave goodbye to freehold. It’s serious, Angliss. Imagine it. We’ll have to take this as the most troublesome period of settlement. …. read the papers I give you you’ll notice that it was proposed to allow the true titleholders free access to their tribal lands.” (71-72)

He advises Angliss to request the Governor, to intervene in this matter. They have to demonstrate that Australia matches with Europe in its produce of burgundy and the settlers of Australia are increasing the commerce of the land.

Not only this, Angliss deceives a plan that they project all the blacks as criminals. He’ll go to any extent to prove to Europe that Aborigines are barbarians. He says, “perhaps we need to suggest the defilement of a white woman, an incidence of cannibalism…” (73) They are projected as criminals, radicals and man-eaters. He advises Redmond that the case of the death of three Aborigines has to be closed. Moorabool, whose body is missing, has to be killed, if he is not dead. And Frank Palmer has to be frightened with some means or other to keep his mouth shut. And, Hindsmith has to be transferred from Geelong immediately.

Captain Hindsmith is transferred to Sydney, “which just leaves McCallum and company, and they won’t admit the evidence of blacks to the court. There’ll be no appeal.” (74) Frank is offered the job of building new stables at the Morning Star
owned by Snodgrass. He smells deception. He says to Claudie, “Moorabool is being blamed for things he never did. Rape, cannibalism … he’d get blamed if the cat had kitten … and he’s probably dead, and there are no witnesses except the murderers, and no one to argue… standing up here I can see the streets of this town and each one is built on a black man’s blood.” (75) The judicial law of Australia is by white people. And it supports them. It never questioned them when they built fence, when they occupied land, when they killed blacks and when they raped the black women. The court needs evidence, white evidence.

William Angliss arranges a party to celebrate the acquittal of Officer McCallum from the charges of the crime. He says to other white men, “we honour him in his dedication to the duty of protecting our herds and homes from the depredations of the blacks.” (96) He proposes a plan to start an association with all the white men, which will meet on every Friday night “to honour the empire and protect our (their) values, the rights of ordinary men to have free use of their property protected by the superiority of British justice. Control of the blacks, low taxes….. an association to protect all the values we (they) hold dear.” (97) Mr. Campbell proposes that the society will be formed along same lines as other societies which are loyal to his Majesty, the Royal Highness and yet peculiarly be Australian. These societies in Europe are known for their corruption and malice. It becomes a mockery when they say that the “society will be based on the Christian observance where a man and his family may live in peace and prosperity.” (101) They speak and dream of peace and prosperity where as human rights and values are destroyed because of them.
Claudie gives birth to a girl, Cecily. She herself does the delivery without taking the help of anybody. Frank assists her. Nobody in the town comes out during mid night for a child they are determined to see black. White men are waiting for an opportunity, to prove their loyalty to King George by making somebody a scapegoat. The hullabaloo of Friday night by white men wakes the babies up. Alf asks Frank:

“What’s all that racket, Grandpa.”

“That’s the Loyalists. Alfie, the new society dedicated to the elimination of anyone not white.” (102)

Alwyn Angliss always feels that people like her husband and other white men are making finances from the land at the cost of the natives’ lives. A heated argument runs between Alwyn and William. She comes to know from the close sources that William has been forcibly molesting an Aboriginal girl. She can’t control her anger and bursts out on William. He says that blacks are murderers and are treacherous by nature. The Association, started by white men and British Law safe guard all the white people and their houses from blacks. Alwyn questions him:

“Safe? Safe from old Billy Wurrun, Mary, Elsie?”

“That’s because we have made them see the will of our law, the power and righteousness of our civilization. Do you think they won’t benefit from it in time to come?”

“If they survive, perhaps.”

“And if they don’t survive perhaps they weren’t meant to survive.”
“Meant, Mr. Angliss. Who meant that we should have their land?” (105)

The whites think the Aborigines have never used the land properly. Instead they’ve made use of the land by introducing farms, fences and crops. She strongly opposes William that the blacks used to cultivate daisy, netted rivers and used to live in huts and houses until they were burnt down, for the benefit of few people like her husband, who plan to expand their properties by fencing the land. To increase their wealth, they’ve knocked down blacks’ houses and their lives. And the blacks are ordered to live at stations. These white men believe that they’ve taught the natives how to live. Allan D. Cooper says,

The aboriginal population of Australia is the world’s oldest known culture, dating back between 40,000 and 65,000 years. At the time of European contact in 1606, there was a total aboriginal population of some 750,000 divided into 600 separate ethnic groups. Most of these communities were nomadic, but some had established some small towns as well. Some of these urban areas reportedly possessed stone houses with wood roofs with internal fireplaces, and were serviced by extensive canal systems with stone weirs that extended up to 400 yards in length. (Cooper, Allan D. 141-42)

The above citation gives the information of the great Aboriginal civilization. They respected each other and achieved social and political integration very early which resulted in peace, solace, harmony among the Aboriginal communities and there was no inward or outward trouble.

Alwyn questions William about molesting an Aboriginal girl. He warns her to stop supporting blacks and to end the argument about the girl:
“I have given every consideration to your welfare, Alwyn, I have provided the kind of marriage which many …”

“What you have provided me with, William, is enormous shame. That I should be asked to share a bed with a man who has slept with a woman … a girl, a child, Mr Angliss, a child dressed in filthy rags …” (107)

She leaves him forever, returns to England and meets the Archbishop for divorce. He tries to counsel her and warns her that her social standing will be reduced if she takes divorce. She resolutely opposes him and refuses to have ‘Angliss’ as her family name. She doesn’t like to be called a member of that family, which in the name of civilization does all barbarous things. Women can’t lead a life without the support of men and that their position is degraded if they are separated from their husbands; women to become complete female needs to have a husband and children- are just misconceptions. This deep-rooted belief is the driving force which makes many women not to compromise to the circumstances.

Alwyn doesn’t like to enjoy the fortunes which come from killing Aborigines and feels that the church has turned a blind eye to the crimes and atrocities on blacks. She declares that she would support the Methodists. She has come there to inform the Archbishop of the misuse of powers of Church in Australia. Chasing and shooting the blacks indiscriminately, fornicating with their women is not Christianity. She wants the Archbishop to do something to protect the Christian faith and the good name of the King. It’s the duty of English men and women to uphold the very commandments of Christ.
Captain Hindsmith writes a letter to Alwyn. He’s seen her in the court during the trial of the death of three Aborigines. He notices that she’s closely followed the case and has been very upset over the proceedings. The case isn’t fought on fair means. Both of them have the same feeling that the natives were denied of their rights. He is aware of her return to London and her active participation and support to the Anti-Slavery Movement. He wants to discuss some issues with her in respect of their relevance to the atrocities occurring on blacks on a daily basis; also informs her of the escape of Moorabool from police, which cause sleepless nights for the white men. He may reveal the true reason behind the arrest, stealing a sheep. But the whites need a cause to hunt and kill him. First they successfully prove the theft of guns from Angliss’s house by the aborigines. Now as Moorabool is on escape, every theft and mischief is linked to him. Alwyn writes back to Hindsmith. It’s a great relief for her to hear that others in the colony view incidents in Australia with the same dread as herself. She promises to send the reports and activities of the Anti-Slavery Society.

Frank doesn’t like the suspicious stare from the white man. Moreover, he fears all these would end up in misery and poverty. To his surprise, Alf is proud of being an Aboriginal, and he prefers himself be called Golkawil, his Aboriginal name. He knows the greatness of his culture and land; his people’s expertise in everything they do, like fishing, farming and hunting. He belongs to the place and always dreams of a bright future. Alf talks of a fortune out of fishing.

There’s absolute poverty among the Aboriginal communities. They own nothing as the settlers have occupied everything and made them homeless. Even in
the 21st century, all the socioeconomic indicators such as income, employment, housing, education and health indicate towards their absolute poverty. Alf knows that his people have to fight economic backwardness first. For him, the meaning to resistance is self-employment and not to depend on settlers.

The Aboriginal spirits are quite happy with Claudie and Frank. The efforts made by them to bring up the boys really please them. Very few children have this bliss and these spirits want these children to take up the responsibility, Alf, in particular. “Oh that boy, such a small thing to hafta carry all his people on ‘is back, but that’s the way it is, not enough blackfellas to carry the load, liddle kids ‘ave to put their skinny liddle shoulders to the wheel, bloody strong our people, make us mob proud …” (70) They want to make Alf a man. They just want to whisper his responsibilities when he is asleep. They ask him to be watchful and he is advised not to touch alcohol. Consumption of alcohol began among the Aboriginals with the European invasion. In the beginning, the Aboriginal laborers were paid in alcohol and tobacco; and were offered the same for the exchange of women, which resulted in prostitution. It deteriorated the communities. Alf and youngsters of his age shouldn’t forget their country and should listen to the old spirits. If they stop listening, they’ll be lost, the country will be dead.

The spirits sit together and narrate their stories of how they were treated, harassed, punished and killed by white man, when they were alive. Wordel Liangal shares his story. It was a common day for them like the old men mending nets, women making baskets for fish, and all of them enjoying the tasty fish. The white men came on a boat with guns and started shooting them. He reports:
My uncle, my tandop, Pompabil, big man to us peoples, stood up, faced them, stood in front an’ they just shot ‘im, one, two, three, ran past ‘im as if was dog, had no respect for that great warrior, ran past, grabbed women, brung, brung (gun), shoot men, shoot liddle burron (boy), grab my liddle girl, not eight years old that liddle girl. We heard the stories, we knew what they like. I can’t bear to see that in my head, that liddle girl, my yarran gook (daughter), with those savages, I scream out “Bitjarra, bitjarra (fight),” but all our good men shot, no respect, magic men with guts hangin’ out, left like dogs. (94)

His daughter, wife and other women were kicked with rifle sticks and boots. He heard the noise of his wife’s bones, when she was kicked at her face with a boot. His eight year old daughter was grabbed by those white savages. He cried for help but nobody was there. All the women were thrown in to the boat and were taken away. The whole mob was killed except him, a boy and an old man. And Frank happens to be a cousin to that boy who survived the mayhem. The spirits are happy that they have been survived in the form of Frank, Alf and Woorer Woorer.

The native blacks are racially discriminated by whites. Hatred, xenophobia, exploitation, separatism, racial supremacy, genocide, etc, are associated with racism. It’s been persistently an issue. The life and conditions of native Australians is appalling and disgraceful even in 21st century. The development of Australia on the world arena doesn’t turn their misfortune. The arrival of Europeans, colonization of Australia, violent elimination of Aboriginal population, awful conditions at reserves and missions, Stolen Generations, European thoughts and attitude towards natives,
denial of Aboriginal culture- are few examples of racism. There are ample numbers of examples in the works of Bruce Pascoe.

William Angliss and Snodgrass are doubtful of anyone who is not white. Frank works at their farms, in spite of that they disbelieve Frank. He works at the farms for livelihood, but derives pleasure from fishing. The calmness of the sea makes him drowsy. His people might have enjoyed the same calmness and liberty with big feasts, before the arrival of white men. Alf asks him a very serious question.

“Why can’t we have peace, Grandpa, all the people, blackfellas and whitefellas?”

“Well Alf, I was hopin’ you might learn that at school and tell me the secret. You hear Christians talk, look at your grandmother for instance, never a better woman of any colour anywhere in the world, and yet most of her fellow Christians want to kill every black fellow in the country … those that they didn’t get before. How is it Alf that there’s such a gap between what they say and what they do? Love your neighbour, thou shall not steal …” (114)

Frank and Alf help Moorabool to escape from police. While fishing, they see Moorabool chained, jumping into the water from Police boat. Frank is warned by the coppers to row away from there. While going away he makes sure that Moorabool catches the boat’s anchor. Even Alf acts very intelligent with the police. When they row out of the sight of coppers, Moorabool leaves the anchor and hides himself among the reeds. Frank throws a big file on to the shore for Moorabool to unchain
himself. Alf enjoys himself during the whole situation. They are doubted and tracked already. The boy is really surprised to see Moorabool, holding breath for so long. Blacks are very good at swimming under water. These skills are not taught at orphanages or at schools run by European missions. These are taught to blacks when they are children, by their elders, part of their culture, a birthright and a heritage. A single false step will throw Frank into a sea of troubles. The whites are waiting for Frank to declare himself a black man. He fears these incidents may turn Alf into a fighter. But Alf likes to be a fighter. He supports his stance, “Grandpa, they hate black people, what other way is there?” (120) Moorabool is discontent that blacks have to live like animals, creeping in the bushes and listening to other people teaching their kids. The only thing they can do is live and wait. They will get their time.

Arnie Tomkins actually owns half of Angliss’ property, where he is made to work as a clerk. He knows everything about Moorabool as they were like brothers when they were young. He hides Moorabool in the black’s camp, owned by Angliss. His wife Vera’s given Moorabool a hair cut and a shirt so that whites don’t recognize him. He knows the timely help of Frank to Moorabool in escaping from coppers. He comes to return the file and gives him a stick, carved from a branch of the tree under which Frank was born. It’s a symbol of Frank’s identity. He informs Frank of an impending danger. The whites have already formed Loyalist Society and they are looking for scapegoats. They’ve zeroed on Frank for burying Billy Wurrun and for bringing up Moorabool’s son.
To project all Aboriginal people as dangerous trouble makers the government stops new land sales between Sydney and London. There’s a talk of sending all mixed race kids to orphanages and to Christian homes. White men are hunting down blacks and stealing them from their houses. Claudie can observe people become quiet when she passes their houses. Everybody shares the secret of Frank’s help in Moorabool’s escape from the coppers. She says, “your support for the Aborigines has prejudiced them against you, against us.” (139) It all depends on Frank. If he goes to church every Sunday, becomes faithful to the white people, he can escape the wrath. But he is not going to do that. Frank says, “We’ve just been pitched into a world without our asking and it’s full of Christians who would spit on Christ if he walked past them in rags or the wrong colour. We can’t help it.” (140)

Moorabool dies of ill health. He is old besides the gun shot on the chest deteriorate his heath. He’s always wanted to instruct his fellow blacks to live and wait for the sunshine in their lives. The blacks at the camp asked Frank to come to see Moorabool’s body as he is related to him. He has to perform customary funeral rights for the spirit of the deceased. Claudie hasn’t been feeling well since the delivery of the baby. Her health’s been worsening day by day. Nobody in the town comes to help her. She’s helped many people of the town; either nursed them or delivered their babies. Once there is talk of Frank’s association with blacks, all of them stop talking to them.

Mrs. Ruddock and Mrs. Tomkins bring Betty to help Claudie. She feels responsible to help the family as Frank and Claudie bring up her child. They keep Betty’s presence in the house as secret. Claudie feels guilty as nobody in the town
speaks to them. Frank says, “we’ve done nothing to be ashamed of, Claudie, except in the eyes of those people who think the commandments an’ the teaching belong to white people alone.” (161-162) Betty looks after the babies while Claudie takes rest. Betty feeds the babies. Claudie can feel the stinking smell out of her body. Luckily for her, Betty cooks food, washes clothes and cleans the house. She has learnt all these at the mission house. The black women are trained in these works to serve the whites. They are taught the so called manners like eating food (the leftovers) outside the master’s house, in a shed; standing while the whites are around, etc.

Captain Hindsmith likes to work with the Anti-Slavery Society. In Sydney he has formed evidences for the large scale crimes on blacks, they are not proved in court, can’t be. The white men led by Wentworth have again voted down the right to admit evidence in court by Aboriginal people. Hindsmith tries to find evidences on his experiences in Port Phillip where the blacks are imprisoned and trailed. He can’t continue in the job and resigned for the service. He writes to Alwyn, “…am strangely drawn to this country and the cause of the most limited justice for its original inhabitants. With the small amount credited to me on my resignation I have returned to Geelong … opened a small stationery and bookselling business in Ryrie Street.” (164)

With the profits he buys a property, Lovely Banks, at the Barwon River, which has an Aboriginal camp. Before he bought the property it is in the harshest and unfortunate state, and the station blacks were used as indentured labourers on the property. He wants to improve their situation, allows them full access to all their hunts and share in the monthly kill of beasts. Miss Dawson, who understands their
language, communicates with them and assures them of their liberty in the confines of the property. With cautious fencing of ponds and streams, the blacks are allowed to hunt kangaroo, geese and possum; and a collection of amazing number of water plants, bulbs, shoots, berries, fruits and eggs.

He shares an incident told to him by Too roo rer, an old man, uncle to Moorabool. He “carves the most intricate designs on the large eggs of emus.” (166) He sells them to the wives of the settlers. They urge him to etch their likenesses on them, has a collection of these etched out eggs. There is an egg which is believed to be over one hundred year old, has a design created by Too roo rer’s uncle. It represents the earth. On one side of the egg a picture of an eagle is carved. Means, the design of the earth is bird’s eye view. The people have a detailed memory of vast tracts of land. Hindsmith says:

they understood from their geographical knowledge of land and the curve of the horizon, easily seen from the You Yang mountain range, that the earth itself was curved. Hence the egg? Will we ever get to know the people well enough, and be trusted sufficiently, to become privy to their knowledge? If I even dare speculate on such matters, even the most refined and educated people of the colony recoil from me in horror. (167)

And their skill at hunting is amazing. They can identify the animals by looking at the foot tracks or marks. “After years of training, the Aboriginals developed extraordinary skills in tracking their prey, by following broken twigs, or by very faint markings, even on hard ground.” (Aborigines. Web. 11 May 2011) Hindsmith provides the natives liberty where they sing songs, hunt kangaroo, dance
corroboree, feed their babies, bring them up and teach them fishing. He makes them lead their own life on the riverbanks. Not only that, he is trying to prove to the world, with the example of the ancient egg that blacks are no inferiors in knowledge.

The Prince of England will visit Australia and the Anti-Slavery Society has made arrangements that the Chairman of the Aboriginal Protection Board, Mr. Roadknight, to introduce the Prince to the Aboriginal people in their usual habitation. Alwyn requests Hindsmith, “you might be able to direct various persons of influence in your acquaintance to ensure that the Prince is introduced to the real situation as it exists in the area of Port Phillip. Perhaps some of your residents at Lovely Banks may be suitable candidates for the Prince to meet.” (180)

William Angliss and Snodgrass discuss the plans of Anti-Slavery Society to introduce the blacks and their problems to the Prince. They sense more trouble as Hindsmith and Alwyn are involved. They plan to frighten the blacks residing in camps, so that they don’t come forward to represent their problems to the Prince. They plan to scare them in such a way that all of them should run away into bushes. Then the official programme will run as per their plan. William asks Snodgrass to find reliable white men for this mischief. Snodgrass replies, “don’t you worry about that. The blacks will have cleared out and we’ll smell like roses.” (208)

The Prince of England, Albert, visits the native people. Hindsmith introduces Too roo rer, clothed as an Englishman, to the Prince. He communicates with the old man. “I’ve come all the way from England on the urging of my father to discover if the native people have flourished under the British monarchy.” (223) He tries to know the welfare of the natives under their ruling, gets to know that the Aborigines
own the place for long time. He asks them whether they have accepted Christianity. But they believe in Spirit, not Holy Spirit, which surprises the Prince. Alwyn tries to clarify that they believe in a higher power. But he doesn’t like the manners of Too roo rer, as he wears coat, trousers and smokes a pipe.

The Prince is already met by William Angliss, before he comes to meet the natives. And he misleads the Prince that the natives are addicted to alcohol and they don’t attempt at agriculture. Alwyn and Hindsmith try their best to convince him.

“There were root crops, Your Excellency, yams and other green…”

“But Mr. Angliss denies their root crops ever existed, certainly not cultivated. You see, I’ve read your reports, Captain Hindsmith, but there seems so little support for your assertions.”

“The sheep and cattle eat the top off the yam, Your Excellency, it has all but disappeared.”

“You can understand, Captain Hindsmith, Miss Hope, that I have difficulty in bringing the opposing views into a consistent whole such as I might present for the deliberations of the King and Parliament.”

“Of course, Your Excellency, but much of the damage was done within a few years of the stock and plough arriving, the houses of the people …”

“Houses?”

“Yes, Your Excellency, these people had substantial houses. I’ll ask Mr. Too roo rer to confirm … ah, Mr. Too roo rer your people built houses out of stone and turf.”
“Yueh, plenny waurn, plenny mine, plenny tucker alright.”

“He says, Your Excellency, that there were plenty of houses.”

“Yes, Captain Hindsmit, but where are they now?”

“Burnt, Your Excellency, destroyed.”

“And the people have not the will to replace them.”

“Where, Your Excellency? The people no longer have land on which to erect a house, there are no longer enough men to rebuild them and when they do the shepherds and settlers burn them down again, to the settlers they represent ownership, they …”

“Yes, yes, Miss Hope, a very passionate defence, but I must balance all arguments against my own observations.” (225-226)

The Prince hasn’t reacted positively at any moment during their discussion. He doubts the ownership of blacks and their existence. He is narrow in his thinking when he disbelieves the fact that the blacks cultivate the land; can’t understand that cultivating root and yam is agriculture. The plan to change the opinion of England and Australia towards the Aborigines seems no success. Alwyn says:

“They can’t equate a man sitting under a tree with any idea of ownership or civilization.”

“That’s exactly it, Alwyn, they struggle in their minds with the idea of these people’s fellow humanity. They look at the nakedness and the poverty and can’t look past it to the humanity.”
“I have a sense of absolute doom, the legislation and land grants already established are destined to crush the independence of these people.”

“Into the dust.” (228)

Claudie is very much upset that Gertie hasn’t returned home and lives with Aboriginal women. She has been scared all through her life of her family’s connection with blacks. Frank argues, “Not down here, but if your God is the Lord, and he treats us all as his own blood, then he should be harshest on those who reject those of his flesh and blood, those who think the only true blood comes from Jerusalem, white, Christian blood.” (188) Claudie dies leaving both Frank and Alf with the babies. The town people have put her timely help out of their minds. And they call themselves Christians and civilized people. But all the blacks from the camp turn up. Though they are not educated they know what gratitude is. Arnie Tomkins brings Too roo rer and introduces him to Frank. He belongs to his mob and knows the mother of Frank. He puts Claudie’s spirit to rest. The whole mob from camp stays there around the house the whole night.

The settlers don’t want any black man staying in the town. They want to show clean houses, clean streets in Geelong to the Prince. For them cleanliness is culture and civilization. Frank has to leave the house and move to the river camp. Everybody senses trouble. Then the mishap occurs. At two o’clock mid night the house is set to fire by Mr. Pearson. Betty wakes all of them, take the babies out. Alf gets up and finds Mr. Pearson running away from inside their fence. The whole house is burnt. A Chinaman, Johnny Lee, offers them shelter. Frank pities his
condition, “A country full of Christians and it’s up to a Chinaman to offer me his roof.” (206)

Alf gives hope to Frank that they can start again. It’s quite motivating how the boy could come out of depression so spontaneously. He comes to know that his mother, Gertie, dies of ill health. He has been longing to see and meet her. He controls himself and consoles Frank. He says, “I’m lucky to have what I’ve got, kids like me are always being taken away from their families … Anyone with a family can count themselves lucky.” (217)

Majority of the Aboriginal people are leading a strenuous life in camps. Very few are in bushes. They have to come together to help and look after the safety of each other. Especially, the young generation and children are precious for them. They strive hard to shield them from all the dangers. The elders want to teach them the Aboriginal living. They have to keep the children like Alf, Woore Woorer, Cecily alive. And these children will lead the fight of resistance. All of them including Arnie Tomkins, his wife, Vera, Too roo rer, Betty, Aunty Kneebone take Frank and the children to the black’s camp, a secure place, to safeguard the family.

The Earth speaks to Frank. In fact, it is unbiased on the issue of land acquisition. But it repents on the misdoings of human beings. Constructing walls and fences, drawing boundaries and borders, killing innocent people for acquiring more land, infuriate her. It is motivated by Aunty Adpin, who is ready to sacrifice her life for her people. Adpin pleads to the Earth, ‘Da, I don’t mind becomin’ dust under your foot if it could mean somethin’ for that other mob.’ (237) These many blacks helping his family and wishing a great future for the babies, Betty looking after the
babies, Too roo rer’s information about his mother, his best friend, Arnie Tomkins’ continuous appealing and the incessant crimes on blacks, really awaken Frank. If he lived the life of an Aboriginal, he could have enjoyed fishing, sleeping under the sun and big feasts around big fire at the camps. He wants to be a part of the fight. Uncle Too roo rer is optimistic and says, ‘That new Godfella he be needin’ new gate. Missus that Godfella she bin sayin’, ooh no gate, no fence, she bin scared longa bush… You plenny good fence man, Frank.’ (239)

It’s metaphoric that throughout his life Frank has built fences, walls and boundaries for the settlers. Now, he wants to break all that he has constructed by leading the resistance. Love, hypocrisy, greed and murder are the themes of the work. Amidst despair, hope prevails as old values reassert themselves against overwhelming odds. The novel is a daring and thought provoking work of Bruce Pascoe.