CHAPTER III

PLUNDERING AQUAMARINE

(*SHARK*)

*Shark* (1999) explores the bitter experiences of native Australians through the brutal period of colonization and conquest. It talks about the suppression of Aboriginal Australians by European settlers; importance of culture and environmental conservation in the life of Aboriginal people; and resistance towards Australian law and governmental policies by the natives. Australian law is biased and it supports settler communities. The natives have suffered systematic inequality in law and they demand for an impartial law and judiciary. European capitalistic approach resulted in the disappearance of many marine species of Australian continent, which in turn resulted in ecological imbalance. The riches that the rare species have fetched them in the world market made them practice modern methods to catch fish. For Aborigines fishing is part of food-gathering. The native Australians demand the government for regulations on fishing. Unfortunately, they are at the receiving end. The fight for rights and identity play a pivotal role.

Throughout the history of mankind, humans’ sustenance depended on hunting animals. Various tools have been developed with stone, wood, bone and shell for hunting. There were abundant animals for food and for domestication. Hunting and fishing have been major sources of livelihood for the native Australians. They are said to be exceptional water craftsmen and excellent swimmers. The Aborigines haven’t cultivated major crops though Australian land is
fertile and suitable for agriculture. And they never domesticated animals, have been into hunting and fishing, which form the basis of their economic system. “Men used to hunt bigger animals like kangaroos, wallabies, emus, opossums, reptiles and snakes, women gathered vegetables, herbs, nuts, berries, fruit, leaves, insects, frogs and other small animals.” (Dusik 1992:82) The British colonization has put an end to their free life. The settlers disturbed the Aboriginal communities and their way of life. With the stockyards, the animals were yarded and the natives starved to death. Keeping the natives in mind, the whites formulated new regulations, which made them punishable for hunting and fishing, many times to death.

Annerose Baumann in her essay, “Traditional Aboriginal Culture, says that the natives are deeply connected to the area of land they live in. Each and every clan has a story of its own creation which strongly believes that they are linked to their territory through their dreaming ancestor who had created them and after that became a part of the land. Hence, they feel a deep spiritual connection to their land and often call and consider it as their ‘mother’. They believe it as their responsibility to take care of the land. Loss of the land is loss of identity and life itself for them. Land is a gift given to them by their ancestors and it’s unimaginable to buy or sell it.

In the beginning the natives resisted the occupation of their land. They felt that their civilization and religious beliefs were at risk because of European settlers, who had no respect for the Aboriginal culture. The regulations on hunting and fishing and establishment of stockyards infuriated the natives. As the European domination spread across the land the natives had to confine themselves to the interiors of Australia. There were many fights between the settlers and natives. The
latter stole some livestock or sheep for food by entering the stockyards. In response, the settlers entered the houses of natives and killed their women and children. There were many instances where the native children were drowned by the whites.

*Shark* (1999) is a sequel to *Ruby-eyed Coucal* (1996), set in a sleepy fishing town called Tired Sailor. It talks about the discontent and frustration of the Aborigines of Australia, who are treated as aliens in their own land. Australia is their land without doubt but they are deprived of every thing. Their lands are taken away, they are butchered and their wives are molested by the white man. Even the black children are not spared. The government states that equality is prevalent in Australia. Their fight for liberation is unheard and unnoticed by the government and so-called Peace Promoting Organizations of the world. Aboriginal political activist, William Cooper (1861-1941) rightly said:

> How much compensation have we had? How much of our land has been paid for? Not one iota! Again we state that we are the original owners of the country. In spite of force, prestige, or anything else you like, morally the land is ours. We have been ejected and despoiled of our God-given right and our inheritance has been forcibly taken from us. (Attwood, Bain and Andrew Markus. 94)

*Shark* is a postcolonial novel as it aggressively reacts to colonization. The work also involves issues of decolonization. The protagonists of *Shark*, struggle with questions of identity, experience the conflict of living between the old, native world and the invasive forces of hegemony from new, dominant cultures.
Colonialism has brought a sense of loss among the indigenous people that resulted in societal changes. This sense of loss affects the displaced indigene.

Jim Fox, a half-caste Aborigine, a protagonist of *Ruby-eyed Coucal*, returns from the Papuan resistance to his daughter, Maree, living in Tired Sailor. He ran away from Australia when he was a young man as he was arrested on the charges of killing his step father. As a fugitive, he joined Papuan Freedom fight against the Indonesian army. For many years he assisted OPM resist the Indonesian occupation of Papua; smashed his leg during a gun fire. In fact, Maree was there at the time of the gunfire on Papuan rebels. She couldn’t meet him as he was taken to the near by caves. Maree has sent many letters, requesting him to see her. He had left her when she was a small child. Maree did meet him once, troubling herself crossing the mountains and valleys of West Papua. He is old and tired, and the smashed leg doesn’t allow him to continue as a rebel. He returns to Australia which he has left as a young man. Not that he likes Australia. He likes his past life as a rebel because it means something for him, a noble cause. “He’d been useful to what he considered a just cause.” (10)

During her search for her father, Maree meets Lester Grange, a handcraft trader. He has been secretly importing weapons to the Papuan rebels in his boat *Tea Gardens*. He loves her. It’s because of the timely help of Lester she could trace out her father. Lester’s assistant on ship, Saul, is an Aboriginal from Thursday Island. He’s made Maree pregnant. Lester has accepted Maree as his wife and her child Reuben, as son. They are like two different people living together. He thinks that he has done enough trading around Indonesia. In fact, he can’t face the embarrassment
of being a father to a black kid, takes the family to Southern Australia. He comes to know of a new fish, orange roughy, wants to try his hand at fishing, buys a house and settles in Tired Sailor with the family.

Tired Sailor was previously known as Weeaproinah. It’s been a paradise for fishermen. As in all the instances, it started with trade and ended with colonization. The growth of white population made the natives homeless. Aborigines live mainly on the riverbanks, in the swamps and near to the sea as fishing is a major occupation for them. Val Attenbrow observes:

…both historical descriptions and current archaeological evidence …, supported by archaeological data …, suggest there was a focus along the waterways in the daily lives of the people – the ocean and estuarine shoreline on the coast and the riverbanks in the hinterland. (Attenbrow, Val, 56)

Like the other Aboriginal villages, the original inhabitants of the village have been killed by the white man. He needed access to the river water for his crops and to the sea for fishing. The blacks don’t want to leave their village but the old village huts have been knocked over to build the new town, Tired Sailor. “The people of Weeaproinah were not keen to give up their oyster beds, wallaby pastures and yam paddocks but they were shot, poisoned and sickened.” (2)

Bruce Pascoe depicts that postcolonial practices like, destruction of villages and clan system in the name of development; rapid dissemination of diseases, will result in the total wipe out of the native cultures and traditions. The white man brought his religion, culture, diseases, what not everything to Australia. “They reasoned that they had a king and an empire and the logical course for the peoples of
empire was to become imperial and shift aside those who were not.” (2-3). There was a white man called Frazer who had tied a black child as bait to the bottom of a craypot and sent him deep into the water till he died. It was his obsession to hunt Aboriginal children and hunted many. He collected their bones and kept them in a box as collection. This is the extremity to cruelty. The whites feel themselves as God’s children. “Patience, patience. Yes, it’s black and white, starkly so, no shade, but there was no subtlety then, no room for it; the fight had to be won early or not at all and it was their duty as God’s children to win it. God made them strong and righteous; they heralded from the flower of civilisation…” (3)

Rooster Clark is an Aboriginal Koori lives in the swamp with his family. He repairs all sorts of electronics with little success. He has a dark past. His tribe, which has been fishing the lakes for thousands of years, was killed at Convincing Ground near Portland. “From Portland’s beginning as a whaling station in 1829, relations between whalers and the Aboriginal community were tense, but erupted around 1833 when almost the entire Kilcarer Gundidj tribe was massacred after a dispute over the ownership of beached whale.” (Boulton, Martin)

Origin of the term, Convincing Ground, has a very important relation. “Edward Henty and Police Magistrate Jim Blair’s account of a violent altercation to “convince” the Aborigines of European “rights” to land and resources which led Robinson to believe a large number of people were slain.” (Convincing Ground Massacre. Web)

Rooster runs a big family. And it’s the only family of Aborigines in and around Tired Sailor. Deidre, his wife, has a keen eye on the resistance movement
and follows the movement on Land Rights. She has a long line of relatives, who come to meet her from far away places of Australia. They narrate her, their stories of abuse and struggle in the name of colonization. She prays every night for the safety of her people and kids that they shouldn’t be taken to Christian homes. She doesn’t want the children to end up like Rooster and Fox at orphanages. Their son Rocky Clark is a rebel at heart and the children have their mother’s influence more. Women like her are instrumental in uniting their people to stay together to fight for equality and their support gives the movement immense strength.

The natives have a cultural connection to fishing. And the relation that they have with their country or Land is part of their traditions. Scott Johnson in his essay, “Aboriginal Land Management Techniques”, says that the geography of the country is an integral part of the Aboriginal spirituality, which implies rights and responsibilities, including proper use of resources, rights of access and the responsibilities of management. Therefore, the management of land was inextricably tied to ceremony and ritual, and to the sense of clan identity. (Johnson, Scott) They believe that the land is sacred which blesses them with foodstuff. “For Aboriginal people, cultural values are intertwined around traditional uses, spiritual connection, ancestral ties and respect for waterways, land, sea and the resources these provide.” (Aboriginal Fishing) In the wilderness of Australia the natives adapted themselves to the ecosystem and used to gather food resources accordingly. Australia was a land known for its rich aquaculture. Fishing has been their profession for ages. Their skill at catching fish is exemplary, a skill which is taught to them by their elders, cultural transmission. They can sing the fish to them and use spears to kill the fish. They are
very much aware of the fact of managing marine species and the threat that the fish would be extinct, if hunted too much.

But the arrival of the settlers changed their fate at fishing. They went on occupying Aboriginal villages and the Aboriginal sources of food and made life miserable for the natives. The indigenous fishing tradition is in the danger of extinction. Their regular activities like food gatherings, catching fish, hunting animals are viewed as serious crimes for which the natives have been arrested many a time by cops. They are forced to give up fishing because of strict fishing laws and over policing. They can’t even teach or train their younger generation about traditional fishing methods. The white man says that he’s breaking rules. Rules have been specifically created, keeping the blacks in mind.

Rooster’s family fishes in the swamp only for their livelihood. Inspite of that, he is held responsible for over fishing, has been questioned his identity and ownership of the place where he lives. It’s frustrating for Rooster as he has been receiving letters from the governmental authorities that his family doesn’t have any authority over the land, they’ve been living and fishing. It makes his blood boil and he says:

“Some nosey bastard reckons we don’t have title to our land or something’. How’s that, eh? A hundred thousand years an’ they reckon we can’t build a tin shack in the swamp. An’ then they’re chargin’ us with illegal fishin’ an’ trespass. Bloody trespass… they won’t be happy until they’ve kicked us off the land-out of sight, out of bloody mind.” (155-156)
The fish that his people catch is only for food and ceremonial purpose; nothing in comparison to the catch of white fishermen, who are into exporting it. They don’t want him and his family to stay around. This is nothing but racism. “The professional fishermen had assembled to denounce poaching and illegal netting and call on the authorities-political and civil to do something. They had Rooster in their sights. Let’s get the black bastard.” (104)

Customary Fishing is contrary to Commercial and recreational fishing. First one applies to an Aboriginal person with traditional connection to the area being fished. And he fishes for domestic, personal and non-commercial needs. Commercial fishing is mainly for making money from catching and selling the fish. It involves lesser amount of investment and large amounts of profits because of exporting fish. Whereas recreational fishing is for fun, deriving joy and pleasure from catching fish for a meal for the family. Hence, customary fishing is focused on sustainability of fish stock and has its purpose centered on cultural needs and values of the Aboriginal people.

Bruce Pascoe, like Charles Dickens, places children at the centre of the plot. All his works portray a quick-witted boy-hero who fights hard the desolation and deprivation of his race. They are fortunate to be staying with their families. They share few of the traits of Byronic hero like- intelligence, high levels of perception and keen observation. They know that they are socially excluded, and face the crisis of identity and belongingness. They are firm and resilient in their approach, grasp the circumstances with ease. Aboriginal elders promisngly believe that these boys would kindle the lives of their people.
Reuben and Rocky Clark are known for their steadfastness and vigor. Reuben is the talk of the town because of his distinct Aboriginal features. He lives in a town owned by whites and attends school where all his classmates are indifferent to him. People are surprised to see a black boy to white parents. “The town never tired of speculating about the black child and even the Koori mob from back in the Swamps came to town to have a look.” (7) People doubt that Reuben can’t be Lester’s son. But Fox’s Kooriness relieved them. They believed that genetically it’s possible now. Reuben is as resourceful as his father or grandfather. He is increasingly conscious that he is black. Fox and his grandson go for long walks across the sea shore. He loves his walks with his grandfather. Lester is a good father, who teaches him all about boats and fishing. But Reuben likes the company of his grandfather. Maree has always wanted her father to guide Reuben, make him understand the life of the blacks and the bush. “He enjoyed the kid’s company. It was softening to him to watch the seriousness and gentleness of the kid. They got on together and it was a comfort to Fox to look at the black face warmed by his own blood.” (52)

During their leisurely walks, they are offered shelter by Norm Hodson when they are drenched in heavy rain. Norm is surprised to see blacks in Tired Sailor. Many natives were killed by whites in the town. People ran away from the place to northern part of the country for the fear of death. Whites can go to any extent to kill the black people. Norm reports Fox:

the settlers here, and their families are still here, were pretty efficient about getting rid of the opposition… Killing Flat, Red Swamp, Dead Finish, lot of people killed in all those places. That’s why I was surprised to see you two,
most blacks won’t come within a bull’s roar of the place… What a place it must have been. Still is. But just look. Lakes, rivers, springs, mountains, jungles, reefs, swamps, grass plains, heaths – everything you need. There are middens in these dunes so deep and wide there must have been thousands of people here for thousands of years. (13-14)

He informs Fox of the mob, Rooster Clark’s family, living in the high reaches of the swamp. Fox has come to Tired Sailor on the continuous pleading of Maree. He considers his stay at Tired Sailor temporary, as the climate doesn’t suit him. But the meeting with Norm Hodson and his report on Aboriginal killings change his decision and he wants to stay back in the town with his daughter. He thinks about the Clark’s family and determines to take Reuben there. They belong to Koori tribe. Nobody living in Tired Sailor is black. They are all immigrants, Europeans. When Tired Sailor was built, out of many blacks the few who escaped death got migrated to Northern Australia. The best way Reuben can understand Aboriginal life is by staying with Clark’s family. Hence, Fox takes the decision to introduce the boy to Clarks.

Clarks know the presence of the black boy in the town. When Fox has visited them with Reuben the whole family is ecstatic to find another of their tribe, colour. Even this is the first time that Reuben has seen those many black people. As Fox sits with Rooster and Deidre, Reuben is taken to the lakes by the children. He experiences the sense of belongingness. His mind longs for identity, real identity. On their way back Reuben expresses his desire to meet his real father from Thursday
Island. Fox could feel the same yearning for his family, like any other native, when he was a boy.

Fox watched the boy gazing across the lake. He’d never heard him ask about his real father before. He felt as stricken as Reuben sounded. It seemed that the boy was reliving that awful uncertainty that he’d known as a boy himself.

To tell the truth, that grieving uncertainty, that yearning for his own mother which he’d been denied after being adopted by a white family at Echuca, that nagging sorrow had never really left him at all. As a boy he would cry into his pillow every night wanting a mother, a real mother, to kiss his face while he pretended to be asleep. That feeling had never left him but had changed, grudgingly, as he grew up and encountered even worse forms of loneliness and defection. (39)

Fox has longed for love through out his life, so also his daughter, who spent her life without her father’s love. And now his grandson, Reuben desires to see his father. Fox wants to put an end to this dislocation by sending a letter to Reuben’s real father, Saul.

The displacement of Aboriginal children from their communities is considered to be one of the worst crimes in the history of Aboriginal Australia. European child welfare authorities severely damaged the native communities. Their intrusion is paternalistic and colonial in nature. They were insensitive and brutal to Aboriginal children. In the name of better hygiene and education, they took the children from their families. These children always suffered from a sense of
belongingness as they are separated from their culture. Many Aboriginal elders worried about the future survival of their cultures, customs and languages.

Unlike Reuben many of the black people don’t know their fathers, not even mothers. They were brought up in orphanages like Fox and Rooster Clark. Cultural identity is an important aspect of Aboriginal culture. The removal of Aboriginal children from their families continued for many decades. The objective of the removal was to assimilate the Aboriginal children in European way of life, which ended up with disastrous results. Besides physical and emotional abuse the children were forbidden to speak and practice their traditional languages and customs. The Europeans made them to think that leading Aboriginal life is immoral and primitive. Europeans are disdainful towards the natives and the native children think that they are disconnected from their communities.

Reuben wants the comfort of his mother. Maree, on her part is busy helping Doris Arinyeri. Fox thinks that the boy needs the company of other boys, of his age, of his colour, like the Clarks. He needs them to teach him to laugh. He himself or Maree can’t teach him. Lester can, but he’s not blood. As far as possible the boy has to be shown where he belonged. He is arranged a trip to Thursday Island. His real father, Saul is on a fishing voyage. His grand mother’s received him. He had a great time there:

His old uncles had taught him things about his dreaming and totems and where he was fixed in the TI (Thursday Island) scheme of things. They were very keen for him to come back and visit; it was important not only for him, but them too, for the whole mob to stick together. The old men noticed how
serious and attentive the boy was and claimed him as one of their own. He should be taught how to become a man, not whitefella way, blackfella way.

(50)

All the people starting from Fox, Maree, Clarks and Thursday Islanders want to make Reuben a man. Fox advises Reuben to listen to the old people. The boy is really fortunate to have a family, to look after him, especially at the time when all the native children are taken or stolen from hospital beds and sent to orphanages and mission houses. He has the privilege of representing two tribes-Koori and TI, and happens to be the grandson of Fox. It’s not that there are no black children at Clarks or in TI. His composure, seriousness, attentiveness, keen eye at that tender age made them assure themselves of a promising leader and all of them hope him to lead the blacks in the resistance fight. “It was uncanny what the kid could absorb, how seriously he studied people and things.” (50)

Maree resigned her job and went in search of her father. She was inspired by Doris for her selfless service to her race and assisted her in the fight for Land Rights before Reuben was born. She did some precious work on the ancient trading links among Aboriginal Australians, Native Papuans and Indonesians. She understood her father’s inclination for Papuan freedom and informed Doris of the exchange of Coucal feathers among the earliest tribes. Moreover, she plied information about the involvement of Australian Government in the suppression of Papuan fight for freedom and the imprisonment of Papuan rebels on an Australian island. The information is of great help to the Land Council in the fight for Land Rights.
As the family moved to south, Maree couldn’t spend time on Land Rights. And she has been busy bringing up Reuben. “The political work she’d been involved in with Aboriginal Land Rights up north had all foundered. The promises, the Barunga Bark, Mabo, all those things which had pointed to a treaty of reconciliation were referred to an endless line of committees and commissions…” (19) She hasn’t aspired to sit idle at Tired Sailor. Lester and Fox go for fishing, for days sometimes and Reuben’s grown up. He can do works on his own. She thinks of serving the Land Council again and wants to be associated with Doris. She tries to help the Council from Tired Sailor but her participation seemed rather fake – not patronizing, “she’d escaped the heat of the battle and while the Murris up north didn’t exactly see her as a coconut (brown on the outside, white on the inside), she wasn’t with them; she’d become one of those pale southern Kooris who didn’t even know three words of their language.” (19)

In the mean time she fights for legislation for fishing with the Fisheries Department, Melbourne. Orange roughy is a symbol of Australia’s ancient culture and it is in the danger of extinction. It’s been a most sought after fish, which is a hit with all the fishermen. As the fish fetches them more economy all of them are manufacturing new nets and following new methods to catch roughy. The number of the fish has alarmingly gone down as all fishermen engaged in catching the fish. Earlier the fishermen could catch abundant fish. Laurie Clancy says, “Australia has – or used to have- a considerable number and variety of fish, but once consumers turned to fish, they did so with such enthusiasm that some species were almost
instantly fished out; the rise and fall of orange roughy, for instance, is a dismal saga in itself.” (Clancy, Laurie. 87)

Lester and Maree think of a regulation for the survival of the roughy species. They work together for a fish licensing business. The regulation would discipline fishing of roughy. Maree spends few months at Melbourne, meeting the officials of the Fisheries Department. She’s also on Radio once, representing ‘Southern Ocean Fish Co-operative’. She feels “the fishermen need to protect the fish so that they can catch it again in the next generation.” (71) She has been busy sending press reports to newspapers and magazines and regularly visiting the Department to check on how things are going on. She meets politicians and bureaucrats to represent the issue and it’s almost been impossible to bring a common opinion. Without their help the regulation is unachievable. No politician would dare to think about fishing licenses for the fear of losing votes. Moreover, the fishermen don’t support a regulation on fishing. She has observed that the Department and the Minister are inert towards bringing out a Regulation. “They were spiteful and malicious, not because they didn’t want a regulated and conserved fishing industry, but because the excitement in the job was to create an obstacle and watch people flounder.” (66)

The future of nations and peoples is being decided in a dozen city rooms by people, who don’t have any real idea of the severity of problems that the blacks have been experiencing. The future is going to be very critical. Doris has bestowed her life for the cause of blacks. She has been working untiringly for decades. Now she’s old, needs support to fight for equality. At this critical juncture Maree cannot sit back in Tired Sailor, “she had a need to resolve that in her own heart and her friends
were appealing to her to put a shoulder to wheel. Not that she was irreplaceable but because any extra shoulder was irreplaceable.” (111) Even before the birth of Reuben, Maree has planned to go to Canberra to help Doris, as she wants to shoulder the responsibility. There’s going to be a new government in Australia. Doris and Maree have the undying hope that this opportunity would never come again. They can press hard the new government and the new minister for Aboriginal Affairs for equal rights and for a liberated future. She is white in complexion, anglicized in thinking as her mother is a white lady but her father is half-caste, “she felt a principal loyalty to that part of her blood to which she most closely identified.” (113)

Fourth world feminism focuses on the power relationships between colonizers and colonized people; argues against the process of colonization, whereby native cultures are stripped of their customs, values, land and traditions. This form of feminism talks about the condition, position and oppression of indigenous women. Bruce Pascoe remarks that few factors and issues don’t diminish the strength of Aboriginal women. In Shark, Doris, Deidre and Maree represent Fourth World Feminism as they stand against all hardships. They are known for their perseverance and hard work. The native women learned to adapt and survive the most dreadful social and economic conditions. Their ability to fight for equal rights, to raise their children, to face discrimination and violence, is commendable. They are the guiding force in the resistance movement.

Maree always wants to offer her son the security of love. But she’s too busy to do that, stays away from house most of the time:
The boy didn’t know that Maree was looking at documents that reflected the attitude of Australians to their own souls. Nothing to do with the orange roughy but what … government had decided was an acceptable history for the country. Even if Maree had been inclined to explain it to him, if she’d been able to rise above the despair welling in her heart he would not have been able to grasp so general a concept as Australian apathy. (93)

The blacks have been living in Australia for generations. It’s their culture and tradition. But they do not own land as per European perception as they don’t have a written document that declares the ownership of it. But they lost the right on their land in 1788 due to the doctrine of terra nullius, means - land belonging to no one:

When the English arrived in Australia they needed to decide how much of their law would apply to the new colony. To do this, the English needed to decide whether Australia was a conquered or settled country. A conquered country was one that was overtaken by another country. Thus it was seen as having inhabitants and a society. A settled country was one that was uninhabited and could therefore be occupied by another country. Though there were numerous inhabitants of Australia when the English arrived, they decided eventually that Australia was a settled colony. To be recognized as inhabitants of a place by the English, the people had to: cultivate the soil; have permanent habitations; have a recognizable legal system. The English did not recognize the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as filling any of these requirements. Because Australia was seen as a ‘settled’
country, the doctrine of terra nullius applied. (Brassil, Belinda and Brassil, Dimity. 78-79)

Eddie Mabo (1936-1992), is a Torres Strait Islander, campaigned for indigenous land rights. He says that Australia is treated as unowned land by the British. As per their colonial law, Aboriginals have no property rights on Australia. They can’t sell or buy the land. And as per colonization the British government owns the entire continent. There have been many thinkers who’ve felt that the doctrine, terra nullius is unfairly imposed on black Australians. Many people raised their voice against the doctrine. The blacks didn’t want to give it away, fought the case legally in the court. Henry Reynolds says:

The doctrine of terra nullius remained the law in Australia throughout the colonial period. In the first half of the nineteenth century it survived the rise of an active British humanitarian movement seeking to improve the conditions of indigenous people throughout the empire. The movement achieved many successes, such as the abolition of slavery in the colonies. In Britain and Australia there were vocal, powerful people, both inside and outside the government, who urged that terra nullius had been a terrible injustice to the Aborigines. (Reynolds, Henry. 1–90)

On the 3rd of June, 1992 the High Court of Australia took a landmark decision recognizing the native title to Australia. It was a shock to the European colonization. It states that Aborigines are the original inhabitants of the land. According to this, they have the right to possess their traditional lands in accordance with their customs and lores. Stan Pelczynski observes:
The Mabo judgment is a very important step towards the achievement of justice in Australia. Contrary to claims by its opponents, it does not bestow any privileges on Aborigines that no other Australians already enjoy. In fact, it still leaves Aborigines at a disadvantage relative to other Australians as well as to the Indigenous Peoples in the USA, Canada, and New Zealand. It is a matter of justice that the judgment is not weakened but strengthened by further reforms recognising the rights of Aborigines to compensation for past injustice, to self determination, to practice of their religion and to the protection of their cultural and religious inheritance. (Pelczynski, Stan’ for Action for Aboriginal Rights, 27-07-1993)

The blacks are furious as the Australian inner-government has taken the decision not to pursue the courses of action available to it even though the High Court has declared that the term terra nullius is invalid. The government has decided that it cannot assure equality to the natives till the native people vote them to win the next elections with a great margin. The Aboriginal people, who lived and died and have the longest civilization, cannot be guaranteed their land back. Their fight for Land Rights over decades is in doldrums once again. Such a thing can’t be tolerated. Doris and Maree fight against the decision of the government. Maree grieves for Doris as the later has to spend another decade fighting for blacks, her people.

Doris sends some documents to Maree as a witness to the genocide by the Indonesian Soldiers in the border region of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya, in which Armos Tutilani, the leader of OPM and a great comrade to Fox, has been shot to death. “The report indicated that rebel strongholds in the ‘impenetrable’
swamplands east and west of the Fly River were now being bombed by Indonesian forces in an attempt to bring peace and stability to the border region of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya.” (94-95)

Maree gives the news item of Armos’ death to Fox. He glances at the report and stares at the photo of Armos for a while. He knows that the death of Armos is inevitable:

“Armos, eh. Well that just about takes care of the freedom fighters. Can’t be many left now. Not with the bombing.” Reuben peered over his grandfather’s forearm at the photograph.

“Who’s that man?”

“A friend of mine. I lived with his people for a while when they were fighting the Indonesians. Until I got this.” He lifted the edge of his shorts and pointed to the shiny, puckered skin of his thigh. “It was a hopeless fight. Thousands of Indonesians with American helicopters against a few hundred Papuans with .303s.”

“Is your friend dead?”

“Yes, they got him eventually. He couldn’t last forever.”

“Why didn’t he leave like you did?”

“It was his land, his people. He would never leave Papua.” Fox turned to Maree who sat on the step next to Reuben. “Ten years from now there won’t be a highland village left. It’ll all be tin shacks with Indonesian flags. The Papuans will toe the line or starve.” (96-97)
Fox was discontent that he couldn’t continue the resistance fight. He regrets, “My grandson’s sitting here having a glass of cordial and his (Armos) kids will be harassed by the Indonesians for the rest of their lives.” (97) It took three decades only for Indonesia to wipe out one of the earliest cultures of the world. All the pleadings are unheard to the Indonesian government. There’s no other option for the Papuans, except guerilla warfare. The Papuan women are the motivating force for the resistance fight. They know that Indonesians are the reason for their poverty and dispossession. Even if the men think of giving it up, the women won’t agree to do that. Fox says, “Armos had it right. You had to keep fighting for what your heart said was right…” (100)

“When will black people get their land back, pop?” Reuben asked. (98) Nobody has an answer. Both Maree and Fox think that it’s a hopeless fight. But Fox doesn’t want to say that in the presence of Rueben, as he may be habituated to think that all would be hopeless. This seed of hopelessness in the minds of small children will not guarantee their land back. They won’t be fighting against the settlers but with their inner selves. Fox doesn’t know how to give hope to his daughter of a bright future but, in the meantime, he has to shield his grandson from despair. Moreover, all the blacks have to be protected from desperation. They need to be given a ray of hope that their future will be secure. Over years all the policies and practices of the government have aimed at eliminating the natives. The blacks don’t even have the right to vote till 1960s. Fox’s strongly believed that one day they’ll have it, which can change their fortune. It’s only since the 1960s that Aboriginal people have been allowed to participate in mainstream society on an equal footing
and access full citizenship rights. It includes the right to vote, improved access to healthcare, education and welfare and so forth. They’ll be considered as fellow human beings by Whites. That’s why they have got to stay to demand their rights.

He believes that the natives should wait for a change in the fortune. After fighting war for decades in Papua, he became a man of patience. He used to advice Armos to give up guerilla warfare. All the rebels have been killed, including their supporters. It might be their impatience, which resulted in their early doom. As for Maree she is not satisfied at all, fighting for fishing cooperative. She convinced Lester. Fox understood her noble decision to go to Canberra. And she has to convince Reuben. Lester says:

“just keep in touch with him Maree-even tell him you love him. He’ll be waiting here.”

“You’re admitting he’ll stay here with you.”

“I think so, but he’ll need to be asked and take him up there one time and let him see what the councils are doing. Let him see what the black movement’s doing. He needs to get a better look at that…” (114-115)

More than the death of Armos, the death of black children in the bombing, frustrates Maree. Long back a fisherman told Fox that, “I don’t care what they do with any bloody country on earth as long as they don’t hurt children. They could nationalize, socialize, computerize, capitalize, do any bloody thing their busy little minds wanted as long as it didn’t lead to kids being napalmed or shot.” (100) At that time Fox had never seen a child being killed in Australia, but many years later he’d
seen children being murdered for no cause. The people, who have to provide security to the children like politicians and army, have been killing them. The white men certainly are the reason. “In Australia, deaths of Aboriginal children are many times higher than for non-Aboriginal children, and the rate of such deaths is among the highest in the world.” (Alder, Christine and Polk, Ken. 17)

Emily Frazer, the grand daughter of cruel Frazer is a worm pumper, sells yabbies to the tourist fishermen. Her father’s gone and she lives with her mother. She has an affair with Fox. She visits him daily in the morning, before she goes to sell worms. Her grand father was one of the early settlers of Tired Sailor. He along with other settlers killed seventy eight Aborigines and their children; collected knives, axe-heads, necklaces, strings, needles from the camp of blacks. It was followed by killing of another eighteen at another camp. He kept all those things in boxes as his collection and secreted them in the house. It’s the history of the blacks and a shame for the settlers. Emily wants to give those boxes to the natives. But, there are no blacks in the town, only Rooster’s family lives nearby. All of them have been evacuated from their village and from their life by settlers, the box is the proof. And Emily has shown Fox little finger bones kept in a biscuit tin. Those are the bones of black children killed by Frazer. She asks him to request Rooster to collect the boxes. Rooster doesn’t want those boxes and he wants to throw them in to the ocean.

A whole generation of black kids has been stolen in Australia. The Aboriginal and half-caste children are sent to homes run by government. The welfare of these kids at the houses has been least concerned. The parents shouldn’t visit them, and in
most of the cases, they don’t know where their children are sent to. There’s an enquiry in to the welfare of the kids and in the recent times it’s been startling to find that they were used for testing medical treatments. Kathleen Mills, a representative of the Stolen Generations Alliance said, “the public did not know the full extent of what happened to some children… were injected with serums to gauge their reaction to the medication… were used as “guinea pigs” for leprosy treatments… the treatment almost killed them.” (“Stolen Generation Kids Used for Tests.”)

The same is with West Papua. The Indonesians don’t want to grant freedom to Papuans. Many native children have been killed by Indonesians. They died because of severe bombing. By killing children they are putting an end to the future threat:

In the early twenty-first century, the population of PNG was estimated at 5.5 million inhabitants. By contrast, the indigenous population of WP (West Papua) is only 1.8 million, with an additional 1.7 million transmigrants mainly from the Indonesian islands of Java and Sulawesi. Had the indigenous population of WP grown at the same rate as PNG, it should have achieved a total of approximately 3.4 million. (West Papua, Indonesia)

The fishermen of Tired Sailor couldn’t go for fishing because of bad weather. As all of them have been fishing orange roughy they couldn’t find the fish even during season. They have to go towards Southern Ocean, where there’s always the danger of a storm. It’s impossible for them to catch the fish and return to Tired Sailor before the storm. They either can take shelter at Strahan on the west coast of Tasmania or come back to Tired Sailor. Even though it’s dangerous for them to enter
the Sea, they can’t sit back, as they have to pay the interest to the Pentland bank for lending money. The new manager of the bank retrieves interests on the last Monday of every month. Their nets and other fishing items can be taken away by the bank for debt.

When Maree is away in Canberra, Lester and Fox go for fishing roughy on their Tea Gardens, leaving Reuben with Emily. While they fish, they face a severe storm, “when he (Fox) looked up he could see the line of cloud and it was closer but what he didn’t like was the colour. The bank of clouds had taken on the bright green of a ripening lemon and that light was stretching up from the southwest and sluicing everything in an eerie lime pallor.” (129) They just give up another run of the net, when they notice the brutal storm. They try to save themselves. The Tea Gardens is smaller than the other boats and has got only two crew members. They try hard to make it to Strahan but they are carried away to King Island. During this mayhem, Fox loses his balance and falls into the sea.

Fox was saturated and his crook leg had lost circulation and he could hardly get it to move. The Tea Gardens righted itself and the chain still lay on the deck. Fox slid across the boards, grabbed the chain and was clawing his way back up to the mast when a wall of water curled back against the pressure from the reefs, broke free of the main wave and dumped itself directly on the deck. The lifeboat lashed away from the remaining stanchion and swiped Fox and half the deck railing overboard. (132-133)

Lester has thrown four life jackets as soon as Fox has fallen into the sea. He tries to spot Fox to help him. But it’s severe dark over there. And the heavy wind
has carried the Tea Gardens towards Naracoopa. Next day a rescue team has been
arranged to search for Fox. He is found dead, clinging to a lifebuoy. A blow on his
head has cut several major blood vessels.

Fox had found the buoy and he must have been conscious long enough to lash
himself to it but the concussion and loss of blood would have had him drift
into a vague sea sleep, the storm slapping his face with water but not reviving
him, and at last he’d been cradled in this sheltered embayment, rocked gently
by the sea that had slain him, swayed to sleep in her salty arms. Tired Sailor.

(136)

Jim Fox has lived the life of a restless runaway. Adopted, when he was a boy;
imprisoned for the charge of killing his adopted father; escaped from Australia;
joined Papuan struggle for freedom; returned to Tired Sailor to his daughter; was a
good mate to Lester and a real guide to Reuben. The family can’t absorb the death of
Fox. And all of them, Rooster, even Emily, are upset because the authorities don’t
allow for Fox’s burial, as his identity hasn’t been proved. At last they come to know
of Fox as a criminal in Australia but a legend to his people and to Papuans, in
particular. The absence of his grand father is awful for Reuben. Rooster Clark takes
Reuben to his house. They take care of him. “The alive keeping the alive, alive.”
(148) Maree is advised by Lester to go to Canberra to help Doris. It will be a fitting
tribute to Fox, if they achieve what the black people desire and dream.

What they dream is a treaty of reconciliation. The Aborigines have been
demanding it for their Rights. Roderic Pitty views:
The massive reconciliation marches held around the country … have raised anew the prospect of a treaty within Australia to redress the failure of successive governments to improve Aboriginal conditions of life and to provide proper space for the development of Aboriginal culture. There is a widespread view that … Government(s) has failed to appreciate the requirements of reconciliation. This failure is not just a result of a lack of leadership. It also reflects a lack of due process. Indigenous peoples have been treated unfairly because they have been neglected as marginal actors in Australian politics, rather than recognized as potential partners in the creation of a reconciled Australia. (Pitty, Roderic, 14 July 2000)

The Labor party, which is in power, states that it supports Aboriginal rights and the Treaty of Reconciliation. But it is planning to direct the social welfare money for other purposes, which will make the blacks homeless. They’ll have to stay in the National parks with a special permission from the government, a real pity. Their policy will certainly result in Apartheid in Australia. Doris is very busy distributing leaflets to all the people about the problem as there are going to be by-elections in Australia. She wants them out of power. It’s not that there are no representatives for the blacks in the government. Billy Paddock is a communist Aboriginal, representing Labor party. He has held the seat of Liverpool for 15 years. He is never made a minister, not even for Aboriginal Affairs during these many years. The right wing of Labor Party has never liked the presence of Billy and they’ve always wanted to select a candidate who can toe their orders.
The Treaty of reconciliation is a treacherous plan deceived by the government. It’s to woo the blacks to get the votes, for them to get into power. In the name of a treaty the whole programme of reform will be delayed. “In the meantime, all momentum would be lost and the whole case for a treaty would have to be fought again.” (152) It may take years of time, probably decades. Then they have to fight with a new government or with a new cabinet. This is in no way going to help the blacks:

Black people would gain almost nothing as a result, but white people might be allowed to know and to live with the truth of their history. For white Australians, it would be the end of self-deception and the beginnings of democracy. It was on that democracy Doris had pinned the pennant of her hopes; fairness and honesty would have an expression. (152)

Conferring land to the black Australians (Land Rights Movements) will be the most important document ever signed in the history of Australia. But the pen just hovered on the document. It made Doris sick:

It left her sad and flat, not angry; she never really felt much anger, but she was sorry, sorry for all the work that had been wasted, sorry for all the white Australians who had been looking forward to the birth of a nation and most of all sorry for her own people who would continue to be treated as if the landless poverty was their fault, a fault of intellect and spirit, rather than insufficient immunity to smallpox, syphilis, lead, disdain and government. (152)
Every year the Aborigines celebrate NAIDOC week, the National Aboriginal
Day of Celebration:

In 1939 Aboriginal people asked for a national day of their own. Churches
began to hold what was called Aboriginal Sunday, which became National
Aborigines’ Day in 1955. In 1957 the National Aborigines’ Day of
Observance Committee (NADOC) was formed. The name of the committee
was later changed to include Torres Strait Islander people, and became
NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance Committee).
They decided to hold an annual NAIDOC Week every year in July… Each
year there is a different theme for NAIDOC Week, and one State or Territory
leads the activities. Flags are raised, and there are speeches, games, dances
and cultural events, such as art shows. Aboriginal people and Torres Strait
Islander people display some of the ways they have contributed to the culture
of Australia. (Discovering Democracy: Middle Primary Units, 88)

But the blacks aren’t celebrating as the government took the decision to
suspend the presentation of the Barunga Treaty:

The treaty issue returned to political prominence in the period surrounding
the bicentennial of British colonization in 1988. Protests by Aboriginal
people during the celebrations of 200 years of British ‘settlement’ highlighted
the poor socio-economic conditions in which the Aboriginal community
continued to live, the lack of formal recognition of Indigenous peoples as the
first peoples of Australia and the continued violation of their human rights.
The Aboriginal Sovereign Treaty ’88 campaign called for the recognition of
the sovereignty of Aboriginal people and their ownership of Australia and for the Commonwealth government to enter into a treaty with the Aboriginal nations of Australia. During that year, the Barunga Statement, developed at the Barunga Festival in the Northern Territory, was presented to Prime Minister Bob Hawke. The Barunga Statement called for a treaty, a national system of land rights, compensation for loss of land, an end to discrimination, Aboriginal self-determination and the protection of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. At the festival, the Prime Minister said there would be a treaty. However, it did not eventuate and the issue faded from the federal government’s agenda. (Brennan, Sean, et al. 15)

That’s why the whole week has been turned to protest. The whole mob, all the blacks attend the procession at Melbourne. Four thousand black people assembled in the Collins Street of Melbourne. “Black, a sea of black” (174). This is the biggest gatherings by blacks in two hundred years. Nobody, even in their wild dreams, thought of this. “Koori people claiming their land, calling for the future of their culture, the future of their kids.” (174) They want their land back. The events take a turn here as the black kids resolutely take a decision to fight for freedom, wish to shoulder the responsibility.

Maree, Reuben, even Lester, the whole family of Clark’s except Rooster, are there in the procession. Posters have been displayed, slogans-raised, skits-enacted on the street, during the demonstration. They can’t believe their eyes and become emotional when they see those many blacks, united for the cause, their land. Even it’s first time for Doris. They are not even aware of the exact number of their mob.
And the government has no authentic data of the living blacks. Doris has the hope now that her mob will get their land back. They’ll fight it out. Their inclination and bravery to attend the procession speaks out their love for their country.

Rocky Clark is a rebel at heart. He “had a way of driving sensible people crazy. Teachers always had him in the corner of their eye. The gaze of any policeman within a hundred meters would fall on him as a matter of course.” (176) The procession has been monitored by several policemen. They are waiting for an opportunity where the black mob goes violent, to kick them all up and take them into custody. During the lull of speeches, Rocky with other youth sings the songs of famous indigenous singer Archie Roach. The police communicated through their eyes the rebellious nature of Rocky. In fact, they have Rocky in their minds. They catch him and drag him towards the tram. Deidre’s least wanted this to happen. “If there was one thing she wanted for her kids, it was for their names to be unknown to the police. And now, Rocky, the little skyrocket, would spend rest of his life showing his license and answering questions. Where were you on the night of the twenty-sixth of January, 1788?” (176-177)

The police always project the Aboriginal youth as the offenders and lawbreakers of Australian society. The discrimination is manifest with many statistical data that the indigenous youth are made or forced to appear in court more than the non indigenous people. And Aboriginal deaths in the custody add fuel to the fire. Cases investigated by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) show that “young Aboriginals are unnecessarily or deliberately made the subject of trivial charges or multiple charges, with the result that the appearance
of a serious criminal record is built up at an early age.” (RCIADIC 1991: VOL.2. 275)

Fay Gale says:

In virtually every one of the interviews conducted with Aboriginal people … specific examples of police discrimination against blacks were cited. Most adults in the Aboriginal community were able to recall at least one incident in which they or a close family member had been, at least according to their own perception of events, unjustly or harshly treated by police. Even though many of these stories cannot be verified, they help to perpetuate negative attitudes towards the police amongst young Aborigines and thus stimulate aggressive Aboriginal responses to police intervention. (Gale, Fay. 64)

Deidre knows the boy’s intelligence, vigour, defiance and since his childhood he has been a fighter. Never gives up. Doris consoles her.

“He’ll be alright, that boy; he won’t come to no harm.”

“You don’t know him, he’ll never forget it, he’ll never let it rest. He’ll fight, I know him.” Deidre whispered, almost to herself.

“And you won’t be able to stop him, and sis, true, I’m glad there is someone to fight. Teach him to fight, right. Not an angry drunk’s fight- but fight like a Koori.” (178-179)

Doris suffers paralysis during the night and has great hopes on Maree to lead their fight. Next generation should shoulder the responsibility. They have to achieve natural justice, which is uncertain now. Maree feels herself incapable of carrying out
the task. Moreover she is half white. Doris leaves for her place. With her the
endurance and selflessness have gone out of the movement. Her absence has created
a great vacuum which can not be filled. The author Bruce Pascoe says that her
caracter is modeled after “a multitude of black women, whose love and courage
kept Aboriginal communities together when all appeared hopeless.” (In an E-mail)
Aboriginal women activists like Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920-1993) known as Kath
Walker, Shirley Smith (1921-1998), popularly known as Mum Shirl, Lowitja
O’Donoghue (1932- ) are an inspiration.

As for Rocky, he can never forget the incident, where he is hauled by the
police from the procession. He “pledged himself to the memory, committed his life
then and there to the guerilla war.” (177) Even when he is in the prison he has a
plan, “so large and so demanding of his energy he knew he’d never have another
moment of complete rest for the remainder of his life. And he was fifteen.” (185) He
wants to join the university to study law. The prisoners are offered one phone call.
He hasn’t called his mother but used it to call a History Professor at the University
of Canberra. It indicates his firmness of resolve, certainly a kid to reckon with. He
takes a room at Doris’ old house, goes regularly to the library of Australian National
University. His teachers at school think that he’s wasting the educational allowance.
But his year twelve results have startled them. He has set himself for something. He
always surrounds himself with at least eight books in the library, spends “night after
night, week after week, month after month” (204) reading and referring them. It’s
not for pose. He knows what’s in them. Those are books of constitutional law.
It was his aim to know constitutional law (of Australia) so well that he could then dismiss it and start again. Start from scratch, an alternative constitution of black sovereignty. It never occurred to him to doubt his ability to fly in the face of white law; he was young, his energy seemed limitless, his understanding of the premise of law profound. Once he qualified, he was going to tear up the existing body of knowledge and challenge the country to start again. (205)

Rocky Clark shares some of the traits of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), an Indian Jurist, philosopher, thinker, prolific writer, economist, scholar and an enthralling orator. He tried to turn the Wheel of Law towards social justice for all. He is the messiah of Dalits and oppressed of India. As a boy belonging to the downtrodden family, he experienced discrimination, untouchability and ill-treatment. He took a resolute decision to change the conditions of the downtrodden, fought untiringly to pursue education. In the course of time he was appointed as the Chairman to the Drafting Committee that framed the Constitution of India. He was the first Law minister of Free India. He created necessary atmosphere to make a law to wipe out untouchability. He is a personality who changed his so-called destiny and changed the fate of Dalits of India. Rocky Clarke’s decision to redeem his race from discrimination and inequity resembles Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Lester takes Reuben up the North to Thursday Island. A young girl, Purale Tutilani, the daughter of the dead OPM leader, Armos Tutilani, now leads the Papuan freedom fight. After Fox returned to Australia, Armos’ family except Purale and many Papuans have been killed by the Indonesian army. After the death of
Armos, Purale is secretly sent to Thursday Island. Papuans use the Island as a hideout. They are eagerly waiting for Reuben. They want to share with him a story about his grand father. A very important story. It’s about the role of Australia in the occupation of Papua by Indonesia.

Fox, when he was working with the Papuan rebels, bitterly complained about Australia’s self-interest when they said nothing about Indonesian occupation of Papua. There are many factors that made him so angry:

…the oppression of the Indigenous people, Australia’s security fears, its lust for trade, its pragmatic view of the world order, particularly Southeast Asia. All the news reports of Australia’s republican stand and the new trade imperatives in its region began to make sense- officials somewhere from several countries had decided that the Papuans on Timor and Irian Jaya were not necessary for this new world order, they were an unnecessarily disturbing element of the equation, eliminate them, or simply ignore them and X could equal Y, more comfortably- more profitably. (191)

It means that indirectly Australia has equal share in the suppression of Papuans. Jim Elmslie remarks:

For Australia the way out of this Papuan-induced quagmire was the Lombok Treaty, a wide-ranging security pact between Australia and Indonesia signed in November 2007. At its core is the (unspoken) conflict in West Papua. clause 2.3 in the Treaty specifically deals with prohibiting support for persons or entities which ‘constitute(s) a threat to the stability, sovereignty or territorial integrity of the other party… including separatism. The Treaty
could be interpreted as to be a tool to restrict the basic human rights of Australians, let alone West Papuans. (Elmslie, Jim. 12-15)

Their families are little worried about their life. Rooster and Deidre want Rocky at home. They fear that he may be killed in the fight. Maree feels the absence of both Reuben and Lester as they are out on sea to Thursday Island. She has been busy with the paper work and feels sorry for Lester. Being white and rich he could have a comfortable life. But he’s accepted Maree and settled in Tired Sailor. She’s always neglected him.

As they reach Thursday Island, Purale takes Reuben to the Papuans. They are elated to see the grandson of legendary Jim Fox. “It re-affirmed their belief in the struggle. Fox had risen from the dead, Armos had risen also – in the shape of his daughter. They were not finished yet. They would fight on- even to the last coral beach on the most remote atoll. They lived.” (206)

Reuben like Rocky is burning for justice. “He was on a slow burn towards justice, the fuel for this smouldering intensity was the colour of his own skin and the commitments of his grandfather and mother and more recently, the sight of Rocky being dragged from the Treaty march in Melbourne.” (191) Boys and youngsters of their age usually talk about girls, football and plan to build bright careers. But Reuben, Rocky and Purale are fervently interested in the fight for justice. It’s their career and life. They committed themselves to the war:

A generation of kids for whom education had provided the tools, the arms for them to engage in a war that ninety percent of their fellow citizens were not aware had begun, a war that would rob these freedom fighters of part of their
childhood and the rest of their lives. Reuben’s smoulder would remain alight until every skerrick of his being had been consumed. Black coal burns slow.

(192)

Bruce Pascoe’s description of the systematic plundering of aquamarine in *Shark* exposed the cruel intentions of the settlers in wiping out the total resources of Australia. And Treaty of reconciliation has been the dream of all the indigenous people, for which, they put a resolute fight. Many marine species and fishing practices have been disappeared. Terra nullius has been wrongly imposed on native Australians. The land which has been inhabited by the natives for ages, has been declared uninhabited land. How could the modern and so-called civilized nations be so uncivilized towards the native people?

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