CHAPTER 2
EXTANT CRITICISM WITH PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

It is evident from the studies carried out by the various scholars have not traced the root of psychological problems of the Aborigines in the colonial policies. They were uprooted, separated from the families which adversely affected the psyche of the once nomadic race. Alexis Wright in her novels highlights the psychological problems of the Aborigines emanating from the above mentioned factors. But unfortunately none of the critics has paid any attention towards Alexis Wright’s intention to expose the effects of being dispossessed. They just concentrate on Aboriginal spirituality, use of Aboriginal story telling techniques and so on.

The researcher has come across many papers written on Alexis Wright. “Australian Literature Inside and Out” by Nicholas Jose is a paper that concentrates mainly on the development of Australian literatures and setting up of Australian Study Centres in China, Europe and other parts of the world. The paper also touches *Carpentaria* but that is only in the context of the reception of Australian literature in other countries. Similarly “Homelands vs. “The Tropics”: Crossing the Line” by Lyn Jacobs devotes only one paragraph to the novel *Plains of Promise*. Jacobs finds the novel as a saga that depicts “chaotic, on-going, repercussions of colonial repression and dispossession” (Jacobs 175). Similarly a paper entitled “Future Imperfect” by Suvendrini Prera discusses the situation of multiculturalism in Australia. In the paper she devotes a small part to *Plains of Promise*, but her discussion of the novel focuses on one episode involving a character called Chinaman. She uses the episode to suggest that though Chinaman had lived in Australia, married Indigenous women but “the Chinaman is not naturalized into Australia; he does not become one with earth, or part of it” (Perera 8).

Frances Devlin Glass’ paper “A Politics of the Dreamtime: Destructive and Regenerative Rainbows in Alexis Wright’s *Carpentaria*” as the name suggests is an attempt to read the novel as a treatise on Aboriginal spirituality. The writer herself says that her focus in the essay is “Wright’s representation of the river and the cyclone” (Devlin-Glass 394). Devlin-Glass sees the novel as a political move about
how to understand coloniality and mining and how to resist them. She finds that most of the characters of the novel are the embodiment of rainbow. The novel according to her is “bizarre amalgam of myth, theatre, broad political satire, perhaps even sermonising of the hell fire variety” (Devlin-Glass 395). The paper mostly concentrates on the use of the local myths, legends and stories related to the dreaming sites of saltwater people.

While Carole Ferrier’s ““Disappearing Memory” and the Colonial Present in Recent Indigenous Women’s Writing” treats *Carpentaria* as an attempt to find the “the curse that seems to be on the community” (Ferrier, Disappearing 47). The paper also concentrates on the technical aspects of the story telling and quotes Alexis Wright’s comments about the experimentation with narration in the novel. She felt that the style used by her will “engage more Indigenous readers” (Wright, On Writing 80) and that the novel was also written for educating the white people so that they may “be less racist in dealings with Aboriginal people” (Wright, On Writing 89). The paper also concentrates on the portrayal of Indigenous as well as white characters. Ferrier finds that in the novel Indigenous men are “central and sympathetic characters” (Ferrier, Disappearing 47).

“Dreaming Phantoms Golems: Elements of the Place beyond Nation in *Carpentaria* and *Dreamhunter*” compares the novels by Alexis Wright and New Zealand writer Elizabeth Knox. In the paper Laura Joseph argues that *Carpentaria* marks Wright’s departure from Aboriginal women’s writing. According to her, it is a sort of avant-garde novel for an Aboriginal writer because the novel is not about history. The other novels by Aboriginal women are either autobiographies or autobiographical novels and both the genres thrive on personal as well as national histories, but *Carpentaria* is about present. It tells a tale about the problems that have been created by mining in Aboriginal lands, a threat which is even greater than the threat posed by farming and cattle stations. The paper also talks about the dominant role played by the elements of nature and the “Cultural specific” world of “dreams and the fantastic elements of ancient and modern magic” (Joseph 1).

Cornelis Martin Renes’ paper “Discomforting Readings: Uncanny Perceptions of Self in Alexis Wright’s *Plains of Promise* and David Malouf’s
"Remembering Babylon" is a reading of the novel from a “non-Aboriginal Perspective” (Renes 77). In the paper, Renes argues that there are so many things which remain unanswered in the novel and are no less than a mystery for the non-Aboriginal readers who are not well versed with the Aboriginal spirituality, mythology and relations with the land. Renes says that Wright’s political agenda “seems to deny non-Aboriginal readers full access to the native universe of the Aborigines. They are refused clear answers to the many issues that affect the Aboriginal community through the presence of the half-castes Ivy, Mary, Jessie” (Renes 80). The paper tries to answer the questions that are left by the author. The most important being the commentary on the death of Chinaman. Wright does not tell anything about the death and the description itself creates ambiguity in the minds of readers if the death is a suicide or murder. The paper is a remarkable study of the novel that tries to unravel the mysteries of the novel and tries to unravel them from western point of view.

The second paper is “On Reading Carpentaria” by Craig San Roque. The paper according to San Roque is written with an intention to help the readers who are not familiar with the Australian Indigenous situation and need some help in deciphering the text and understanding the narrative style used by the author. The paper is a personal rendering of the impact of the novel on San Roque. The paper comments on the murders and suicides in the novel and the land rights. The paper concentrates more on the impact felt by the reader.

Pradeep Trikha’s paper “Carpentaria: A Collage of Identity, Ethos and Ethnicity” begins with quoting the comments of reviewers on the novel. Trikha analyses the novel as a “cultural text” which is “equipped with unique complexities of identities, norms, values, modes of thinking and knowledge” (135). Trikha also emphasizes the displacement of Normal Phantom from his traditional land and how “land was a source of nourishment for not only their eyes but even souls” (137). He feels that ethnicity and Aboriginal cultural ethos are a potent force in the novel. The novel is also a story of entrapment where people are entrapped in their circumstances. The whites living in Uptown are “entrapped in greed of wealth, crass commercialization, cutthroat competition and other evils of the globalised world” (139) while the Aborigines are entrapped in their “archaic Aboriginal existence”
Martin Renes in a paper entitled “Dreamtime Narrative and Postcolonisation: Alexis Wright’s *Carpentaria* as an Antidote to the Discourse of Intervention” claims that Alexis Wright writes about the dispossession of Waayni people, who have largely been removed from their traditional land. Renes analyses *Plains of Promise* as a novel describing the lives of three Aboriginal women in “assimilation and post-assimilation” (106) era and their search for their spiritual roots. Renes claims that by writing *Plains of Promise*, Wright provides intellectual space to her people “in which to manage their historical awareness and cultural heritage” (108). He sees *Carpentaria* as an attempt to “denounce Euro-Australian powers that marginalize, objectify and stifle the Waayni Indigenous community in Gulf country” (113). Renes’ paper largely focuses on *Carpentaria* as a form of resistance writing where Alexis Wright weaves a tale to achieve some political ends for her people. The paper also comments on the style of narration adopted by the writer.

Paul Sharrad has published an important paper titled “Beyond Capricornia; Ambiguous Promise in Alexis Wright.” The paper comments on both *Plains of Promise* and *Carpentaria*. According to Prof. Sharrad, Wright aims to speak “for herself and her people against the misrepresentation” (Sharrad 2). For him, Wright provides a “depressingly naturalistic picture of Aboriginal life in both outback and urban context in *Plains of Promise*. He also refers to the “lasting debilitating effects of traumatic separation” of four generations of Aboriginal women (Sharrad 3). The paper comments on various aspects of the novel which include the impact of separation from land, racial biases and prejudices. While commenting on *Carpentaria*, he finds it a work in the tradition of Garcia Marques and Rushdie. The paper studies the novel from linguistic point of view and compares it with Xavier Herbert’s *Poor Fellow My Country*. Sharrad observes that in the book Christianity is contrasted with the Aboriginal traditions and how the Aborigines survive in the “racial hot spot of northern Queensland;” The paper also studies characters like Normal Phantom, Will Phantom and Mozzie Fishman.

The researcher has not come across any book length study on the author. Moreover, the researcher has also not come across any work where the
psychoanalytic study of Alexis Wright’s works has been performed to find out a connection between the policies of Australian government and the psychological problems of the Aborigines. In the recent times, psychoanalysis has become an important tool to understand the impact of colonialism, a relationship that was strengthened by the publication of Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967). After this “scholars began representing psychoanalysis not as complicit with colonialism, but as indispensable to its critique” (Lane, Christopher, Psychoanalysis and Colonial Redux 127). Psychoanalysis becomes even more important in the settler societies where the Indigenous people are still trying to fight the internalized oppression.

The natives in almost all the settler nations suffer from serious psychological problems. The problems in Australia, Canada and the United States seem to be similar as all these three countries are settler countries and all the three followed almost same policies towards the Natives. The story of colonial exploitation is punctuated by same happenings: taking away the children from the native families, land grab, massacres of the natives and mining on the native lands. On the other hand, the natives seem to have a similar set of beliefs: close relationship with land, animals and nature, preference to community instead of individual and religious beliefs that were closely associated with the land.

An example of a common policy followed by all the three settler nations is that of taking the Indigenous children away from the families. It is important to note that the policy of stealing the children was followed earlier in the United States and Canada where native children were taken away during the nineteenth and twentieth century to attend the government run boarding schools (Smith, Andrea 90). In Australia, the children who were taken away are known as stolen generations. The impact of such a system was felt on the whole communities of the natives and the intergenerational trauma still affects the current generations of the natives in all the three countries.

The single most important thing that tells about the psychological trauma of the Aborigines in Australia is consumption of alcohol. The data collected by various agencies show that alcohol is consumed to the dangerous levels. According to the
Aboriginal website creative spirits five times Aboriginal death rate due to alcohol is responsible for many deaths of the Aborigines and 48% of Aboriginal mothers drink alcohol while pregnant. The reasons behind the excessive consumption of alcohol are:

1. A lack of traditional rules;
2. A lack of group identity;
3. Resistance to imposed control on Aboriginal society;
4. Unprocessed pain which requires healing;
5. A lack of processes for tensions and frustrations occurring as a result of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, racism, boredom and dislocation. (“Aboriginal Alcohol Consumption”) 

According to M. Wilson et al the Aborigines took to alcohol as a response to “devastating effects of colonialism, including dispossession and illness and death resulting from disease and confrontation” (“The Harmful use of Alcohol”). The policy of stolen generations had a “devastating impact on Aboriginal families and way of life, the effects of which continue to reverberate even today. This includes high level of mental health problems experienced by Indigenous Australians and the absence of parenting models resulting in unacceptably high levels of child abuse and neglect, which many people attribute to this period” (Wilson, M, et al “The Harmful use of Alcohol” ).

It is clear that most of the researches have indicated that the high level of mental problems experienced by the Aborigines is due to the breaking of families and dislocation by the invaders. The Aborigines were closely associated with their land so once they were removed from their lands, their social and cultural connections were broken because Aboriginal culture emanated from the land and was largely dependent on it. The Aboriginal tribes were extended families, so once they were removed from their lands their kinship ties also weakened and rest of the job was completed by the policy of stolen generations.

In the studies conducted in both the United States and Canada it has been found that the roots of many psychological problems lie in the policy of taking away children. Effects of Native Schools in the United States include:
• Increased physical, sexual and emotional violence in Native communities;
• Unemployment and underemployment;
• Increased suicide rates;
• Increased substance abuse;
• Loss of language, religious/cultural traditions;
• Increased depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; and
• Increased child abuse. (Smith, Andrea 92)

The problem of the American Indians and the Australian Aborigines are similar. Moreover, the system of keeping the Native children in the government run schools and missions to assimilate the children was also similar.

So the root of psychological problems can be found in the lack of land rights and the policy of stolen generations. Most of the psychological problems emanate from the traumas that were inflicted upon the Aborigines during the colonial times. It is important to distinguish between trauma and a physical injury. Sigmund Freud devised the core definition of trauma: “wound inflicted not upon body but upon the mind” and “the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares and other repetitive phenomena” (qtd. in Vernon, Irene S. 35). Alexis Wright’s works show that the current problems of the Aborigines are because of the psychological traumas that were inflicted upon her people by the invaders. Aboriginal people have become alcoholics only to numb the pain that emanates from these traumas. Alexis Wright in her book quotes a person who says that alcohol is consumed by him to “dull the pain. A pain which was like sledgehammers with blunt knives attached hammering inside his head” (Wright, Grog 11). It is clear that alcoholism is a “means of escape and solace” (Wilson, M. et al “The Harmful use of Alcohol”).

The book Grog War is written by Alexis Wright on the issue of alcohol consumption by the Aborigines. In the book while searching for the reasons behind these psychological problems of her people she has mentioned the troubled history of her people as the source. The policy of stolen generations is mentioned by two
Kidnapping was a practice that occurred in one form or another until in the 1960s. What amounted to theft of other people’s children was a legal practice implemented by government legislation to remove children from their parents. The policy was called assimilation. Under such a policy it was hoped that the removal of children to dormitories away from their families would encourage ‘civilised habits and lifestyle. These dormitories were usually run by missionaries of various denominations, values and charity. Nevertheless, the children were forcibly taken to live in yet another form of poverty, either in the vicinity of their parents or taken away to distant missions or to live with white families a long way from their own families and homelands. (Wright, Grog 35)

The policy of stolen generations was followed by Australian Government from 1910 to 1970. During this tenure the Government pursued a policy of forcibly removing those children identified as “half castes of their families, Aboriginal children of mixed descent, and placing them in institutions and white foster homes” (Levi 129). The pain and suffering of the people of stolen Generation first came into the notice of general public with the publication of Bringing them Home (1997). The report of the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children from their families. The report “sits like a stone in the consciousness of many Australians” (Toorn 24). Under the leadership of Sir Ronald Wilson, the commission travelled across Australia receiving evidence from 777 people and organizations and gathered information from 535 people who had been removed as children from their families. In addition to stories of these 535 people, commission also received written testimony from around one thousand others. The report focused primarily on the 20th century experiences and policies of child removal. Moreover, the report noted that the practice of removing the children was prevalent from early Colonial times. Incidentally, Plains of Promise and the report were published in the same year i.e. 1997 and both of them complimented each other. The novel confirmed that the contents of the report were true and the report corroborated the depiction of the psychological disintegration of the Aborigines in
The policy had a long lasting impact on the psychology of the Aborigines. The relationship between the psychological problems of the Aboriginal and stolen generations was observed when a Royal Commission established in the early 1990s to investigate the alarming trend that had evolved amongst gaolled Aboriginal people: “Over the previous decade (January 1980 to May 1989), 99 Aboriginal People had died in custody, many by suicide.” The Royal Commission (Australian Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1991) found that there was “necessarily a relationship between these deaths in custody and the history of Colonization in Australia. Of those who had committed suicide, 43 had been removed from their families as children” (Bretherton and Mellor 85).

Suicides committed by the Aborigines made it clear that there is a close connection between the policy of stolen generations followed by the government and the psychological problems of the affected people. The report used excerpts of Indigenous people to uncover that stealing of the Aboriginal Children had been systematically practised and it had catastrophic effects on the lives of the children and the families. In these excerpts “the same themes of loss of identity, family, and community; of physical, emotional and sexual abuse: of lack of self-esteem and a sense of purpose; of drug and alcohol dependency and suicidal thoughts emerged repeatedly” (Kennedy 53).

The problems of the current generation of Aborigines is a spillover effect of the policies of stolen generations and other problems like breaking up of traditional belief systems, powerlessness and other conditions created by brutal colonial policies. The Sydney Aboriginal Mental Health Unit advised the Inquiry of its experience with patients presenting with emotional distress:

This tragic experience, across generations has resulted in incalculable trauma, depression and major mental health problems for Aboriginal people. Careful history taking during the assessment of most individuals (i.e. Clients) and families identifies separation by one means or another – initially the systematic forced removal of children and now the continuing removal by community Services or the
magistracy for detention of children.... This process has been tantamount to a continuous culture or spiritual genocide both as an individual and a community experience and we believe that it has been the single most significant factor in emotional and mental health problems which in turn have impacted on physical health. (Bringing them Home 171)

It is clear from the report above that the psychological problems of the Aboriginals are closely associated with the policy of stolen generations.

There were many people who believed that the policy of stolen generations was not detrimental rather it was a policy that was followed on compassionate grounds:

The so-called “stolen children” were not stolen at all. The welfare authorities of the day (and the church group of the day were- in the main-responsible for welfare) made a decision on compassionate ground and with a Christian outlook, to ensure that children of the aboriginal people were given proper sustenance. Decisions were made on compassionate and welfare grounds. What was done at the time was for the welfare and betterment of what were seen to be deprived children. Children who were in circumstances which might have caused them ill health. (qtd. in Lecouteur and Augoustinos 59)

But the Bringing them Home report shattered all these beneficial myths about the stolen generations and quoted Australian Bureau of Statistics to reveal that the Aborigines who were removed as children were “twice more likely to have been arrested more than once in the last five years (22% as compared with 11% of those who were not taken away)” (Bringing ThemHome 13). Moreover, many Aborigines have said that they did not need rescuing from their “mother’s love” (Cockatoo-Collins 6). The report also found that institutionalization had “very damaging effects” on “personal emotional development and on the individual’s sense of self-worth” (Bringing them Home 13). The investigation in this regard was conducted by the Bureau in 1994. The report received intense media coverage and became “a national best seller” (Toorn 15).
Alexis Wright has called the policy a “cultural genocide” (Wright, Grog 35). According to her the policy was genocide because the real motive behind the policy was to erase the identity of the stolen children. The stolen generations could not be trained in their culture which was not only essential for their mental and physical well being, but also for the Continent of Australia.

*Bringing them Home* Report also confirms Wright’s assertion that the policy was indeed genocide. The report declares that the policy of stolen generations followed by the Australian government can be termed as genocide as it fulfills the criteria laid down by the United Nations for a massacre or situation to be called genocide. The UN convention declared that genocide is a heinous crime against humanity. In the same convention, genocide was defined as:

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

a. Killing members of the group;
b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm of members of the group;
c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

(*Bringing them Home* 235)

In his report, the Polish Jurist Raphael Lemkin defined genocide as “a coordinated plan of different actions aimed at the destruction of the essential foundations of the life of national groups with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.” According to him the objective of such plans is the disintegration of the political and social institutions of culture, language, national feelings, religion and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of personal security, liberty, health, dignity and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups (qtd. in *Bringing them Home* 235).

The Venezuelan delegate of the General Assembly summed up the views of the nations which supported the inclusion of forcible transfer of children within the scope of genocide:
The forced transfer of children to a group where they would be given an education different from that of their own group, or would have new customs, a new religion and probably a new language was in practice tantamount to the destruction of their groups, whose future depended on that generation of children. Such transfer might be made from a group with a low standard of civilization.... to a highly civilized group.... Yet if the intent of the transfer were the destruction of the group, a crime of genocide would undoubtedly have been committed. (qtd. in *Bringing them Home* 236)

It is clear that the real motive behind the removal of Aboriginal children was to decimate their culture, and to destruct their religious beliefs in the process of converting them to Christianity which was synonymous with being civilized for the invaders. In the light of the above statement, the policy of stolen generations certainly comes under the scope of genocide.

It is important that the beliefs and traditions of a community are carried forward by their children. Children learn so many things by observing their parents, by taking part in social ceremonies and from the stories and legends that are told by the older generations. So it is clear that by removing the children, the Australian government was indeed committing genocide:

(Children are) core elements of the present and future of the community. The removal of these children creates a sense of death and loss in the community, and the community dies too… there’s a sense of hopelessness that becomes part of experience for that family, that community…. (*Bringing Them Home* 190)

The experience of the stolen generations was not the experience of some families, but it was the experience of whole Aboriginal community. So the impact was not felt only by the affected biological parents and children, but by the whole tribes.

Alexis Wright quotes Article 12 (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) which tells about the “right of everyone to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health” (qtd. in Wright, Grog
61). She asserts that this article also means that “everyone has the right of education which should be embedded in the culture. Also everyone has the right to take part in cultural life” (Wright, Grog 61). It is clear that by stealing the children, the Australian government took away an important right away from the children: the right to grow up in mentally healthy way.

The reason behind following the policy of stolen generation was essentially a racist motive of establishing a white Australia. In fact, it was in 1893 when the whole of white world was startled with the publication of Charles Pearson’s National life and Character; a Forecast that whole of the white world was startled. The impression made by the book was such that Theodore Roosevelt wrote to Pearson in 1893:

All our men here in Washington.... were greatly interested in what you said. In fact, I don’t suppose that any book, recently, unless it is Mahan’s Influence of Sea Power has excited anything like as much interest or has caused so many men to feel that they had to revise their mental estimates of facts. (qtd. in Lake 42)

In the book Pearson argued that it was “the Black and yellow races which were in the ascendant-powered by population increase and industrial capacity” (Lake 42).

The book was a rude shock to the theorists and believers of white supremacy. Australia also woke up to the so-called black and yellow threat and its impact was visible when Edmund Barton, Australia’s first Prime Minister quoted from Pearson’s book:

The day will come, and perhaps is not far distant, when the European observers will look round to see the globe girdled with a continuous zone of the black and yellow races, no longer too weak for aggressions or under tutelage, but independent, or practically so, in government monopolizing the trade of their own regions and circumscribing the industry of the Europeans; when Chinamen and the natives of Hindostan, the states of Central and south America, by that time predominantly Indian are represented by fleets in the
European seas, invited to international conferences and welcomed as allies in quarrels of the civilized world. The citizens of these countries then be taken up into the social relations of the white races will throng the English turf or the salons of Paris, and will be admitted to inter-marriage. It is idle to say that if all this should come to pass our pride of place will not be humiliated… we shall wake to find ourselves elbowed and hustled, and perhaps even thrust aside by the peoples whom we looked down upon as servile and thought of as bound always to minister to our need. The solitary consolation will be that the changes have been inevitable. (Barton 3503)

Barton himself was a rabid racist who told the Parliament:

I do not think that the doctrine of the equality of man was really ever intended to include racial equality. There is no racial equality. There is that basic inequality. These races are, in comparison with White races unequal and inferior. (Barton 5233)

Barton was supported by his close colleague, Alfred Deakin, who said:

The unity of Australia is nothing, if that does not mean that its members can intermix, intermarry and associate without degradation on either side, but implies one inspired by the same ideas. (Deakin 4807)

It is clear that Australian political leaders like Barton and Deakin were determined to secure white man’s status and self-esteem in the South Pacific by transforming Australia into a ‘white man’s Country’ (Lake 44). All these fears of racial contamination were generated by the imagined swamping of the United States by the Negroes. H.B. Higgins, a liberal, declared that the United States was experiencing the greatest racial trouble ever known in the world and “Australians should” take warning and “guard themselves against similar complication” (Lake 56).

In the same year, Australian Parliament passed the Immigration Restriction Act that was aimed at excluding all non-European immigrants. The Immigration Restriction Act enabled the government to exclude any person who failed in a
dictation test of a passage of 50 words in a European language directed by the officer. In the beginning, the language of the test was supposed to be English, but it was argued that it could discourage migration from other regions of Europe and could encourage Japanese. In 1905, it was changed to any prescribed language. The dictation test was “administered 805 times in 1902-03 with 46 people passing and 554 times in 1904-09 with only six people successful. After 1909 no person passed the dictation Test” (“Immigration Restriction Act 1901”).

The other racially motivated act passed in the same year was Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901. The Act was enacted to facilitate the mass deportation of all the Pacific Islanders working in Australia. While speaking in the favour of the Act Prime Minister Barton delivered a highly racial speech:

The difference in intellectual level and the difference in knowledge of the ways of the world between the white man and the Pacific Islander, is one which cannot be bridged by acts or regulations about agreements. The level of the one is above that of the other, the difference being one in human mental stature of character as well of mind - which cannot be put aside by passing 50 laws or 1000 regulations. He cannot be made to understand the condition of his engagement. He may be brought to state of partial understanding, but it is impossible to say that he can have a degree of contracting capacity equal to that of the man who is dealing with him. (Barton 5,503)

Beginning in the 1860s, tens of thousands of Pacific islanders were brought to Australia to work as low paid labourers in the growing sugar industry. The Act was supported by Higgins by quoting the history of United States:

I say that that country, more especially the Southern States would have been ten times better off if the Negroes had not been left there. There are no conditions under which degeneracy of race is so great as those which exist when a superior race and an inferior race are brought into close contact. (qtd. in Lake 57)

The Aborigines were not thought to be a hurdle in this policy of white
Australia. According to the opinion prevalent at that time, “The Aboriginals were of too low a stamp of intelligence and too few in numbers to be seriously considered. If there has been any difficulty it would have been obviated by the gradual dying out of the native race” (qtd. in Markus 259-260). Only problem that remained was that of the half castes who were in plenty. It is important to note that when the whites started to arrive in Australia there was no white woman to accompany them:

In 1861 there were 200 white men to every 100 white women in rural areas; by 1900 there were 171 men to every 100 women. Adding to the predominance of bachelors were the Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Malay, other south-east Asian and Pacific Island immigrants who worked in tropical agriculture, ocean industries and gold mining. (McGrath, Marriage)

All these bachelors found Aboriginal women for them and sired children with them which gave rise to half caste problem in Australia.

For the establishment of white Australia, these half-castes posed a formidable challenge. In 1937, A.O. Neville wrote:

Are we going to have a population of 1,000,000 blacks in the commonwealth, or are we going to merge them into our white community and eventually forget that there were any aborigines in Australia? (A.O. Neville, in Commonwealth of Australia, 1937 11)

Neville was supported by Cleland:

The number of half-castes in certain parts of Australia is increasing, not as a result of additional influx of white blood, but following on inter-marriage amongst themselves, where they are living under protected conditions, such as at the Government aboriginal stations at point Pearce and Point McLeay, in South Australia. This may be the beginning of a possible problem of the future. A very unfortunate situation would arise if a large half-caste population breeding within themselves eventually arose in any of the Australian states. It seems to me that there can be only one satisfactory solution to the half-caste problem and that is the ultimate absorption of these persons in the
Both Cleland and Neville thought of biological engineering as the solution to the half-caste problem.

Theoretical justification to Neville’s biological engineering programme was provided by the work of anthropologist, Herbert Basedow. It is ironical that Herbert Basedow was the president of Aborigine Protection League (APL) in South Australia; the league was one of the few pro-Aboriginal bodies in Australia that took a firm stand against the removal of children and for the preservation of family life (Haebich 324).

Basedow wrote his doctoral thesis called Contributions to the knowledge of Australian Anthropology. In the thesis, he tried to authenticate the ideas propounded by his friend and mentor Hermann Klaatsch by providing the skull measurements to prove that the Aborigines of the mainland and Tasmania came from same ancestry and were not related to Negroes. Klaatsch and Basedow were at the forefront of research into Indigenous Australia and both advanced the novel theory that “Aborigines and Caucasians were racially related.” Both argued that the “prominent eyebrow edge of the Aborigines was the result of constant frowning and straining the eye against the light and not a racial characteristic” (qtd. in Zogbaum 125).

In a long letter written to the leading Adelaide newspaper The Advertiser and The Register, Basedow wrote:

The Australian aborigine is not a remote animal creation which happens to belong to same human species he is our racial brother. The Europeans (or Caucasians, as we like to call ourselves) are of the same ancestral stock and have evolved from an ancient Australian type. For this reason we cannot in a strictly scientific or racial sense speak of difference between ourselves and the Australian aborigines as it exists, for instance between ourselves and the Negroids or the Mongoloids. Modern research, beginning with the doctrine of Thomas Huxley, has convinced us that we and the Australian Aborigines are extremes in evolution of one and same type…. He is just what we were before the happy wave of culture overtook our
worthy ancestors in the dim-grey dawn of civilization. (Basedow, “Letter to Editor”)

He also argued that the black colour of the Australian Aborigines is not same as that of the African Negro:

He is not even a black fellow for the pigment which lies most superficially in his skin and can only be regarded as an intensified condition of which we know as sunburn or tan. In the negro pigment cells lie deeper in the skin. (Basedow, “Letter to Editor”)

The theories propounded by Basedow were further developed by him and he further concluded:

In fact, the colour question, as far as the Australian aboriginal is concerned, is a relative conception, the difference in the amount of pigments in his skin and in the “white” man’s being in all probability due to climatic influences extending over, a long periods of time. In is doubtful whether the primitive Australia or the Proto-Australian possessed a skin so dark as that of the present day Australian. We may now understand why it is that the quarter- blooded progeny arrived from the union of half-blooded aboriginal woman with a European father is always lighter in colour than its mother, and the octoroon lighter still. Unions further on the European side produce children practically white and no case in on record where the colour in a later generation reverted to the darker again. (Basedow, Aboriginal, 58)

It seems the A.O. Neville must have read Basedow’s Australian Aboriginal (1925) because he started using Basedow’s theory to justify his biological engineering project. He wrote:

The quadroon and octoroon are scarcely distinguishable from the white. Many are handsome even beautiful, gentle mannered, soft voiced girls, speaking perfectly, enunciated if somewhat abbreviated English. Is there to be a colour bar?

One factor, however seems clear; atavism is not in evidence as far as
colour is concerned. Eliminate in further the full-blood and the white and one common blend will remain. Eliminate the full blood and permit the white admixture and eventually the race will become white. (qtd.in zogbaum 132)

In his evidence to the Moseley Royal Commission in 1935, Neville stressed that since Australian Aborigines descended from the Caucasian race, so breeding out the colour was a feasible and the best way to solve the half-caste problem. An aimed breeding programme could biologically breed out the half caste, while full bloods were doomed to certain death. Segregating half castes, especially children from full blood Aborigines had a higher biological purpose because half-castes were to be hurried along the “evolutionary scale by selective breeding until their aboriginality has faded and they could reach the standard of white Australians” (Zogbaum 132).

The policy of taking away the children had a severe impact on the Aborigines as it lead to the extinction of many cultural practices and many tribes were seriously affected by the policy. The parents of the children were engulfed in never ending gloom and eventually became neurotics, while the attack on the psyche of children was multi-pronged. They were denied the loving care of their parents and were put under the stern missionaries who were least concerned with the development of children into healthy adults. Moreover, the children were subjected to unbelievable physical and sexual abuse as happens with Ivy in Plains of Promise.

It is clear that the psychological health of the Aborigines has been affected by the policies followed by the colonialists. So Psychoanalysis is the appropriate model to analyse the psychological problems of the Aborigines. Psychoanalysis can be said to have begun with Freud and publication of his book The Interpretation of Dreams (1899). The twentieth century has been called Freudian century because of the immense influence exerted by Sigmund Freud. Today “psychoanalytic concepts have become part of our everyday lives” (Tyson 11). Freud’s seminal theories on human mind and psychological processes have exerted tremendous influence on the psychologists. Freud’s theory, psychoanalysis.” suggested new says of understanding amongst other things, love, hate, sexuality, fantasy and conflicting emotions that make up our daily lives” (Thuschwell 1).
Psychoanalysis is a theory of reading first and foremost; it suggests that there are always more meanings to a statement than there appear to be at first glance. The most important critical goal of psychologists is toward searching behind and below the surface content of everyday life (Thurschwell 3). Thus psychoanalysis can help in understanding human behaviour. So it can also help in deciphering the literary texts which offer an insight in human life and human behaviour. Freud himself wrote essays on *Hamlet* in which he showed how psychoanalysis can be used for interpreting texts. In the essays, he showed that Hamlet finds it almost impossible to kill the man who is making love with his mother and his step father represents the wishes of his own childhood.

The key concept in Freud is the unconscious. The unconscious is like a vault which keeps all the painful experiences and emotions safely locked away from our conscious lives. Though unconscious acts as store house, yet these are not eliminated from human psyche. Time and again these painful experiences resurface and find expression through dreams and slips. According to Freud:

> The unconscious can be defined in several different ways, but it is primarily the storehouse of instinctual desires and needs. Childhood wishes and memories live on in uncurious life, even if they have been erased from consciousness. The unconscious is in a sense, the great waste paper basket of the mind – the trash that never gets taken out: ‘in mental life nothing which has once been formed can perish… everything is somehow preserved and …in suitable circumstances…it can once more be brought to light. (qtd. in Thurschwell 4)

It is important to note that poets and artists were aware of the powerful unconscious component in human experience. In 1821, in ‘A Defense of Poetry’ Shelley affirms that poetry arts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness (Shelley 423). But the unconscious in the scientific sense had to be discovered, to be analysed in a scientific way. Freud did this after qualifying as a doctor (Easthope 7). According to Freud unconscious has following characteristics:

1. ‘Exemption from mutual contradiction’: according to Freud opposed
wishes can co-exist in the unconscious;

2. ‘Primary process’: energies in the unconscious are not fixed but mobile, liable to recombine into new configurations, is an active process like that in which meanings are displaced and superimposed in dreams; the unconscious “is alive,” and this makes repressed material likely to return to consciousness in same form;

3. ‘timelessness’: the processes of the unconscious are not ‘ordered temporarily’ are not altered by the passage of time in fact have no reference to time at all;

4. ‘Replacement of external by psychical reality’: the unconscious essentially seeks pleasure and since it has little need to have regard for reality it will readily express itself in wishes and fantasies.

(Easthope 36)

Some critics have referred to writing as an unconscious process where unconscious articulates so many things which are otherwise locked in it. So psychoanalysis is the right theory to understand the layers of hidden meanings embedded in the texts. Alexis Wright may have written only the stories, but the history of displacement and torture locked in her unconscious finds voice through her novels and other writings.

Freud shocked the whole world by telling that a person has to resolve many psychosexual conflicts at a young age. The success of resolving these psychosexual conflicts as a child determines how the child will develop into a person. In his theory, Freud told about following psychosexual stages:

1. Oral stage: During this stage infants tend to put everything in their mouths, mainly because of the pleasure they receive in life comes from eating and reducing the tension associated with hunger. The first psychosexual conflict occurs when mother stops breast feeding. If the conflict associated with the weaning process goes well, the infant develops the basic skills necessary to cope effectively with certain conflicts that may arise later in life.

2. Anal Stage: At the second year of life, the primary erogenous zone begins to shift from the oral region to the anal region. Freud referred
to the second psychosexual stage as the anal stage. The principal source of pleasure associated with the anal stage is reduction of tension that accompanies reduction by urinating and defecating.

3. The Phallic Stage: Around the fourth or fifth year called the phallic stage. With an increased sense of bodily awareness and the exploration of various body parts, the child discovers the sense of pleasure that can be achieved by touching the genitals. For little boys, the principal conflict involves the father as a source of competition for the gratification provided by the mother. Freud called this love triangle involving the little boy and his parents; the Oedipus complex. The phallic stage for young girls begins when she notices that little boys have a penis and little girls do not. This realization results in what Freud referred to as penis envy. The little girls feel that this being denied the extra genital pleasure that a penis would allow her. As in the past, the girl turns to her mother as a means of achieving this additional pleasure. But her mother also lacks a penis, so the girl turns her affection towards her father. The girls mixed feelings for her parents form what Freud referred to as the Electra complex. The unsuccessful complex can lead to severe problems during the adulthood.

4. The Genital Stage: The onset of puberty initials the genital, the final psychosexual stage. It is during this stage that adolescents become aware of meeting not only their own sense of pleasure but also the needs and pleasures of others. (Carducci 68-70)

These stages explain why the people affected by stolen generations suffered from psychological traumas. According to Freud all these psychosexual conflicts emanate from the children’s relationship with their parents. But the children of stolen generations did not live with their parents so they could not train themselves in resolving these psychosexual conflicts. Due to their lack of training in their childhood, they succumbed to the psychological traumas in the adult age.

The second important thinker to have a great impact on psychoanalysis was
Carl Gustav Jung (1875-96). He rejected Freud’s theory that human behaviour is motivated by sexuality. Jung also felt that Freud’s view on the unconscious (i.e. a storehouse for unacceptable desires) were rather limited. Jung viewed the unconscious as being a psychogenetic structure that have been passed along from one all times- that have been passed along from one generation to the next. The transpersonal nature of the collective unconscious reflected Jung’s view that there is a region of the unconscious mind counting a collection of general memories shared by all people, has developed over time and is passed along from generation to generation across the ages. Jung’s theory is also important in the case of the Aborigines because it explains that the trauma inflicted by the massacres and policies like stolen generations has entered the collective unconscious of the Aborigines. Due to this the current generation of Aborigines, who were not stolen from their parents and who never lived on their traditional lands continue to suffer from trauma.

Another important psychoanalytic thinker who had profound influence is French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). Lacan undertook to follow Freud by rethinking the unconscious in relation to language. Hence Lacan’s famous slogan was ‘the unconscious is structured like a language’ (Lacan, Four 1977). Hence Lacan turns away from Freud’s view that “the unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual; rather it is something that happens when coherent language becomes dislocated” (Easthope 41).

Lacan’s theory of psychological development of the infant says that in its early months as a random, fragmented, formless mass. Indeed the infant does not even differentiate itself from its environment and does not know that parts of its own body are, in fact parts of its own body because it doesn’t have a have sense of itself that is capable of such an understanding. For example, its own body parts like its toes, thumbs hands etc. are to be explored. At some point between six and eight months, however, what Lacan calls the “Mirror stage” occurs. Whether the child seen itself is an actual mirror or sees itself “mirrored” back to itself in the reactions of mother, the point is that the infant now develops, during this stage a sense of itself as a whole rather than a formless and fragmented mass (Tyson 27).
For Lacan the operations of unconscious resemble who very common processes of language that imply a kind of loss or lack metaphor and metonymy. Metaphors occur in language when one object is used as a substitute for another, dissimilar object which we want to nevertheless compare it. Metonymy occurs in a language when an object associated with or part of another object is used as a stand-in for the whole object. Metaphor, Lacan says, is akin to the unconscious process called condensation because both processes bring dissimilar things together. Analogously, metonymy is akin to the unconscious process of displacement because both processes substitute a person or object for another person or object with which the first is, in some way associated (Tyson 30).

This makes clear that the unconscious is structured like a language, and the key ingredient loss or lack. In entering the Symbolic Order the world of language-human beings enter a world of loss or lack. The person has exited the imaginary fulfillment and control. He now inhabits a world in which other have needs, desires and fears that limit the ways in which and the extent to which he can attend to his needs, desires and fears (Tyson 30). The new world is the one in which there are some rules which a person must obey.

The first rule is that the mother belongs to the father and not to the son. So the son must find substitutes for mother because she is no longer his alone. Lacan says the symbolic order marks the replacement of the desire the mother with the “Name-of-the-Father” (Tyson 31). For it is through language that we are socially programmed, that we learn the rules and prohibitions of our society, and those rules and prohibitions were and still are authored by Father, that is by men in authority. So the desires, beliefs, biases, and so forth are constructed by a person’s immersion is carried out by the parents and influenced by the responses of the individual to the symbolic order.

Another important theory that explains the psychological problems of the members of the stolen generations is the Attachment Theory. Attachment theory is the joint work of John Bowlby (1907-1990) and Mary Ainsworth (1913-1999). Through this theory they revolutionized the thinking about a child’s tie to the mother. In other words, they scientifically proved the impact of separation of a child
from his/her mother. Mary Ainsworth contributed the concept of the attachment figure as a secure base from which an infant can explore the world. She also formulated the concept of maternal sensitivity to infant signals and its role in the development of child-mother attachment patterns (Bretherton, Inge 759). According to Bowlby if a child has to grow into a psychologically healthy adult, “the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment” (Bowlby 13).

In his study *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (1951) he claimed that “maternal care in early infancy and early childhood is essential for mental health. This is a discovery comparable in magnitude to that of roles of vitamins in physical health” (Bowlby 59). Bowlby stressed on the relationship between mother and child in his study and how the relationship paves the way for healthy adulthood. In broad outline the following are the most important:

(a) The phase during which the infant is in course of establishing a relation between a clearly identified person- his mother; this is normally achieved by five or six months of age;

(b) The phase during which he needs her as an ever present companion; this usually continues until about his third birthday;

(c) The phase during which he is becoming able to maintain a relationship with her in absentia. During the fourth and fifth years such a relationship can only be maintained in favourable circumstances and for a few days or weeks at a time; after seven or eight years the relationship can be maintained though not without strain, for periods of a year or more. (Bowlby 53)

Bowlby explained the theory in the Freudian terms that in the beginning mother plays the role of not only a protector, but she is also the “ego and super ego” of the child. Most of the psychologists have acknowledged that one of the most important things in the life is to remain friendly with others and form relationships, but a child is unable to reciprocate the love and care given by others so the mother does the job for him. Thus she acts as ego and super ego of the child. Bowlby
described this process as:

It is not surprising that during infancy and early childhood these functions are not operating at all or are doing so most imperfectly. During this phase of life, the child is therefore dependent on his mother performing them for him. She orients him in space and time, provides his environment, permits the satisfaction of some impulses, restrict others. She is his ego and super ego. Gradually he learns these arts himself, and as he does, the skilled parent transfers the roles to him. This is a slow, subtle and continuous process, beginning when he first learns to walk and feed himself and not ending completely until maturity is reached…Ego and super-ego development are thus inextricably bound up with the child’s primary human relationship. (Bowlby 53)

Thus Bowlby’s theory can explain the plight of stolen generations. The members of stolen generations did not get a chance to live with their mothers or their permanent substitutes, so a vacuum remained in their psychological life and their ego which dictates how a person maintains relations with others; and super ego which plays the role of stern father or inhibits a person from indulging in socially unacceptable behaviour remained undeveloped. This probably explains why there is so much domestic violence in the Aboriginal societies and why the incarceration rates for the Aborigines are so high.

Bowlby’s theory further explained that the relationship with mother gives the child the confidence to survive in the world not only physically but also psychologically. Mother not only acknowledges the child’s need for comfort and protection, but also respects his need for the independent exploration of environment. While living in such a relationship a child is likely to develop “an internal working model of self as valued and reliable, conversely, if the parent has frequently rejected the child’s need for independent exploration, the child is likely to construct an internal working model of self as unworthy and incompetent” (Bowlby 23). It is important to note that the children belonging to the stolen generations developed severe psychological problems because they grew up without their
mothers in the brutal atmosphere where they were treated like animals. Their needs for comfort and protection were not acknowledged by their so called protectors. So all these children grew up in such an atmosphere where they started thinking of themselves as “unworthy and incompetent.”

The psychological problems of the Aborigines cannot be blamed only on the policy of the stolen generations; rather they are a result of a sum total of many colonial policies and practices. Several scholars argue that the colonization experience of the natives, including loss of land, violence, removal of children from their families, and other cultural and social, and economic destructions created a “soul wound” a wound so deep that it reaches the vital core of their being, compounding their health problems and the “mental health problems of succeeding generations” (Vernon, Irene S. 35).

Another source of psychological trauma of the Aborigines is the lack of land rights and their displacement from their homelands. The Aborigines have a special bond with the land which is not professed by any other community in the world, but the problem is that when Aborigines talk about this relationship then it is dismissed as empty rhetoric by the whites. But now after considerable research by many people in different areas have confirmed that the Aborigines do have a special relationship with the land. In the Aboriginal traditions, land is not only a lifeless material commodity, a source of riches; rather it is a living entity just like human beings and other animals.

When the Europeans landed on the continent, they called it a terra nullius, a land occupied/ owned by no one. The fiction of terra nullius stood for almost two centuries when the Australian High Court turned it down in Mabo case in 1982. Terra Nullius is one concept that has probably done the worst damage to Aboriginal psyche. The Australian continent was occupied from many thousand years by the Aborigines who were divided into many tribes and spoke several hundred different languages (Hughes 9). Contrary to British supposition that they wandered about aimlessly:

Aboriginal tribes or clans actually had well defined territories. To be more precise, the traditional pattern of landholding vested certain
access and use rights in a descent group connected through male line. The territory held by the clan was its “estate.” (Hinchman and Hinchman 27)

The Aborigines had divided the continent in such a way that the encroachment on the land of other tribe was not possible.

The British thought that since the Aborigines were nomads so they did not have any sense of territory, but this conclusion was drawn by the whites after seeing the Aborigines from a distance. The researchers who have studied the Aboriginal society have proved this belief to be fallacious. It has been proved now beyond the point that though the Aborigines were nomads, yet their territories were well defined:

Although a constant nomad, however and this point cannot be too strongly emphasized, the Australian is not the unrestricted wanderer which some would have us believe. Neither the tribe, the local group, the family, nor the individual move about from one part of the continent to the other wherever fancy happens to guide, for all are bound to certain customs and traditions which have the force of inviolable laws, that there are well defined limits beyond which an individual and his family may not trespass will be brought out below. (Davidson 167)

The laws of inheritance of the land were also same as the other societies. The land owned by the father was inherited by his son on his death:

I have spoken of its territory as being used in common but there is no doubt that in many tribes (our local groups) the land is divided into Portions, each of which is the personal property of single male. The boundaries of these portions are known but not with any precision and I have never heard of an instance of their being artificially marked, as some writers have assented in general terms…as the blacks have a very elaborate nomenclature of their lands it is probable that before a father dies, he in some cases divides his lands amongst his sons, and in other lest the tribe know to which of this sons he has
bequeathed the various portions of his property… and it is likely that no male possesses any land until after the death of his father, and that every male whose father is dead owns a portion of the tribal territory. (Curr 64)

Many researchers have already pointed out that when the British landed on the Australian continent even at that time the ownership of land was very clear and it was the local tribe which was the owner of the land:

1. Local group is a land owning unit.
2. Patrilocality is the usual procedure.
3. The land of the local group is inherited in the male line.
4. Leadership in the local group is vested in a headman.
5. There is tendency for this position to be hereditary.
6. The old men form a council of Elders.
7. Trespassing by outsiders on the territory of the local group is strictly prohibited unless permission is first granted. (Davidson 618-19)

It is clear that the whites ignored all these things because it suited their purpose. At that time land was the primary source of riches; and agriculture and cattle industry were main occupations. So when the whites arrived in Australia which was a huge landmass when compared to their home country Britain, they seized the opportunity of owning the land which was better for agriculture and cattle industries. Under the international law a European power had three ways to take possession of territory: treaty, conquest and cession and terra nullius without formally admitting it, the British and colonial courts seem to have opted for the third of these alternatives in Australia (Hinchman & Hinchman 29 ). Australian society was a hunter gatherer society. They had no governing structure that was recognised by the Europeans. Their society was a “static relationship controlled by the ‘old men’ a gerontocracy” (Briscoe 151).

The whites did not care much for the Aborigines because they were backed by John Locke’s principles of property ownership. In his Two treatises of
Government, Locke Proposed that property in land originated from tilling the soil, in “mixing labour with land”:

As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by his labour does, as it were, enclose it from the common. Nor will it invalidate his right, to say everybody else has an equal title to it; and therefore he cannot appropriate, he cannot enclose, without the consent of all his fellow-commoners, all mankind. God, when he gave the world in common to all mankind, commanded man also to labour, and the penury of his condition required it of him. God and his reason commanded him to subdue the earth, i.e. improve it for the benefit of life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour. He that in obedience to this command of God, subdued, tilled and sowed any part of it, thereby annexed to it something that was his property, which another had no title to, nor could without injury take from him. (Locke 19)

The apparent absence of such activities had led to the colonizer’s conviction that the natives did not indulge in agriculture and hence no legitimate claim to it. This outlook “served to legitimize the widespread use of the terra nullius concept in 18th century international law facilitating colonial expansion and the dispossession of native peoples” (Short 492). Australian Aborigines were among other nomadic people who were removed from their land through agriculture and fire power. “Exception could be cited” Donald Denoon has remarked “but in general nomadic people have been lucky to survive the shock of European settlement, where the complete annihilation of settled communities has rarely been attempted, and even more rarely accomplished” (qtd. in Moran, psychodynamics 669).

Another important advocate of the land for agriculturist was Swiss Jurist Emer de Vattel. Like Locke he believed, “to live upon one’s flocks or upon the fruits of the chase is an idle mode of life those who pursue it need more land then they may would ‘under a system of honest labour,’” accordingly “they may not complain of other more industrious nation, too confined at home, should come and occupy
part of their lands” (Maddock, Your land 185).

The whites not only used philosophers like Locke and Vattel to serve their purpose, but also the religion. The continent of Australia was shown to be tailor made for the settlement of the whites:

Emma: How favored the place seems, Mamma; as if providence had designed it for a settlement.

Mrs. S: It might indeed have been so ordained my dear: you know nothing happens without God’s knowledge: The party have been under this special providence when they selected it (qtd. in Bradford, Providence).

In 1856, Presbyterian Clergyman J.D. Lang said “God’s first command to man was Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth: Now that the Aborigines had not done and therefore it was no fault in taking the land of which they were previously the possessors” (qtd. in Reynolds, Frontier 171).

Alexis Wright finds that lack of land rights is another source of alcoholism for the Aboriginal people In Grog War; she tells that the Warumungu Aborigines were brought to the brink of starvation on their own land because the land was given to the miners which disrupted the food supply of the Aborigines. It was during this time that the Warumungu people realised that alcohol can remove their problems at least for some time:

In those times it must have been a revelation to the Aboriginal people who had succumbed to alcohol, to know that the grog could make you forget just about everything that reminded you who you were. (Wright, Grog 36)

The problems faced by the Waramungu people can be easily generalized to the other tribes of Aborigines also who were dispossessed by the whites and the best lands were taken for agriculture and cattle stations and for mines. This was a big setback for the Aboriginal people because for them land was not only a source of economic riches, but the fountain spring of their culture and spirituality. The Aboriginal people are connected to the land through Dreaming, but the whites were unable to understand the concept as they were strangers to this kind of relationships.
An Aboriginal defines Dreaming:

White people ask us all the time what is Dreaming? This is a hard question because Dreaming is really big thing for Aboriginal people. In our language Yanyuwa, we called the Dreaming Yijan. The Dreamings made our law or narnu-yuwa. This law is the way we live, our rules. This law is our ceremonies, our songs, our stories; all of these things come from the Dreaming. One thing that I can tell you though is that our Law is not like European Law which is always changing- new government, new laws; but our Laws cannot change. We did not make it. The Law was made by the Dreaming many, many years ago and given to our ancestors and they gave it to us.

The Dreamings are our ancestors, no matter if they are fish, birds, men, women, animals, wind or rain. It was these Dreamings that made our Law. All things in our country have Law, they have ceremony and song, and they have people related to them….

In our ceremonies we wear marks on our bodies, they come from Dreaming too, we carry the design that the Dreamings gave to us. When we wear that Dreaming mark we are carrying the country, we are keeping the Dreaming held up, we are keeping the country and Dreaming alive. That is the most important thing, we have to keep up the country, the Dreamings, our Law, our people, it can’t change. Our Law has been handed on from generation to generation and it is our job to keep it going, to keep it safe. (qtd. in Bradley, John Yanuwa XI-XII)

When the people were dislocated from their lands, they could not keep their traditions alive because the traditions were different at different places. In fact, Aboriginal Law is land based and specifically associated with and applies to particular countries (Bird 31). But the white man could not understand their anguish because he could not comprehend such a relationship. He saw land as a dead mass which was made for him to exploit and become rich. For the whites, Man is centre of the creation and all the other animals and things are made for him but for the
Aborigines “Humans are only one aspect. It is not up to the humans to take supreme control, or define the ultimate values of the country. Aboriginal relationships to the land link people to ecosystems rather than giving dominion over them” (Bird10-11).

It is clear that land is very important for the survival of the Aborigines in Australia. Their physical and mental health depends on the land. This is what Alexis Wright asks:

   So what happens when Aboriginal people have been forced to abandon their traditional lifestyle and have become culturally alienated? In a study on Indigenous people of Greenland, the Danish centre for Human Rights found that there are higher incidences of both substance abuse, community and family violence, including suicide. Both physical and mental health deteriorates. (Wright, Grog 61)

   It is clear that Wright herself believes that lack of land rights has played an important role in the deterioration of mental health of Australian people.

   The theoretical proof for the assertion of Aboriginal writers that the health of land and health of mind is interconnected is provided by the work of American philosopher Theodore Roszak (1933-2011) and Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht. Roszak gave the concept of ecological unconscious and stressed on the well-being of earth for the mental health of human beings:

   The core of mind is the ecological unconscious. For ecopsychology, repression of the ecological unconscious is the deepest root of collusive madness in industrial society; open access to the ecological unconscious is the path to sanity.

   According to Roszak, the fundamental reason of the modern man’s psychological problems could be found in his estranged relationship with the environment. The human psychology withers with the destruction of the landscape and environment:
Just as it has been the goal of previous therapies to recover the repressed contents of the unconscious, so the goal of ecopsychology is to awaken the inherent sense of environmental reciprocity that lies within ecological unconscious. Other therapies seek to heal the alienation between person and person, person and family, person and society. Ecopsychology seeks to heal more fundamental alienation between the person and the natural environment. (Roszak 320)

The goal of ecopsychology is to reestablish the broken link between the man and the environment. According to Roszak man’s destiny is closely linked with the environment. If environment is pushed towards destruction, then it will destruct human psyche also:

This is an essay in ecopsychology. Its goal is to bridge our culture’s long standing, historical gulf between the psychological and ecological, to see the needs of planet and the person as continuum. In search of greater sanity, it begins where many might say sanity leaves off: at the threshold of the nonhuman world. in a sense that weaves science and psychiatry, poetry and politics together, the ecological priorities of the planet are coming to be expressed through our most spiritual travail. The earth’s cry for rescue from the punishing weight of the industrial system, we have created is our own cry for a scale and quality of life that will free each of us to become the complete person we were born to be. (Roszak 14)

According to Roszak the other psychological therapies “seek to heal the alienation between person and person, person and family, person and society. Ecopsychology seeks to heal the more fundamental alienation between the person and natural environment” (Roszak 320).

Roszak developed a general theory regarding how man’s mental health is affected by the changes in environment. Glenn Albrecht’s theory discusses the impact of mining on the human psyche. He coined two new terms “solastalgia” and “psychoterratic illness” to describe the relationship between land and human psyche. He describes solastalgia as:
The pain or sickness caused by the loss of or inability to derive solace connected to the present state of one’s home environment. Solastalgia exists when there is recognition that the place where one resides and that one loves is under assault (physical desolation). It can be contrasted to spatial and temporal dislocation and dispossession experienced as nostalgia. Solastalgia is the “live experience of the loss of the value of the present as manifest in a feeling of dislocation; of being undermined by forces that destroy the potential for solace to be derived from the immediate and given. In brief, solastalgia is a form of homesickness one experiences when one is still at home. (Albrecht, Glenn, “Solastalgia: a new Psychoterratic illness”)

He further defines psychoterratic illness as:

Psychoterratic illness involves the psyche or mind and terra or earth. So a psychoterratic illness would be an earth related illness, where both nostalgia and solastalgia are example of people being made “mentally ill by severing of healthy links between themselves and their home territories. (Khanna, “Solastalgia and Mental Affects of Climate Change)

While studying the problems of the residents of Hunter Valley, Albrecht acknowledged that the “Australian Aborigines, Navajos and any number of Indigenous peoples have reported this sense of mournful disorientation after being displaced from land” (qtd. in Smith, Daniel B.). He terms the feeling of staying at one home land as “heart’s ease”, but when one is displaced from the homeland, he loses “heart’s ease” and starts suffering from problems like depression:

People have heart’s ease when they’re on their own country. If you force them off that country, if you take them away from their land, they feel the loss of heart’s ease as a kind of vertigo, a disintegration of their whole life (qtd. in Smith, Daniel B.).

The important point about Albrecht’s theory is that it not only discusses the impact of displacement from land, but also disfiguring of land by natural and man-made disasters. The entire research was carried out by Albrecht when he got distress
calls from the residents of Hunter Valley who were under severe psychological stress because of the coal mines that were operating near their places. Albrecht studied the problems and noted:

Their sense of place, their identity, physical and mental health and general wellbeing were all challenged by unwelcome change. Moreover, they felt powerless to influence the outcome of the change process. From the transcript material generated from the interviews the following responses clearly resonate with the dominant components of solastalgia— the loss of ecosystem health and corresponding sense of place, threats to personal health and wellbeing and a sense of injustice and/ or powerlessness. (Albrecht, Glenn, Solastalgia S96)

Albrecht’s research mainly concentrated on the residents of Hunter valley and most of those residents were white. This fact can help anybody in understanding the impact of mining on the Aboriginal people who consider land as their mother. When white residents can feel so distressed who do not have any such connection with the land then the severity of impact on Aborigines is not hard to imagine. Mining is considered as a “rape” by the Aborigines. For the Aborigines “so powerful is the connection between a loved place and experience of negative transformation, that for some people, suicide is seen as the only form of relief from psychoterratic distress” (Albrecht “Solastalgia: A new Psychoterratic Illness”). Mining not only causes the sickness of land which affects the Aboriginal mind, but it also affects them in many other ways which further exacerbate their mental health. When they see their land getting mined, their sacred places getting desecrated, their ancestral resting places getting ravaged they feel acute powerlessness. This powerlessness in turn paves the way for extreme hopelessness which is an extreme psychological problem. So many of the psychological problems of the Aborigines emanate from their displacement from the land and from seeing their land getting desecrated by the mining activities going on and inflicting violence on their mother (land).

In his paper “Solastalgia: A New concept in Health and identity,” Albrecht refers particularly to the Australian Aborigines and notes that there is a genuine
grieving for country among the Aborigines. He acknowledges that the Aborigines share a relationship with the land which is “difficult for the people in European cultures to fathom” (47). In the same paper he asserts that solastalgia is responsible for the Aboriginal suicides because, the Aborigines cannot tolerate the defacing their lands by mining and agricultural activities:

Both the loss of country and disintegration of cultural ties between humans and the land (their roots) are implicated in the ‘crisis’ within many Indigenous communities in contemporary Australia. The difficulty or inability to find “heart’s ease” is a root cause of the identity problems faced by Indigenous Australians. As explained by one of the Indigenous elder, suicide occurs “because life at home is too awful.” This insight combined with the knowledge that premature death rates are highest where people remain in their traditional lands suggests that solastalgia, rather than nostalgia is a powerful factor.

(48)

In the same paper Albrecht has tried to relate the social and medical epidemics among the Aborigines to solastalgia: “Both social and medical epidemics that afflict some indigenous people can be partly understood as their attempt to relieve themselves of the distress, desolation and pain of solastalgia” (Albrecht, Glenn, Solastalgia: A New concept in Health and Identity 48).

In fact, there were people before Glenn Albrecht who wrote about the health of land. In the paper “Solastalgia: A New concept in Health and identity,” he builds his argument on the basis of the ideas propounded by Elyne Mitchell (1913-2002) who in her book Soil and Civilization (1946) tried to explain to the Australians the importance of connection between human and ecosystem health. In her book, Mitchell wrote that agricultural practices were ruining the continent as well as the psychic health of the Australians:

But no time or nation will produce genius if there is a steady decline away from the integral unity of man and the earth. The break in this unity is swiftly apparent in the individual person. Divorced from his roots, man loses his psychic stability. (qtd. in Albrecht. Solastalgia: A New Concept in Health and Identity 42)
The psychoanalytic approach is thought to be controversial, yet its influence on the present day culture is immense. Psychoanalytic concepts such as sibling rivalry, inferiority complexes and defense mechanisms are almost known to everyone. The theory has an immense impact on the post-colonial studies. Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), who was a psychiatrist, used psychoanalysis to demonstrate the process of how colonialism influenced the psyche of the colonized people. Similar studies have been done by people like Ashis Nandy (1937) whose book *The Intimate Enemy; Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (1983) studied the psychological problems posed at the personal level by colonialism and its institutions. Albert Memmi (1920- ) published *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (trans. by Howard Greenfield, 1991) and *Racism* (Translated by Steve Martinet 2000). So psychoanalysis has played an important role in the development of post-colonial studies.

The theories of Albrecht and Roszak show that the surroundings of the person’s abode also have an impact on the psychology. So the mental problems of the Aborigines can be attributed to the colonial policies of taking away the children from their parents and their subsequent dislocation from their homelands. In the next chapters impact of both these policies will be studied on the psyche of the Aborigines.