

RESEARCH ARTICLE



CONJURING THE CRIMINAL: COLONIAL OTHERNESS IN THE TEXTS OF ROBERTA SYKES AND RUBY LANGFORD GINIBI

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ABSTRACT

The process of European colonisation had led to the formation of several unwanted subject positions for the colonised groups throughout the various colonies. Colonial Australia witnessed the birth of one of the most economically, socially and psychologically inferior race in the history of colonisation called the Stolen Generation. These mixed-race Aborigines were the victims of stereotyped identity formation, hence, witnessed subsequent otherness and subjectivisation in the early twentieth century. This paper further analyses the criminal identity enforced on these Aborigines as depicted in the texts by Aboriginal authors, Roberta Sykes and Ruby Langford 'Ginibi' who themselves were forced to lead hybrid-chaotic lives owing to their mixed parentage.

[**Keywords:** Stolen Generation, otherness, representation, mixed-race, hybridity, subjectivisation]

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An important engagement of the postcolonial studies is to critique the construction of *otherness* in the colonial discourse. The *representation*¹ of *otherness* has continued to fascinate postcolonial academicians and researchers and had been the subject of debate for a long time. My serious academic engagement with

the depiction of the same in relation to the marginal communities has helped me in generating some critical perspectives regarding them. The Cold War, the process of European colonisation and the emerging social, economic and political parameters have led to the division of the earth into three broad categories- the first world nations, the second world nations and the third world nations. The first world nations, USA and its allies in the cold war, are economically the most developed countries in the world. Being a part of the third world developing nations and an interest in the first world phenomena, I found a connection and a condition that has third world situations in the first

¹ The term has been taken from Stuart Hall's essay, *The Work of Representation*(1997) where the term is seen as a phenomenon which involves the politics of image creation in any culture. The term representation gets social and cultural validation through the effective construction of 'meaning, associations and values' related to a particular culture. And this representation helps in generation of meanings for a particular culture about itself or about another culture that intends to project.

world nations. Fourth world² conditions within Australia with its gripping penal history of colonization grabbed my attention in its creation of *otherness*, is central to my study.

This paper intends to investigate the criminal representation of Aborigines³ in Australia and the reform measures utilized by the white government to abolish the criminality from the imagined all white Australia, a phenomenon that was integral to the colonial strategies of eradicating the blacks from the Continent. For a serious academic engagement, it is difficult to overlook the penal history of Australia with the nexus of the colonizer and the colonized situations in this continent. The penal-colonial history of colonization in this context is symptomatic of the creation of a relationship between the two broader phenomena- the all *White* Europe and the all *Native* pre-colonial Australia. These two autonomous entities found a connection on the basis of their penal engagement. This penal relation created a bipolar extreme connection between concept and academically civilized Europe and the savage Australia, which shows the successful creation and propagation of postcolonial identity formation where Australia was to become the land of white criminals which eventually became the land of criminals.

Australia, as it has been already called as the extended womb of Europe, partook in the conception and birth of its foster criminal race which actually belonged to the mother Europe. This initial criminal connection kept on lingering in the White Australian psyche who continued to believe that all those who were not white from the skin colour were of the criminal descendants. In historiographic representatives of Australia, the colonized have always held the position of the *other* and the colonized whites have grappled with the position of the *self*. Hegelian concepts of the

² Fourth world has various connotations and here it refers to the third world socio-economic conditions in a first World Country

³ I have used the term Aborigines and Natives interchangeably to denote to the original inhabitants of Australia who were the most dispossessed people who were colonized and made colonial subjects.

*binary*⁴ creation also took place in the representation of the *other*. How does one define the *other*? The *other* can only be defined when it is defined in terms of the *self*, can there be a *self* without the *other*-this symbiotic relationship prohibits the independent existence of any of these categories and both are *representations* and their *construction* depends on their relation to one another. This eventually establishes an unequal criminal binary relationship between our Australian binaries. In this case there can be no existence of the whites as the controlling race without the uninhibited-criminal black natives which needed to be controlled.

As a material of research this paper uses autobiographical narratives written by Australian Aboriginal writers, Roberta Sykes and Ruby Langford Ginibi. My choice of autobiographical narratives is essentially due to the testimonial aspect involved in the depiction of their own life histories, a reason why I have not engaged in fictional texts, though autobiographies also engage in fictionalization in their narrativisation, a debate I intend not to engage in. The paper utilizes and engages with the various colonial constructions the case of the *mixed-race*⁵ *stolen generations*⁶, particularly with reference to the laws that a specific signification in their lives. This paper is divided into three sections, the first section deals with the colonial history of Australia, the second part deals the creation of the stolen generation, the third part deals with the criminalization of the

⁴ Binary as defined in the book *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*(2000), refers to the ideological tool used by the colonizer with the impulse to 'exploit' and 'civilize' the colonized. It is a relation of dependence where one gets defined in terms of the other.

⁵ Mixed-race refers to the hybrid races in Australia during the colonial times. There were several categories under this which was determined on the basis of the percentage of white blood one had.

⁶ The stolen generation, the term attributed by historian Peter Read, refers to the children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island who were taken away from their families to be raised in state run orphanages called Homes. This phenomenon was also seen in colonial Canada, but here I emphasize on the Australian context.

Aboriginals as put forth by the authors in their respective texts and the concluding fourth part draws inferences as to how the construct of the criminality is carried out.

I

The Colonial History of Australia

A brief description of the process of colonization in Australia is essential to understand the colonizer and the colonized relationship from their initial encounters. Texts written on the history of colonization in Australia affirm that the colonization of Australia began with the arrival of the first fleet of Europeans at the Botany Bay in the year 1788. The texts also substantiate for the initial cordial encounter between the whites and the native people who were hospitable by nature. The generalized historical depiction also approves of the gradual violent encounters between the two races which led to the formation of a clear-cut unapproved relation between them which will continue for the ages to come.

This unapproved relation continued as the colonizers took over the lands of the natives disclaiming all their rights on the land through the very first *terra nullius*⁷ law. These initial laws, not only took away all the land rights of the indigenous people, but it also declared that the land which had not been acquired by human beings, automatically comes under the control of the colonizing people. This law permanently put an exclamation mark on the existence of native people on the land for 40,000 years. This denial was also carried forward in other laws as well, which deprived the native people of their rights, which will be discussed in the next section.

Australia after colonization was broadly divided into the white colonizers and the non-white natives. There was no in-between space as a result of which there was a clear cut distinction between these two binaries. They were racially, ethnically and culturally divergent groups whom the process of colonisation had bound to a common

⁷ Terra Nullius, the international law declares that a particular land has been occupied or has not been under any sovereign rule yet. This law was used as a tool by the colonizers to acquire the colonized land on the basis that the land has not been legally occupied. This phenomenon was seen in Australia.

geographical location. The *binary* groups had to come together so that the relationship of inequality, comparison and contrast could be developed. The contrast was not limited to the skin colour, it extended to involve the living style, and the rituals performed. The practices which were central to the white society were epitomized as the centre of civilization which meant that all the native practices held a peripheral position. And such peripheral practices which were different from the white practices were the abnormal, the uncivilized and the barbaric *other*. Homi. K. Bhabha calls this *representation* of the *other* where the other is defined in all its difference from the normative self, as an *ambivalent*⁸ representation. And in this case the white Australians defined the native Australians as the Australian *other*, a representation which is centred on hierarchising on the race basis.

The representation continues in the construction of the *other* whom Bhabha denotes as the *colonial stereotype* who is the ideological projection of the colonial psyche. This colonial stereotype, in this case the Aborigines of Australia, are defined as a 'complex, *ambivalent* and contradictory mode of representation' meted out through the *colonial discourse* in the *process of subjectivisation*⁹ of the colonized natives. This *subjectivisation* of Aborigines was mainly carried out through the various laws put forth for them, I will be dealing with the protection laws in this paper. Protection laws were the laws put forth by the Aborigines Board (a government body which aimed for providing all round protection and preservation of Aborigines and in one act Aborigines are cared and protected under the flora and fauna category).

II

Creation of the Stolen Generations

The colonial discourse in Bhabha's terminology operates on the ideological 'fixity' in

⁸ Ambivalence as used in this article is taken from the definition as given in the *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*(2000) refers to the way in which the colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject, for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, at the same time.

⁹ Here I intend to refer to the process of creation of the colonial subject within the colonial discourse.

the *subjectivisation* of its native population. The ideological fixity is that the natives are the disordered race and that is the reason they have to be civilized. There is ambivalence in this relationship as the colonizer who believes that the natives are uncivilized also propagates the faith that the savage colonized can be made obedient subjects. This process of *subjectivisation*, that is the effective creation of an obedient subject race, led to the creation of the stolen generation. The *ambivalence* continues further as the 'uncivilized' race, which is repulsive to the colonizer due to its nature and at the same time it is desired due to the embodiment of an obedient subject. This epitomizes the creation of another symbiotic equation between the colonizer and the colonized, where binary formation is carried forward in the formation of the policing whites and the criminal blacks.

The most astonishing ambivalence in Australia is found in the relationship between the colonial Whites and the colonized stolen generation. Stolen generation is symptomatic of the *contact zone*¹⁰ *hybridity* that took place due to the continued interaction between these two racially divergent groups. Stolen generation in Australia was the racially hybrid children born due to the miscegenation between the white colonizers and the black natives (Sahoo, 21). These stolen generation children due to their mixed racial heritage are darker than most of the whites and the same time fairer than most of the natives. They are of both the races and were equally desired by both the communities. They were wanted by the whites as the whites felt that due to the percentage of white blood in them, they can be easily assimilated into the white society (Sahoo, 35). These children were to make for them the most economically viable sources of cheap labor in the history of colonisation, which seemed to satisfy their capitalistic desires in the guise of humanitarian grounds. And the blacks wanted them due to their

natural affinity for them (Sahoo, 36). And the blacks with no such capitalistic motives wanted to cash-in in their emotional ties with their children.

White Australian policy wanted that Australia should be a completely white nation with no blacks in it. This worked out on their assumption that natives are a dying race due to their high mortality rate, so they won't survive anyway to be part of what they wanted as White Australia. The emerging threat to this assumption was the increasing population of the in-between mixed-race population who were neither white nor black and who were expected to live longer than the natives. These mixed-race Aborigines posed a threat to the impending dream, hence, the white government found a permanent solution to erase this race as well. They wanted this race to be assimilated into the white community, assuming that the white blood in them will make it easier for them to adapt into the white society, and by mixing them with the whites their blackness can be 'wiped out' in three to four generations as observed by Neville, the Chief Protector of Aborigines.

This assumption made them to remove all the children from their families to the state-run orphanages contrarily called Homes¹¹ (Sahoo, 40). These mixed-race children were removed, sometimes with the will of parents and sometimes with coercion in the pretext of providing them education and better living conditions than their bush focused native living conditions. The process of removal was always painful for the children and their family members. The proceedings were carried out legally with the involvement of the written-official document from the Chief Protector of the Aborigines and the Aborigines Protection Board. These children, who were removed from their families never to return, made who were termed as stolen generation by historian Peter Read in his 21 page pamphlet titled *The Stolen Generation: The Removal of Aboriginal Children in New South Wales 1883 to 1969*. The removal of these children was politically validated by the fact that these children were neglected by their

¹⁰ Contact zone as quoted in the book *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (2000) refers to social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination-like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths.

¹¹ Homes here refer to the various missions and children's home made for the Aboriginal children in order to provide them protection under the Aborigines Protection Acts.

aboriginal parents and deserved a better life which could be provided to them in the 'Homes' only. The other names for homes were missions or dormitories. The phenomenon of removal of natives is as old as the process of colonization. It is not only the mixed race children who were removed, but other aborigines were also removed, sometimes along with their families to work on' the stations and sometimes to be part of the mission run by white Christian missionaries to carry out various forms of religious conversions. Stolen Generation Aborigines emerged out as the worst outcome of the imperial policies which actually proposed protection of the Aborigines. The removal of these children was rampant during 1909 to 1960's.

III

Criminalisation of the Aborigines

The Whites in Australia withheld the position of centrality in the colonial discourse which was essential to the phenomenon of Eurocentric conceptualization of world history, this concept has been discussed by postcolonial critic and theorist, Edward Said in his text, *Orientalism*(1978). This Eurocentric ideology in White colonizers led to the formulation of an imagined peripheral savage position for the Aborigines and the central-superior 'civilized' position for the whites. The other ideological representation was the binary roles assigned to them that was the police-criminal binary relation. There is an interesting text written by Australian author Anne Summers titled *Damned Whores and God's Police* where she takes up the feminist concerns and talks how men have always kept on moral policing on the women who are attributed with the damned whore's position and men who were there as their natural police. The condition of Aborigines in Australia was in many ways similar to the women Summers' talks about. Aborigines were branded as criminals and to their rescue they were provided with whites-their natural/ moral/social police.

Policing was integral to the imperial Australian society which could never erase from its colonial psyche its initial penal history. In the construction of various identities for the Aborigines there was an addition and that was the criminal identity. This criminality of Aborigines was fostered

through the various colonial laws and policies made for the Aborigines. Stolen generation being most vulnerable to colonial policies were the absolute victims of this imperial representation of criminal identity. How is one defined as a criminal, what are the qualifications to deem one as a criminal? A very generalised conception of a criminal is someone who commits a crime and due to his crimes or offences gets deprived of his right to control his own life, he is subjected to depend upon someone else's authority and direction to lead his/ her own life. A criminal is also someone who takes a punishment for his life and also suffers isolation and confinement. A criminal is also someone who is a threat to the peaceful existence of a society and hence viewed with suspicion and fear and whose sight can also be disturbing at times. In my reading of the stolen generation condition I have found that there is a basic similarity in the pattern of life they were forced to live and the way criminals lived.

The stolen generation narrative chosen for study are *The Snake Cradle* trilogy and *Don't Take Your Love to Town*. *The Snake Cradle* Trilogy is the narrative of Roberta Sykes who feels criminalized due to her partial white but mainly dark skin colour. One of the most prominent reasons for Roberta Sykes' gangrape was due to her identity as an Aboriginal girl and not being a white person. Her position as a victim gave her no consolation but there was a guilt involved for being the victim "I felt that I didn't deserve a friend, I had somehow attracted evil and therefore had become evil myself"(Sykes, 299). The white system enforces an already existing criminal role on the Aborigines due to which Roberta Sykes feels that her inherent evilness as a black person had attracted the evil of rape on her. The White society had an internalized conviction that being black was criminal, then how can a criminal question the criminality acted out on her. The crime of rape of which Sykes was a victim, criticized and questioned her victim position only because she was an Aborigine. The fourth defendant who had raped Sykes screamed in the courtroom, "What the hell! She's an Abo!She's just a fucking boong! He continued to scream these words over and over, as though his outrage at the verdict to the judge and the jury, while he was

being dragged, kicking and struggling, down into the holding cells under the courtroom”(320).

The criminal and his family were infuriated as they felt that the punishment for the crime was way beyond the severity of the crime. They felt that the fact that the victim was an Aboriginal woman somehow reduced the severity of the crime. Had it been a white woman the punishment would have been justified in some sense. In every society it is the privileged who has all the rights to call the unprivileged with all sorts of names. It is somehow contradictory that the criminal calls the victim with derogatory remarks as ‘Abo’ and ‘Boong’¹². On a day to day basis racism is encountered by color people by the whites in several parts of the world. The names like ‘nigger’, ‘darkie’ and ‘blackie’ and all. Naming is a colonial phenomenon with postcolonial signification where it is the superior who names the inferior and the vice-versa is not possible. In the above mentioned instance in a courtroom a criminal charged with the crime of rape calls names to the victim. In this situation where the criminal occupies a superior position over the victim due to the due to his assumed racial superiority, can hardly believe in the victim positionality of a racially inferior black woman:

I saw no point in telling anyone the truth, because even woman who had been overpowered or raped were considered to have contributed , if not wholly caused, their own misfortune by having acted or dressed in a provocative manner. The crime of rape held a tremendous curiosity for public, and over time, I saw numerous other women who had been raped suffer as much from ignorance and even hostile public attention as they had from initial assault, I was determined not to be one of them(324).

Being Aboriginal was a crime in itself and an Aboriginal with white blood, as Roberta Sykes’ position was no less challenging. It does not allow you to properly belong anywhere. There was something in being an Aboriginal that attracted

¹² These two terms have been used as derogatory remarks against the people of colour to refer to their inferior status due to the race they belong to.

suspicion towards one’s day to day activities. Getting gangraped was not the only violent attack that she faced, the violence continued almost all her life with undue hostile attention. “I’d grown up in a racially hostile environment, where being a ‘darkie’ was viewed with suspicion and distrust”(325). Sykes even believed that in a society where it is the white who holds every position of authority and even the crows of the shops are trained to make noise witnessing the sight of a black person(an instance which she witnesses while visiting a shop owned by a white man and mostly the owners of every other place were white in those days), the only reason she got a fair chance of trial in the court for getting raped, even though the offenders were white, was due to the fact that her mother was a white woman, an identity which her mother flaunted in every other situation which had the slightest chances of putting them at a disadvantage due to her part-black children.

My mother’s valiant desire to be a white woman in a world she recognized as intrinsically racist had, in the end, been god-sent for me. I learned of no other instance in which the rape of a black woman by white men resulted in prison sentences. Perhaps there had been, but throughout my research had never heard of it. I felt sure that initially, only my mother’s ‘whiteness’ had prompted the police to begin their inquiries(326).

Sykes mother’s emphasis on her whiteness had in many circumstances helped her from not becoming a victim of the all white society, in a way her mother constructs a counter-pose of resistance for her victim child. She being a single mother of three mixed-race children could still keep her children, when the Aborigines Protection Board used to remove every aboriginal children to the Homes in the slightest cases of neglect on the parent’s side, it was her white identity that came to her and her children’s rescue. Every time the government officials threatened or forced her to send her children to the Home as it was difficult for her to manage three girls all by herself, she emphasized on her whiteness by saying, “You can’t do that to a white woman. You are not dealing with some poor dumb Abo”(99). It was important for her specify

that her whiteness brings her automatic rights and she does not occupy a helpless position as any other Aboriginal woman. Her specification is also symptomatic of her belief that all Aborigines are poor and dumb, hence, they can be tricked easily, while she being a white woman was smart enough to be aware of her rights as a white person.

Sykes grew up in the early twentieth century where the removal of the Aboriginal children was rampant. In those circumstances Sykes' and her sisters were not removed, comes as a matter of surprise. There were two reasons that saved them from being sent to the Homes. First, was the whiteness of their mother, when you are white in Australia, especially during those times, it becomes easier for you, Secondly, Sykes mother emphasized that they have no Aboriginal connection on any side. Being Aboriginal from any side puts one in the danger of getting unwanted attention from the Aborigines Protection Board, which was keen on keeping complete track of every Aboriginal child. That is the reason Sykes' mother never let her children call themselves or identify themselves as Aboriginal. On being asked about their father, she came out with a new story of their connections like her husband being 'an American Soldier who was half Negro and half Cherokee', she was ready to accept any other connection other than Aboriginal lineage for her children. Sykes later realizes that was the only way her mother could keep her children with her without being taken away by the Aboriginal Protection Board. In her initial years Sykes, being the unruly child she was, 'wanted a credible history for herself' even if that meant being identified as Aboriginal, without realizing the consequences of identifying oneself as an Aboriginal in an all white-authoritative society, which her mother was very much conscious of. On being asked once why she can't identify herself as an Aborigine which was very evident from her physical attributes, she gets smacked by her mother for whom being an Aborigine in Australia was in itself a crime:

You are as good as a white person, and if you behave yourself properly, they will treat you like a white person. You will get the same opportunities, and the same chance to make life for yourself. If you

keep hanging around with the darkies at Garbutt, then you will get pregnant and nothing will save you. You will end up living in a bloody humpy and having a tribe of kids that the government will take away from you. So, you hear me straight you're as good as a white person and you've got to act like a white person, or I won't be responsible for your fate(174).

It is clear from Sykes's mother statements that being white meant all the opportunities and being an Aboriginal meant denial of all that. And there is a *fixity* in the understanding of Aboriginal beings. Sykes's mother knew that when one identifies oneself as an Aborigine then they will have to get away without any opportunities in the white dominant society, that is the reason she wanted her children to be anything but Aborigines. For that matter she knew hanging around with Aborigines can bring the same fate that Aborigines share as the Aborigines Protection Acts deemed anyone as an Aboriginal " who habitually associated with the Aborigines"(Aborigines Protection Act 1897), and Sykes mother was nervous that her children who already have Aboriginal physical attributes might be deemed as Aboriginal for associating with them. There is another observation that all the Aborigines stayed in a ghetto before the policy of Integration started gaining momentum and anyone who visited the places where Aborigines stayed had the threat of getting identified with them.

Living as a *white* in Australia, Sykes's mother knew what it meant not to be a White person. She and all other whites had a fixed idea about what an Aborigine meant. Being an Aborigine meant that you will live under impoverished conditions and government will have say in anything and everything you do as authorities have a say in what a criminal does. Being an Aborigine not only denied the basic rights to live but it meant that your children will be government property. Aborigines like criminals could not possess anything, not even their own children. Government was the legal guardian of all Aboriginal children, which deemed that all Aboriginal parents are incapable of taking the responsibility of their children(Sahoo, 155). This also established legally that the Aboriginal children were not legitimately

related to the parents but to the Aborigines Protection Board and the Chief Protector specifically.

In the above quoted passage from the text mother of Roberta Sykes even feels that her children should get the approval of the white society. She felt that it was a privilege to be called and accepted as a white. This notion is part of the concept of *White Privilege* which refers to the advantages and opportunities that comes along one's way when one is part of or is identified as belonging to the dominant race, in this case the white society. One often cited example of this is not being followed by a clerk in a store or not grabbing police's attention without any reason. Sykes's mother also believed that being identified or getting accepted as white saves you from the day to day troubles that any Aborigine faces. The only option in that case was to behave as a white so that eventually one wins the trust of the whites to be part of the *white privilege*.

Does *White Privilege* bring equality in attitude? Does it mean that Aborigines who get accepted in white society are treated at par with the whites. In the case of Sykes's family that did not happen even though her mother was white. Not being white in skin colour added to the problems on the day to day basis for Sykes and her sisters. In spite of having access to the benefits of *white privilege* they were victims of the *racial microaggression* on the day to day basis. Microaggression coined by Chester. M. Pierce is "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults towards people"(Sue et al, 2007). According to Pierce the most common instrument of pro racist behaviours are microaggression. This form of microaggression which targets a person due to his race and color can be called *racial microaggression*. A common form of *racial microaggression* faced by Aborigines, hence, encountered by Roberta Sykes and her sisters was unwarranted police attention, a kind of *surveillance*, a concept espoused by Michel Foucault in his theories of *governmentality* and the discussions on prison systems. In those days police never required any permit to enter upon the

personal space of Aborigines. Aborigines, criminals they were believed to be, could be searched for and could be detained at any place and could be interrupted anywhere and could be put in jail for absolute no reason. Roberta Sykes remembers police entering her bedroom without a warrant. They pick her husband and took and put him in jail and beat him up for misguiding the police, when he was trying to discover the new streets in the new town. The interference of police not only bothered Roberta Sykes' life but her sister also got offended due to police's search of her personal belongings:

My youngest sister, Leonie, was extremely upset because the police, while searching her room, had shaken out her packet of Modess. She was fourteen years old and had just arrived at the stage of needing to use them. She cried with embarrassment after the police had gone..Mum resented anything that drew the attention of the police to our family in a negative manner(20).

Being Aboriginal meant drawing unwarranted attention of the police. That was one of the reasons why many of the Aboriginal people and their families used to keep very low profile. They try their best to lead very average lives not outshining in any field or take a front seat in any public activity which also meant that they let go off many opportunities in life due to this. They did not want to be noticed by the police and get subjected to their regular presence in their lives. While Roberta Sykes was working for the Black movement she constantly encountered police interference on every action of her's. All her movements were recorded, her vehicle was followed, she was not allowed to keep friends at home, she was not allowed to hold meetings regarding the movements, her phone calls were tapped, her letterbox was being tampered with, her house was broken in, her things were misplaced at her apartment and many more such instances.

Police attention was the worst form of racial microaggression which creates a great psychological impact on the lives of Aborigines. It is a constant *interpellation*, the term taken from Althusser, which emphasizes in this context that being an Aborigine one can be hailed anytime and

anywhere. Ruby Langford Ginibi's son, Nobby gets convicted due to the false allegations of a prostitute and he gets put to blame due to his Aboriginality. Even years after getting free and been acquitted he could not get over the fear of the police. "He was a real paranoid about police. If he saw a cop's car coming, he'd watch it until it was out of sight but that's what jail does to people; I knew he'd be watching his back all his damn life, because of the jail he had done(Ginibi,23). That is what the white system does to an Aborigine, it gives a lifelong impairment of inherent criminality to the Aborigines who could never recover from it. The imposition of criminality was essential to the white system of regulations for the Aborigines.

Racism and criminalization of Aboriginality was not only limited to the police system but was ingrained in all the social structures(Sahoo, 76). Aborigines in Australia were victims of *Institutional Racism*, which refers to the race biased discrimination meted out to people in various structures of the society, in the government institutions like school, hospital, religious bodies and leading to 'differential access to goods, services and opportunities' for the one who is considered racially inferior. Roberta Sykes and Ruby Langford Ginibi both cite instances of their lives where they have been victims of *Institutional racism*. Roberta Sykes was denied employment opportunities in various places in spite of qualifying the criteria's demanded, her only hurdle that came in her way and the various jobs was her Aboriginal identity. Roberta Sykes was fully qualified for the job of a nurse in a hospital but the authorities wanted her to mop the floor instead, "it wasn't hard to see they weren't prepared to employ a black girl in a nursing capacity(Sykes, 29). Sykes son, Russel became a permanent victim of medical racism when he was taken to hospital and the white doctor denied to attend to him due to his black color which resulted in creating a permanent damage to his ears. On later diagnosis it was found that:

a list of things Russel would never be able to do as a result of his perforated eardrums, such as traveling in unsealed planes or deep dive; anything that would put pressure on the drums. At three years

old his life and its limitations were already being shaped by racism(70).

Ruby Langford Ginibi remembers getting from the Aborigines Board, Lux soap for her fairer babies and Palmolive soap for her darker babies, a variant of racism where mothers had no option but discriminate between the children on the choice of soap for them. Racism was not limited to these institutions only but religious bodies like Churches also practiced racism. Sykes learnt about a Church called the Mormon Church, which does admits the blacks but only at the lower levels. They propagated the notion that being Aboriginal meant one had committed sins in their previous life and being white meant that one had been good in their previous birth as a result being rewarded with a white skin. Roberta Sykes found herself out of place in this ideology and sensed the racism ingrained in this pattern as well. "I found this concept extremely racist and perhaps designed to force Blacks to accept a servile position in society, just as they were made to accept a lowly place if they wanted to be part of this Church'(75). Sykes was not ready to confirm to the pattern, a subordinate position in Church was unacceptable to her.

IV

CONCLUSION

I started the discussion in this paper by reflecting upon the concept of *otherness* held by Aborigines in fourth world countries. I still linger upon the denial of opportunities to the Aborigines in Australia in colonial Australia due to the racial, ethnic and culturally different and stigmatized space they occupied in the white dominated colonial Australia plagued by the various protection policies of the imperial government. The colonizer and the colonized, in this case the whites and the stolen generation mixed-race Aborigines occupied very unequal binary positions due to the colonial policies. These Aborigines were at the receiving end of the various forms of *racisms* practiced in Australia as evidenced from the Stolen Generation autobiographical narratives. The *hybrid* identities of the Aborigines making them more vulnerable to colonial policies and laws leaves them with social, legal and psychological scars which gets imprinted on their assumed criminal identity, a crisis from which they never get out of. The various forms of

racisms criminalized Aboriginal identity not only through the *microaggressions* in day to day basis but also practiced and *institutionalized* the criminalization of Aboriginality through their so-called Protection policies for the Aborigines whose proposed intension was to provide for the Aboriginal benefits. This paper is an attempt to trace the construction of the criminal identity for natives in colonial context, Aborigines in this case.

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