

# Raising Awareness of Gender Discrimination Against Indigenous Australian Women of the Stolen Generation Through Doris Kartinyeri's *Kick The Tin*

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**Abstract**—In contemporary society, the persistent manifestation of gender discrimination continues to impede the advancement of women in their pursuit of gender equality. Within the historical context of the assimilation program, Indigenous Australian women confronted systemic gender disparities. This scholarly investigation endeavors to elucidate the nuanced facets of gender discrimination experienced by Indigenous Australian women affiliated with the stolen generation, as discerned through the lens of Doris Kartinyeri's seminal work, "Kick the Tin." Employing a qualitative research paradigm, this study uses a liberal feminist framework to scrutinize the gathered data meticulously. The findings underscore that Kartinyeri's "Kick the Tin" unveils the entrenched gender discrimination endured by Indigenous Australian women during the assimilation era, delineating their prescribed roles as domestic laborers within the prevailing white societal framework, thereby perpetuating the marginalization of this demographic. In its essence, the narrative challenges the systemic marginalization of Indigenous Australian women, concurrently advocating for their empowerment as a catalyst for fostering an equitable societal milieu. Consequently, this research augments scholarly discourse, serves as a poignant catalyst for heightened social consciousness, and catalyzes imperative shifts toward mitigating the pervasive impacts of gender discrimination on a broader scale.

**Index Terms**—raising awareness, gender discrimination, marginalization, stolen generation, indigenous Australian women's life writing

## I. INTRODUCTION

Doris Kartinyeri's 'Kick the Tin' serves as a memoir detailing her life experiences as a member of the stolen generations in Australia. The primary objective of Kartinyeri's life writing is to shed light on her encounters as a forcibly separated child within Australian society. Published in 2000, 'Kick the Tin' unveils Kartinyeri's life history during the assimilation program, with the narrative delving into her childhood separation from her family in the first part and addressing the subsequent loss of language, culture, and its impact on her in the second part, as noted by Maher et al. (2019).

Life writings play a crucial role in fostering self-awareness and generating public consciousness about specific issues or the experiences of marginalized individuals in a given society. Epstein defines life writing as any piece of writing that undertakes the tasks of "discovery" and "personal inquiry" (cited in Yigitbilek, 2022). Similar to other literary works, life writings reflect personal or communal experiences, encompassing aspects of identity and culture (Yigitbilek, 2022). There are various forms of life stories, including personal, formal, informal, humorous, descriptive, reflective, nature, critical, lyric, narrative, review, periodical, romantic, scholarly, and genteel (Stuckey-French, 2018). Consequently, life stories offer readers an insider's perspective on a historical culture or era. Furthermore, life stories

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provide insights from the vantage point of individuals whose voices have been muted or overlooked in society. In the Australian context, the experiences of the Stolen Generation remained concealed for an extended period. Polak argues that the life writings of the Stolen Generation gained recognition in the late 1970s (Polak, 2020).

The HREOC's *Bringing Them Home Report* compiles testimonies from victims of forced assimilation, outlining the experiences of stolen children and the egregious human rights violations resulting from government policies and programs (HREOC, 1997). The report highlights the devastating effects on the victims, asserting that the stolen generation comprises Indigenous Australian children taken from their families between 1907 and around 1970. The government, often labeling these children as "half-caste," targeted them for assimilation into the dominant culture. Presently, the repercussions persist, leaving many unable to connect with their roots or trace their ancestors, resulting in the loss of cultural identity, family ties, language, and a sense of belonging. Survivors continue to endure profound anguish and trauma, feeling adrift in their homeland.

Literature serves as a mirror reflecting human experiences, and Indigenous women's life writing, as a form of literary work, illuminates the gendered construction of Indigenous women during the Stolen Generations period. This literary work unveils the social construction of Indigenous women's gendered identity in Australian society. Indigenous women's writings convey empowerment and subjectivity, as indicated by Schaffer and Smith (2004) (cited in Mohammed & Berzenji, 2022). Moreover, Indigenous women's life writings critically examine their lives during the era of assimilation, highlighting their gender role as domestic workers in white society.

The author argues that Doris Kartinyeri's life writing mirrors the lives of Indigenous Australian women from the stolen generation, revealing the marginalization they experienced. Consequently, this study aims to expose the gender discrimination endured by Indigenous Australian women within the stolen generation. Significantly, it contributes to raising awareness and educating the public about gender discrimination against Indigenous Australian women, fostering social consciousness and understanding. Additionally, it has the potential to inform policy development aimed at empowering Indigenous Australian women today. Lastly, the study advocates for further research into the lives and empowerment of Indigenous Australian women through other life writings.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology. The data are collected through primary sources, the life writing of Doris Kartinyeri, and secondary sources such as books and articles. Then, the analysis is presented descriptively. The writer applies a feminist literary approach that stresses the representation of women as reflected in the life writing of Doris Kartinyeri. Feminist Literature deals with interpreting a particular literary work regarding women's empowerment (Singh, 2021). In this case, the Liberal feminism approach is used to understand gender discrimination of Indigenous women. Rajapandi et al. (2022) claimed that liberal feminism perceives that women and men deserve to have similar rights and freedom to actualize themselves. Liberal feminists stress the importance of developing a culture that promotes women's empowerment. The analysis is shaped by feminism, which is interdisciplinary and integrates academic disciplines such as history, sociology, culture, and literature.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. *Assimilation Program Through Education to Indigenous Australian Women*

Liberal feminists believe education is critical in enhancing women's empowerment and gender equality. Thus, the assimilation program for Indigenous women of Australia in the assimilation period was good for the betterment of Indigenous women in terms of their education. However, the reality was not based on the beliefs of feminists who fight for universal equality for all women in all aspects of life.

It is argued that the life writing of Doris Kartinyeri is to show gender discrimination in the assimilation program that marginalizes Indigenous women's gender roles in Australian society and raise awareness concerning the gender discrimination against Indigenous women in Australian society during the assimilation period. *Kick the Tin* is the life story of Doris Kartinyeri, which is a personal story or narrative. It reflects her identity and the experiences of her society. In this case, the story of Doris Kartinyeri discloses her experiences and other Indigenous women of Australia who belong to the stolen generation. The stolen generation were children who were taken away from their families and educated in White institutions (Mohammed & Berzenji, 2022). The recognition of the Stolen Generations gained prominence following the release of the *Bringing Them Home Report* in 1997 (HREOC, 1997).

*Kick the Tin* refers to a game that was played by Doris and her friends in Colebrook Home, a White institution for Indigenous Australian children. It pictured the life of Doris Kartinyeri and her friends, who had been kicked around after being taken away from their families. As asserted by Kartinyeri, the book's title serves as a representation of the experiences of Indigenous children, who were mistreated by those entrusted with their education for integration into the white community (Kartinyeri, 2000, p. 2). She was born at the Raukkan Community Hospital on 8 September 1945. She was removed after the death of her mother, a month after her birth. Doris was brought up in Colebrook Home (Kartinyeri, 2000).

Kick the Tin describes Doris Kartinyeri's experience of being stolen from her family in 1945 in South Australia. Historically, in 1891, there were 571 'half-castes' in Western Australia; ten years later, there were 951 and 691 alone in the State's southwest (Buti, 2004, p. 80). Moreover, Haebich asserts that in the late nineteenth century, Indigenous children were sent to white institutions in the south of Western Australia. The purpose of educating Indigenous children was to prepare them for domestic and farm work (HREOC, 1997). The Bringing Them Home Inquiry found that in New South Wales, the policy of removing Indigenous children to assimilate them with non-Indigenous people had been in place since 1890. In 1914, the Aborigines' Protection Board made a regulation that all Indigenous male children 14 years and older had to find jobs in the white community. Indigenous girls 14 years and older should 'go into service' or be trained in the Cootamundra Training Home, which opened in 1911 and closed in 1969 (HREOC, 1997).

Doris Kartinyeri recounts similar experiences of the policy. She was removed after the death of her mother in 1945 and placed in the Colebrook Home (Kartinyeri, 2000, pp. 13-16). Doris was still a baby when she was taken away from her family.

I came into this world on 8 September 1945 in Raukkan, a Ngarrindjeri community situated at Point McLeay along the shores of Lake Alexandrina. Sadly, my mother faced complications and passed away on October 8, just a month after my birth, at Murray Bridge Hospital. Shortly after her demise, I was forcibly separated from my family. Agents of the Aboriginal Protection Board, without my father's knowledge, took me from Murray Bridge Hospital and relocated me to Colebrook Home. (Kartinyeri, 2000, p. 6)

In this instance, Doris employs the term 'stolen' to narrate her removal from her family, suggesting that by the time Kartinyeri penned her account, the term 'Stolen Generation' was already in circulation within Australian society. Kartinyeri resided at Colebrook Home until the age of 14 in the 1950s but was never informed of her removal from her family, leading to feelings of alienation and isolation from her family (Mellor & Haebich, 2002, p. 64).

During the 1920s, missions played an active role in assimilating Indigenous children in South Australia. The mission relocated to Quorn in 1926, transforming into the Colebrook Children's Home. In 1944, it moved to Adelaide and remained operational until 1981 (HREOC, 1997, p. 123). Doris Kartinyeri resided in the Colebrook Children's Home from 1945 to 1959, a facility built in 1943 at Eden Hills to train Indigenous children (Hosking, 2004). Kartinyeri reveals that approximately 350 Indigenous children were taken for training between 1943 and 1972, forming a surrogate family at Colebrook as they lacked knowledge of their biological families and true identities. She reflects, 'This was our home, and we respected it. We were happy, laughing, crying, and just being an extended family with much love' (Kartinyeri, 2000, p. 14). Nevertheless, the sense of family and community disintegrated upon their departure, as Kartinyeri states:

This is what happened to most of us kids; we had everything taken from us: our culture, our heritage, our language. So, once we left Colebrook, it was a confusing life for us. (Kartinyeri, 2000, pp. 223-224)

This implies that Indigenous children who departed from the Colebrook Home experienced feelings of isolation and insecurity while residing in the white community due to their detachment from their 'roots,' families, and culture. The removal of Indigenous children was largely motivated by racism. Yan Pettman contends that in Australia, race pertains to 'physical characteristics like skin color' and specifically to 'Aboriginal people in the context of colonization' (Pettman, 1992, p. 9). Additionally, Mary Holmes defines race as the judgment that other races are inferior (Holmes, 2007, p. 149). In this context, the assimilation of Indigenous children was linked to 'Anglo-Australian superiority,' perceiving Indigenous people as 'inferior' and necessitating assimilation to conform to white culture (Beresford & Omaji, 1998, p. 256). Beresford and Omaji (1998) affirm that:

During the era of the Stolen Generations in Australia, the two forms of racism drove official policy in a mutually reinforcing way. Aversive racism removed Aborigines from their land or out of the cities to make way for European possession, and dominative racism turned them into cheap laborers and domestic servants. (Beresford & Omaji, 1998, p. 261)

Indigenous women's life writing, therefore, makes visible the official racism at the heart of the policy framework. Margaret Tucker states:

In that era, the management of Aboriginal affairs was marked by negligence, insensitivity, and cruelty, leaving a significant stain on Australia's history. We appeared to be treated as mere subjects for experimentation, as the government seemed uncertain about how to handle our situation. It is disheartening to be labeled as 'half-caste,' evoking a sense of bitterness. (Tucker, 1977, pp. 29-30)

Tucker's critique of government policies regarding Indigenous 'half-caste' individuals underscores the mistreatment they endured based on their 'skin color,' rendering them as 'experimental objects.' White individuals wielded their authority to 'civilize' Indigenous children, aiming to mold them into 'useful citizens' by forcibly separating them from their families and 'educating' them in white institutions, driven by the belief that Indigenous people were perceived as 'little better than animals' (Edwards & Read, 1992, p. 10). The assimilation policy aimed to establish 'an Aboriginal working class' to serve the interests of the white community (Edwards & Read, 1992, p. 10). Consequently, the assimilation policy tended to depict stolen children as subservient to white people and instilled in them the acceptance of a life at the lower echelons of the white community, as noted by Beresford and Omaji (1998, p. 62).

The shaping of Indigenous women's gendered identity as 'inferior' to non-Indigenous women was further solidified during their training in white institutions. Haebich (2000) highlights that the 'education' provided to Indigenous children was geared towards preparing them for specific roles in the workforce based on their gender, such as pastoral work for

boys and domestic service for girls. This labor segregation underscores the gendering of Indigenous children, particularly contributing to the gendered construction of Indigenous women.

Indigenous women's life writing shows that life in missions and training homes was quite similar from one place to another. There were strict regulations to discipline children into accepting Christianity, reading the Bible, and praying. At the same time, a gendered division of labor for girls and boys was enforced, with physical punishment for those who disobeyed. Gladys Corunna recalls her experiences at Parkerville Children's Home, run by the Church of England, as follows:

Every morning at Parkerville, we adhered to a consistent routine. The day commenced with an early awakening signaled by a bell, followed by the tasks of making our beds, getting dressed, and sweeping the verandahs. Breakfast ensued, during which the boys fetched wood for the kitchen stove, and older girls prepared the porridge. Post breakfast, we engaged in cleanup activities and attended the morning church before school. At lunchtime, we formed lines and marched to the substantial dining hall. Occasionally, the odor from the meat was quite unpleasant, especially in the summer. After school, our allowance was one slice of bread with dripping before proceeding to the afternoon church. (Morgan, 1990, p. 246)

Doris Kartinyeri said it was similar at Colebrook, and religion had to be practiced frequently. Whatever they did and wherever they went, they had to pray and praise God (Kartinyeri, 2000, p. 30). They were poorly dressed and also had regular jobs that they had to do. Kartinyeri states:

We donned second-hand attire, consistently adorned with aprons, often resembling raggedy Annies, though we were oblivious to any alternative. Footwear typically consisted of hand-me-downs, not particularly comfortable, contributing to enduring foot problems throughout my life, as diagnosed by my doctor. Maintaining the cleanliness of the standard room floors mandated washing and polishing, a task performed on our knees. Dishwashing was assigned to the girls, a duty I didn't mind as it provided a chance to discreetly take items from the pantry. (Kartinyeri, 2000, pp. 36-39)

These examples show the harsh life and poor conditions in white institutions. Smith states, "Former residents told of being cold and hungry, worked too hard but educated too little" (Smith, 2004, p. 93). HREOC (1997) states:

The structural conditions of missions, governmental facilities, and children's homes were frequently substandard, with insufficient resources available to enhance them or adequately provide clothing, nourishment, and shelter for the children (HREOC, 1997, p. 158).

In addition to their harsh living condition, punishment was also a routine part of Indigenous women's lives in white institutions. Margaret Tucker remembers that it was difficult for her to learn how to cook for white people. She and her friends were punished for not performing such tasks well.

It was pretty obvious, then, why two Aboriginal girls and the others at the Home couldn't be expected to understand the cooking of white people, disciplined meals – we who were children of the bush! Beatrice Buggs and I received corporal punishment on that initial occasion for failing to recall details such as the essence of vanilla and other similar matters. I vividly recall witnessing Beatrice's bleeding lips and bruised cheeks as I huddled in the corner, gripped by fear. Miss Wood, holding a substantial piece of firewood, appeared furious and intimidating. The distressing incident with Beatrice is etched in my memory, leaving an indelible mark on our experience. (Tucker, 1977, p. 100)

In this sense, 'education' for Indigenous women was 'reinforced' by punishment.

In short, the designated 'education' for Indigenous children prepared them for domestic work since they were only considered fit for domestic service. Morgan asserts that children were prepared to be skillful in domestic work such as cleaning, washing, and cooking. As the girls matured, they were assigned to serve as housemaids or domestic help for individuals or families seeking their assistance (Morgan, 1990).

### *B. Gender Discrimination in Work Place*

The training for Indigenous women prepared them to deal with work in domestic service, such as cleaning and cooking. In this case, 'the training system' for Indigenous women tended to construct girls' gendered role as domestic servants for the white community. They were considered inferior and were expected to submit to the norms of white society. They could not be allowed to compete with non-Indigenous people intellectually or economically, and thus, the 'education' they received was designed to marginalize them. Moreton-Robinson asserts that "in attempting to assimilate Indigenous women as domestic servants, the government was constructing and defining who they were and how they should behave" (Moreton-Robinson, 2002, p. 11). This illustrates an unequal power relationship in which Indigenous women were subordinated to non-Indigenous women, for whom white race privilege enacted and maintained Indigenous women's subjugation and exploitation.

Morgan (1990) narrates her mother, Gladys's, experiences as a child. Gladys was sent to Parkerville but had permission to visit her mother, Daisy, who worked as a servant at Ivanhoe (the house of Howden Drake-Brockman and Alice, his second wife). Gladys recalls that it was a holiday, and she was with her mother in the kitchen when Alice and June Drake-Brockman came in. The power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women are illustrated in a scene in which the benevolence of the non-Indigenous woman reveals the social construction of Indigenous women:

I couldn't divert my gaze from June, who held the most exquisite doll in her arms—a doll with golden hair, blue eyes, and adorned in satin and lace. June remarked, 'You have a doll too. Mommy has it.' Subsequently,

Alice revealed a black topsy doll resembling a servant from behind her back. Dressed in a red checked dress and a white apron reminiscent of Mum's attire, the doll wore what was known as a slave cap—a handkerchief knotted at each corner. As I observed this doll for a moment, I was profoundly shocked. I thought, 'That's me.' I aspired to be a princess, not a servant. (Morgan, 1990, pp. 261-262)

The quotation above shows that from Alice and June's point of view, Gladys deserves a black doll dressed like a servant because her mother is a servant. This symbolizes how Indigenous women were conditioned to become servants for the white community. Brook asserts that the rag doll given to Gladys Corunna represents the 'mother/daughter bond' (Huggins, 1998, p. 113). In other words, Gladys was reminded that she would not be 'a princess' but a servant like her mother. White people believed that Indigenous women deserved to be domestic workers (Huggins, 1998, p. 9). This means Gladys must take up a position similar to her mother's. Her gendered role as an Indigenous woman is confined to that of a domestic servant, which cannot be separated from white interference in terms of race (Huggins, 1995, p. 113).

Alice represents how white women were implicated in the gendered construction of Indigenous women as domestic servants. Moreton-Robinson asserts that "White women played a role in shaping this narrative, influenced by an ideology of true white womanhood. This perspective, whether unconscious or conscious, positioned Indigenous women as less feminine, less human, and less spiritual than their white counterparts (Moreton-Robinson, 2002, p. 24). Indigenous women were perceived as inferior and valueless in the white community. This perception made Indigenous women domestic servants vulnerable. Their lives were controlled, without any sense of caring for their personal feelings or conditions.

Morgan makes this visible in her text. Her grandmother, Daisy, who lived at Corunna Station, asserts:

Because of your race, they treat you poorly. In those times, we were regarded as possessions, similar to cows or horses. There were even those who asserted that we were not equal to white individuals. When white people needed something, they did not ignore your presence; instead, they anticipated you to respond promptly and efficiently. There were instances when I had to rush in and out as expected. (Morgan, 1990, p. 336)

Indigenous women's life writing documents how Indigenous women were racialized and exploited by non-Indigenous people, and this was Doris Kartinyeri's experience as well.

Doris Kartinyeri was also required to work as a domestic servant when she was 14 years old, and she was moved between several white families' homes without notice from the Aboriginal Protection Board. She could not make her own choices, as she had to follow the orders of the Aboriginal Protection Board. The members of the Board never considered her feelings. Kartinyeri recalls when she was moved to work in another place.

Unthinkingly and without any explanation, I was relocated from the Edwardstown family to a residence in the hills near Colebrook, at Coromandel Valley. This transfer was yet another traumatic experience for me, leaving me feeling isolated. I resided in cold and dimly lit quarters, situated around thirty yards away from the main house. The nights were pitch dark, and the prospect of returning after completing dinner dishes frightened me. Despite my desire to leave, my age prevented me from doing so. Regrettably, I had no contact with my family, and the Protectors and Sister McKenzie left me with no one to reach out to. The absence of a guiding hand, which a child is meant to have, intensified the challenges I faced. (Kartinyeri, 2000, p. 61)

In domestic service, many Indigenous women were exploited and treated poorly by their white employers. They were oppressed and forced to submit to white power. This suggests that they were not 'protected' by those who controlled them. Indigenous women's domestic servants were powerless against white people, and white women exercised their power over Indigenous women. As Huggins asserts, Indigenous women domestic servants discovered that their female 'boss' could mistreat them since Indigenous women workers had lower status (Huggins, 1998, p. 30). They also commonly experienced physical violence, such as beatings (Huggins, 1998).

The powerless condition of Indigenous women servants also meant that they became sexual objects of white men. Brook points out that the term 'lubra', an insulting term for Indigenous women, refers to Indigenous women as sex objects (Huggins, 1995, p. 124). Many of them experienced sexual abuse or were raped. Doris Kartinyeri recalls her experience when she worked as a domestic servant as follows:

In this instance, a lay minister of the church subjected me to constant exposure, particularly at night, when I could hear him at my bedroom window. The fear of him attempting to enter my room paralyzed me with fright. I hesitated to confide in his wife, knowing she wouldn't believe me. He pressured me to go to the dairy shed, and recalling this incites anger within me. I felt utterly alone, overwhelmed by sadness, shame, and pain. His persistent acts of exposure and masturbation inflicted deep wounds. In a horrifying violation of my vulnerability, he forced me onto his marital bed, leaving me stripped of my pride. (Kartinyeri, 2000, pp. 61-62)

Indigenous women who faced sexual exploitation while in domestic service, according to Huggins (1998), had no refuge because the rules were dictated by white individuals. Moreton-Robinson (2002, p. 7) contends that the rising number of Indigenous 'mixed-blood children' resulted from instances of white males raping or engaging in sexual contact with Indigenous women. In an interview of Huggins (1998, p. 15), Marnie Kennedy, an Indigenous domestic servant, expressed the obligation to obey, work diligently, comply with orders, and be used as the white man desired. She stated, 'When he wanted a bit of lovin', we were 'black velvet'. Additionally, Rita Huggins, Jackie Huggins's mother, affirmed that the masters believed their right to Indigenous women's services excused them from attempting to use their bodies (Huggins, 1998, p. 16). The requirement for Indigenous women to 'save themselves for marriage' rested

on the assumption that it was the women's sexual behavior, rather than their white male employers, that was deemed uncontrollable.

Indigenous women's life writing serves as a testament to how those in domestic service endured harsh and subordinate conditions. Their past experiences offer valuable lessons for succeeding generations of Indigenous women, empowering them to reclaim agency. This underscores the potential for Indigenous people to unearth untold aspects of history through personal narratives, fostering new understandings of historical injustices. Kartinyeri's (2000, p. 1) narrative represents a form of 'healing' from her challenging past, as she notes, 'My healing began when I decided to write my autobiography'. Actively involved with the Blackwood Reconciliation group, Kartinyeri played a significant role in promoting mutual comprehension between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities regarding the Stolen Generations. At Colebrook, a monument stands as a symbol representing the experiences of the children who were taken away from their families and lived there (Kartinyeri, 2000). In her final chapter, Kartinyeri (2000, p. 135) states, 'I walk with dignity... I believe that I am only now coming to terms with all that I endured in the past'.

For Indigenous women, life writing serves as a means of reclaiming and reorganizing the past, functioning both as a counter-history and a way to challenge the dominant culture's misrepresentation of Indigenous identity. Moreover, reclaiming the past and giving voice to the stolen children serves as a method of bearing witness to the cultural trauma experienced by Indigenous families and communities since colonization.

Undoubtedly, the processes of removal and assimilation further entrenched the perceived 'racial inferiority' and social disadvantages experienced by Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous women. From an early age, these women were categorized in terms of both their inferior race and gender, positioning them as unskilled workers within the white community. Rorintulus (2018), Rorintulus et al. (2022), Pilcher and Whelehan (2004) elucidate that gender encompasses the distinct roles, functions, and characteristics socially and culturally ascribed to females and males. Gender is an inseparable concept from the ongoing social processes that create distinctions between the sexes. In this context, Brook, as cited in Harrison (2008), contends that the gendered construction of Indigenous women cannot be divorced from race in Australia. Consequently, as argued by Tonkinson (1990), Indigenous women were 'disadvantaged' as they were perceived by white individuals primarily as domestic workers and objects of sexual desire, resulting in a loss of ground as negotiators for equal rights.

The portrayal of Indigenous women as inferior was intertwined with white people's perceptions, constructing their gendered status as domestic servants within the white community. According to Brook, Indigenous women were not considered to possess 'white' feminine values, such as physical or moral hygiene, from the perspective of white women. White males regarded them as a type of 'sexual animal' devoid of 'human feelings' (Huggins, 1998, p. 123). Additionally, Kilic (1994) asserts that:

Black women were universally regarded as almost worthless, applicable only as either servants or prostitutes and were regarded as being outside white social structures. Such views and systematic exploitation of black women as domestic laborers for white women continued until the 1960s and sit uneasily in the memory of many Aboriginal women alive today. (Kilic, 1994, p. 45)

This suggests that Indigenous women were valueless and were considered helpful in being domestic servants.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The story of Doris Kartinyeri reveals gender discrimination against Indigenous women of Australia who belong to the stolen generation and raises awareness dealing with the inferior gender role as conditioned through the assimilation program. They were positioned and treated as domestic servants and sexual objects. It challenges persistent misrepresentations of Indigenous women, which white people socially constructed.

Indigenous women's life writing shows that Indigenous women servants commonly experienced sexual, physical, and financial oppression under the rule of white male and female employers. They were powerless and had no rights, including the right to care for their children. White women exercised their power to control and subjugate Indigenous women through physical and verbal abuse, while white men sexually exploited Indigenous women. These conditions made Indigenous women servants vulnerable.

Indigenous women's life writing testifies to the personal and harsh experiences of Indigenous women servants, which were not recorded in historical texts. It also shows how Indigenous women servants could survive the past challenging conditions that positioned them as inferior and valueless in the dominant white community. Their testimony can be used to empower the new generation of Indigenous women today, as well as to teach Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people about the past to ensure a better future for Indigenous people in Australia.

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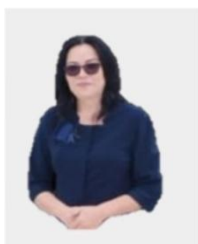
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