

# The rabbits



? The rabbits successfully presents an analogy of 18th century British colonisation of terra nullius and the ensuing encroachment of their civilisation on the rights and freedoms of aboriginal peoples effectively displacing them as owners of their lands. The historical context illuminated by the arrival of the first fleet in 1788 carrying the symbolic motif of the union jack epitomises the British stamp of authority on the environs of which they invade. Thomas Austin released 24 wild rabbits on his property; the beginning of an environmental destruction.

The parallel of Tan and Marsden's use of the rabbits as a metaphor for white settlers plays on the pun to breed like rabbits and alienated to remain on the fringes of the rabbits society. The rabbits journey parallels that of governments initiatives to control indigenous Australians: -Paternalism-Stolen Generation-Assimilation-Segregation The rabbits are stylized acting to affectively represent British superiority and highlight the artificial connection they purport to have with the land. The visual impact of the text is powerfully emotive in the detail. The initially bright colours used fade with the continuation of the rabbits journey, and monotonous and blackness impact heavily charged by the possums despair at being ousted from their home, their place of belonging. A montage of images evoke empathy, suffering and injustice as the possums drink from their river then die, illustrating the historical poisoning of indigenous people for the purpose of irritation or extermination.

Plate 11 of the infant possums being flown in balloons/kites(box) from the care of parents silhouettes the sheer number of indigenous children tragically removed; a main policy for which the nation apologized on the 13th

<https://assignbuster.com/the-rabbits/>

of feb 2008. Marsden and tan (2000) present a cautionary tale on the effects of displacement and alienating those indigenous keepers of this countrys lands whose knowledge of its secrets and heritage are bound, and are priceless to our national integrity, and future. The rhetorical questions lay unanswered; where do the possums belong where are their babies will their link to their land survive” now there is nothing left in my head except for blackness no more words or thoughts”