

requiem for a beast essay essay sample

[Government](#), [Colonialism](#)



Images can have a powerful effect on the way a person perceives a story. It can be the line that connects two dots together and adds a visual emotion to just a plain text. Matt Ottley's multimodal text, *Requiem for a Beast*, uses illustrations, music, text and changes in point of view to highlight the major themes that develop throughout the text. Themes such as reconciliation and the Stolen Generation are explored and the hardships that the Aboriginal people endured are present as well. The Stolen Generation is interpreted as a time when Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their homes and then taken under custody of the Australian Government.

The image on page twenty-one depicts the scene of the boys' father and friends driving when an Aboriginal boy jumps out at them in hopes to scare them. The use of dull colours makes the reader focus on the Aboriginal boy who has a spotlight on him from the headlights. The photo of the blurry Aboriginal child at the bottom of the page could symbolise that the Aboriginal child was slowly being forgotten or that he was in the back of the boys mind and was a constant memory. It could also tie to the theme of the Stolen Generation as children went missing and became nothing but a blurry memory for their families to remember. Next to the boy is an empty packet of tablets and this could be the illustrator's way of telling the reader that the boy was depressed and since the background is black that could symbolise nothingness or darkness that the boy feels is engulfing him. The series of images at the top of the page could portray scattered memories that the boy is using the tablets to escape from. An excerpt from page sixty-five "them finding me on my bed, almost gone" gives evidence of the boy wanting an '

escape' from the grief he feels and possibly making a suicide attempt to permanently escape the dark places in the depths of his mind.

The Stolen Generation was a vital part of Australian history from when Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their homes by the Australian Government and made to become 'white folk'. The Aboriginal boy from the story told by the boy's father on pages sixty-five to sixty-eight tells the story of how this Aboriginal boy was 'forcibly' pushed over the edge of the bridge and 'taken away' from his family. This correlates to page twenty-one where there is an illustration of the scene of the Aboriginal boy outside the car. The men in the car were wearing cowboy hats, which could be assumed that they resemble the Australian Government. The father mentions his remorse over the situation years after the event took place and this is similar to the apology given by then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, as the speech was given many years after the incident occurred. The boy's father's remorse over the death of the young Aboriginal boy could symbolise the apology the Australian Government gave on behalf of Australia about the land they lost, their treatment and particularly the Stolen Generation.

The Aboriginal community lost more than just their younger generations; they lost their land, their way of life, pieces of their culture. Pages thirty-five to thirty-eight are symbolic of the Aborigines impairment. The boy on his horse is staring into the bull's eyes. As the panels zoom closer and closer into the eye, a young Aboriginal child is revealed which could symbolise that the helpless bull that is being cornered is representing the Aboriginal community. The panels continue to zoom into the child's eye and the last

page shows a blurry image of a bright sun and vibrant blue sky, which resembles a landscape. It could be assumed that deep down, all the Aborigines wanted was their home back. Their hard exterior is a defence mechanism that hides their underlying yearning for the land they once called their home to be theirs again, and the bull is the visual interpretation of that.

The children were not the only ones affected by the Government's new policy. The parents and families of the children were also deeply affected. The panels on pages fifty-four and fifty-five show the boy's dream sequence and because of the guilt and emotion he was feeling his dreams portrayed the pain that the Aboriginal mother was going through after he heard the story by the woman in the town hall. He connected that to the story of the boy from the bridge and his untimely death. The pain shown in the mother's eyes represents all the Aboriginal families who lost their young ones.

Page fifty-five shows an image of the mother literally breaking apart about the fact that she can't find her child. It is symbolic of the Stolen Generation as the elderly woman said that most children never returned home and families were left broken apart. The black background symbolises how empty the mother is without her child and the darkness that is engulfing her and forcing it's way into her through the cracks she is showing.

The storm on pages eighty and eighty-one is the reconciliation between the two cultures, which means that no matter how hard the battle is right now, there will come a time where the people will find peace with one another. They will band together and in the end, make each other stronger. The blood on the brightened tree represents the pain and suffering the Aborigines went

through as the colonial powers took possession of their land and the dark forests emphasise that point because the clouds look like they're shadowing the forest, therefore taking possession of it like the colonial powers did but the brightened tree with the blood is still the Aborigines. " But the storm is also a nurturing thing, a thing that allows the land and the people to grow again." explains how the rain isn't only coming to terrorise and disturb the peace but to also take care of and look after the land. " We all have to stand in the rain, however long it lasts." is another powerful sentence. The Aborigines had to endure a long storm of rain but in the end, the rain ceased and the Government apologised for their wrong doing in the past and insisted on moving forward together, as one nation who shares the same land.

Requiem for a Beast offers a greater understanding of the pain and suffering the Aborigines endured during the times of the Stolen Generation and colonisation. Matt Ottley's use of images and text portray an extensive understanding of the multimodal text, by telling stories that relate to both the Aborigines and the boy. The Stolen Generation remains a constant occurrence throughout the narrative and the powerful illustrations work together to create a text that gives the reader a first hand perspective on the life of an Aboriginal during that time and the hardships they endured to get the respect they fought for. The reconciliation between the Government and the Aborigines gives an understanding of letting go of the past and moving forward with a clear outlook on what lies in the future in hopes to stay united and live in peace as one country.