# A Movie On Aboriginal People

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## Early Media Images of Aboriginal People

I watched a movie when I was around six years old, but I do not remember the name of the film. I know it was on aboriginal people because their faces were painted, their hair was messy, and they had no clothes on their bodies. That was the first time I was introduced to the Aboriginals, but I could not forget about it because one of my cousins who was watching the movie with me started calling me Kirab after an annoying character in the movie. It was an introduction to the native people and the stereotyped features of the native people. Most of the things that I associated with the Aboriginal people after the movie were primitive. Although the topic was not discussed at home often, I do not think my family influenced me, but my friends and the media had a great influence on the formation of the stereotypes about the Aboriginal people (Survival International, n.d.).

## Absence of Aboriginal Issues in Family Discussion

I do not remember my family members discussing Aboriginal people at home when I was growing up. They did not exist for my family, at least. We discussed all sorts of political issues at home, but it was not part of the discussions. The Aboriginal people and their problems never caught the attention of my family. Therefore, the Aboriginal people were not real. They were the fiction that was presented in the media and movies. Therefore, I did not really consider them real people residing in Australia until I was fifteen (Survival International, n.d.).

## Recognition of Aboriginal Australians

I watched another movie about the Aboriginal people when I was fifteen, and my friend broke the news that they were real people residing in Australia and native Australians. I was shocked even though I knew that Australia was colonialized and the native people had suffered due to it. I did not know that the books were discussing these people when they talked about native people. Then I had a discussion with my friend, and I told him that the colonials were justified in colonizing these people, as they seemed wild with no civilization. I thought they were wild and barbaric, living in primitive conditions. I believed that they lacked rationality in living in such conditions. I imagined many times that they might kill me if I came across them without any reason, as they killed in films such as *Ten Canoes*. I had imagined these people in a similar light. I thought killing was normal for these people.

However, I later realized that I was gravely wrong. I realized it after meeting a friend who was Aboriginal. I realized the movies presented the wrong image of the people to exclude them and scare others from mixing with them. The representation of the people in the movies contributed to a sense that the injustices on them were justified. These people were portrayed as illogical and ignorant, ready to kill or to be killed, with a lack of empathy. I realized it was all wrong because of my friend (de Heer & Djigirr, 2006; Dasilva, n.d.; Survival International, n.d.).

# Personal Encounters with Indigenous Injustice

I met a friend in high school, and he belongs to the Aboriginal community in Bangladesh. He told me stories about the injustices that the Bangladeshi government and the military were inflicting on his community in Bangladesh. He compared his people and their suffering with the aboriginal people of Australia, and I was shocked and offended. I was not ready to accept that the Australian government was involved in the killing, torturing, and removal of these people from Australia. It was because of him I started reading about the Aboriginal people and the injustices that they have faced. I read about the discrimination and torture that the people faced. I read about the children who were taken from their families and given out to white families in an attempt to abolish the white aboriginal culture. It was because of my friend I started empathizing with the Aboriginal people (Australian Government, n.d.).

# Changing Perceptions Through Information

However, it was difficult to eradicate the images of barbaric people with no clothes on initially, but the constant images of torture and injustices on the news and Facebook helped me change my ideologies. In addition, I have tried to reach out to a few Aboriginal people, and we are connected through social media, so the media has helped me change my stereotypes regarding them. Moreover, some of the recent movies have changed the stereotypical representation of the aboriginal people. For instance, the movie *Samson and Delilah* shows their problems and issues instead of presenting them as the problem. These movies and connecting with friends from aboriginal communities through Facebook helped me understand their struggles (Thornton, 2009; Survival International, n.d.).

# Humanizing Aboriginal Identity and Experience

Although I feel uncomfortable to admit, it is the reality that the Aboriginal people become real recently for me. They become real human beings after connecting with them, listening to their stories, and reading about them. They were fiction and the barbaric and uncivilized characters of movies. However, I am empathizing with them. I discuss their issues with my family now. Although my family accepts the injustices incurred to them, they seem detached from those people. I feel the same sometimes when I am not critical because the issues of the Aboriginal people were not considered the

issue of Australia and the people of Australia until recently. Moreover, the presentation of the people in the popular culture has damaged their identities instead of helping them. Hence, it is difficult to relate to their problems unless I try consciously (Survival International, n.d.).

## References


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