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From Stolen Childhoods to Reclaimed Lives: Indigenous Women's Stories in *Five Little Indians*

Swati Mittal, Dr. Swati Chauhan, Dr. Shivani Vashist
Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, India

Abstract

This paper offers a feminist analysis of *Five Little Indians* by Michelle Good, focusing on the lived experiences of Indigenous women within the devastating legacy of the Canadian residential school system. Established in the late 19th century, this system forcibly removed Indigenous children from their families with the aim of erasing their culture and assimilating them into colonial society. Drawing on Indigenous feminist theory and intersectional frameworks, the study examines how the novel portrays the multifaceted trauma—physical, emotional, sexual, and cultural—that is inflicted upon characters like Clara, Lucy, and Maisie. The novel challenges stereotypes about Indigenous women by portraying them as complex individuals with diverse experiences and struggles. The study is an in-depth exploration of themes of sexual violence, forced motherhood, and the struggle for Indigenous women to reclaim their identities after enduring trauma. Through qualitative textual analysis and close reading, the paper reveals how colonial institutions, embodied by figures such as Sister Mary and Father Levesque, enforced patriarchal violence that compounded the systemic erasure of Indigenous identity and family bonds. The research highlights the novel's exploration of intergenerational trauma, disrupted kinship, and the loss of a stable home, while foregrounding the resilience and determination of Indigenous women to survive and rebuild their lives. By centering Indigenous women's voices and experiences, this paper contributes to broader feminist and decolonial conversations on survival, memory, and the transformative power of storytelling in postcolonial contexts.

Keywords: indigenous women, feminist perspective, colonial violence, indigenous feminism