

THE SURVIVAL OF IDENTITY OF CHEROKEE PEOPLE IN 20TH CENTURY AS DEPICTED IN PATRICIA RILEY'S *DAMPING DOWN THE ROAD AND WISTERIA*

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Abstract

The lives of the Cherokee family in the 20th Century in Patricia Riley's *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria* give a description in how the characters in the family have different viewpoint on seeing Native American, Cherokee. The research is to find out the ways used by the Cherokee people to survive in the whites' culture society and to find the reasons for the Cherokee people survive in such way. The research is conducted under American Studies discipline, by applying postnational paradigm. Moreover, mimicry, decolonization theory proposed by Frantz Fanon, to analyze the ways used by the characters to survive in the whites' culture society, and drive theory proposed by Clark L. Hull to answer the reason for the natives to survive in such ways.

The research finds that both short stories are depicted to do mimicry and to keep their Cherokee culture. The characters who do mimicry are those who want to be accepted in the whites' culture society meanwhile the characters who keep their Cherokee culture are those who have mission in maintaining the Cherokee culture for the next generation. By doing mimicry and keeping the traditional culture, they could survive in the whites' culture society in order to show their existence.

Keywords: Cherokee, whites' culture, mimicry, decolonization, and drive theory

Introduction

Before the arrival of the white men to the natives' land, the natives are portrayed to have a peaceful life living in the tradition. They are believed to have a belief in supernatural power on nature. Therefore, they show their respect toward nature and their ancestors by doing some rituals as well. These characteristics are assumed to be heathen in the eyes of the whites. Therefore, they intend to change or even destroy such culture. Establishing boarding school under Christian order is

assumed to be the government's method in making them loss their native culture. The issues appear in Patricia Riley's short stories *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria* is about the family issue of Native American family who live in the white's culture society in America in 20th Century.

Patricia Riley, who was born in 1950 and a mixed of Cherokee and Irish, is a storyteller and teacher. She works as an Assistant Professor in the English Department at the University of Idaho,

America. Moreover, she takes part in writing short stories, *Damping Down the Roads* (2002) and *Wisteria* (1996), which were compiled in a collection of short stories entitled *Reckonings* (2008) with other Native American women authors.

Damping Down the Road describes a Cherokee family who consists of parents (Eli and Nettie) and two daughters (Ruby and Carnel). The family issue emerges when they have a different perception on being Native American. The mother (Nettie) and the first daughter (Ruby) always wish to be someone else instead of Native American meanwhile the father (Eli) and the second daughter (Carnel) are always proud of being Native American. Nettie and Ruby always perceive that Native American is weird meanwhile Eli and Carnel believe that being Native American is a blessing.

Wisteria also describes a quite similar Cherokee family issue with in *Damping Down the Road* by portraying a mother (Eddie T.) who has no good relationship with her Christian daughter in law (Jessie) and how Eddie T. teaches her granddaughter (Justine) a lesson about being a Cherokee. The problem emerges when there is a different viewpoint between Eddie T. and Jessie. These short stories give a depiction on how

colonization era during 16th – 19th Century still could be felt by the characters in in 20th Century as seen in the interaction within the members of the family. In *Damping Down the Road*, a native mother is described as a person who has a thought that being part of white people is better than being a native meanwhile in *Wisteria* the mother in law is described as a person who is difficult to accept her Christian daughter in law in the family.

Methodology

The study is conducting through eight stages. First, the problems that emerge in this study are to see the way for the Cherokee people to survive in the whites' culture society and to find the reasons for the natives to survive in such ways. Second, the purpose of the study is to elaborate the ways of Cherokee people survive in the whites' culture society, to find the reasons for Cherokee people survive in the whites' culture society, and to see the life of Cherokee people before and after the arrival of the white men to the natives' land. Third, the study is conducted under Postnational paradigm, American Studies discipline. Moreover, there would be three concepts to be conducted in analyzing the short stories in chapter three: mimicry, decolonization

proposed by Frantz Fanon, and drive theory proposed by Clark L. Hull. Fourth, the method of the study is conducted with qualitative research which is through a series of steps; data collection, data recording, and data analysis and interpretation.

In data collection, the data is taken from the excerpts of both Patricia Riley's short stories, *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria*. Meanwhile the primary data is taken from the short stories; *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria*. The secondary data is taken from journals, internet sources, books, articles and any materials related to Native American's history during 16th to 19th Century and theory that are conducted for this research. Moreover, this secondary data is taken from the result of the processed and analyzed data. Therefore, those primary data and secondary data are read simultaneously in order to gain a deep understanding of the topic.

In data recording, the researcher reads the source of data, primary and secondary data. Next, the researcher finds and lists of the related quotations both in the primary and secondary data regarding to the research topic based on theoretical framework. In data analysis and interpretation, after the data is listed, it is

interpreted and analyzed by using a set of theoretical framework which has been explained in chapter I in order to see Native American's issue in both short stories, *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria*.

Discussion

The Cherokee Survival in Patricia Riley's *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria*

Years after the Cherokee and other natives are removed to the Indian Territory, Oklahoma, the lives of the natives begin to come up to the surface again in the 20th Century. Some of the natives prefer to live in town and others prefer to stay in villages or farm and they already mingle and socialize with other people, such as the whites, the African American, and so on. As we already know that the natives once had a tragic relationship with the whites in the past time. The whites came to the native's land, took their land, expelled them from their homeland, cut off their traditional culture, called them heathen, and forced them to adopt and adapt the whites' culture.

Those reasons have made the natives' lives become hard and look difficult to move on. They put their effort in living together with the whites, living in

the same environment, studying and working in the same place, and so on. Moreover, after experiencing a nightmare in the past, how they could survive in the society where the whites culture are the dominance one.

This also correlates to the natives selves. Though they come from the same tribe or family, differences may appear before them. Patricia Riley’s *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria* are short stories that give a portrait about the common problem happening on Native American in general. This chapter would be divided into three parts; the mimicry side, the traditional side, and the cause of the Cherokee people survive in such ways.

The Mimicry Side

The mimicry side shows in how the characters, who are Cherokee, from both short stories decide to mimic the whites’ culture. The characters who decide to live in this way are showing that they are mimicking to other. This side would be divided into three parts; lifestyles, way of thinking, and manner.

1.a. Mimicking in Lifestyle: The Use of Material Culture	
Damping Down the Road	Wisteria

<p>“Ruby was three years older than Carnel. Being fifteen going on sixteen had made her overly fond of spicing her conversation with dots and dashes of profanity. She thought it made her sound more mature. Carnel thought it made her sound more like poor white trash” (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 154).</p>	<p>“In the storage shed behind the garden, a modern “radar range” languished new and never lifted from its crate. It had been a gift from her daughter in law, Jessie, but Eddie T. mistrusted the new stove’s shiny chrome and doubted its ability to brown the crust just right on a fresh loaf of bread” (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 166).</p>
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Table 1.a. “Mimicking in Lifestyle: The Use of Material Culture”

In *Damping Down the Road*, Ruby, who is older than Carnel, is interested in using “dots and dashes of profanity” while speaking. The above excerpt shows Ruby is in the stage of adolescence which means she is still searching for her independence and self-identity, therefore she would appear to be somebody else (Psychology today). Such language, was once, used by the whites who were criminal and foreigners (YourDictionary). Regarding to the language she used, she wants to show to her sister that she is not a child anymore and she is different with Carnel. The use of the language is a sign that she is not a Cherokee but a white person.

While in *Wisteria* depicts there is a family relationship between Eddie T and Jessie, who is described as Eddie T's daughter in law and has a complicated relationship with her. She gives Eddie T a new stove which is considered as a modern appliance and would be useful to be used, however, Eddie T refuses to use the stove since she knows the stove is a gift from Jessie and she believes the stove is not useful for her. Moreover, she knows that Jessie is influenced by the whites to use modern appliance and got dependent on it.

What the characters have done is actually almost similar with the Cherokee people when they make a trading contact with the English in the past time. The Cherokee people have a dependence on the English goods that change the lives of the Cherokee people. Then, this dependence has caused them to live as similar as the English or the white people.

The experience in the past seems to occur again by using the material culture, such as the language and stove shiny chrome. They seem to be dependent on these materials culture that has caused them having a tendency to imitate the whites. This could be stated that the characters, Ruby and Jessie, want to leave, what so called as, their traditional or

uncivilized custom and turn into the modern or civilized one.

1.b. Mimicking in Lifestyle: Hairdo	
Damping Down the Road	Wisteria
<p>“What she needs is a good perm,” Nettie said. When Ruby heard, she got all excited. “Oh, Mama,” she cried. “Can I have one, too?” “But I do, Mama. I want one,” Ruby wheedled. “I want a perm, and I want to dye my hair. I want to dye it blonde. The boys at school like the girls with blonde hair better. Can I get a perm and dye it blonde, Mama?” “Bleach, Ruby, not dye,” Nettie said. “I imagine you can. You’ll be sixteen soon. We’ll go and do it tomorrow if you like” (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 154).</p>	<p>“It’s the haircut.” Justine smiled at the old woman and opened the screen door. “Mama had it done. I liked it long, myself, but you know Mama. She says it tangles too much and, besides, long hair isn’t stylish these days. She told Arleen at the Beauty Barn that she wanted something particularly stylish and this turned out to be it” (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 168).</p>

Table 1.b. “Mimicking in Lifestyle: Hairdo”

Next, in *Damping Down the Road*, Nettie, the mother, wants her daughters’ hair to get perm. Hearing her mother wish, Ruby insists her mother to take her as well. Ruby has an interest in changing her hair and turns it into something else. There is a sign indicating she wants to leave her old

hair, which is straight long and black hair, and changes it into blonde and perm as well.

In the adolescence stage, girl usually starts to think about her male friends. Girl will look worry on her appearance, especially in clothes and hairdos. She begins to express her care on how her look will be at school. She also explores many things to make her appearance look better and to be similar with her friends at school. She admires with the look of her friends, especially the white student, at school.

In *Wisteria*, the story also describes about the change of the daughter’s hairdos. Yet, the difference is that the daughter is willing to do this is because of her mother’s wish. Her mother, Jessie, insists her daughter, Justine, to change her hairdos since she believes that her daughter’s long hair does not fit her anymore.

The reason for the mothers to do this is because there is an indication that she wants to forget about her past as a Cherokee descendant. There is a statement saying that having long hair means the pure thoughts that live in human’s mind will flow from the top to the bottom that lead and guide the human’s attitude in keeping the family and the nation in

harmony (White Wolf Pack). Having new haircut for their daughters will help them to forget everything about the past of the Cherokee. This means that they do not want their daughters to know everything about Cherokee culture. They believe having new haircut refer to start a new life and leave behind the past.

2. Mimicking in Way of Thinking	
Damping Down the Road	Wisteria
<p>If you didn’t like a thing you changed it somehow so that it would suit you better. It didn’t matter what it was. If Nettie didn’t like it, if for some reason it got on what she called her “bad side,” she was going to change it, and that philosophy extended to everything in the world around her (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 155).</p>	<p>...waving her hands about and calling on the sun and moon and stars. Even the river one time. God only knows who or what she calls on. Anybody does that is a heathen and a heathen’s domain is no place for my daughter on Sunday mornings. Or any other mornings for that matter. And I will say it. I don’t care if she is your mother. I have a right to my opinion and a right to raise my child as I see fit. A heathen is a heathen and children need to be protected from that kind of thing (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 168).</p>

Table 2 “Mimicking in Way of Thinking”

The portrayal of way of thinking in *Damping Down the Road* is discussing about the mother, Nettie, has her own view in seeing and facing life. She believes in change. She believes that if you have something you don't like, just change it no matter what it is. This also includes the people around her, especially in her family.

In *Wisteria*, the depiction of mimicry shown by Jessie, the daughter in law, has similarity concept with the whites'. Jessie sees the way her mother in law prays is not showing a Christian. As a Christian, she believes that if you want to pray to God, you must go to church every Sunday. Yet, this is different with what Eddie T. does. The mother in law has her own way, the Cherokee way, in praying to God, but in Jessie's viewpoint, the way her mother's pray indicating a heathen.

This way of thinking is also considered as imitating the whites' concept of thought because the whites had done this before in the past. They did the same thing as Nettie and Jessie. They thought the Cherokee people were heathen because of their traditional culture, which worshipping the unseen. Therefore, they struggled to change them by converting them into the whites' religious belief because they believed this would be fit for

them. Moreover, they took the children away from their parents in order to cut off the traditional culture. They wished to protect the children from their parents, especially from their traditional culture that could destroy the future of the children. Staying in mission school, learning Bible and going to church every Sunday are methods they believed could protect them from the bad side.

3. Mimicking in Manner	
Damping Down the Road	Wisteria
"Mama," Carnel said. "Daddy says that when it rains our road dreams that it's a river. I think that must be true, don't you? It's rushing along right now as if it were the Brazos." "Ellie, why do you keep filling her head with all that nonsense?" Nettie asked. "Roads can't dream. That road's nothing more than a bunch of dead dirt pounded flat. And Carnel, if you believe any different, then you're just as crazy as he is" (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 156).	Justine's father, Tom, told her that he figured the combination of the flu and the thunderstorm must have put Jessie in immediate touch with her own mortality because by day seven of vomiting and the green apple trots, Jessie had suddenly acquired what could only be described as a religious personality and rapidly converted to three-times-a day Bible study and absolute churchgoing on a strict Sunday basis (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 167).

Table 3 "Mimicking in Manner"

In mimicking to other the first excerpt taken from *Damping Down the Road*, Nettie shows her response toward Ellie, her husband, discussing about the road where their house is located. Ellie said to Carnel that the road could dream but Nettie seems to hate this. She insists and believes the road cannot dream since it is not a living thing. Therefore, she mentions this discussion as a weird thing. The manner that she shows before her husband, Ellie, and her daughters indicating that she is trying to not believe on such story or trying to deny about the truth that she is part of Cherokee tribe.

From *Wisteria*, Jessie suddenly turns into a religious person who starts learning Bible and going to church every Sunday. From the above excerpt, it could be seen the reason why Jessie, in sudden, turns into a different person. It is described that there is a miracle involving in healing her flu.

Christian is not part of Cherokee culture but it is European culture. The European missionaries bring this religion and introduce it to them. Therefore, by converting their faith into Christian meaning they are imitating the whites. By converting this religion, they would not be called as heathen. Moreover, according to Poerter and Roemer, conversion to Christianity is one of the methods used by

the white people to conquer Native American. They start to use propaganda to destroy the natives by attacking their ideologies and traditional values (52).

The concept of mimicry is discussing about the decision taken by the characters from both short stories who take the path in mimicking the whites' culture and they want to make them as similar as them. To be recognized by other people is one of the triggers that cause them to do mimicry as it has already been explained in the previous excerpts. They wish other people recognize their existence; they wish they have equal treatment; and they wish other people would not regard them as inferior.

The Traditional Side

The traditional side shows in how the characters from both short stories decide to maintain their Cherokee culture though they live in an environment under white culture society. The characters who decide to live in this culture are showing that they are differentiating from other. This traditional side would be divided into three parts; lifestyles, way of thinking, and manner.

1. Maintaining the Tradition in Lifestyle	
Damping Down the Road	Wisteria
“It is what it is and what it is straight. Good old Indian hair,” Eli said and smiled at his wife while ruffling Carnel’s hair (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 154).	Carefully, she poured boiling water from a copper kettle into the tall round jars that sat like sentinels in dishpans of battered enamel (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 166).

Table 1 “Maintaining the Tradition in Lifestyle”

In *Damping Down the Road*, the character, Eli, wishes to keep his daughters’ hair long just like the natives’ hair. Realizing his identity as part of Cherokee tribe, he believes keeping the Cherokee culture is kind of a mission. Because of having two daughters, he has the responsibility to inherit the Cherokee culture to them. He wants them to recognize and maintain their culture.

From that excerpt, it could be stated that hair is also considered as a reminder of the past. Maintaining and keeping the hair long and straight could recall the traditional life of the Cherokee. Eli believes that keeping the hair long would help her daughters to not be misguided. The reason is because, which the writer

has already explained in the previous parts, having long hair means the pure thoughts that live on human’s mind will flow from the top to the bottom that lead and guide the human’s attitude in keeping the family and the nation in harmony.

Meanwhile, in *Wisteria* explains Eddie T. is being described as a woman who holds her Cherokee identity. According to the excerpt in the above table, she still uses traditional appliances for cooking though her daughter in law has bought her a new stove. She believes using the traditional appliances would make her able to cook better and would make her happy as well.

Eddie T. prefers to use the traditional appliances than the modern one is because she feels connected with the Cherokee culture. As part of Cherokee tribe, she believes the traditional objects could bring a joy atmosphere and enjoyment. Though using traditional appliances, she mostly burns the foods she cooked, she seems to enjoy it and she is glad to know that the burning smell would go around the farm. By doing this, she would feel like she is getting close to the nature who has given everything she need.

In this traditional side, the characters are showing themselves differentiating from other by showing respect toward

their traditional culture. Keeping the straight long hair and using traditional appliances are methods that are used by the characters to make her stay in touch with her culture and her Cherokee homeland. This could bring back the memory of the Cherokee life in the past. How they wish to get connected with their ancestors and spiritual beings that have been left behind in their homeland.

live in. From his statement in the above, it describes about the condition of the area of the house is not what they expected. Yet, he wishes his daughters to see the ‘other side’ of the house area as the good side of it. The ‘other side’ in this paragraph means that seeing something from different viewpoint.

Eli advises her daughters to do this because he wants to revive her daughters’ dream, which would lead them to gain new experience and adventure. Having a dream is important because this is a method for them to reach their happiness. Moreover, by seeing the ‘other side’ of the area of the house or even on something else, he wants to teach them a lesson about good and bad.

In *Wisteria*, Eddie T.’s viewpoint describes how she shows her respect toward the Creator by waving her hands to the sun, moon, and stars. Such concept usually held by the traditional Cherokee. Moreover, she believes that the spiritual being lives around the nature. Although she lives in the modern society, she still holds her traditional belief. The belief that makes her put her faith in believing that the existence of the Great Spirit could be seen and felt only by feeling the atmosphere of the nature.

As part of Cherokee tribe, she has a conviction that keeping their traditional

2. Maintaining the Tradition in Way of Thinking	
Damping Down the Road	Wisteria
Before they moved there, Eli told his girls that, although living on a red dirt road might seem to have disadvantages, it had its good points, too. It all depended on how you chose to look at it as to which was which (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 155).	I myself have come upon her a number of times standing in the woods, waving her hands about and calling on the sun and moon and stars. Even the river one time. God only knows who or what else she calls on (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 168).

Table 2 “Maintaining the Tradition in Way of Thinking”

In *Damping Down the Road*, indicating how he explains to his daughters about the way they see the ‘other side’ of the area of the house they

culture is important. It is because she believes what she does is for showing a respect toward the Creator or the unseen is not a mistake. This is a representation of Cherokee religious belief instead. The way Eddie T. pray to the Great Spirit through sensing the atmosphere and the beautiful of the nature is similar with what the traditional Cherokee people did in the past.

The point from both characters, Eli and Eddie T., is they want to maintain their traditional culture in order to make their next generations could be proud of it. They regard the culture as an irreplaceable precious treasure. Though the rest of their family prefers to hold the whites way of thinking, Eli and Eddie T. are persistent to maintain the Cherokee culture with their traditional way of thinking.

3.a. Maintaining the Tradition in Manner	
Damping Down the Road	Wisteria
The day was hot and still, the silence broken only by the creaky, sawing sounds that the chains made and the dull gentle thud of wood against wood when the back of the swing hit the house. It was the kind of repetitious noise that annoyed	Eddie T. had taken the girl there many times and taught her where to look for roots and plants that were good for healing any number of common complaints from sore throat to fever (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008:

her mother, she knew, but to Carnel it was soothing. Its rhythm matched her dreaming mood (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 153).	169).
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Table 3.a. "Maintaining the Tradition in Manner"

The first excerpt taken from *Damping Down the Road* gives a description about how the atmosphere of the house turns from silence into sound. Carnel, the youngest daughter, could feel the hot of the weather and when there is a sound comes from the creaky sawing sound and the woods, in a sudden that sound could change the atmosphere. She enjoys listening to the sound as if it is music which has soothed her. The rhythm of the music has created a dream for her.

The way she listens to the sound and follows its rhythm is indicating Native American way in respecting the nature. The Cherokee people also produce music when they hold ceremonies. It is believed that music is a mediator to enable them live together in the spiritual world and to bring the spiritual power into the human world in order to help them in daily life (warpaths2peacepipes).

The first excerpt in *Wisteria* shows Eddie T. teaches her granddaughter,

Justine, the use of plants and roots for healing. She realizes being a Cherokee is her responsibility to introduce everything about Cherokee or Native American culture to her granddaughter. She wants her to recognize the Cherokee culture and hope one day Justine could transfer the knowledge to the next generation.

Eddie T. shares the knowledge of Cherokee culture to her granddaughter, Justine, is because she wants the culture would still remain in the society and Justine is the only hope to make her dream come true. Eddie T. is no longer young anymore thus she decides to inherit the Cherokee legacy to her granddaughter since she is the only hope she has. She chooses Justine to do this task is because Justine is part of Cherokee tribe and she does not want Justine to follow her mother’s, Jessie, path, who leaves behind the Cherokee culture by imitating the whites’ culture.

<p>in the porch swing, picking off dried and curling pieces of its faded, flaking paint, watching the clouds of red dust rise up off the road as cars passed on their way to town. Dreaming. Looking for secret meaning in the patterns the flakes formed on the grey concrete. Sometimes, a small breath of a breeze came up and blew the pattern away before she could read what was in them, but today the lack of wind allowed the flakes to arrange themselves the way they wanted (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 153).</p>	<p>have had one of them dance right there just last night. Oh, I leave things for ‘em. Little snacks of food mostly, sometimes tobacco and beads when I got ‘em, and wisteria flowers when they’re bloomin. They like them blossoms. My mam called them things offerings. Just to let them know that we ain’t forgot about ‘em. That we know they’re out there livin’ on (Riley in. Wong, Muller, and Magdaleno, 2008: 170).</p>
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Table 3.b “Maintaining the Tradition in Manner”

<p>3.b. Maintaining the Tradition in Manner</p>	
<p>Damping Down the Road</p>	<p>Wisteria</p>
<p>It seemed to Carnel that she had passed almost the entire summer rocking slowly back and forth</p>	<p>There are little people out back here, Justine, and sometimes they get together and hold a dance. They must</p>

The second excerpt taken from *Damping Down the Road* also depicts Carnel’s reaction toward the nature. She looks amazed with the beautiful nature she sees in summer. She enjoys the atmosphere of the summer by sitting in the porch swing accompanied by the breeze and she is playing with the dried pieces of paint on the porch swing. Moreover, the nature has brought her into another dream when the cars passed on the way which has caused the red dust rises up and covers the clouds.

She is dreaming about the homeland of the Cherokee people in the past time. She believes the Cherokees in the past might live in a place covered with red dirt. She imagines herself living in the Cherokee village, sitting in front of her house and looking at the clouds. As a Cherokee, she wants to figure out the puzzle that the flakes made. She is playing as if the flakes are a message from the spiritual being and she wishes to figure out what the flakes say.

In the second excerpt taken from *Wisteria*, Eddie T. tells Justine about a creature that appears in native story. She tells her that the Cherokee people believe on “little people” or it is called as Yunwi Tsundi. By telling her about this “little people,” Eddie T. wishes her granddaughter would show respect toward the creature and would not forget or ignore it as well. She wants to teach her how spiritual beings also live in nature and it needs their concern in order to create a balance and harmony.

The depiction of the traditional side explains how the characters are aware of their Cherokee identity and they prefer to keep, stay and live with their traditional custom. This could be considered as a form of resistance towards the whites’ culture because they believe by leaving

their Cherokee identity and imitate the whites’ culture would not make them proud of themselves and would not make them happy as well. Leaving their Cherokee culture means they leave their homeland; their ancestors, rituals, and their faith in the existence of spiritual beings.

The Cause of the Cherokee People Survive in Such Ways The Mimicry Side

In *Damping Down the Road*, Nettie is being described as a mother with two daughters who has opposing thought with her husband, Eli. She is part of Cherokee tribe but she seems to hide or even to deny herself from the truth that she is Native American. She was still a young girl who loves gathering together with her family for listening the natives’ stories. This is a precious moment that she has been waiting for in the family. During her childhood, she is very happy for being part of Cherokee family. Being surrounded by the Cherokee culture and her family has made her difficult to leave them.

The punishment, for retelling natives’ night stories, she received from the Sisters at the school has made her to think that what she does to her friends is wrong. Native children are rarely to get punishment from their parents hence three

days detention in the basement is a hard thing to do for children in that age and this is considered as the first time she got. In addition to, such punishment is given to those who behave inappropriate according to them, the Sisters and the school regulation.

After she got home, her refusal on gathering together with her company and listening to the nightly storytelling is a picture about the impact of the punishment she got. Being locked in the dark basement has eventually scared her and made her into a decision to not make any contact relating to the natives. She does this because she does not wish to receive any more punishment at school and this choice is her decision to save her own life. Since then, she decides to become a new person, the person whom the Sisters wanted her to be, and to leave everything behind that has a relation with the natives.

In *Wisteria*, Jessie is being described as a mother, with a daughter, Justine, who has opposing thought with her mother in law, Eddie T. As it has already been discussed in the above, she is part of Cherokee family who in sudden becomes a new person. The change on Jessie's viewpoint shows in how she in sudden changes her view in looking at the natives in general and her mother in law in

particular. The impact of watching religious network broadcasting has made her to think about what she has done and what she has believed before is considered as a mistake.

The similarity between Nettie and Jessie, who prefers to take the mimicry side, is the incidents in the past have influenced them. Both of them suffer on something. The experience of being suffered has triggered them to leave their identity as a Cherokee. The difference is placed on the incident itself. Nettie's experience for being suffered physically and mentally has changed her into someone else while Jessie suffers from her ill has made her spiritually change into a religious person.

The reason for the characters could survive in the white culture society is because they have their goal, which is to survive by mimicking the whites' culture in the whites' culture society. Referring to Hull's *Principles of Behavior*, the writer could state that this goal could be achieved by reducing their desire which is their knowledge of the past. This knowledge of the past refers to the characters' past experience that see the whites' culture is the good one.

The Traditional Side

In *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria*, Eli and Eddie T. are being described as the characters who prefer to keep and live in the tradition. Eli is the head of the family who has responsibility in leading and guiding his family to the right path. Meanwhile, Eddie T. is a mother and a grandmother who shows her love on her native tradition. They are aware that this is not easy for them to make their family stay and live in the tradition, especially for Nettie and Jessie, Ellie's wife and Eddie T.'s daughter in law who have decided to leave their native culture because of the incident in the past. Thus, one of methods Eli used in order to make them recognize their native identity is by buying a new house.

The area of the house has recalled the memory of Eli about the home of the Cherokee in the past. Eli uses this house as a tool to help him in maintaining the tradition within his family. Through this house, he wishes to bring his family back to the native tradition because he believes they still have native blood flows in their body. This means they cannot deny themselves as part of Cherokee tribe.

This could be stated as Eli's mission in bringing back the family into the native tradition because Eli knows the reason

why Nettie leaves her native culture and prefers to live like the whites' culture. What Eli has done for his family is a kind of resistance toward the whites' culture that dominates in the society. Eli is struggling in maintaining the native tradition by having an opposing idea with his wife, Nettie who has different viewpoint in seeing native culture, and by introducing native tradition to his youngest daughter, Carnel.

In *Wisteria*, Tom has the same experience with Nettie, they go to mission school to obtain education. He experiences a bad moment at school where his teachers say bad things about his people. This has caused him to be ashamed of himself and he feels being humiliated by the teachers. The word "regretted" indicates that he once leaves his tradition and prefers to follow the whites' culture. Then, he realizes what he has done in the past is a mistake.

This experience has made Eddie T. decides to always keep the tradition. The incident that has been experienced by Tom in the past has made her feel anxious and angry toward the government and the school system. She believes that the school teachers are bad people who have changed Tom's mind about his people and she accuses the white government is

responsible for this change. In the past, many native parents send their children to school are for obtaining education only so that they have the capability in reading and writing. They do not expect them to leave their tradition while studying at school. But when the children got home, they become somebody else who have left their tradition behind and have adopted the whites' culture instead.

The reason for the characters to survive in the white culture society is because they have their goal which is to survive by maintaining the Cherokee culture in the white culture society. Referring to Hull's Principles of Behavior, the writer could state that this goal could be achieved by reducing their desire which is their knowledge of the past. This knowledge of the past refers to the memory of the loss of Cherokee culture during white colonization, for example the whites took and claimed the Cherokee people's land and they force the Cherokee people to leave their culture.

Conclusion

Patricia Riley's *Damping Down the Road* and *Wisteria* are depicting the lives of two Cherokee families who face different opposing ideas between the mimicry side and the traditional side.

Nettie and Jessie are being portrayed doing "mimicry" in their lifestyle, ideology, and manner which are imitating the whites' culture. Their past experience has triggered them to do "mimicry" because they believe by doing so their existence would be recognized by other people and they do not need to feel what their ancestors feel in the past.

Meanwhile, Eli and Eddie T. are being portrayed keeping and living in the traditional culture in their lifestyle, way of thinking, and manner. Their past experience has triggered them to maintain the Cherokee culture in the society. They believe by keeping the tradition is an important thing to do because this could help them to get close with their ancestors or to show their respect toward their homeland itself. What Eli and Eddie T. have done could be considered as decolonization because they decolonize their mind from the whites' culture by believing their Cherokee culture is good. This is a form of resistance that makes them able to survive living in the society where it is surrounded by the whites' culture.

Both mimicking to other and differentiating from other are chosen because they believe these paths are helping them in survival in the society

where the whites' culture is the dominance. Two different opposing ideas; leaving the Cherokee tradition behind and keeping the Cherokee tradition, are showing there is superiority and inferiority or it is called as "othering" and decolonization.

The mimicking to other would see itself as the correct or the civilized one which makes it superior meanwhile the differentiating from other would be looked as the savage or uncivilized which makes it inferior. While the differentiating from other sees their lives are part of tradition. These evidences have shown how colonization gives impact toward the colonized people.

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