

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

The five women characters in this novel represent each characteristic. This analysis focuses on the story development by analyzing each character over the chapters. The writer emphasises on the representation of the Aboriginal women and on the power relation of the Aboriginal Nyari and the whites and on the way the coming of the whites affects the life of Nyari people and its culture.

A. Women Representation

A.1 Towradgi

Towradgi is described as an old woman. Physically, she has an ordinary appearance as any other old woman.

“Towradgi was old. She was so old, no one remembered that there was once a time when she had been young. Her hair was the colour of the clouds; her skin, stretched tightly over ageing bones and criss-crossed with lines, was dark like the bark of a tree seared by fire... she was a woman elder of the Nyari people.” (p.1)

Yet, what makes her important in this novel is her role in teaching the younger generation, particularly women, about Nyari culture, beliefs, the wisdom of the traditions, and about nature. She taught the younger women the ways to gather food, to behave as tribal women, to give herbal cures, and she educated

them carefully in order to groom her successor; "... she knew that Alinta would one day be her successor among the people ..." (p.2).

Towradgi was a woman with a strong belief in her totem and culture. She conducted her life based on the Nyari traditions. She had a strong will and was stubborn. She applied her understanding and interpretation of nature to her people and led her to be over-proud of her tribal identity. When the first two whites arrived in the Nyari land, she showed her strong-headed characterization by disallowing the two whites to stay: "We don't want them here... They will bring great suffering to the people" (p.17). Towradgi strictly upheld her belief. This led her to think of other races with prejudice.

Traditionally, Aboriginal society distinguishes the roles of their people. Women gather roots and food; men hunt animals. In rituals, they held completely separate roles. Men had their own sacred rites and places where women were not allowed to enter, and women had theirs. In other words, they had separated places; public and privileged place. The public place refers to a place where the Nyari people could sit together, men and women, to share their experiences during the day, and to perform discussions within the community. This place was usually used to gather in the evening after a day work. Meanwhile, the privileged place refers to a place where opposite sex were not allowed to enter because it was considered as a sacred site. The Nyari men had their own privileged place where women were not allowed to enter, and conversely women had their own site where men were not allowed to enter as well. The Nyari people accepted this division as it was considered to be based on the law and cultural wisdom. This

case would be different in meaning if there were only certain places for one sex, either men or women. If this case had happened, they would have differentiated gender by placing it inequality. The fact that the Nyari had separated the roles and sites both for men and for women means that they occupied the considerably equal roles and equal status within the community.

The Nyari also had cultural wisdom in dividing social roles for elder and younger. An elder person, whom the people called their tribal leader, led tribal society, as in the Nyari. Towradgi, as one of the most influential characters within the Nyari community, had to hand down the tribal wisdom and teaching to the younger. The tribal leader was considered a person with wide knowledge of the tribe, as well as beyond the tribe, and inherited cultural power. The people relied on the wisdom and knowledge of their tribal leader to conduct and manage the tribe's social life.

Towradgi is one of the tribal leaders of the Nyari people. She had power over the women yet was considered as the most powerful leader among Nyari people; "They had great power, these women elders. They had the knowledge..." (p.1). It can be known from the way other tribal leader of the Nyari respected her thinking and opinion in making decision to help the two injured whites into the Nyari community. Towradgi refused the two whites because she thought by helping and accepting the two whites, it would open a chance for other whites to come and to destroy the Nyari land and people. Anyhow, during the process of discussion, the Nyari people respectfully listened to her words and considered what she talked to them. That eventually, the Nyari people accepted the two

whites, was merely because their sense of humanity drove them to help the injured whites.

The power of Towradgi over the Nyari people is also shown when she is believed to be the one who handed down the cultural knowledge and wisdom to the women young generation. Towradgi conducted the rituals for the women's initiation and taught the younger girls about tribal knowledge and nature which was handed down from their ancestors. She instilled in the younger generation's mind that the land was sacred – their ancestors were made from it.

“Feel this earth...it is your flesh, your blood, your sinews. You are the earth, and the earth is you. Your ancestors were made from this earth, and this earth is sacred...” (p.5)

Her sense of belonging toward the earth firmly bound her. She wanted to transfer this sense from generation to generation. This sense also depicts that the Nyari people considered nature as a source of their life, where they lived with and from where the Nyari ate. This assumption directed them to maintain nature by utilising it necessarily, respecting, and maintaining nature. By considering nature as part of their life, the Nyari represented themselves as a respectful community.

Toward the other tribes and whites, Towradgi's claim of being part of the earth “...they had knowledge that was handed down from the Ancestors who walked the earth at the beginning creation” (p.1) brings her to occupy the position of 'self'. She places the 'self-ness' into her own and her community. Something outside her community is considered as 'other'. In short, Towradgi sets two

contexts; within the community, what is categorized as 'self', and beyond the community, which refers to 'other'.

The determination of 'self' and 'other' is dependant on the person who speaks and about what. In this case, Towradgi may say that the Nyari tribe and its people are better than others. Yet, an outsider, who is considered as 'other' under this viewpoint, may say that the Nyari tribe and its people are worse than they are or that they are better than the Nyari. Thus, 'self' and 'other' are positioned within context; used to justify the admission of being part of certain group and to reinforce the identity.

Towradgi character in this novel explains that women were traditionally and previously were positioned equally as men. The women had a strong power over the people of the Nyari community and had influential strength toward the Nyari people. The determination of women and men's roles within society, which were respectfully up-held by Towradgi, portrays that the Nyari people had previously lived harmoniously together. They divided different roles for men and women; men hunt animals, women gathered the food and roots. This happened without any spirit of rebellion from the Nyari people against their traditional system. This was presumably a system, which they had made and agreed on, so that they respected to what they had decided and conducted their life based on this system. Including the moieties, the Nyari people had different signs for men and women. The Nyari people, whose sign was moon for men and sun for women, proved it; the sun's light is shinier than the moon and it is more powerful than the

moon. This shows that the Aborigines respected the Aboriginal women and put them in equal position to the Aboriginal men, or even above the men.

The process of transferring knowledge from generation to generation was customarily considered normal since each generation needed a tribal leader to maintain their existence. The imposition of cultural wisdom to the younger generation of the Nyari was performed without any resistance from the tribal people because the awareness of being exist encouraged the Nyari people to hand down their cultural wisdom and philosophy from generation to generation.

A.2 Alinta, the Flame

The coming of the whites had been introduced in chapter one. In the second chapter, Alinta experienced the further effects of their coming. The strength and power of Towradgi over the Nyari people influenced Alinta, though she was not strictly bound by the cultural teachings handed down by Towradgi, because the situation post coming of the whites forced her not to fully up-bring them. Alinta, who is pictured as an obedient girl, tried to follow what Towradgi told her. Every single Nyari teaching and tradition seems to be sacred and obligatory to her. In marriage, her love toward her husband did not come from her heart.

“... It was Murra...she was suddenly like a small, frightened animal. She did not want to leave her people. She wanted to stay with those she loved and who loved her.”(p.11)

She was forced by the elders to have Murra as her future husband based on the Law, which was considered as the basic principle, justification.

She, eventually, accepted the coming of Murra into her life and followed the elders' suggestion in order to be a wife based on the Law. There, she had to undergo self-discipline before marriage, during the time when the couple were sent to the bush to struggle and to survive with nature for three months. During the self-discipline before marriage test, the couple were not allowed to go back to the people or to ask help to survive. The main purpose of this test was to show other people in the community that they could master themselves and nature. Though something bad could possibly befall them, it would be an embarrassment for them to let other people know that they were in trouble. On the other hand, they were taught not to lie and would have to admit to difficulties should they be questioned about it later. This situation sets dilemmatic problems for the couple, though they could not avoid this; either telling the truth that they had failed by not overcoming a difficulty, and thus losing their pride, or telling a lie and gaining respect from society but breaking the law and suffering guilt and loss of pride.

At this stage, the authors clearly describe the weaknesses of being a woman. The description of Alinta clearly shows the readers that women were put under men in terms of strength and power. Women are pictured as an object that needs to be carefully protected by men.

“There was a rustling in the bush. He snapped out of his thoughts and, sensing danger, grabbed his spear, gesturing to Alinta to stay back.”

(p.27)

“The men set out to find the intruders – to send them away before they could do any harm... Alinta stayed with the women ... The women kept away and went about their business.” (p.31-32)

The citation above shows that women were not considered strong enough, and that the men needed to protect them. Meanwhile, women obeyed and acceded what they had been told. This weakened and gradually undermined the independence of women. Thus, women accepted their limited women’s roles and men’s roles within society. Hence, there are two factors which weaken the independence of women within society and which lower the status of women toward men. The first factor is men who regard women as powerless creatures who need to be protected, and the second is women who accept their imposed weaknesses, accede the stereotype, and limit their own roles within the society.

Alinta was one of Towradgi pupils. Towradgi was quite certain that Alinta would be her successor. Towradgi taught her that there were two moieties, Pund-jel and Pal-ly-an. This was part of totemic belief, which bound the Nyari people. She learnt that all creatures belonged to one or the other of these groups. She was Pund-jel, the child of the sun.

Alinta is pictured as a young woman who has physical beauty and a firm but patient personality. She is so tightly bound to the Nyari culture that she feels insecure when made to live with people beyond her own community. Even the prospect of marrying her future husband – a man whom Alinta is supposed to marry with, Murra, and living within his tribe caused her concerns.

“... she wondered if Murra would be kind. If she made mistakes, would he punish her? Some of the men were quick to beat their women. If he did, she would run away and come back to her own people...” (p.12)

From this, we learn that Alinta was doubtful of her future husband, even if he was kind. She questioned his sincerity and kindness and found it difficult to live with a man whom she might call a ‘stranger’.

Later on her feelings changed into admiration. She found that Murra was not as bad as she had previously thought. She decided to accept him.

“...his teeth were white – liked foam from the sea. Alinta felt suddenly she would like to be very close to him. It was a strange, pleasant feeling, and she favoured it.” (p.13)

Her fondness for him grew when Murra gave her a gift, which he had made.

“...’I have brought you a special gift, Alinta ...Murra let the string of seeds slip around her neck. She felt it touch her skin, and she decided straight away that she would always wear it, never part with it.” (p.13)

This shows us that Alinta is actually sure of herself in spite of her doubt. She is the kind of person who is never sure of someone until she gets enough proof that he or she is worthy of trust.

Her honesty is shown when she and Murra were undertaking the trial of discipline before marriage.

“It was not easy for Murra and Alinta to obey the Law. Who but themselves would have known that they had broken it? But the Nyari

were taught not to lie, and would have been against their pride. At the end of the three months they would be questioned by the elders, and they would have to tell the truth. They knew they had to be masters of themselves, their passions, if the people were to survive.” (p.29)

The adherence to, and respect of, their culture and tradition by the Nyari people, in addition to their ignorance of, and non-acceptance of, other tribes' traditions, lead the Nyari to feel a great pride in their culture and themselves. In addition to the rites and rituals of the tribe, part of this adherence is in speaking the truth. To lie is to break the cultural law and therefore one who has lied would suffer guilt and be unable to feel proud.

Alinta is a brave character living through hardships. She struggled to survive as well as to protect her daughter and her people of Nyari. Alinta was trying hard to maintain the existence of her tribal people even though it was impossible for her to do it by herself. Yet she did not give up and not surrender by this situation. She displayed her courage and tenacious spirit in all circumstances, even when she witnessed the death of the Nyari people, including the death of her husband.

“The men grabbed their spears, their woomeras ... the blast of thundersticks cracked the night; there were screams of terror, there was yelling, shouting; there was fire as the mia-mias began to burn; there were the cries and wails of children...Alinta saw her mother's face, briefly lit by the flames; she saw Warro falling, hands pressed against

her head and red with blood... Then she saw Murra falling... she saw that he was dying... the people were all dead” (p.42)

In her pitiful state, she still did what her culture taught her.

“... They all lay there, many with open, unseeing eyes, already glazed, their bodies sprawling, rigid in death. There was Murra... she wished she and her child were dead... Alinta cut herself with sharp stones to help her to bear the grief, and then she began to chant the words she had learnt from Towradgi and the other women, honouring the dead and sending their spirits safely to their home.” (p.43)

It shows us that the Nyari people, particularly Alinta, are tightly bound by the culture and tradition. Even while suffering the complete loss of everything she had known (except her child), the loss of her tribe, the people who shared the traditions with her and kept them alive, and witnessed the end of her people and the innumerable generations of knowledge, Alinta obeyed the cultural traditions of honouring the dead and giving the dead their rites.

A.3 Maydina, the Shadow

Obedience to the culture and traditions is continued in chapter three, where the authors convey the life of the Aboriginal character named Maydina. The authors use the character of Maydina to illustrate other weaknesses of women toward men and to strengthen the stereotypes of women within Aboriginal society. Maydina, with her daughter, are pictured as the victims of men's abuse.

Maydina was raped by Alf, a white man, after he had murdered her husband. Maydina give birth to Alf's daughter, named Biri. Maydina, Biri and Takari, a woman from the Bunnerong tribe, were forced to live with Alf and his partner. White settlers had also killed Takari's husband.

In this chapter, Maydina is described as a different character from Towradgi and Alinta. In other words, she has no kinship to the previous characters. Yet, Maydina, Towradgi and Alinta are parts of Aboriginal society. Maydina is Pund-jel, the same totem as Alinta's.

At first, Maydina was not a very good mother. She tried to kill the baby because of the hatred she had to the baby's father. Eventually, her natural instincts of motherhood led her to love the baby much more than she had during her pregnancy.

“What did it matter now that a whitefeller was the father? Her daughter was her flesh, her blood, her body...She felt a great surge of love; it was the first good feeling she had had for many years.” (p.47)

She was forced to accept the coming of the whites, i.e. her daughter's father, although she remained very distrustful of them. She:

“... was consumed by a constant worry as to how she could guard her from the white men, who often forced young girls, even children, to their will... she did not trust Alf, even though he was her father.” (p.51)

This represents Maydina's responsibility of raising her daughter. Between hatred and love, she accepted the child but she could never fully accept the child's father.

Maydina was a hard-worker. She was motivated by her responsibility of taking care of her daughter. Her daughter was her strength to survive. She was determined and stubborn.

Maydina did not trust Alf because, although he was her daughter's biological father, she was afraid that Alf would force her daughter to fulfil his personal desires. However, her suspicions were well founded because Alf tried to sell Biri to his sealer friend. She would have been unable to stop him from doing so. The only thing she could do to save her daughter was to escape from Alf and his sealer friend. Finally, she forcibly escaped and sought shelter from the people within the sanctuary of a Christian mission.

In the next part of this chapter, the weaknesses of being a woman and being a part of an indigenous society are clearly illustrated. Maydina experienced double marginalization, as a woman as well as a member of tribal society. It has been noted that women often become the object of violence and harassment, and as such, Maydina strove to protect herself and her daughter from the Aboriginal men and the whites. Furthermore, her responsibility of being a mother encouraged her to protect her daughter and to educate her. However, whilst living under the protection of the mission, she was unable to hand down her tribal teachings.

As a part of the indigenous society, the whites considered her as 'other'. When a subject does not have any similarities with certain group, that subject will be considered as 'other'; or to state simply, "You are different from us because you don't have any similarities with us". If that subject wishes to be a part of the group and to be considered as 'self', he or she should learn how to behave like

'self' members, to do what they do, to think as they think. Maydina found out that she was different and was treated differently from the whites during the time at the mission. The whites changed her daughter's name to Emily and her own name into May. Her daughter was educated as the whites, introduced to the white's culture, and Christianized. Her daughter was not taught or introduced to her own culture and traditions. Maydina and her daughter were not allowed to use their native language. The whites did not allow them Aborigines within the mission to use their previous names. The mission changed their names into the names that they considered as good names based on the Christianity. The Aborigines' forced identity and contextualized situation more strengthened the whites' power over the Aboriginal society. There is a discourse built by the whites to portray the Aboriginal life negatively.

Maydina's representation within the text as a weak individual is shown when the whites abandoned her from her daughter forever. Maydina could not perform her responsibility as a mother and as a part of tribal society. She lost her child and land rights. Representing Aborigines, Maydina, is shown to be powerless against the whites, and is easily controlled and defeated by them.

"As in a dream, a nightmare, she saw the children, bewildered and crying, put into the buggy. She called out to them, struggled against the hands which had grabbed her arms...She ran and ran, knowing there was no hope, but still running till her lungs gave out. She fell to the ground...she lay and cried, her tears darkening the dry soil" (p.89-90).

A.4 Nerida, the Waterlily

Nerida, in the fourth chapter, is portrayed as a girl with inferiority complex.

“... If you were koori, what chance did you have of finding a job?- except if you were lucky, cleaning up the whitefeller’s dirt? None at all... No one wanted her ... the country here looked desolate and depressing. She felt that it reflected her own soul, her spirit...Now there was nothing but dust.” (p.94)

She worked as a bookkeeper for the whites, she considered it as a very good job for Aborigines. Compared to other Aborigines, she was prouder and luckier. Working with the whites, she found many differences between the ways Aborigines and the whites conducted their lives. She became used to living with the whites and experienced the whites’ comfortable living style. Yet, eventually she became tired and disappointed of their style, and became concerned that Aborigines did not have the same quality of life. She became aware of her rights as a part of Australian citizens to get the equal quality of life as the whites.

In her point of view, the whites could get facilities from the government better than the Aborigines could. The government also supported the whites with a system that enabled the whites to get the ownership of Australian land, to build missions to Christianized the Aborigines. This system also enabled the whites to employ the Aboriginal young women and men by taking them away from their families and underpaying them. However, this system eventually supported the whites to colonize the Aboriginal land so that it intervened to the life of

Aborigines and negatively influenced the Aboriginal culture and tradition. This situation, in which she thought as inequality life between the whites and the Aborigines, made her feel inferior, in relation to the whites, and led her to struggle for equality between the whites and her own community, Aboriginal.

Her spirit of rebellion, as a young woman, led her to bring great changes to the Aborigines. She worked hard for the Mission but tried to find weaknesses in the white Missionaries, who she would eventually contest. Her strength inspired a growing number of Aborigines to struggle against the whites. She utilised her knowledge and education, which she had received from the whites, as a tool or weapon to attack them.

Nerida experienced a similar outcome as Maydina's daughter. She had been taken away from her family by the whites. She lived in a city, in which the environment was culturally white. When she decided to return home, she found it to be extremely different with the life with which she had become accustomed. She tried to break the rules in the mission to get their land rights and to get free from the white's power, which controlled them.

During her life, she had been mostly influenced by whites. Having worked for and being heavily influenced by the whites, she was often considered as 'other' by her own people.

"...the girl had asked if she was a 'spaghetti eater'. Nerida had got used to the fact that people often thought she was Italian or Greek".

(p.95)

Most Aborigines got a job as servants. History notes that nearly a third of all Aboriginal children were removed from their families; nearly 70 percent of these were girls, who were trained as domestic servants, and the boys were trained as manual labourers (<http://www.roninfilms.com.au/related/1832369-0.pdf>).

Nerida felt disappointed when she discovered that the environment and society were not the same as she had left it.

“The country around here looked desolate and depressing... Now there was nothing but dust.” (p.94)

The changes within her community and environment happened after the coming of the whites. This means that the coming of the whites into her community brought negative changes in forms of physical environment as well as in cultural and traditional life. Nerida implicitly compared the life during pre-coming of the whites and post-coming of the whites. From the above citation, Nerida saw that the land where she used to living was more beautiful than it was during the post-coming of the whites.

This first impression, on her return to her people, encourages her to change and improve it. She thought that Aboriginal society should not be that way. This leads her to conduct the struggle against the whites to get their land rights back and to get their freedom. Nerida thought that it was not important to have permission to enter her native community because she considered this as her own home. Yet everything had changed since the whites came.

There is a significant difference in Nerida's characterization from the previous characters. She is pictured as a woman with great strength and

willingness who refuses to accept the situation of her native community. She had a clear view of her people's future and had plans of what she was going to do with the Mission and the people. The spirit of rebellion is strongly shown here.

However, there is a sort of dualistic point. The first is that Nerida was employed by the whites with a considerably better job than average Aborigines were. She worked for them and learned from them; but eventually she used her experiences of living with them to attack them. The second point is that Nerida's sense of belonging to the earth and the people was still strongly holding her. She used her experience as a weapon to struggle against the whites. Yet, she still experienced sexual harassment from the manager of the Mission.

Nerida compared her people with the whites. She learned that there was wisdom, philosophy and a depth of culture, which was extremely different from the whites'. However, she knew that the whites considered themselves superior to the Aborigines. As found in:

“She had never realized how much wisdom, how much depth, there was in the old people's thinking. In the world outside there were no other values but those of the whitefellers...she was given to understand that she came from an inferior race which was doomed to die.” (p.106)

This is a dilemmatic problem. On one side, her pride of being a member of the Aborigines is reduced by that imposition. Her environment forced her to passively accept what had been contextualised. On the other hand, she still had the pride of being Aborigine, when she found out that Aborigines had taught her things that she could not get from the whites.

A.5 Lo-Arna, the Beautiful

In chapter five, the authors describe the character of Lo-Arna as a beautiful girl; golden brown skin with large dark and shiny eyes (p.145). Her father was a white settler and her mother was an Aborigine. She was raised by her father and white stepmother, and thus experienced the white's way of life, learned white culture and behaved as a white. However, Lo-Arna was obsessed with being a white and being a part of the white community.

“...she put on her swimsuit ...she knew little about Aborigines ... she knew they struggled for land rights ...went confidently downstairs: she was French Polynesian...she went as Barbarella, in a crazy, scanty space costume ... she had a few drinks” (p150-156)

Lo-Arna's acknowledgment of being white is supported by his father; “... She's like a white girl. She's not really Aboriginal” (p.156).

Even though she was in confusion whether she had to follow her father or biological mother, she could still do what her heart told her to.

Nerida's confusion also happens to Lo-Arna, in chapter four. In this chapter, the authors no longer conveyed the life contrast between the whites and the Aborigines. The main character's psychological development in choosing the new identity became the major theme. Lo-Arna's refusal of being half-Aboriginal girl is shown on the early part of the chapter. She lived with the whites. For years, she knew that she was an adopted child. Lo-Arna was proud of being a French Polynesian adopted child; was proud to be different and be part of this family. She lived in prosperity; the family provided her with a good standard of life. She lived

happily with her identity until she discovered that she was not an adopted child. Doug Cutler, Lo-Arna's father, did not want to let her know that she was half Aborigine. Lo-Arna had no idea that she was a mix-blooded child. As far as she knew, she was French Polynesian. Furthermore, what she knew about the Aborigines was that they were struggling for land rights. When the truth was revealed, she was shocked to discover that her adoptive father was her biological father. It happened when her biological mother tried to find her and her mother found out that she was still alive. Her mother struggled to hold her back. Because of her mother's struggle, her biological father was forced to tell the truth to her. Her father had kidnapped her from her mother. She felt that her adoptive family had deceived her for not telling the truth and for taking her from her mother. She rebelled against her father and tried to find her biological mother, which was strongly opposed by her stepmother. It was not simple to find and meet her real mother.

Initially Lo-Arna was described as an emotionally weak child and, as a child, was in a weak position. She was supposed to follow what her father told her. However, once the truth of her parentage became known and she had contacted her mother, she found herself standing between the opposing wills of her parents. She had to choose whom she would live with. She had to decide since there was no way for her parents to live together. If she chose to live with only one parent, another parent would be disappointed with her decision. She needed a strong will and knew that she had to follow her heart, no matter how big the challenge was.

C. Power Relation

As the story opens with the character namely Towradgi, the readers are brought to understand that Towradgi is a character with strong resistance against the whites and whose power or rules over the Nyari people. This is made clear by the way she regards her cultural knowledge and rituals to be more important than providing help or shelter to the white men. She tried to hand down the knowledge of earth and tribal culture to the younger generation. Towradgi has a very strong belief that the spirit, which actually was not clearly stated in the text, controlled the tribe. She believed that every single thing had its own sign, and that people were supposed to learn about it by themselves.

Towradgi believed she belonged to the eagle totem, which guarded her and protected her with its symbols.

“High above Towradgi a wedgetailed eagle drew his circles in the sky. Towradgi knew that he was there; without looking up, she sent her spirit to soar with him, so that she could see from above the land her people had held in trust since time began.” (p.2)

She established a kind of communication relationship between her and her totemic sign; the eagle. Towradgi believed that the eagle would tell her, through signs, of things to come. This interpretation is eventually spread to the Nyari people by her and used as a justification to firm her power over the Nyari people.

Towradgi obeyed the cultural law. She performed initiation for the girls who got their first period. It was forbidden for men to join the initiation rituals and

to enter the place wherein the initiation was usually held. There was a women's territory separated from men's.

“She would take them to the place that was sacred to the women. No men were allowed to set foot there.” (p.3)

Moreover, the way she taught the younger women placed her into a position of superiority toward the younger. Toward the younger, her power controlled the younger to do what they were supposed to;

“...they would learn self-discipline, and the codes of conduct by which the people lived. They would learn the mystery of creation” (p.2).

Towradgi justified this in the terms of their culture. Culture and tribal teaching were used as tools to support what she did to them. The freedom of being youngsters in the tribal community was limited only in terms of age. Socially, the elders controlled them -- they were only allowed to do something with an elder's approval.

Towradgi's sense of belonging toward nature is also illustrated when she knew that there was a wind, which she considered as strange.

“...there was a great fear in the wind himself ... he spoke of things to come that could not be explained because there were no words for them.” (p.3)

She tried to build a communication with her totem and to go inside the spirit as if she was united with her totem.

Towradgi, in this chapter, was positioned as the elder person who held the knowledge of the tribe and who taught the younger generation with the things that

the people claimed as wisdom and knowledge. In fact, wisdom and knowledge are not fixed terms. It changes over time. What has been categorized as wisdom or knowledge at one time has great possibilities to change later. It is questionable to say that a thing is the real and true wisdom or knowledge.

As the power holder in the tribe, Towradgi was supposed to transfer the traditional and cultural knowledge to the younger generation. She prepared her successor to hold the power in the future. She did so to Alinta.

“...Alinta would one day be her successor among the people...had been prepared to carry the torch of wisdom and of knowledge so that it could be passed on into the far distant future ...” (p.2)

Entitling Alinta to be her successor is also a form of power relation between the elder and the younger. One cannot decide that another person would have certain roles within society in the future if there were no power induced to that person. In the process of educating and preparing the younger generation, there happens the process of transferring power. This process is not simply in the form of transferring power, but it includes transferring knowledge.

Alinta, one of Towradgi pupils, up-held the tradition and culture, but in more a diluted form than Towradgi. Alinta's situation forced her to struggle for survival rather than strictly live by the entire teachings. However, she kept trying to apply the cultural teachings as a base during her struggle.

“It was not easy for Murra and Alinta to obey the Law. Who but themselves would have known that they had broken it? But the Nyari

were taught not to lie, and it would have been against their pride...”
(p.28)

It can be seen that she has awareness to obey the law, but she broke it because she had to deal with the situation she was facing.

“It was of great importance that the Law was followed; ...This knowledge filled her with pride and pleasure...” (p.10)

Alinta’s feelings of pride and pleasure convey that the process of transferring went smoothly without any significant resistance of accepting new knowledge from the elder. In fact, Alinta could no longer up-hold the entire teachings of knowledge and given power. Her struggle for survival impeded her from fully conducting her life in accordance to the elder’s teachings.

The coming of two white men into their land interfered with the tribal and cultural life of the Nyari people. Yet at this stage, a greater scope of power relation is introduced. There are two large parts, which represent the society and races of, white and Aborigines, first is the two white men are representatives of white European society and second is the Nyari people represent the Aboriginal society in Australia.

Meanwhile, Maydina experienced the shifting of culture from Aboriginal to white. She and Biri, her daughter, were forced to stay in the Christian mission to get its protection from her daughter’s father. It was not easy, being an Aborigine, to shift the culture, even less to the culture of whites. Furthermore, Maydina portrays a weaker resistance than the previous characters. Feeling inferiority plays a significant role in weakening the resistance. Living in the

mission because of the need of protection makes her become accustomed to the white's life style.

“...they had got used to Balambool: it had become a home.” (p.86)

As an Aborigine, she refused the white's efforts of inflicting their new culture upon her but, since there was no other shelter, she had no other choice but to accept it. It shows that the whites had a power and a control over the Aborigines. The situation supported the whites in consolidating their power over the Aborigines. Moreover, this 'victory' is supported by the whites' success in separating Biri from Maydina.

Hence, the victorious power that is shown in the end of chapter three is repeated in the beginning of chapter four. The authors describe that previously Nerida worked as a bookkeeper for the whites. This is a further weakening of the resistance of Aborigines. She accepted the worked, though later on she rejected it and returned to her people. However, there remained resistance from Aborigines towards the whites, but in a more diluted way. Nerida's willingness to work as a bookkeeper conveys her acceptance. Yet she still could not wholly get any other things from the whites; specifically, the land rights and freedom.

Furthermore, when Mrs. Felton asked her a permit for entering onto the Mission and Nerida did not have it (p.99), she felt that she could no longer be free to come to her own home. She thought still that the land, on where the mission was built, was her own home where she could come whenever she wanted to, without any permit and without somebody who controlled over her. This is the

lead-in of her rebellion to the whites. She discovered that the coming of whites reduced their freedom and seized their land rights.

“There was no one else in the country being treated in such a humiliating way. Whitefellers had taken the land; they had tried to kill the spirit and the culture of the people...” (p.121)

She tried to ask their freedom and land rights to be reinstated, but it was too difficult for her. The Australian government, who were whites, supported the whites' power over the mission. She would have to face to local and national powers in her struggle. Eventually, she gave up and left the mission along with other Aboriginal people, as she knew that she didn't have enough power to win her battle.

In chapter five, Lo-Arna accepted the whites without difficulty. This happened because she considered herself one of them. Lo-Arna, mix-blooded daughter of a white and Aborigine, accepted the idea that she was an adopted child named Ann-Cutler. She was proud of being a part of a white family and of being a French Polynesian adopted child. The family reinforced her belief that she was not an Aborigine; “She's like a white girl. She is not really Aboriginal” (p.156). In fact, the truth was revealed when her adoptive father told her that she was his biological daughter. She could hardly accept that her mother was Aborigine.

“ ...Lo-Arna felt resentment building up inside her-a deep, futile resentment against life, against fate that had made her

Aboriginal...She felt contaminated by some dreadful disease that permeated her whole being.” (p.159)

It reflects her resistance to the Aborigines, not to the whites. She felt that she was a part of the white culture, not Aboriginal; “I’m a boong. A bloody Abo” (p.160).

Gradually, she learned that she had to accept her fate of being mix-blooded. She knew that she was between white and Aborigine. Lo-Arna, as a child, certainly missed the presence of her mother in her life. This made her decide that she had to meet her mother. In this context, the sense of humanity and childhood plays an important role in Lo-Arna’s life. She decided to visit her mother but, believing what her stepmother had told her, thought that her mother would not be kind to her. Yet she discovered that her mother had in fact missed her for years and would be very glad to live with her. Eventually, she accepted herself as being mix-blooded as well as accepted her mother and accepting the whites in her land.

As stated in chapter two, power and knowledge affect each other. Knowledge can only be imposed if power supports it. When power operates, there will always be knowledge imposed to the object by subject. The determination of subject and object is not fixed. A subject may become object and vice versa. It changes and depends on the speaker at the moment of speaking.

In chapter two and three, the authors thoroughly compare these two groups by describing prejudices.

“The creatures had heads, arms, legs, like men. But they had no real colour... She had seen the eyes of fish that had that colour... They were

spirits. No human being looked like that...They were spirit from the Country of Dead ...to haunt the living; they brought death with them.”

(p.15)

The Nyari thought that all the whites were bad-tempered, ugly, cruel, and so forth. The Nyari might say this sort of prejudice because they found that the whites were physically different from them. Logically, the Nyari people created and lived within their own undisruptive and close community, where every person had physical similarities. However, when they discovered that there were people with physical differences, they considered that these people were ‘other’.

“Their state before we came was lower than a beast’s: they deliberately indulged in sinful practices: they are used to deceit...” (p.79)

Conversely, the whites assumed that all Aborigines were poor in quality, bad, uncivilized and so forth. However, none of these prejudices are all-true. Later on, they discover that each group has their own characteristics, which are not extremely bad or absolutely good. Stereotypes, which are set by society, affect the ways of thinking by the people.

Each stereotype that was spread by the whites and Aborigines forms knowledge, which is imposed on their own people. This, in turn, leads to the assumptions made about other races being supported and admitted as ‘truth’. This ‘truth’ is not a fixed term; it always changes over time and depends on the person who speaks about certain objects. For example, the whites are talking about the Aborigines. They consider Aborigines to be savage, uncivilized, wild, etc because they are representing their own race. Everything outside and different from them

is 'other'. Conversely, the Aborigines are talking about the whites. They consider that their tribe is better or even the best among other tribes and nations in the world. They view that the whites have a worse culture; since they do not understand about nature's signs, they do not have totemic belief, and so forth. Thus, the Aborigines consider the whites as 'other' as well.

The acceptance of new culture or identity, both in the white's society and in Aborigine's society, is merely because of the power that both races place equal position. At one time, strong resistance plays an important role; and at another time acceptance is clearly shown. It is also not fixed situation that Aborigines always resist neither the whites nor the vice versa. The characteristic of resistance in power relation is fluid. During the process of power relation, there are always resistances happening in both actors. It happens reciprocally.

The characterization of Nerida shows that resistance goes along acceptance. In one side, she accepted the job for the whites. It reflects her acceptance toward the whites. In other side, she discovered that the comfortable living of the whites was derived from the peaceful living of the Aborigines: means that the whites destroyed the life of Aborigines so that they could live happier above the suffer of the Aborigines. This stage describes that the stronger power belonged to the whites. Moreover, the characterization of Lo-Arna shows that the process of resistance and of acceptance she experienced goes alongside in the vice versa. She resisted the fact of being a part of Aborigines and more accepted the fact of being French-Polynesian.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION