

Treatment of Identity, History and Culture in the Select Novels of Louise Erdrich

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Abstract: --Louise Karen Erdrich is one of the most popular and praised Native American writers. Her novels reflect strongly her origin, and family and community background. The narratives in Erdrich's novels suggest that individuals are part of a network of narratives of self, family, community, society, culture and humanity and they allow individuals to understand themselves and take control of their narratives and their identities. Erdrich's ability in developing and constructing fictional characters is a primary part of her success as a creator. She is compared with William Faulkner, who peopled the imaginary Yoknapatawpha County in Mississippi with a rich form of men and women of a couple of races. Similarly, in the same way the reader would call the Matchimanito saga of her first five novels, Erdrich has created imaginary vicinity established around her fictional town of Argus in North Dakota reservation, whose heart is Matchimanito Lake, and peopled it with an assorted staff of men and women of white, Indian, and blended-blood heritage. Erdrich's works, linked by using recurring characters who are victims of fate and the patterns set by means of their elders, are structured like intricate puzzles where part of expertise about individuals and their members of the family and an additional are slowly launched in a reputedly random order. Through her characters' antics, Erdrich explores common household existence cycles which also speaks a sense of the alterations and loss concerned within the twentieth-century Native American expertise. The works of Erdrich mirror her multilayered, complex foundation as well as frustrate a mixed bag of abstract sort and cultural classes. In spite of the fact that she is referred to fundamentally as a fruitful contemporary Native American author, Erdrich's finely cleaned written work uncovers both her Turtle Mountain Chippewa and European American legacies. In her fiction and different compositions she obviously respects the survival of American Indian societies as basic. The aim of the present study is to advance the theoretical aspects of history, identity, and culture in Native American literature with special reference to the novels of Erdrich. The study closely examines the targeted spaces within her novels and queerly re-read them with a view to achieving a comprehensible understanding of the protagonists' gradually aggravated ambivalence toward troubled history, identity, and culture and their fear of being trapped in the static life mode. By doing so, a more sympathetic reading with the characters will be presented, and it is hoped that such a reading cannot only bring up an alternative which is otherwise missing from the previous scholarly attention, but open up a possibility to arouse more discussions in the future. The novels - Love Medicine, The Beet Queen, Tracks, and The Bingo Palace - have been selected for this purpose.

Keywords: --Treatment of Identity, History and Culture.

Introduction

American Indian literature written in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth century is viewed as a literature of move between the oral custom which prospered before Europeans landed on the continent and the starting of the 1960's the point at which the American Indian Renaissance started. Nineteenth-century literature wrote by American Indians was content based and written in English, which came about principally due to the English taught in convent schools. Most Eighteenth and Nineteenth century authors utilized the basic artistic classes like autobiography and the novel, yet joining narratives with the conventional trickster oral tale or myth making a mixture artistic structure.

Early American Indian writing showed the conflict they encountered by the writers to discover their own voice within the culture of the United States, however it was later in the 1960's that their written work started to express the mortification felt by Native American groups over their less than human treatment by the overwhelming culture. These early authors are driven by their consciousness of the force of writing as an instrument in evolving state of mind, yet it would be quite a while before this could beat the profound preferences molded amid the struggle between Euro-Americans and Natives in the bloody Indian Wars of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries.

Louise Karen Erdrich is one of the most predominant Native American writers for the past fifteen years and one of the most comprehensive and talented novelists of any heritage now working in the United States. Erdrich is not only a novelist but also a short story writer, nonfiction writer, poet, and memoirist. Her works has received many awards and has fascinated a loyal readership among lay as well as academic readers.

Erdrich is raised as a Catholic, and this tradition is mirrored in her works, that place a lot of her American Indian characters which are portrayed as missionized Catholics who also take part within the religious belief methods of their tradition. Certainly, Erdrich located a mannequin for this form of observe of devout belief with her grandfather Patrick Gourneau, who discovered both Catholicism and his ordinary Chippewa religion. For her grandfather, as Erdrich reviews, Catholicism and Ojibwa beliefs are so thoroughly intertwined that he would do pipe ceremonies for [church] ordinations. Like Gourneau, Erdrich's characters are living within two religious traditions, and in *Tracks* she finds social gathering to take into account specific implications of this old circumstance.

Erdrich thinks of herself as a citizen of two nations, and, indeed, her literary artwork has roots in both Euro-American and Native American narrative traditions. Like many different latest fiction writers, she works from and experiments with the Euro-American way of novel life, however she additionally incorporates within those genre points of alternative genres and elements of an oral storytelling culture. Her use of this type of the unconventional lies in the culture of William Faulkner, for she too situates more than one narrator inside the mythic landscape of a regional community. In her hands, nonetheless, the radical as style is transfigured. Erdrich's own experiences with both loved ones narrative and the Ojibwa oral culture have shaped her want to reward her reports within the voices of storytellers, and through her illustration of characters as storytellers, she transforms her readers into listeners.

Erdrich was born on 7 July 1954 in Little Falls, Minnesota, and the eldest of seven kids. Her mother, Rita Joanne Gourneau Erdrich, had been born on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation, of which Patrick Gourneau, Erdrich's grandfather, had been tribal chairman. Her father, Ralph Louis Erdrich, of German descent, taught on the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school, where the place her mother additionally taught. The household lived in school housing at the fringe of the small town of Wahpeton, North Dakota, and 300 miles far away from the Turtle Mountain Reservation.

The aim of the present study is to advance the theoretical aspects of history, identity, and culture in Native American literature with special reference to the novels of Erdrich. The study closely examines the targeted spaces within her novels and queerly re-read them with a view to achieving a comprehensible understanding of the protagonists' gradually aggravated ambivalence toward troubled history, identity, and culture and their fear of being trapped in the static life mode. By doing so, a more sympathetic reading with the characters will be presented, and it is hoped that such a reading cannot only bring up an alternative which is otherwise missing from the previous scholarly attention, but open up a possibility to arouse more discussions in the future. The novels - *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, *Tracks*, and *The Bingo Palace* - have been selected for this purpose.

Analysis of the Novel

Her novel, *The Beet Queen*, deals with whites, half-of-breeds, and American Indians, and explores the interactions between these worlds. The major issues are abandonment, sexuality, love and jealous. *Tracks* takes place from, *Love Medicine*'s characters and their hardships. One of the most narrators, Nanapush, is the chief of a tribe that is struggling on account of the white executive's exploitation. He feels compelled to quit tribal land so as to avert hunger. While Nanapush represents the old way, Pauline, the opposite narrator, represents trade. *The Bingo Palace* weaves a story of spiritual pursuit with elements of modern reservation lifestyles. Erdrich additionally furnished continuity to the series by using having the radical chiefly narrated by Lipsha Morrissey, the illegitimate son of June Kashpaw and Gerry Nanapush from *Love Medicine*. After working at a Fargo sugar beet factory, Lipsha has again home to the reservation searching for his life's meaning.

Erdrich has received numerous awards: *Love Medicine* has been awarded the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Los Angeles Times Book prize, the Nelson Algren Short Fiction Award, the National Award for Fiction, the 1985 O'Henry Prize for a chapter from *Love Medicine*, the Sue Kaufman Prize for the Best First Novel, the American Academy of Poets Prize, and the Virginia McCormick Scully Prize for the Best Book of 1984 dealing with Indians or Chicanos.

All through *Tracks* and *Love Medicine*, tales have a recuperating impact on both people and the group, and stories regularly take characters back to the group after they have incidentally lost their link. Nanapush's story in *Tracks* is devoted to fixing the harm done to Lulu at the administration boarding school. In spite of the fact that he neglects to win her back, Nanapush recounts a creation tale to Pauline to attempt to conquer her over the top association with Catholicism. Nanapush eludes more than once to times he himself was spared by telling tales, after he about kicked the bucket of starvation.

In *Love Medicine*, June makes due in her family's tales after her passing. In "The World's Greatest Fishermen" narrating tales regarding June helps her family start to grapple with her death. These books, and whatever is remaining of Erdrich's works, are a route for her to protect and celebrate her way of life, and obviously the link between storytelling and survival is vital for Erdrich. Erdrich's characters survive, and regardless of tremendous loss, figure out how to ensure and praise the Ojibwa custom.

Most of the characters in the two books are conflicting to keep up and accomplish an association with their legacy after most of loss of property and constrained digestion. Erdrich investigates these struggles through water symbolism. Despite the fact that

water imagery in altogether different routes in every novel she utilizes it as a theme as she looks at the American Indian experience in the twentieth century. In *Tracks*, water speaks to control: control over the area, identity, and the self.

While *Tracks* delineates changes as they are happening, *Love Medicine* portrays characters living in a world that has early changed: property has been lost, the way of life weakened, and Catholicism is prevalent. In *Love Medicine* the characters exist in an interminable condition of profound crisis, and Erdrich utilizes the water's as a surface and the individuals who truly or metaphorically suffocate, pulled under by the heaviness they could call their own personality disarray. Huge numbers of the characters need to away from the reservation and return so as to find what it intends to be an American Indian in an immensely diverse world than the universe of their precursors.

Love Medicine and *The Beet Queen* specifically takes after this example as Nector, Lipsha, Marie, and Lulu all leave the reservation and return, generally more protected in their identities, or if nothing else more sure that they have a place on the reservation with their American Indian group.

American Indian writers who write in English may plan to compose for other Americans Indian, however they should likewise recognize that their readers of people will probably comprise of both Native American and non-Native American pursuers. The impact of this inescapably differing readership makes a richly hybridized dialogue aimed at those few with privileged knowledge — the traditionally educated Indian reader—as well as those with claims to a privileged discourse—the Eurocentric reader. This additionally compels the non-indigenous pursuer into the position of other, while in the meantime permitting, notwithstanding driving, delicate pursuers to find out around a culture they may have been beforehand unconscious.

As a blended blood writer, Erdrich is particularly gifted at way of writing that is helpless to various understandings, contingent upon the pursuer's experience.

The empowerment/disempowerment permits the pursuer to have an experience perusing *Love Medicine* (and *Tracks*, however to a lesser degree) that reflects the experience of the characters. Perusing the books together reproduces for the pursuer the excursion that the characters in *Love Medicine* take to find out about their legacy keeping in mind the end goal to have a more noteworthy comprehension they could call their own personalities. *Love Medicine* implies more to the pursuer if the pursuer has likewise read *Tracks*, and taken together as the history of an evolving community, *Tracks* and *Love Medicine* express the stories not of vanishing relics but of intrepid survivors.

Erdrich investigates the experience of Chippewa individuals in the twentieth century in a sensible manner that is open to a wide range of pursuers, along these lines presenting non-Native pursuers to another experience and giving an underestimated culture a voice, all while investigating her own feeling of her identity. As a half-German, half-Chippewa, author, she concentrates on the experience of the blended blood American Indian in the current world and the disarray and disagreements that having a blended lineage involves. Her fiction are among the first by a American Indian writer to accomplish both basic and business achievement, which Owens credits to her depiction of the more universal trials of characters that just happen to be Indian or Indian-and-white, setting the multiple mini-dramas against a recognizable Indian world. A major piece of what makes Erdrich's work so engaging pursuers of all foundations is her comprehension of her blended blood foundation, and that through the difficulty of embracing our own contradictions we gain sympathy for the range of ordinary failures and marvels. Erdrich's characters are indigenous, blended blood, and dominant white, however most importantly they are human and consequently both simple and difficult to get it. In her novels, Erdrich has made a stark, poetic, and mystical representation of present life in provincial North Dakota. Her narratives portray divided family ties, loss of confidence in conventional Ojibwa and Catholic gods, and male and female who conflict to survive, to frame identities, and to figure out how to practice power as per their surroundings.

Erdrich's characters that do not discover a home are normally the individuals who have fizzled in their focal reason, development of personality. One illustration is King and Lynette's crew. Lynette's alluding to both places as King's home close that there are clashes which he has not determined between his legacy and contemporary life with his wife and kid.

The account of *Tracks* closures with Lulu Nanapush's arrival from the boarding school. She is met by Margaret and Nanapush, who like squeaking oaks clutch her, sticking together in the fierce dry wind. The picture is promising; in spite of the fact that Lulu has been move, Margaret and Nanapush stay to grapple her to the place where there is her legacy.

Lipsha portrays the end of *Love Medicine* and *The Bingo Palace*. He has quite recently won June's car from King Kashpaw and transported his father, Gerry Nanapush, to the Canadian outskirt. Crossing a bridge is she coming back home, Lipsha stops the car and gets out looking into the stream, considering about his mother. His soliloquy exhibits that he thinks no hatred toward June and has acknowledged his family identity. In the last sentences of the novel, Lipsha paints a quiet homecoming scene.

The last scene in *The Bingo Palace* elements Fleur Pillager's irritated getting Lipsha's home in death. She packs a sledge brimming with bones and drags it over a solidified Matchimanito onto an island which includes a cave. There, she discovers her

home, as she is brought together with her grandma, sisters, Nanapush, and the baby she lost. Therefore, in spite of the fact that Fleur Pillager has passed on physically, her soul stays to shape the future of the group.

The delight and help that these homecomings provider of recommend that albeit all is not impeccable on the world, there is some vast request. Erdrich's characters at times feel the congruity, or request; Gerry attests that there was no such thing as a complete lack of order, only a design so vast it seemed unrepetitive up close. Gerry is conceded his impression when the plane carrying him between hospitals accidents, slaughtering the government officers and permitting his run away.

In *Love Medicine* Lyman has a comparative vision of request when he rationally remembers the scuffle that pulverizes the Tomahawk Factory with an organized joy. Identifying the gathered constrain in the factory's devastation, Lyman admits that the industrial facility was damned, and soon a while later he is roused with the thought to manufacture the Bingo Palace.

Looks of request are transient, then again, and regularly a character has such a motivated vision, just to lose it, which requires his or her proceeding quest. Visits home are never perpetual, either; rather, they work for as relaxing interims and markers of advancement. That Erdrich's characters are persistently provocation makes them solid. The routes, in which the characters conquer these deterrents, are blending qualities, religions, and cultural legacies, make every novel a lesson in present survival.

Erdrich accentuates the essentialness of discernment all through her novel, *Love Medicine*, not just through the direct records of occasions re-narrating by the describing characters, yet particularly through the prevalent subject - the search for identity. As the western culture infringes on the reservation, the greater part of the characters must assess their impression of both the western and American Indian cultures and their places inside of them. This struggle between the cultures convolutes how the characters progress to their identities. As American Indians, most of the characters must assess their mental view of self, as well as their view of their liking with the family and tribe community, and also their view of the men and women parts of their culture.

In "American Indian Thought and Identity in American Fiction," Anna Lee Walters explains that American Indian thought should be synonymous with "American Indian identity," (35) however now among several Americans, Native American thought and character are still over and over again compared with a cowboys and Indians' image of tribal peoples; in this way, American Indian creators present and reaffirm their social identities through their artistic works. Erdrich's accentuation on character in *Love Medicine* reaffirms the Ojibwa identity and exhibits the unpredictability of Americans Indians' acknowledgment of personality to both the individuals from the Ojibwa tribe and those outside of the American Indian identity.

As underestimated individuals the American Indian's anxiety of identity formation is paramount, as Erdrich shows in *Love Medicine*. Marginalized individuals should continually rearrange their view of identity, adjusting their comprehension of their places in the western and Ojibwa culture. Furthermore, Erdrich's accentuation on observation addresses the multifaceted nature of the characters' osmosis of occurrence and identity.

On the other hand, Erdrich's accentuation on discernment additionally confuses the pursuer's render of the novel. To completely comprehend the issue of character in *Love Medicine* the pursuer must convey the episodes of the novel in his/her mind, constantly reshuffling and reinterpreting as new events are revealed and the narrative biases of each character are exposed. Accordingly, the pursuer is stranded between conflicting codes - deprived of a stable point of identification¹ within the world evoked by the text - the reader is temporarily disempowered and marginalized by the text. Be that as it may, the pursuer's underestimation leads to another kind of power; the pursuer is enabled by the likelihood of different elucidations of the content. Thus, pursuers can react to the novel in spite of their social inclinations.

Indeed, even the individuals who are new to American Indian thought and culture can translate the content; be that as it may, this pursuer would not identify the centrality of the racial identity that Erdrich so plainly characterizes in the novel. Along these, to completely comprehend the issue of identity in *Love Medicine*, *Tracks*, *The Beet Queen*, and *The Bingo Palace*.

Each one of these deciphers methods reveals inconspicuous impacts on the characters' identity, their periphery, and their view of what it intends to be Ojibwa in twentieth century America. In spite of the fact that the pursuer require not really be American Indian, he or she can completely comprehend the ramifications of the Ojibwa social crumbling and the Chippewa's conflict to recover their legacy just by receiving an American Indian viewpoint and perception the novel through American Indian eyes.

The artistic manifestations by Erdrich present contradiction by structure and substance, by language and creation. Among the numerous paradoxes are the confluxes of oral custom in a written document, protection of historical morals while balancing to the present world, most profound sense of being during a time of Scientifics, and shared assembling that praises singularity. The incongruity of group and singularity is likewise illustration for the individual substance inside of the tribal group, for particular tribal character inside of the rubric of American Indian countries, and for social hugeness inside of a pluralistic culture.

Erdrich's graceful voice contrasts from the inferred author of her novels not in tone, sentence structure, or solidified symbolism, but rather in power of feeling. Some sensational circumstances of the account lyrics are extended in the books; however the tetralogy books show a inclusive wholeness.

Erdrich's verse and novels have a literary relationship. Comparative subjects of social intercession, verifiable examination, and human survival are in every one of her works. Every of her lyrics contain seeds that grow into books. The clearest illustrations are "Tracks" cycle that contains components of *The Beet Queen* and the indistinguishably titled fiction and poem, "Love Medicine." "Family Reunion" accumulates characters in a comparative manner that June Kashpaw's demise reunites her crew. The imaginary characters in the lyrics, for example, Mary Kroger, Leonard, and Potchikoo, are as individual and human as Mary Adare, Nanapush, or NectorKashpaw.

The totality of the tribal group is displayed in the North Dakota books, *Tracks*, *The Bingo Palace*, *The Beet Queen*, and *Love Medicine*. The unpredictability of accuracy epitomizes all the books. Albeit each could stand autonomously, they are more finish when considered in general. The incorporation of *The Beet Queen* in tribal accounts shows that Native tribal groups do not exist in complete disengagement yet must collaborate with encompassing social orders. Albeit American Indians may not clearly show their qualities in *The Beet Queen*, basic standards exist together with the predominant society. The intangibility accessible to minorities is altered with Pauline and the conventional Ojibwas in *Tracks* yet fundamental to Celestine in *The Beet Queen*.

An obvious inconsistency happens in the unreeling of ordered time in the three books such as *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, *The Bingo Palace* and *Tracks*. Apparently they continue from 1912 through 1984; in any case, through the narrating accounts, the occasions hover through recollections of the different storytellers, in this way taking out straight movement. The reappearance of the different characters in distinctive books at different phases of their lives however with identities in place adds to smoothness of time. Material culture as distinguishing Ojibwa social codes is discernibly truant from the books. Notwithstanding, custom authorization possesses large amounts of narrating, in archetypal characters, and in symbolism and references.

Multiculturalism amplifies past conflictual separation, praising assorted qualities. Few critical renders of Erdrich's fiction recognize a conflict of societies and reason that struggle produces minority of the pursuer.

Erdrich's multiculturalism comes from her own encounters. She is conscious that the tales she weaves product a past additionally evaluates the substances of the present, and tasks trust for future. The narrating fuses the legacy of oral convention, show in a talk of regular pictures, noteworthiness of spot, revolving around stories, and closeness.

Erdrich's own mission for personality and comprehension turns into the search for all Native Americans and non-Native Americans. Whether from an American blood legacy or European, all Americans take part in the Indian history of this nation. The Native American molded the creative ability, supporting through negativism the roughness and land occupying that made America, romanticizing the sad legacy of overwhelm. The duality of the Noble Savage still infests prevalent and high culture. Erdrich's extremely presence, her drive to tell the stories, and the convincing way of her stories effortlessly amplifies another chance for American culture to mend. Through the influence of language, an aphoristic estimation of the oral custom, Erdrich not just reminds that American Indians will keep on adjusting and survive, yet her works offer general society a view of communities, union through assorted qualities.

In Native American Literature is coming to mean, for a great many people, the works of writing in English by Native American writers. Fiction by Native American writers is not quite the same as each other in a few ways. Every novel presents a particular perspective of a certain place. Cultural setting and Physical setting are greatly essential in comprehension the story. Despite the fact that there are unmistakably particular qualities, there are likewise similitudes. Most of greatest fiction by Native American writers is fabricated around the general theme of isolation and cultural conflict. Fiction in this kind have attributes of the initiation story.

Conclusion

Erdrich's novels powerfully depict the struggles of modern Native Americans as they encounter the trials of disease, hunger, government interference, and missionary zeal. Erdrich weaves together the narrative perspectives of various Ojibwa and European-American characters to depict generations of Native American history. But though politics form the backdrop of the novels, Erdrich's works are not purely, or even primarily, political. The stories of her characters revolve around the more immediate concerns of identity and family. These characters tell their stories in order to uncover the secrets of their family histories, to understand themselves, or to pass on these histories to family members. Their quests for identity and their explorations of family history have relevance for all readers. Erdrich's first-person narrators self-consciously construct their stories, and in doing so, they reveal the ways in which individuals uses stories to make sense of their lives and their families.

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