

Chapter One

Introduction: Clash of Culture

The Chippewa of Northern Wisconsin continue to experience a peculiarly American form of apartheid, characterized by segregation, discrimination, cultural imperialism and everyday violence. Native Americans across the country continue to experience myriad and interrelated forms of economic, political and social oppression. That is to say that there is the western control of American Indians and their resources. Yet such efforts have not gone unchallenged. In fact recent years have seen extensive resistance on the part of American Indians, as they reassert their remaining treaty rights around land resources and self governance. The American Indians demand for sovereignty and self determination. Frequently, this has been manifest in the invocation of rights claims-specifically, treaty, land fishing and the resource rights. Euro-American's hegemony and the practices of insurgency are inherently dynamic and unstable. Instead of granting Indian nations political sovereignty, the history of treaties with the U.S. Federal government further diminished the identities, homelands and freedom of the Indigenous people. White people think themselves dominant and civilized. They think that the natives are uncivilized and barbaric. They subdue and dominate the natives in the name of civilizing them.

Native American activist, Ramona Bennett aptly expresses the Native American response to above mentioned pattern of treaty abrogation:

At this time, our people were fighting to preserve their last treaty right- the right to fish. We lost our land base. There was no game in the area

... We're dependent not just economically but culturally on the right to fish. Fishing is part of our cultural forms and religion and diet, and the entire culture is based around it. And so when we talk about (Euro America's) ripping off the right to fish, we're talking about cultural genocide. (qtd. In Perry and Robyn 591-592)

So, the Native Americans are not finding the way to escape from domination and cruelty of Euro Americans. But Native American Activists are often seen as an affront to white dominance, in that the activists are perceived to be violating the anticipated rules of behaviour. Instead of accepting their subordination, they resist it. It is a form of "resistance to any diminishment in the authorial claims of a particular white identity." When Native people oppose white assertions of power or in fact demand of their few remaining rights, they resist. The natives are physically and spiritually depressed because of the marginalization.

The US government seek to marginalize and disempowering Native American Communities. The oppression is systematic. It represents a network of norms, assumptions, behaviours and policies that are structurally connected in such a way as to reproduce the racialized and gendered hierarchies that characterize the society in question Iris Marion Young (1990) articulates five inter-related" faces of oppression." By which we might characterize the experience of minority groups: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.

Attesting to the violent potential inherent in the game of racial accountability bell hooks observes that the daily violence experienced by so many black people

is necessary for the maintenance of racial difference. Indeed if black

people have not learned our place as second-class citizens through educational institutions, we learn it by the daily assaults perpetuated by white offenders on our bodies and beings that we feel but rarely, publicly protect or name. Most black folks believe that if they do not conform to white dominated standards of acceptable behaviour they will not survive. (Hooks qtd. In Perry and Robyn 594)

Not only the blacks but all Native Americans also know that the white gaze is upon them. Native are against those imposed standards to which hook refers. Whites' Psyche seek to maintain the relative disempowerment of Native Americans and other racial minorities. As the experience of the Great lakes Chippewas demonstrate, racial violence becomes especially problematic when subordinate groups challenge such hierarchies.

We can observe the Anti-Indian Violence in America. Historically, people of color, including American Indians have been relegated to the category of "Menial Laborers," or even servants American Indians have lost more than 95 percent of their land base. In retrospect, the historical relationship that evolved between colonizers and colonized lends insight into the reason exploitation is occurring today. American Indian tribes, specifically, believe in a strong sense of balance. Before the first Europeans came, massive American Indians land base existed. The trees, the earth, and the sense of sight of the environment itself influenced the intellect and thinking process of the Indians in creating the notion of balance. This precarious balance still exists and the relationship among plants, animals, the elements, the air, water, wind and the earth are all equally and evenly placed within the whole. But when Europeans had came their then they placed themselves intellect,

civilized and educated. They did need lands and raw materials for expansion. Indians were defined as a problem or a threat and their lands and resources were taken.

The hysteria generated by anti-Indian groups is grounded precisely in this tendency to imagine the Chippewa as the culprits rather as protectors of the land. This sentiment is reflected in the following observation made by a Chippewa who had been active during the spear fishing conflicts:

That hierarchy of racism is still there ... We've never gotten an apology from American for what they've done to our people and to our lands. Every other ethnic group has today Japanese, blacks. We helped America since when they first came here; we continue to. We try to fish and hunt according to old traditions that are meant to keep the earth and its creatures healthy. We try to teach others too. But then we get blamed for the opposite. It's the Sunday fishermen and the fishing business and the mines that have hurt our lakes. They take, take, take and then blame us. (Gedicks qtd. In Perry and Robyn 599)

So, the Chippewa are kept on reservations, behind fences, like the deer and the geese. Non-Indians can move into territory that was previously home to the Chippewas. Treaty rights that had promised the continuance of fishing, hunting, and gathering are being eroded as the government exercises its paternalistic powers. Knowledge and methods of hunting and fishing pass down from elders through the ages have become criminalized and Chippewas are punished for continuing their traditions. Chippewas are in the depth of darkness because of the white supremacy.

Many literary observers have viewed the Chippewas culture, tradition and the way of life very closely. They have described the poor conditions under which

Chippewas are adjusting themselves as a second-class race or tribe. Harold Hickerson has written that the Chippewa, distributed in thirty-odd villages in the region South and West of Lake Superior, varying from a few families to several, hundred souls, were still engaged in the fur trade, fishing, hunting, wild rice collection and maple sugar productions. Among the non-Indians in their range were fur traders, Indian agents and a sprinkling of Presbyterian missionaries who had just arrived in the region. Indeed, the Indians were granted the right to continue occupying hunting and fishing grounds for an indefinite time in the future. But the pressure of white immigration questioned the existence of Indian Americans. The natives were subdued in every field. They were dominated in business, trade, religion, culture and everything. They were named as barbaric, uneducated, savage and uncivilized. Although the relations between the Indians and the traders were at a time outwardly amicable, tensions endemic in the nature of their relationship which was, after all, one of the opposed interests. Would rise to the surface during periods when the Indians were having a hard time feeding and supplying themselves because of poor success in hunting and trapping. Traders were in a manner Christians and Indians were indeed heathens. Mutual hostility was permanent between Indians and traders.

The natives suffered from starvation. An observer Johnston says that they were suffering from famine because they relied on hunting rather than farming. Johnston mentioned several instances of shortages of provisions, especially meat and one instance in which a trader arriving in the hunting grounds west of Leech lake could purchase no provisions from the Indians.

Another observer Boutwell mentioned that the Indians were looting the trader's fish. The Indians didn't have enough food to feed themselves. They didn't

have any garden where they grew potatoes and other vegetables. They suffered from hunger and only way to alive was to loot (robbery). Boutwell expressed:

The Indians are drawing away to their sugar comps, one after another. Our house has been thronged with young and old, during their stay. It is no rare thing to count 30 or more at meal times, all standing with eager looks, to get at least a potato The weather is extremely cold and stormy. Several of Indians who left for their spring hunts, have returned in a starring condition. But how their condition will be improved here, I know not. for their families are starving. I am almost besieged by starving beggars from morn to eve. My patience is often severely tested with them, for while they beg for potatoes to satisfy their hunger, they must beg for in anticipation, for seed to plant in the spring. (Boutwell qtd. In Hickerson 14-15).

So, the Indians suffered very much from hunger. Non-Indians and Missionaries were an evil for them. They destroyed their tradition and culture.

The Travels and Adventures of Alexander Henry, a well known English fur trader of the late 18th century, were first published in 1809. In Henry's work there are a number of personal observations of Chippewa society and culture. Henry had been adopted as a brother, or perhaps a son, by a Chippewa Indian. He observed the family, clothing and shelter, travel and so on of the Chippewas. While observing a Wawatam family he said that there was a family group composed of four adult males, three adult females and one infant, a total of eight persons. So, there were so many members in a family of Chippewa.

Alexander Henry was dressed by the Wawatam family so that he would look like a typical Chippewa of the time and place. He describes his own appearance in these words:

My hair was cut off, and my head shaved, with the exception of a spot on the crown of about twice the diameter of a crown-piece (coin). My face was painted with three or four different colours; some parts of it red and others black. A shirt was provided for me, painted with vermilion, mixed with grease. A large collar of Wampum was put round my neck and another suspended on my breast. Both my arms were decorated with large bands of silver above the elbow, besides several smaller ones on the wrists; and my legs were covered with Mitasses (leggings), a kind of hose, made, as is the favourite fashion, of scarlet cloth. Over all, I was to wear a scarlet blanket or mantle, and on my head a large bunch of feathers. I parted, not without some regret, with the long hair which was natural to it, and which I fancied to be ornamental; but the ladies of the family, and of the village, in general appeared to think my person improved, and now condescended to call me handsome, even among Indians. (qtd. In Quimby 220)

Alexander Henry also describes the Chippewa types of shelter. He refers to houses, lodges, wigwams and cabins. In one place he describes a rectangular house 20 feet long and 14 feet wide with a door at each end, a continuous fireplace running down the middle of the house from one end to the other, and a smoke hole over it. He further says that in spring, summer and autumn the Cheppewa traveled

in birch bark canoes. In winter they traveled on foot, aided by snowshoes when the snow was deep on the ground.

Alexander Henry makes list of items of material culture in the account of his years stay with the Wawatam family. Article of clothing includes shirts, cloth leggings and common shoes or moccasins. Ornaments mentioned are silver arm bands, silver wrist bands and a collar and necklace of Wampum. Tools mentioned are steel axes of one and a half pound weight knives, trenching tools and iron traps. Weapons are flint lock guns with powder and bullets. Utensils include wooden bowls (dishes), wooden spoons, flint and steel (strike-a-lights) for making fire, brass kettles and tobacco pipes. The only musical instrument mentioned is the drum. Items of travel and transport are the birchbark canoe, wooden paddles, burden straps and snowshoes. The Chippewas are depended upon hunting, fur trading and sugar production.

The treaties that the White Americans signed with the Chippewas is important to understand the clash of culture. Treaty study can be a touchstone and fruitful pathway to learning about Indian affairs. The further says that treaty study places one in touch with the concrete experience of Indian people in their past negotiations and contemporary controversies with the whites.

In the eighteenth century, the southern Chippewa Indians occupied lands around the Great Lakes in Southern Ontario and on the Michigan Peninsula. Late in the century the white immigrants and fur traders crowded around the reservations of the Indians. Chippewa experienced the loss of most of their land in Michigan. By 1900 the Chippewas, reduced to seven reservations in Northern Minnesota and a dozen tiny reserves in Michigan and Wisconsin, had suffered

an enormous loss of land and power. Once known as the most powerful and independent of the Great Lakes tribes, they languished at the end of the nineteenth century, helpless and dependent upon the federal government for support and subsistence. A study of Chippewa treaties could profitably concentrate on the land sessions and frauds which continued almost unabated from the 1840s into the present century. But a more manageable topic is the issue of legal jurisdiction on the reservations, a topic which parallels the loss of land and which also clearly demonstrates the degradation of Chippewa tribal autonomy.

The treaty is only on the paper. We can only trace a decline of tribal independence and the rise of the federal government's legal and eventual moral control over the lives of Chippewa people. They have lost the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The right of fishing, hunting and trapping is lost. Chippewas' own culture and identity is questioned. They merely named as uncivilized, barbaric, uneducated and savage. The whites' supremacy place them as a slaves. They are just as a puppet in the hand of whites. The whites dominate the culture, tradition, rituals and religions of Chippewas.

Chapter Two

Border Theory

Border simply means boundary. It distinguishes one culture from another culture, one nation from another, one society from another, and one religion from another. This era is the era of multiculturalism. There are different cultures, ethnicities groups and races within a nation. The people have different traditions, faiths, and ideas. So constructing a topology of a multicultural society is never simple. Although cultural diversity is often defined by seemingly clear-cut categories such as ethnicity, race, class, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, sorting out "culture" intertwined with these multicultural categories is a complex process. It is common to here reference to Asian-American culture, black culture, Muslim culture, female culture, homosexual culture as if they have clear boundaries and are distinguished entities. It is also assumed that if an Asian meets an African-American their presumed cultural differences are expected to form a cultural border. So, it seems very much difficult for the people to define and redefine these cultural identities in a multicultural society.

Cultural border and boundary often connote the border and boundary of a nation, a state or, a tribal community, which are clearly identifiable markers. The assumption is that as long two distant societies remain separate from each other, their boundaries exist if two societies identified with two distant cultures, and come in contact, a cultural border is expected to form between them. To many scholars a border is not a neutral demarcation line. It is a symbol of power that imposes inclusion and exclusion. Erickson accentuates the political nature of a border by differentiating it from a boundary:

A cultural boundary refers to the presence of some kind of cultural differences. Cultural boundaries are characteristics of all human societies, traditional as well as modern. Across a border power is exercised, as in the political border between two nations. (42)

So, a cultural border connotes a barrier that a more powerful side constructs to guard its own political power, cultural knowledge and privileges.

The territory oriented culture, cultural border and boundary faces a great challenge in a multicultural society because intense contacts between various culture carries blur, the clarity of demarcation lines. In this multicultural society the individuals should decide how much they want to identify with their cultural differences as an embracing factor rather than as a divisive factor. In this post modern era, we do not limit culture as bounded by a territory. Rather, people are the carriers, movers, consumers, and inventors of a culture. When they \ move from one place to the other, they carry their cultures, their personal out looks with them. Cultural hybrids -- those who have adopted "foreign," distinctly different, cultural traits -- that therefore don't fit the homogenous prototypes of their original cultures,

Writing from within two literary traditions, as all Native American writers do, Louise Erdrich writes both traditions into her work. As a mixed-blood of German-American and Chippewa descent, she seems to embody the mediation that David Murray says is necessary in cross-cultural reading to "reduce the danger of making the space between the two sides into an unbridgeable chasm, or of turning differences into otherness(1)." Euro-Americans reading Native-American literature face the particular challenge of meditating between the familiar literary

patterns that arise from their own traditions and other, perhaps unfamiliar, patterns that elicit alternative cultural meaning. How is this done? Holistic methods are preferred today to past dissection, dialogic are preferred to dialectics. We look to see where traditions intersect rather than how they act in isolation, and we are as readers. Mikhail Bakhtin describes such a reading as an act of creative understanding, a "dialogic encounter of two cultures [that] doesn't result in merging or mixing. Creative understanding does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture, and it forgets nothing. In order to understand to be located outside the object of his or her creative understanding in time, in space, in culture"(7)

A meditative reading that focuses on the dialogic relationship between the two cultures represented in Native-American literature creates a bridge that not only allows either culture to be viewed through the lens of the other but also reveals the complex exchanges inherent in such a reading and in a nation composed of multiple, co-existing Americas. Gerald Vizenor suggests using a post modern critical discourse to "liberate tribal narratives in a most pleasurable misreading from social science monologues (59)." Bakhtin's dialogics are both liberating in Vizenor's sense and optimistic about the possibility of exchanging meaning. Other pessimistic ways of reading paralyze readers with the impossibility of shedding their "outsideness."

Discovering the literary and cultural features essential to a creative understanding means recognizing the literary and cultural chronotopes present in the work. The term "chronotopes" is borrowed from Einstein to represent the concept time-space. For Bakhtin, novels think and act historically through their appropriation

of "real historical time and space," which provides "the ground essential for the represent ability this chronotopic ground is to discover the cultural worldview underlying the entire narrative (qtd. In Pittman 778). Of course, a novel is not finally reducible to a single chronotope but is a complex of major generic chronotopes and minor chronotopic motifs that" may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in even more complex interrelationship" (778). It is the chronotopes of readers that are of concern in cross-cultural reading. The burden of readers is to recognize their chronotopic situation and to engage in a dialogue that releases meaning-that produces a creative understanding-instead of overpowering the work from outside or being swallowed up in a futile attempt to shed their own position in the world. In fact, positioning oneself as outsider is finally liberation from the need to react defensively, a release from the guilt of being an outsider. Readers accept their limitations and their desire to understand, and get on with the act of reading. Readers can experience a creative encounter with text that results in a dialogic interchange at the boundary between the two literary traditions. What begins as a generic transformation becomes a cross-cultural transformation as well.

John Carlos Rowe talks about the Native American political unconsciousness in Erdrich's fiction. He says that in her recent novel Louise Erdrich follows her pattern by concentrating primarily on the European immigrant communities living in her fictional Argue, North Dakota. Erdrich tries to portray the Euro American towns. Euro-Americans are fiercely repressing or blithely unaware of Native American presence. Erdrich works self-consciously to counter this repression and overcome such ignorance. Native people are repressed to be key element to understand, not simply for their historical significance but also in the project of

recovering, reconstituting and reaffirming native identities and presence.

John Carols Rowe further says about postcolonial study. He says:

Postcolonial study is itself always Utopian and political insofar as it attempt to formulate more equitable and liberal conditions of social belonging than were possible under colonial and national circumstances postcolonial studies should thus be actively political and deliberately emancipator and it can only do so by identifying the history of those limitations and exclusions that have gone unrecognized in previous systems of social and communal organizations. Implicitly or explicitly, than all work done in the name of postcolonial studies interprets the decolonizing unconsciousness of the imperial practices that required the decolonizing work of independence movement, such as revolutions, and cultural reorganizations of emergent, postcolonial societies (14-15)

So postcolonial studies in its diversity stresses the economic, and cultural struggles to overcome their imperial invisibility and embody themselves as visible, active, complex being. Postcolonial study is also a cultural study where there is decentralization and blurring of hierarchies.

In her novels, *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*, Louise Erdrich engages the paradox of employing and glorifying the oral tradition and its culturally cohesive function by inscribing the tradition. The text that simultaneously asserts and denies the presence of voice makes explicit the paradoxical presence and absence that is the condition of all language, of all texts as they compose words to call forth a world. In Erdrich's work this paradox plays itself out in representing a people and their

culture, who have been unrepresented in manipulative ways in the service of a dominant group's ideology. Her work thus questions the politics of representation.

Indeed, the play of absence and presence imbues Erdrich's texts in multiple ways. Perhaps most striking among these is precisely the inscription and thematization of invisible and the visible. In her text, this inscription and thematization acquire both negative and positive significance, invisibility signifies cultural oppression but can also signify access to the transcendent when invisibility inverts and vision constantly shifts in Erdrich's novel according to the reader who situates them-selves inside or outside of Native American culture. In the fluidity of their meanings their crossing the boundary of definition the concept of invisibility and vision, along with concept of the inside and outside, reflect the complexity of Erdrich's aesthetic engagement of the idea of the border. In her novels about Native American characters confined within and defined by the borders of a reservation and the boundaries of ethnic definition, Erdrich uses the concept of the border as metaphor and narrative strategy for a newly imagined negotiation of individual and cultural identity.

In *Border Theory*, David E. Johnson and Scott Michaelsen complicate the premises of border studies that began with a focus on the U. S. Mexico border but has expanded to include "Latin American Caribbean and internal U. S. Borders [] the U. S. -Canadian border, U. S. Sectionalism and American immigrants diasporic experience" while employing "anthropological, sociological, feminist, Marxist, European postmodernist and poststructuralist, postcolonial, ethno historical and race/ethnicity theory" (qtd. In Ferrari 144). In discussing the border between Anglo and Amerindian cultures, they suggest thinking.

of the complexity-the profound interrelationship of the very ideas of European and indigenous cultures- as a product of colonialist thought from its inception. The cultural knots-the sorts of borders that strangely elide the difference between inside and outside are products of beginnings what is typically described as identity difference is nothing more than an effect of an identity relationally that makes it seem as if cultures are still to be "crossed" rather than David Murray has suggested, analyzed for their "constant interplay" (qtd. In Ferrari 145).

Johnson and Michaelsen define borders as "always already crossed and double-crossed, without the possibility of the 'trans' cultural", they suggest "comprehending the cultural or linguistic self as necessarily incomplete coming to be held open to 'outside' cultures, while at the same time as having always already enfolded the other within itself with the border between the inside and outside in principle, unclosable"(145).

In *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*, Erdrich employs a narrative technique that dissolves the boundaries between the seen and unseen, fact and fiction, memory and event. Erdrich's narrators (two in *Tracks*, eight in *Love Medicine*) who frequently recount the same story from very differing perspectives and thus produce differing renderings of events and interpretations of significance. Erdrich does not install a new monolithic viewpoint, moving the margins to the center, instead she causes the margins to proliferate. Writing about characters that are displaced by definition Erdrich uses aesthetic displacement to critique any master narrative or totalizing viewpoint.

The multiple perspectives, along with Erdrich's pairing of narrators with different moments in time create gaps in the stories. While these gaps are sometimes filled by other characters and are sometimes filled by the reader's interpretation. They still assert a textual silence or hole. Alice Jardine describes the poststructuralist idea of the "hole in the text" as the unrepresentable factor [that] can perhaps be formulated but not represented, for it is the space of nonresemblance between the signifier and signified" (124-25). The linguistic subtlety has an obvious correlative in how *Tracks* and *Love Medicine* focus on Native Americans who historically have been unrepresented or represented in manipulative ways in the service of a dominant group's ideology. That focus clearly calls attention to the no resemblance between signifier and signified and of both to the referent.

Gloria Anzaldua writes about the experience of growing up "between two cultures" extending the ramifications of this experience by declaring,

the psychological borderlands the sexual borderlands and the spiritual borderlands are not particular to the southwest. In fact the borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy (qtd. In Ferrari 147).

Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe to distinguish us from them. A border is dividing line a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is a constant state of transition". Erdrich makes this tenuous territory a product of political social, ideological forces the substance of her

fiction through a border aesthetics her negotiation of border in her novels is a way not only of redrawing the boundaries of cultural representation but of redrawing the boundaries of cultural representation but of making the idea and image of the border or boundary problematic.

It is a world of entangled complexity. And every decision from choosing how to handle land, to choosing a mate, to choosing words- is political. Border becomes dividing line and that border may be the border of culture land geography, nation, politics, and sex. Formation of border creates binary opposition and hierarchies. Linda Hutcheon's work insists on the political relevance of the post modern and conceives of the art of "Black and feminists, ethnics and gays, native and 'Third World' cultures" as integral to the postmodernist and poststructuralist critique of hierarchical dualism those groups.

do not from monolithic movement but constitute a multiplicity of response to a commonly perceived situation of marginality and ex-centricity and there have been liberating effects of moving from the language of alienation (otherness) to that of decentring (difference) because the center used to function as the pivot between binary opposites which always privileged one half. White/black, male/female, self/other, intellect/body, west/east, objectivity/ subjectivity. (62)

The break down of binary oppositions is a form of border dissolution. To blur the hierarchies doesn't mean to accept and reject other culture totally and blindly. To break the binary oppositions is to follow the globalization. In the some way crossing cultural border doesn't mean that the person totally forgets his/her own culture or s/he totally accepts other culture. Crossing border means the mutual

understanding among beings.

Crossing border comes rather close to Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Hybridity refers in its most basic sense to mixture. The term originates from biology and was subsequently employed in linguistics and in racial theory in the nineteenth century. A key text in the development of hybridity theory is Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* which analyses the liminality of hybridity as a paradigm of colonial anxiety. His key argument is that colonial hybridity, as a cultural form, produced ambivalence in the colonial masters and as such altered the authority of power. One of the most celebrated features of hybridity is its supposed characteristic to cross cultural and national boundaries and its ability to translate oppositional cultural spheres into innovative expressions of the so-called postmodern era of late capitalism. This era is apparently based on free circulation and intermingling of ideas and significations in a world increasingly shaped and reshaped by different forces and different meanings of globalization and migration.

In the aftermath of the revisionisms of the new left and national "identity" confusions that followed upon the Algerian war and the Vietnam war, in us and Western European theory a seemingly new space opened to address the antagonisms in the post-war social division of labour that had reached an unprecedented intensity. Postcolonial theory which emerged as an academically "Left" substitute for "Area studies" and "Oriental studies" soon became one of the most "popular" modes of inquiry. Postcolonial theory combined in various measures the theoretical rigour of post structuralism and the activist energies of the equally new field of cultural studies. Since the late 1970s the field has formed its canon and is now an established discipline on the contemporary interdisciplinary academic scene. It is

in this space that Homi K. Bhabha's first book the *Location of Culture* is itself located in terms of a supposedly innovative move away from the singularities of class or gender as primary conceptual and organizational categories. As a result in line with the post-history, post-gender, post production, post-necessity, post-exploitation in short, post-all spirit of revision and reconstruction that is currently articulating the condition of social and cultural theory, his various writings are offered as a contribution toward the project of reforming the existing via the destabilization of established representational boundaries.

The book *Location of culture* is a collection of twelve of Bhabha's essays which includes well known writings on the formation of an anti-colonial subjectivity. Among these are his analysis of racial stereotypes in terms of the Freudian theory of fetishism, his theorization of mimicry— the production of the colonized as " a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite" (86)--as a mode of disruption of colonial authority, as well as "signs taken for wonders"-- the text which introduction his trademark concept of hybridity describing the pluralisation of colonial discourse. In the chapter "The Commitment to Theory" Bhabha locates the genealogy of his concept of cultural difference in the texts of colonialism, where it is articulated as a model of resistance to colonial authority-- a process by which "in the very practice of domination the language of the master becomes hybrid" (33). Within the field of signification of the colonial cultural difference announces a modality of misreading or misappropriation of signs that produces a discursive instability at the level of enunciation, a productive ambivalence which deconstructs the fixity of the boundaries of colonial discursively and constructs hybrid identities which exceed the binary of colonizer/colonized. In other words, the binary of colonizer/colonized is no

longer understood as existing in a hierarchical relation but, rather, as in a relation of (Derridian) supplementary. In defense of his supplementary readings of various texts of the colonial and postcolonial however, Bhabha reminds us that such a theoretical model of post coloniality which maintains a focus on the hybridization of discourse, locates a space of empowerment and resistance for the other in allowing for cultural difference to emerge.

For Bhabha, hybridity is a threat to colonial and cultural authority. It subverts the concept of pure origin or identity of the dominant authority through the ambivalence created by denial, unsettling, repetition and displacement. It is also a threat because it is unpredictable. But Bhabha warns in later writings, that it is neither assimilation nor collaborations. It is neither self nor other. Probably the most salient and problematic attribute of Bhabha's hybridity is its ambivalence which doesn't allow it to resolve tension between cultures. The concept of ambivalence permeates Bhabha's theoretical writing, and his analysis is based on a clear distinction between cultural diversity--defined as a category--and cultural difference--defined as a process.

If cultural diversity is a category of comparative ethics, aesthetics or ethnology, cultural difference is a process of signification through which statements of culture or on culture differentiate, discriminate and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity (34)

Having established that he is interested in the concept of cultural difference, not diversity, he suggests that it focuses on the problem of the ambivalence of cultural authority. This ambivalence, or double think,

... is made viable only through the strategy of disavowal ...
 which requires a theory of the "hybridization" of discourse and
 power that is ignored by theorists who engage in the battle for
 'power' but do so only as the purist of difference (111)

Homi K. Bhabha's chapter "DissemiNation: time narrative and the margins of the modern nation" presents a trenchant and spirited articulation of the resistant and dissident possibilities of minority discourses in the context of the modern western nation. Minority discourse, in this formulation, encompasses voices and texts constructed from the sites of irreducible cultural difference and inequality from the perspective of the nation's margin. Bhabha avers that such texts and voices possess the disruptive capacity to continually evoke and erase the nation's totalizing boundaries and to disturb those teleological maneuvers through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities. This chapter examines the conceptual and actual limits of Bhabha's claims and of the claims of minority discourses in general. So, being an Indian theorist of post colonialism, Bhabha tries to focus upon the minorities. While talking about hybridity, Bhabha seems closer to suggesting that hybridity is the permanent subversion that there will always be hybridity because there will always be a program, always an excess of the actual over the programmed, and always an indeterminate area of spillage and proliferation arising from the program and the excess. Hybridity is normal because resistance is unavoidable. Bhabha argues for a theoretical position which escapes the polarities of East and West, Self and Other, Master and Slave.

So, hybridity refers to the cultural phenomenon of the mixing of unique entities to create what O' Hearn describes as "a third, wholly indistinguishable

category where origin and home are indeterminate" (xiv). Hybridity is also a postcolonial phenomenon. Postcolonial critique is also valuable in that it begins to challenge colonial processes of knowledge production and power and assess the colonial representation of multiracial people. Hybridity is 'a making one of two distinct things.' It presents the cultural differences. Rather than presenting difference as destructive, hybridity represents coexistence, as Sakamoto explains,

giving up the desire for a pure origin, hybridity retains a sense of difference and tension between two cultures, but without assuming hierarchy. It is not just new identity but a new form of identity ...
(qtd. In Bolatagici 77)

According to Bhabha third space is a site of translation and negotiation. He writes that by exploring this third space we may "clue the politics of polarity and emerge as the Others of Ourselves" (39). Sakamoto elaborates upon Bhabha's notion of 'third space' further by stating: "a borderline and cultural of hybridity is a powerful and creative 'third space' through which 'newness enters the world', subverting the authority of the dominant discourse" (78).

Chapter Three

Crossing Border in Erdrich's *Love Medicine*

Louise Erdrich's first novel *Love Medicine* opens on the morning before Easter Sunday with the death of June Kashpaw. On the first chapter of this novel we see June walking somewhat aimlessly down the clogged main street of oil boomtown Williston, North Dakota. She is a long-legged Chippewa woman. When a man beckons to June from a bar, she enters and is "momentarily blinded", guided only by the activities of that person. After having sexual relation with that man June returns back to the reservation. Unfortunately she has shown dead when she is on the way to the reservation.

As a young child, June seems thoroughly Indian. Marie Kashpaw, June's adoptive mother, speculates that she is "the child of what the old people called Manutius, invisible ones who live in the woods" (65). She is traditional, like her Uncle Eli, and in fact, chooses to live with him rather than with Marie and her family. In the novel we see June's willingness to play the role of victim, when, as a child, she insists on being "hung" by Geordie and Aurelia. Presumably playing cowboys and Indians, June coolly tells Gordie: "You got to tighten [the rope].....before you hoist me up" (67). She explains to Marie that she deserves to die because she "stole their horse" (67). She is somehow the Christ like figure too because of her acceptance of Christian myth of forbearance. So, the death of the June, at the very beginning of the novel, itself is difficult to understand. It is because, she is a Chippewa woman of a traditional concept and she is also shown as a Christ like figure too. She is depicted between two cultures i.e. the native culture and the white culture. We can say that her life lacks structure because she

feels no connection to either tradition, nor she can blend the two. June feels dislocated between two cultures. Although she is apparently unaware of it, the chaos of June's life is the result of fragmented identity i.e. either of cultures or of gender. Throughout her life, she wanders into the worlds of masculine and feminine ritual inconsistently. As a child, she seems to be very much close with her guardian Eli, wearing a hat just like his and hunting with him. In this way she participates in the masculine ritual with Uncle Eli. But June does not become Eli, nor is she ever comfortable with the feminine rituals of wives and mothers. On the other hand, June cannot reconcile her past with her present. Her efforts to succeed in the white world as a beautician, secretary, clerk, and waitress fail, too. She fails to maintain the good balance between the Chippewa culture and White culture. Only in her death does June finally feel comfortable with her past and her present; she feels secure, solitary, and she has a direction.

Love Medicine looks at Indian American reservation life in a less optimistic light. It deals with specific Indian American issues, such as reservation life and problems of re location and termination. The conflict in the novel arises out of the Native American concern for connectedness with the land and the interrelatedness of all life. When the Indian American moves off the reservation and begins life in a culture essentially different from his own, the result can be disastrous. In this novel, the returning Indian finds that the tribe has disintegrated, the past has been forgotten, and the reservation land no longer support a livelihood. Leaving home is the road to fulfillment. Louise Erdrich presents the story from so many different narrators. They have so many different points of view. Presenting the story from many different points of view suggests not tribal or family unity, but separation and difference.

The novel has no central conflict or protagonist. Instead of a clearly defined conflict, the novel portrays a variety of characters attempting to love and survive in the world where God and the government seem to have forsaken them. Some of the main characters especially male, of this novel accept the inevitable doom in their lives. But women approach the same reservation world with a different outlook.

Marie Kashpaw is one of Erdrich's strongest characters because her life is a blending of two complementary culture-based societies and traditions. Her life includes risks, transformations, house holding, as well as an integration of past and present. Lulu Nanapush, another female character, is also shown as a very much strong woman.

These two strong women raise the families in adverse situations and, in the end, bond with each other after their children are raised and the man that they both have loved has died. Marie and Lulu not only survive but look back their lives with satisfaction. The two characters mirror one another in their role as mother, in their ability to take risks, in their way of blending past and present, and their way of merging two distinct cultures.

One of the survivors of reservation life is Lipsha Morrissey abandoned by his mother June and raised by "Grandma" Kashpaw. Lipsha narrates two central chapters- one gives the novel its title, and the other ends the book as a link to the opening chapter and the death of June. He recognizes that the life in the reservation is bleak, more so than ever before. He bemoans the loss of faith in the Chippewa gods and the inefficacy of praying to the Catholic God, who doesn't seem to hear. The absence of an attentive god is part of the problem of the Indian Americans. In the absence of God, Lipsha attempts to help his family and friends by restoring the

primitive art of witch doctoring. He believes himself to have healing powers, which he calls "the touch". He attempts to heal the rift between his grandparents by having them eat the raw heart of wild goose. Since wild geese mate for life, Lipsha believes that eating the goose will lessen the separation that has developed between his grandparents over Nector's affair with Lulu.

Love Medicine is set in North-Dakota in a Chippewa reservation and it develops through the life-narratives of the members of the Kashpaw kinship. It gives a special insight into sometimes quite hidden lives of Native Americans. In this novel Erdrich effectively uses the narrative forms of Native American Oral tradition combined with significant elements of Native American culture. She draws her attention on the life style of Native Americans and Euro-Americans' effects on their lives. She has shown the clash between two cultures but in completely different way. She neither supports totally the native culture nor she accepts the white culture blindly. She has shown the balance between two cultures. In this Post- modern era the balance is, indeed, the ways of life. We have to make our surroundings convincing by keeping balance in everything.

Erdrich, however, emphasizes her hybrid cultural identity. As she points out in an interview, the concept of a Native American writer is an ideological construction. According to her,

this is an academic distinction. It's made to attract people to courses where you can lump authors together. There's a mixture of people and characters in native fiction. I'm mixed. There's no other way I would have the artistic truth and veracity to write about all those characters. Labels make a good headline. I don't dislike it, but I find it tedious (qtd. In Balogh 1).

We can easily argue that Erdrich insists on her hybrid origin as well as on the hybridity of the character in her fiction because she is a Native American on her maternal side but her father is a German -American.

Consequently, Erdrich occupies an in-between cultural position, she is both Native American and German-American or she is neither purely Native American, nor purely German -American.

Love Medicine is generally considered in terms of the relationship between the categories of post-modern and Native American. Erdrich emphasizes the post colonial aspect of the Native American experience in this novel. Identity crisis is the main problem of Native Americans. Native Americans are regarded as marginalized race. They are dominated by the white supremacy. But in Erdrich's novel, characters are most concerned with identity -formation and self-representation. We can easily find out the colonial Euro-American construction of Native American identity and its post colonial - multicultural conception in Erdrich's *Love Medicine*. Erdrich's patterns of writing look for the acceptance of all cultures. It is clear that the mixing of different traditions produces alternative cultural meanings. Erdrich reworks both of the stereotypes of Euro-American towards Native Americans; the Euro-American definitions of indigenous Americans as a band of savages and as fabulous inhabitants or to put it differently, the Indian as the wild, evil beast and as the glorified, noble savage. But in *Love Medicine*, Erdrich's engagement with the latter has been discussed widely, her treatment of the former has remained almost unnoticed.

Erdrich gives her postcolonial re-assessment in the chapters about Nector and Marie Kashpaw's life-stories which tell their adventures outside of the

reservation in the non-Indian, White, Euro-American world. In Marie Kashpaw's chapter, Erdrich depicts the Native American strategic appropriation of the Euro-American representation of the Indian as the Evil Beast while Nector Kashpaw's part it is devoted to the Romantic reflection of the Native American figure. In "The Plunge of the Brave" the narrator focalizer is Nector Kashpaw, one of the central figures of *Love Medicine*. He is the heir and carrier of the legacy of the Kashpaw kinship. It is his descendants who inhabit the world of the novel. The title of the chapter cites the title of a painting entitled the Plunge of the Brave . The painting was made by a rich, white woman who employed Nectar Kashpaw as a model to pose for this particular painting. The painting shows a naked Indian who is jumping off a cliff down into a rocky river. When Nector Kashpaw sees the painting he comments on it saying that:

I could not believe it, later, when she showed me the picture. Plunge of the Brave, was the title of it. Later on, that picture would become famous. It would hang in the Bismarck state capitol. There I was, jumping off a cliff, naked of course down into a rocky river. Certain death. [...] When I saw that the greater world was only interested in my doom, I went home on the back of a train. (Erdrich 91)

As Pittman points out, the "Painting shows the Western ideal of the naked, noble savage". Here Erdrich manages to simultaneously depict the construction of the dying Indian in the Euro-American cultural imagination and the Native American Ironic reflection on the Euro-American representation .

Where as in "The Plunge of the Brave" Erdrich offers a postcolonial re-reading of the stereotype of the Indian as the noble savage, in the chapter entitled "Saint Marie" she arguably reinterprets the stereotype of the Indian being the evil- beast although she does it in a less direct form . The " Saint Marie" chapter is Marie Lazarre's life narrative, she is Nector kashpaw's wife and the mother of the Kashpaw's kinship. Her narrative is similar to Nector kashpaw's in the sense that she also wants to achieve fame as Native American in the context of Euro-American culture and in terms of other culturally symbolic values . However, unlike Nector Kashpaw, she manages to legitimize the image she desire for herself in the Euro-American community where she lives.

In the chapter entitled "Saint Marie" Marie Lazarre's life narrative unfolds through the presentation of the conflict between the Native American girl and her catholic teacher, Sister Leopolda. In the chapter Erdrich deploys negative stereotypes for characterizing the reservation, which is the place: "where the Dark one had put in thick bush, liquor, wild dogs, and Indians"(42).The nun, Sister Leopolda, considers the girl as being possessed by evil. As Marie narrates:

She (Leopolda) said the dark one wanted me most of all, and I believed this. I stood out. Evil was a common thing I trusted. Before sleep sometimes he came and whispered conversation in the old language of the bush. I listened. He told me things he never told anyone but Indians. I was privy to both worlds of his knowledge. I listened to him, but I had confidence in Leopolda. She was only one in the bunch he even noticed (43).

So, Sister Leopolda thinks that her mission is to save Marie's young spirit by exorcising the evil from her at all costs. Accordingly, in Sister Leopolda's character-and in the representation of her mind - set- Erdrich introduces the white colonial construct of indigenous Americans as the manifestation of evil. Here, the young Marie Lazzarre identifies with the negative Euro-American icons and myths about the identity of her territory and her personality. The conflict between the Catholic nun and the reservation girl reaches its climax when Sister Leopolda pours boiling water on the girl's back to exorcise the "evil beast" out of her. The girl decides to take revenge on Sister Leopolda by pushing her into the stove. She fails at first but finally she does it.

Unlike Nector Kashpaw, Marie Lazzarre enjoys the role she has to play outside the reservation. This is partly so because she manages to impose her ideal on the convent and construct her identity in accordance with her fiction. In spite of all differences, Nector Kashpaw's and Mary Lazzarre's stories are, however, only two sides of the same coin. In a complementary way, both life- stories elaborate the Native American reaction to the Euro-American representations and negative treatments of American indigenous people. Accordingly, while in Nector Kashpaw's life- story Erdrich exhibits, and to some extent reaffirms, the Euro-American myth of the noble Indian who is doomed to failure and who fails to become an agent of history and narrative, in Marie Kashpaw- Lazzarre's life- story she realizes the possibility of authorizing the Euro- American narratives and acquiring agency through the Native American re-imagination and re-appropriation of the Euro-American myths of America culture.

Nector Kashpaw exemplifies the ineffectuality of male leadership on the

reservation. Although he is elected tribal leader, it is Marie who nominates him and keeps him sober so he can perform his duties. Marie is the embodiment of the saintly virtues of compassion, forgiveness, and love. Even her rival Lulu is forgiven in the end. She forgives Nector and saves his dignity. Forgiving her husband's lover as she had forgiven her husband, caring for Lulu in her time of need, and sharing with her the loss of Nector make Marie a saint on earth.

The other male characters, descendants of Nector or Lulu, are seldom as fortunate. The same sense of separation from things Indian and tribal, a separation from values and customs of the past, haunts the lives of Howard "King" Kashpaw, June and Gordie's son, and Gerry Nanapush, Lulu's oldest son. King's nature is violent. He marries a white woman and leaves the reservation to live in Minneapolis. He prefers to be called Howard rather than King, finds an identity separate his father. King has ambitions to greatness, calling himself "King" and "the world's greatest fisherman," but this ambition is only a talk. Unlike King Kashpaw, Gerry, who has attained notoriety for murder and other crimes, is treated with much awe and respect by both the Indian tribe and his own family. He fights a system of white laws that have branded him a criminal, when all he wants in life is freedom to be with his family and friends, freedom to live out his time with some dignity. Another casualty of the reservation is Henry Lamertine, Jr., Lulu's son, who takes his own life as his father had, although for the different reason. Henry Jr., unable to tolerate his wife's unfaithfulness, parks his car on the railway tracks to end his misery. Henry Jr. returns from Vietnam where he had been a prisoner of war, and he is unable to put the war behind him. Henry and his brother have a drunken picnic, and Henry walks into the river and drowns.

One of the survivors of the reservation life is Lipsha Morrissey, abandoned by his mother June and raised by "Grandma" Kashpaw. Lipsha has learned that we have to face problems, but we live on dry land and do not let them overwhelm us until we drown. At last, Lipsha recalls the story of his mother June. He is driving the car purchased with June's insurance money, and he stops to look into the river that bounds the reservation:

How weakly I remembered her. If it made any sense at all, she was part of the great loneliness being carried up the driving current. I tell you, there was good in what she did for me, I know now. The son that she acknowledged suffered more than Lipsha Morrissey did. The thought of June grabbed my heart, so but I was lucky she turned me over to Grandma Kashpaw.(271-72)

Lipsha has reconciled himself to abandonment by June and accepted the knowledge that the gentle criminal Gerry is his father. Lipsha has not been consumed by depression, by loss, by drowning and destruction.

In *Love Medicine*, Erdrich employs a narrative technique that dissolves the boundaries between seen and unseen, fact and fiction, memory and event. The most obvious element of Erdrich's narrative technique is the use of multiple narratives who frequently recount the same story from very differing perspectives, and this produce differing renderings of events and interpretations of significance. *Love Medicine* presents characters searching for a healthy balance between seemingly diametrically opposed cultures.

In the first section of *Love Medicine* Lipsha and Albertine, who are Cousins, look at the Northern Lights; Albertine says:

"Everything seemed to be one piece. The air, our faces all cool, moist, and dark, and the ghostly sky. All of a piece, as if the sky were a pattern of nerves and our thought and memories traveled across it."

(12)

The image suggests that a collapse of the boundary between the tangible and intangible, the past and the present, the individual and the collective, the collective and the universe.

Erdrich presents her character in two ways i.e. as a failure one and as a successful, one. Kristeva's identification of the symbolic and the semiotic with the symbolic order is useful because Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, like Kristeva's theories, explores how to achieve a healthy balance between language and silence, law and desire. Kristeva views human subjectivity as a social process that start with the maternal body before the mirror stage or the oedipal stage. Within this process human beings balance between two modalities: the symbolic (language system /rules and laws) and the semiotic (desires). The symbolic order is signification and the social realm; it is composed of heterogeneous elements. These elements include cultural and ethnic beliefs and identities, social roles and expectations, family dynamics and the community, and personal fears and desires. If the symbolic or the semiotic realm overtakes its counterpart in a subject then madness or psychosis results. So, it means that, through a successful integration comes a kind of healthy balance.

Because of the disintegration between symbolic and semiotic, many characters become failure. Nector Kashpaw fails to integrate the two opposite cultures. *Love Medicine* suggests that Nector's White schooling, his enthusiasm

for change, and his acceptance of White customs and mores while ignoring traditional knowledge values have denied him the balance necessary for a successful and healthy life. He follows the White culture blindly and his total acceptance, later, becomes the main cause of his failure. But Nector's wife, Marie, integrates the two distinct cultures and she survives. Nector is deserted because he has lost his cultural heritage and traditional beliefs. As a girl Marie is proud that she looks White. Marie is attracted to Catholicism because of Virgin Mary. She denies her heritage in order to embrace the symbol of Catholic womanhood. For Marie, Mary represents power and glory. But after fighting with sister Leopolda, Marie recognizes the truth. Marie abandons her dream of being worshiped. This separation from being a Virgin Mary opens the way for a new identity. Marie knows the way to keep balance between the Catholicism and Native American tradition.

Marie understands the way of life by merging two cultures. She crosses the border. She doesn't accept the white culture totally. She knows that her own native American tradition has a great importance. So, she integrates both White culture and native culture. She is bold and strong enough to face the life. While talking about disappointed Nector, she says that:

I'd known from the beginning, I had married a man with brains. But the brains wouldn't matter unless I kept him from the bottle. He would pour them down the drain, where his liquor went, unless I stopped the holes, wore him out, dragged him back each time he drank and tied him to the bed with strong ropes. I had decided I was going to make him into something big on this reservation. (89)

Marie is a character who can easily combine the two different cultures. She is powerful and intellectual in her thinking. She survives in the novel because she has a mind which longs for crossing the border.

Another character, June Kashpaw, loses her life. She fails to cross the border. She rejects her Native American tradition and blindly follows the White culture. In her life she denies responsibilities, rejects family ties and never achieve and never articulate what she seeks. June loses a sense herself and seems to float and dissolve because of her lost connection to community; she is a soul desperately in need of healthy connections.

Lipsha, in this novel knows how to balance the opposite cultures. He perfectly makes a balance between Native American culture and White culture. Albertine explains Lipsha's seemingly contradictory by nature. She says:

Although he never did well in school, Lipsha knew surprising things. He reads books about computers and volcanoes and the life cycles of salamanders. Sometimes he used words I had to ask him the meaning of, and other times he didn't make even the simplest sense. I loved him for being both ways. (39)

Lipsha's identity embodies both Native culture and White culture. He achieves that balance naturally and it is this balance which helps him in his role as a healer. Lipsha learns that the power and a healthy sense of self come from connections and acceptance rather than individual triumph or separation:

I knew there was some connection, a strong connection, may be strong enough to lead me onward in my quest. I had to get down to the

bottom of my heritage. (342)

When Lipsha realizes that he is the son of June, a failure woman, he says, "so there was nothing to do but cross the water, and bring her home" (367). In this final line of the novel Lipsha speaks not of driving the car back to the Reservation, but of laying his mother to rest. Bringing June home is Lipsha's ways of helping her to heal, even after death. June's spirit and now be put to rest because her son has accepted her and through him she will find the connection that she lost and healing that she needs.

The novel closes with a sense of release. Lipsha has learned that June was his mother and Gerry Nanapush is his father:

"In that night I felt expansion, as if the world was branching out in shoots and growing faster than the eye could see". (366)

With this sense of expansion, founded on his realization of identity, he crosses the border into Canada with his father, who is wanted by white authorities, and then re-crosses the border to the reservation to bring himself (and, symbolically, his mother) home.

So, in Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, we can find out the theme of crossing border and theory of hybridity. The characters remain alive and successful in this novel are those who cross the border and who believe in hybrid identity. In this age of globalization, the dogmatic perception is vain and worthless. We have to keep balance between cultures so that we can live happily like Lipsha, Marie, and Lulu in *Love Medicine*.

Chapter Four

Crossing Border in Erdrich's *Tracks*

Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* focuses on Native Americans who historically have been unrepresented or represented in manipulative ways in the service of a dominant group's ideology. *Tracks* is the story of Fleur Pillager told alternatively by Nanapush, an Ojibway tribe elder, and Pauline, a young mixed blood woman drawn to Fleur's strong personality. The novel's early twentieth century Indian reservation and its Chippewa inhabitants represent an ancient community threatened with eradication by the forces of white society and Industry. *Tracks* refigures both native oral and Christian textual traditions through a multiplication and circulation of voice (s).

In this novel Fleur is the only one of her family to survive. When an epidemic hits the reservation, she is rescued by Nanapush who has lost his own family, and so considers Fleur a daughter. She goes to live in her family's cabin on Mitchimanitou Lake. The people believe she keeps a sea monster in the lake under control. She visits the butcher shop in town, and joins the men there in playing cards. She plays so well that the men become very much angry with her. She takes all their winnings. A tornado strikes shortly after this. The men are found mysteriously locked into a meat locker from the outside. Only one survives and he is crippled. This contributes to even more fear of Fleur among the reservation residents.

Eli Kashpaw, another character of the reservation, falls in love with Fleur. He becomes close with Nanapush to win the heart of Fleur. One day he moves into her cabin, and they have a baby. Eli is away seeking help and Fleur is unconscious, Nanapush is pressed to name the baby. He calls her Lulu Nanpush after his own dead child. Fleur, her family, and community struggle through the epidemics that sweep

the tribe. There is the starvation from inadequate government provisions and they lose their land due to their inability to pay government taxes. Fleur is betrayed by her in-laws when they take the money that was supposed to pay for her land as well as theirs, and use it entirely on their own debt. Fleur loses her confident, and sends her own daughter Lulu away to a government school. Nanapush is successful in getting Lulu out of the government school. He tells her mother's story so that she can understand her past and hopefully not get into a bad marriage.

Erdrich's *Tracks* reflects the ambivalence and tension marking the lives of people, much like her, from dual cultural backgrounds. In *Tracks*, Erdrich's two narrators struggle with liminality in their efforts to leave behind early lives in favor of others they have chosen. Nanapush grows up Christian in a Jesuit school, but later chooses life in the woods and Chippewa tradition; the other narrator, Pauline, is a mixed-blood raised in the Native American tradition, but she wishes to be white and eventually becomes a fanatical nun. Also in *Love Medicine*, for example, Lipsha Morrissey, born with the shaman's healing touch, grows up with both Native American and Roman Catholic religious beliefs. His knowledge of both religions is sometimes an advantage, but at other times he is merely paralyzed between contradictory systems of belief.

We can find the conflicting codes in Erdrich's *Tracks*. Conflicting codes in Erdrich's *Tracks* fall into two large categories- Codes originating within western-European society and those originating within Native American culture. Conflicting codes involve-Christianity versus Shamanic religion, Mechanical or industrial time versus ceremonial time, the nuclear family versus tribal kinship systems, main or privileged characters versus characters of equal status, and privileged narrative voices

as opposed to dialogical or polyphonic narrative development. Events narrated by both narrators, in *Tracks*, take on meaning within a framework of American Indian beliefs about life, death, and mystical experiences. Nanapush speaks of the power of story telling and of how he once resisted the well-intentioned but misguided words of a catholic priest. Nanapush revives himself through narration by saying:

"I kept father Damien listening all night, his green eyes round, his thin face straining to understand, his odd brown hair in curls and clipped knots. Occasionally, he took in air, as if to add observations of his own, but I pushed him under with my words" (*Tracks* 7)

So, Nanapush knows about the single world of the Native American and the world with Euro-American too. He knows how to mingle them together. Another narrator, Pauline, narrates the early life story of Fleur Pillager, and represents her through a network of references to Chippewa Lake being, magical animals, and Native American social practices. Nanapush, on one hand, knows about how to deal with the fragmented identity of one. He knows about the crippled mind of his own tribe and the sophisticated or dominant mind of the Euro-American. He tries to merge the two different cultures. But, on the other hand, Pauline, another narrator of the novel, longs for the codes and conduct of the white culture. She hates her own tribe and follows other's culture blindly. She says:

"I wanted to be my mother, who showed her half-white. I wanted to be my grandfather, pure Canadian, that was because even as a child I saw that to hang back was to perish." (17)

Pauline chooses to reject her native heritage and identify fully with her mother. Pauline perceives identification with the Indians as death. But despite her

scorn for her Native American upbringing, Pauline (Later to become sister Leopolda of *Love Medicine*) cannot quite escape her old way of construing experience. Part of her notion of evil and the supernatural, for example, derives from a non-Christian frame of reference. For example, according to Chippewa belief, the monster in the Lake is a frightening but appeasable entity. When Pauline becomes a nun she still believes in the lake creature, but she calls him Satan. Pauline's distorted version of the satanic lake monster is more horrible than either the Christian Satan, who is not appeasable but who cannot victimize the truly innocent or the Chippewa monster, who can capture the innocent but who is appeasable.

In the open-ended or undecidable question of June Kashpaw's fate in *Love Medicine*, as well as in the warped theology of Pauline in *Tracks*, we can easily see cultural, specifically religious codes conflict. June is depicted partially through references to Christian resurrection and partly through references to Native American religious beliefs. Likewise Pauline/Leopolda's interpretation of experience is dual and irreconcilable, despite her grotesque assimilations. Erdrich uses religious beliefs in order to display the contradictions faced by her characters. She has shown the conflict between two cultures very much clearly. Pauline doesn't like her tribe and she wants to follow the white culture whereas Nanapush is depicted here as a person who wants to preserve his own tribe and is habituated in the modern white world too. Pauline attributes wolf-like characteristics to Fleur;

"She turned, looked straight at me, and grinned the with wolf grin a Pillager turns on its victims, except that she wasn't after me" (19).

So, Pauline describes Fleur as a wolf-Like creature. She is always afraid of Fleur and her behavior. It is because she doesn't like her tribe's (natural) world but

she is devoted towards white's (modern) world. She totally wants to forget her own culture. She fails to keep the healthy balance between her own culture and white culture. Instead of crossing the borders she creates borders. Further more she described Fleur as a witch;

"Some say she kept the finger of a child in her pocket and a power of unborn rabbits in a leather thong around her neck. She laid the heart of an owl on her tongue so she could see at night, and went out, hunting, not even in her own body. We know for sure because the next morning, in the snow or dust, we foiled the tracks of her bare feet ... claws sprang out the pad broadened and pressed into the dust". (12)

Fleur, in *Tracks*, is a representative of Native American tribe. To dislike her means to dislike the culture. Pauline hates Fleur, it means she hates her own culture. She scatters her own identity which is the symbol of life.

Erdrich's *Tracks* deemphasized the importance of biological ties and emphasizes the significance of other, particularly spiritual, ties of friendship and love. To give Lulu "legitimate" name, Nanapush declares her to be his biological child when she is born. However, he also calls her "granddaughter" and she calls him "Uncle". She is really the child of Fleur Pillager and Eli Kashpaw, and not directly kin to Nanapush at all. However, because Nanapush saved Fleur from death, She is a "daughter", and Lulu is thus a "granddaughter". Nanapush has saved Fleur from death that means he is in a way to preserve his own culture. *Tracks* explores another axis of Native American identity, the connection of an individual with the history of his her tribe. In the novel the trickster/patriarch Nanapush narrates to young Lulu the story of the tribe's struggles to survive in an attempt to give her back the identity she has lost

while away at a government boarding school. As a trickster figure of the novel, Nanapush knows how to embody the whole of tribal history and tradition where there is the supremacy of another (white) culture:

I guided the last buffalo hunt. I saw the last bear shot. I trapped the last beaver with a pelt of more than two years' growth. I spoke aloud the words of the government treaty, and refused to sign the settlement papers that would take away our words and lake. I axed the last birch that was older than I, and I saved the last Pillager. (2)

So, the life story of Nanapush is the tribe's life story. His adoption to a new bureaucratic identity at the end of the novel literally and figuratively ensures the survival of the tribe, tribe whose future is clearly tied to young Lulu's self and story. He is proud of speaking the words of the government treaty, and because of that ability he gets success to preserve his own wood, lake and the whole Chippewa culture. He knows the conspiracy of the white language and he uses that only for the preservation of the culture which is his own identity.

As we know that Erdrich's *Tracks* unfolds the cultural differences by means of two alternative narrators. The aging Chippewa, Nanpush, predeceased by his wives and children and the lone-survivor of his family line, delivers the odd chapter, Pauline Puyat narrates the even chapters. Pauline is a light-skinned young women isolated from her mixed-blood family. From the two narrators' point of view we can easily imagine that in a community ravaged by illness, poverty, and white-instituted dependence, familial disconnection is a growing reality. If the characters are failed to maintain the balance, the loss of identity will be introduced.

Pauline is afraid of her own native culture. She is too impressed by the white

culture that she even hates Fleur Pillager. She is really afraid of her birth. She attributes wolf-like character to Fleur. She says:

"She smiled at me steady and hungry, teeth glinting, and I saw again the wolf those men met down in Argus, the one who laughed and stuffed their money in her dress." (75)

Pauline really hates Fleur Pillager. It is because she hates her own identity i.e. her native culture. But another narrator of the novel, Nanapush, feels that Pauline is associated with death when she fails to maintain the balance of two cultures: ". . . but she was useless-good at easing souls into death but bad at breathing them to life, afraid of life infant, afraid of birth, and afraid of Fleur Pillager". (57}

Pauline, really, doesn't try to understand the emotions, feelings and difficulties of her own tribe. She is highly devoted towards the white culture which shows her identity in crisis. She is not, in fact, wholly welcomed by Nanapush because of her totally white-oriented behaviour. She considers her tribe as a barbaric one which is her blunder and because of that she remains of no culture and identity. At times it seems that Nanapush or Fleur might try to help Pauline reintegrate to the native community and extended family they are reconstructing, even as they recognize the threat she poses to this project.

In any case, Nanapush doesn't leave the struggle there, even though Pauline rebuffs him with the most violent Christian theatric. Indeed her curse-- "I hope the devil tears you apart piece by piece and fries each morsell" (148)-- reveals that her own commitment to self-containment is ultimately a drive toward bodily and communal disintegration. Pauline refuses to accept commonality with the group where as Nanapush desires to recreate a family i.e. the native culture. What

Nanapush believes is that only the culture and tradition protect and tie the people with community. He addresses Lulu directly.

"I'm sure you've forgotten what happened next, for if you remembered, you would not wear such shoes as you have on at this moment those heels, like tiny knives and your toes sticking through! you'd wear foot wrappings made of rabbit fur for protection. (166).

So, Nanapush dramatizes his commitment to communal integrity. By seeing the contradictions between the main narrators of *Tracks*, we can easily understand the Erdrich's view i.e. a certain level of integrity, in terms of traditional and relational ties, must be maintained if survival is to be culturally meaningful.

Nanapush's narration, which is an effort to get Lulu to understand her family and tribal past and thus affect the present, will counteract the invisibility wreaked by cultural imperialism. But while "the ones who disappeared" can refer to tribal ancestors, it can also refer to the Manitous who in *Love Medicine*, are referred to as the "invisible ones". Nanapush's calling Lulu a child of the invisible ones simultaneously invokes her inheritance of cultural oppression and of cultural/spiritual empowerment. In *Tracks* Nanapush, the trickster meditates; for *Track's* Nanapush meditating means crossing the border between the material and the spiritual, the visible and the visionary, subject and object, the white world and the Anishinabe world. Nanapush will read government documents; he will get involved in tribal politics, in order to fight the white world; Nanapush sees that the language of white culture is a trap. When father Damien tries to convince him to take on a leadership role in the tribe, Nanapush fears becoming a puppet of the U.S. government: "I saw the snare right then, the invisible load hidden in the priest's well-meaning worlds".

(185).

Nanapush is familiar with the colonial behavior of the white people. But he knows how to use language against it. It is precisely a loophole, in a legal document, that Nanapush will use to bring Lulu back to him and the tribe from the government school: “To become a bureaucrat myself was the only way that I could wade through the letters, the reports, the only place where I could find a ledge to kneel on, to reach through the coopole and draw you home”. (225)

Nanapush uses the white code against itself and to his own advantage. The loophole through which he regains Lulu exists because he had the priest write “Nanapush” on the line for “father” on Lulu’s baptismal certificate.

Nanapush’s vision exists in dialogue with the visions of Pauline, the young mixed blood woman who is the other narrator of *Tracks*. Pauline longs to be like her mother, “Who showed her half white”, and her grandfather who was “pure Canadian” (14), and thus to be firmly situated in the white world. Nanapush, secure in his cultural identity, can negotiate boundaries between the Anishinabe culture and the white culture, all in service of the Anishinabe. Pauline, in contrast, wanders back and forth over the internalized borders of her cultural identity, turning increasingly to Catholicism as a way to rid herself of Indianness. Yet even as she embraces more and more her own perverse spin on Catholicism, she is drawn to Matchimanito Lake where Nanapush lives with Fleur pillager, her husband Eli Kashpaw, their daughter Lulu, and Eli’s mother, Margaret.

Most significant among the characters in *Tracks* is Fleur Pillager who represents the wholly Anishinabe culture. For Pauline, she also represent a mother figure, and it is on both these counts that she is what Pauline most desires and most

violently rejects: “I tried to stop myself from remembering what it was like to have companions, to have my mother and sisters around me, but when Fleur came to us that June, I remembered”. (15)

The beginning of the novel reveals Pauline’s complicated feelings toward Fleur. Pauline’s family has died of disease on the reservation while she is in Argus. She sometimes attributes Fleur and the other times she hates her.

When Pauline becomes pregnant by Napoleon Morrissey, she tries to abort the pregnancy, but later at the moment of birth, she tries to keep the baby inside of her because their separation would mean loneliness. When the child is finally born, Pauline says, “We were divided” (136). She then makes the separation- and abjection-complete when Pauline goes to Bernadette with her child, she says: “I looked upon her. She was soiled, formed by me, bearing every defilement I had known by Napoleon Morrissey ... Look, she’s marked by the devil’s thumbs” (136)

Pauline abandons the child to the care of Napoleon’s sister, Bernadette. Later she will refer to her child as “the bastard girl” (198). After she thrusts the child from her, she waits only long enough to recuperate and then leaves both the reservation and her Indian identity for the new enclosure of the convent and a white identity. There is no any balance between the outside and inside in Pauline’s characteristics.

Nanapush’s ability to deal with the outside and the inside plays itself out in his negotiation of cultural borders. Nanapush reconstructs his past with Fleur. “Since I saved her from the sickness, I was entangled with her. Not that I knew it at first. Only looking back is there a pattern” (33).

His discernment and creation of a pattern constitutes a form of tracking; he

follows the invisible past in search of a significant story that will nourish Lulu and the future of the tribe. In Nanapush's narration we see the crossing of borders between the material and the spiritual, the self and the other, the Anishinable world and the White world. But his ability to cross borders exists along with recognition that borders can be necessary for cultural preservation.

Erdrich's *Tracks* focuses upon the postmodern ideology of pluralism and recognition of difference. Hybrid identity is necessary in this multicultural age. Nanapush, in *Tracks*, is not a typed character as he, unlike Fleur Pillager, adapts himself to the fast changing situations. He wants to preserve his own native Chippewa tribe and for that he doesn't hesitate to understand the White culture too. Nanapush is shown as the real hero of Erdrich's *Tracks* because he keeps balance between two different cultures. Full-blood Fleur is totally Anishinable where as mixed-blood Pauline is devoted towards the Euro-American identity. Both Fleur and Pauline fail to maintain the balance between the two cultures. But different from Fleur and Pauline, Nanapush is a real survivor. He knows the increasing treats posed by the colonizing tendency of the Euro-Americans. In such a contradictory situation, Nanapush acts as a trickster:

“Nanapush, the trickster that he is, realizes this and he decides to fight paper with paper. In an ironic reversal of roles, Nanpush puts on the skin of the oppressor to defuse the oppressor's power he becomes a bureaucrat and he used the “authority” of the textualized word to save Lulu from indoctrination at boarding school.” (Pandey 70).

So, Nanapush realizes the differences of the cultures. He is able to preserve his own culture because he realizes the borders and its importance. Realizing and

crossing the borders at the same time, Nanapush becomes the real survivor. His hybrid identity becomes the way of living in the multicultural society. He survives because he recognizes the border and crosses it. Fleur and Pauline do not realize and fail to cross the borders. They deny the hybrid identity. They are shown as a failure characters where as Nanapush crosses the borders and believes in hybrid identity and he is depicted as a hero like character.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

This is the era of globalization. No one is willing to be under the dictatorship of others. Because of the development in the field of transportation communication, the world is just like a home and we all are the members. As we know that there are different traditions, cultures, rituals and the way of life too. There is demarcation line and there is border too. Eastern culture, philosophy and tradition is different from the western. To live happily and proudly in this multicultural and multi-traditional age we have to recognize the border and cross them. If we become dogmatic one, then the result will be our failure. Border should be recognized and crossed to have a life with full of happiness and charm. We have to modify the bad of ours and follow the good of others. Total acceptance and rejection is a curse and not a blessing.

In Erdrich's *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*, there is the theme of crossing borders and hybridity. Being a product of two different cultures, Erdrich indirectly focuses upon the post modern age which is heading towards "sameness being different". What she wants to suggest is to keep the balance among cultures. We have different cultures, languages, rituals, customs, festivals, traditions etc. They are of their own importance. Postmodern mind is flexible. There are differences and they are our identity two, but we have to go ahead by recognizing them and keeping the balance among them. A person must think "I'm not all anything but I'm a little bit of a lot". In Erdrich's *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*, there are multiple characters having multiple feelings about the culture. All the characters are in-between two cultures i.e. the native American (Chippewa Tribe) and The Euro American. Some characters easily keep balance between two cultures and they survive happily. Some characters are

imprisoned in darkness because they don't know how to keep the balance between cultures. Lipsha, Marie, Lulu and Albertine in *Love Medicine* and Nanapush in *Tracks* keep balance between two cultures. June Kashpaw, in *Love Medicine*, has shown dead at the beginning. Because of the white supremacy June fails to keep balance between cultures and she runs behind white culture blindly. Pauline, in *Tracks* is also a pathetic character who blindly follows white culture and totally forgets her own tribe.

In *Love Medicine*, Albertine and Lipsha recognized the importance of cultures and the necessity of crossing the border. As Albertine says: "Everything seemed to be one piece. The air, our faces all cool, moist and dark, and the ghostly sky. All of a piece, as if the sky were a pattern of nerves and our thought and memories traveled across it." They cross the borders and that suggests a collapse of the boundary between the tangible and intangible, the past and the present, the individual and the collective, the collective and the universe. They have not been consumed by depression, by loss, by drawing and destruction which are the result of the white supremacy. In the final line of the novel Lipsha says "So there was nothing to do but cross the water, and bring her home." Lipsha realized his identity and the flow of the world and finally crosses the borders. Lipsha brings his mother June, who has already been dead, back to the reservation. June fails to keep balance between the cultures but Lipsha helps her to maintain the balance even after her death.

In Erdrich's *Tracks* Nanapush acts as trickster and he crossed the borders between the material and the spiritual, the visible and the visionary, subject and object, the white world and the Anishinabe world. Nanapush can read government documents, he can involve in tribal politics in order to fight the white world. He

recognizes that the Euro American language is a trap. But he is familiar with the language and the colonial behavior of the white people. He knows how to use language against it. He doesn't reject the white identity too but he uses the white code against itself and to his own advantages. He becomes liberal and flexible and this is how he keeps the balance between two different cultures. He is able to preserve his own culture because he realizes the borders and its importance. Realizing and crossing the borders at the same time, Nanapush becomes the real survivor.

The emergence of many literary theories after 1960, focused especially upon 'sameness among differences'. The initial phase of Postmodernism brought a great challenge upon the center seeking tendency and supremacy of the powerful ones. The hierarchy between powerful and powerless, rich and poor, Black and white, center and marginal, blurred. Post colonial studies focused upon the probability of the ex-colonial states' potentiality to have their own existence. Feminism, on the other hand, ruptured the boundary between male and female. Derrida's Deconstruction came as a great threat to the contemporary theories which focused upon the 'logocentrism' or the 'metaphysics of presence'. Derrida explores 'logocentrism' the desire for a center in the western metaphysics. According to him, there is no any absolute truth, there is no any hierarchy and having some differences there is sameness also. Erdrich's texts also focus upon the post modern concept. Her texts show that as if she is fade up of with the White supremacy. On the other hand she wants to change the lifestyle of the Native Americans (Chippewa tribe). By presenting the characters like Nanapush (In *Tracks*), Lipsha and Marie (in *Love Medicine*), she appeals the reader to cross the borders. Our existence, in this postmodern era, dwells upon our capacity to cross the borders and desire to maintain the healthy balance among cultures.

To sum up, border is very much necessary to survive. Border is our existence too. But if we become dogmatic then our life will be ruined. Healthy balance among cultures is necessary to survive happily. Crossing borders and hybrid identity help us to keep a balance among cultures. In this age of globalization, the dogmatic perception is vain and worthless.

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