

I. Louis Erdrich and the Issue of Native American Culture in *The Antelope Wife*

This research focuses on the issue of Native American Culture which is valorized in *Erdrich's The Antelope Wife*. Moreover the research hovers round the deeper understanding of the complexity and plurality of Native American culture which is manifested in the behaviors, attitudes, values, costumes and ways of life of the characters in the novel. This research deals with the unique cultural and socio-political realities of Native American localities. Revolving in its three chapters the present thesis unearths the elements of the valorization of Native American culture which has been shadowed by mainstream western culture. The empowerment of the native American-culture in the research is brought on the strength of the thinkers of Native American studies such as Gerlad Vizenor, George Elias, Anna Secco and others.

The relative marginalization of the Native American society with the negative stereotypes from the west has been challenged by Erdrich through the inclusion of Native American culture, practice of mysticism, issues of salvation and the victory of the Native American cultural practices in the novel *The Antelope Wife*; which shows the constancy devotion of Americans to their culture. This is presented in the novel through the protagonist Scranton Roy and other Native American characters. The uniqueness of the American aboriginals is presented in the novel through the unique language and culture of Native Americans.

Louise Erdrich was born in 1954, in Little Falls, Minnesota and grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota where her parents worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. She received an M.A. degree from the John Hopkins University in 1979. Erdrich's fiction and poetry, draws on her Chippewa heritage to examine complex familial and sexual relationships among full and mixed blood Native Americans as they struggle

with questions of identity in white European American culture. She is a novelist, poet, short story writer, essayist and a critic. Louise Erdrich is an American writer of novels, poetry, and children's books featuring Native American characters and settings. She is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, a band of the Anishinaabe (also known as Ojibwa and Chippewa). Erdrich is highly praised as one of the most significant writers of the second wave of the Native American Renaissance. The collection of poems *Baptism of Desire* is a prize winner book in which she talks about the process of baptism by blood, water, or the necessary desire for salvation in Roman Catholic tradition. In her novel *The Beet Queen* Erdrich gives the vibrant and heartfelt tale of abandonment and sexual obsession, jealousy and unstinting love that explores with empathy, humor, and power the eternal mystery of the human condition.

Louise Erdrich's brilliant novel *The Bingo Palace* is a tale of spiritual death and reawakening; of money, desperate love, and wild hope; and of the enduring power of cherished dreams. This novel shows the Native American life of 20th century. Its hero, Lipsha Morrissey, is a young man, bastard son of irresponsible June Kashpaw and jailbird Gerry Nanapush, whose mother tried to drown him as an infant. He seems like a bright person of wasted promise, who drifts aimlessly between jobs taken on a whim until he returns to the reservation and falls under the spell of lovely Shawnee Ray Toose. But Shawnee Ray is the consort of Lyman Lamartine, the smart, opportunistic entrepreneur who gets rich by feeding on his tribespeople's bingo frenzy. The book is a telling study of Lipsha's passion, and the efforts he makes to win the woman--a vision quest in the deep woods ends up hilariously with him snuggling with a skunk. But neither Shawnee nor Lyman--deeply insecure himself--ever quite comes to life as Lipsha does, and there are myriad subplots and additional

characters as Erdrich piles on the generations. The writing is passionate, often beautiful, whole scenes remain firmly etched in memory, and a telling impression remains of the hopes and despairs of contemporary Native Americans. In the end, however, narrative momentum is sacrificed for a broad canvas full of telling strokes, but which fails to cohere. In 2009, her novel *The Plague of Doves* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. In November 2012, she received the National Book Award for Fiction for her novel *The Round House*. She was married to author Michael Dorris and the two collaborated on a number of works.

The Antelope Wife extends the branches of the families who populate Louise Erdrich's earlier novels, and once again, her unsentimental, unsparing writing captures the Native American sense of despair, magic, and humor. Rooted in myth and set in contemporary Minneapolis, this poetic and haunting story spans a century, at the center of which is a mysterious and graceful woman known as *The Antelope Wife*. Elusive, silent, and bearing a mystical link to nature, she embodies a complicated quest for love and survival that impacts lives in unpredictable ways. Her tale is an unpredictable ways. Her tale is an unforgettable tapestry of ancestry, fate, harrowing tragedy, and redemption, that seems at once modern and eternal.

The Antelope Wife begins with a post-Civil War cavalry raid on an Indian village. The village Blue Prairie Women gave birth to a baby and she tied her baby girl onto the back of a dog, which then escaped in terror. One of the soldiers, Scranton Roy, left the cavalry and chased after the baby. He caught her, hold her, suckled her himself, gave name her after his mother, Matilda, and raised her as his own daughter. Scranton Roy got married with the Matilda's teacher, and she gave birth to a baby boy. They called him Augustus. Blue Prairie Woman was impregnated by her husband, a man named Shawano, and gave birth to two twin

girls, Josephette (Zosie) and Mary, but she compelled to leave new born twin to search her first born baby. She found Matilda and indicated to her, but almost immediately died of a white man's disease. Before she died, she renamed her daughter Other Side of the Earth and arranged for her to be protected by a herd of antelope.

The novel then addresses the lives of modern-day children of Scranton Roy, Matilda, Augustus, and Zosie and Mary Shawano. The narrator and imaginative re-creator of those lives is Cally Whiteheart Beads Roy, descendant through various lines of several of those characters. Certainly she is a central character in the story, though she focused in her narration more on the life of her mother, Rozin. Central to *The Antelope Wife* is Rozin's violent relationship with Cally's father, Richard Whiteheart Beads, and her delightful lover and eventual second husband, Frank Shawano. Also central to the novel is Sweetheart Calico, an antelope-related woman whom Klaus Shawano seized and carried off to Minneapolis, where much of the present-day action of the novel takes place.

Cally is a conventional narrator of the story who doesn't involve directly involve in the story. She builds her story out of the interconnecting and sometimes contradictory stories she has heard, known about, or perhaps merely imagined may have happened to explain the history of events and characters who seem strange to her. For example, she knows Sweetheart Calico, a strange woman whose silence and unconventional actions suggest, to her namesake Cally, that she may be part antelope. It may be then, that to explain her modern-day actions, Cally re-creates for her an ancestry that goes back to Matilda, the child of Blue Prairie Woman and the original antelope wife, who had herself run with the deer after her mother's death. Similarly, the chapters narrated by a dog may make most sense as Cally's attempt to

imagine what a canine narrator would say if it had the power of speech. On the first page, Cally announces that what she tells she is fading in the larger memory, and that she wants to tell it "that it not be lost." She tells us near the end that she was sent here to understand and to report. *The Antelope Wife* is finally a challenging and comic novel, not only in the sense that there is much humor in it, but also that the two unhappy wives, Sweetheart Calico and Rozin, both achieve happiness by gaining freedom from oppressively controlling husbands.

Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife* has received several critical appraisals since the time of the publication. This extraordinary novel is at once a rich story of enigmatic characters and a boldly disquieting meditation on the attempt to build a future of hope and promise from the legacy of the past. Different critics have analyzed the novel from multiple perspectives. Erdrich brings the theme of the cultural reality which emotionally dislocated lives of Native Americans who try to adhere to the tribal ways while docile to the tempt of the general culture. Family stories repeat themselves in patterns and waves, generation to generation, across blood and time. In a beautifully articulated tale of intertwined relationships among succeeding generations, she tells the story of Native Americans who are valorizing their culture in a unique manner. In this condition Ken Kessey puts:

The intricate craft of Native American beadwork is the central metaphor upon which Erdrich strings her multiple, intertwined narratives. Everything is all knotted up in a tangle. Pull one string of this family and the whole web will tremble. Family -- both immediate and ancestral -- is a tensile bond that links the novel's characters, as much a hangman's noose as a lifeline.(4)

Thus, it is proved that the author is most successful when dealing with his countrymen, either among themselves or in their haphazard relationships with the English or Americans. Kessey further describes on the narrative features Edrigh's writings from which she easily shows the cultural and rituals practices of Native Americans. The family nexus and its responsibility upon the member and society is clearly presented by the characters of the novel which is totally unrelated to the western culture.

John Keplom views the title of the novel as interesting and masterful. The narrative begins like a fever dream with a U.S. cavalry attack on an Ojibwa village, the death of an old woman who utters a fateful word, the inadvertent kidnapping of a baby and a mother's heartbreaking quest. The descendants of the white soldier who takes the baby and of the bereaved Ojibwa mother are connected by a potent mix of tragedy, farce and mystical revelation. As time passes, there is another kidnapping, the death of a child and a suicide. Fates are determined by a necklace of blue beads, a length of sweetheart calico and a recipe for blitzkuchen, for him:

Erdrich's novel contains many stories, but its emotional white heat is generated by two complementary tales of troubled marriages.

Sweetheart Calico, silent and wrathful, is the "antelope wife" of the title, named for the fabric that ties her to Klaus Shawano, the man who abducts and enchants her away from the open places where land meets sky. She languishes in the urban prison of Gakahbekong (contemporary Minneapolis, where much of the novel's action takes place). Even more affecting is the story of Rozin -- one of a number of twins who populate this populous novel -- and her husband, Richard Whiteheart Beads, the charismatic, self-destructive man for

whom she feels a "hopeless mixture of tenderness, hatred, exhaustion.

(23)

In third person narration, *The Antelope Wife* recounts a year in the lives of the Anishinabe family. Though the story is animated by obsessional love, mysterious disappearances, mythic legends and personal weakness, Erdrich also works in a comic vein. There's a dog who tells dirty jokes and a naked wife whose anniversary is suppressing. Throughout the story, Erdrich emphasizes the paradoxes of everyday life: braided grandmas who follow traditional ways and speak the old language also wear eyeliner and sneakers. In each generation, men and women are bewitched by love, lust and longing; they are slaves to drink, to carefully guarded secrets or to the mesmerizing power of hope.

Derek Wright views that there is the notion of freedom as a scientific metaphor. The reference here is apparently to the random motion around the atomic nucleus of electrons whose speed and position can be measured, but never at the same time, and which are said to be "in a free state" since their movement is impossible to plot exactly. The accidental, unpredictable travel of particles is comparable to that of the book's characters. He Claims:

All of our actions have in their doing the seed of their undoing," Cally observes as she thinks of her mother. She "marvels" that those actions are "knit and unknit by one same needle. That in her creation of her children there should be the unspeakable promise of their death, for by their birth she had created mortal beings. That in her love there should be failure to love. That in the sudden hatred she developed toward our father there should be the split cotyledon, the tongue, the trembling shoot of a sunless white passion. (21)

Though the plot sometimes bogs down from an overload of emotional complications, the novel ultimately celebrates the courage of following one's ordained path in the universe and meeting the challenges of fate. It is an assured example of Erdrich's storytelling skills. The narrative's movement has a roaming, associative kind of logic that invites any number of possibly spurious correspondences between its episodes and, like the erratic progress of the subatomic particles.

Family stories repeat themselves in patterns and effect generation to generation across the time. Erdrich embroiders this theme in a sensuous novel that brings her back to the material she knows best, the emotionally dislocated lives of Native Americans who try to adhere to the tribal ways while yielding to the lure of the general culture. The narrative begins like a fever dream with a U.S. cavalry attack on an Ojibwa village, the death of an old woman who utters a fateful word. The descendants of the white soldier who takes the baby and of the bereaved Ojibwa mother are connected by a potent mix of tragedy, farce and mystical revelation.

As time passes, there is another kidnapping, the death of a child and a suicide. Fates are determined by a necklace of blue beads, a length of sweetheart calico and a recipe for blitzkuchen. There's a dog who tells dirty jokes and a naked wife whose anniversary surprise has an audience. In each generation, men and women are bewitched by love, lust and longing; they are slaves to drink, to carefully guarded secrets or to the mesmerizing power of hope. This shows the Erdrich's ability of storytelling skills by multiple narrations. By creating multiple narrative style Erdrich tries to cover the various aspects of Native American society. In this context Aime Larsen says:

The intricate craft of Native American beadwork is the central metaphor upon which Erdrich strings her multiple, intertwined narratives: Everything is all knotted up in a tangle. Pull one string of this family and the whole web will tremble. Erdrich's novel contains many stories, but its emotional white heat is generated by two complementary tales of troubled marriages. Sweetheart Calico, silent and wrathful, is the "antelope wife" of the title, named for the fabric that ties her to Klaus Shawano, the man who abducts and enchants her away from the open places where land meets sky. (59)

Aime Larsen argues that, by the techniques of multiple and entangled narration Erdrich presents the cultural stance of Native Americans. The issues of marriage, love and sexuality are in the prime focus of this novel to show the different kind of family relations. According to Aime Larsen, by two complementary stories of troubled marriages and the complex family nexus novel is unique in its nature.

Louise Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife* takes place mainly in Minneapolis but the narrative establishes links with the land of origins, where some initial crack paradoxically brought three white, Ojiba and mixed blood families together. According to Vanessa Guignery, Erdrich offers a hybrid writing which mixed geographical, human and literary organs. According to her:

The Antelope Wife weaves the complicated textual fabric that restork to both the Native story-telling tradition and post modern literature and that stages multiple examples of hybridization. Through her hybrid fictional technique, Edrich defines a luminal territory sketching what appears to be a 'cracked-apart'. (213)

For Vanessa Guignery, *The Antelope Wife* is a complex text by the mixture of old Native American tribal tradition and the post modern literature. The amalgamation of different stories Native American stories in post modern literary form is the examples of hybridization. To criticize this novel as a hybrid text she further puts:

This thesis is a library-based research; it uses a close, discursive analytical style which draws on the Native American and vocabularies. The research is based on the authentic cites. Guidance from the lectures and professors is taken as the supportive tool. In addition to it the texts on the issue Native American are taken as the tools in making the application of the novel from the viewpoint of Native American culture.

Specially, the issue of the native American culture by Gerald Vizenor is taken as the main tool to prove the hypothesis of this research. Along with him, George Elias, Anna Secco, and other theorist's theory of Native American cultural are used to make the analysis of the novel and the different extracts of the novels are taken in order to prove the hypothesis.

Native American culture is one of the distinct and cultures of North America. It determines the sum total of behaviors, attitudes, values, costumes and ways of life of the Native American people. Culture is a part of life of Native American that distinguishes from other African and European cultures. Native American culture, life style, eating habit, values, morals, myths and language prove their existence and identify in society and world. Culture is attached to their life daily life as means of servable and source of existence. Culture of Native Americans is not like a souvenir but rather it is linked with the daily life. Their daily work and efforts are allied with culture. The daily life they live, the language, speak, the morels they follow, the rituals the celebrate reveal the meaning of Native American culture as whole.

Other cultural aspects such as arts, crafts, oral tradition, storytelling and mythmaking play the important role in reliving the Native American culture. These cultural aspects also act as an essence of Native American people in the world. These aspects of culture are considered as tradition that is acquired, inherited and accepted from time memorials and transmitted from one generation to next. Native American culture is inherited in the form of ideas, belief, morals and values and it transfers the extends to oral tradition, teaching, storytelling and mythmaking.

In the field of Native American Studies, current scholarly interest in hybridity, transnationalism, and diaspora has produced mixed feelings, to borrow James Clifford's term. Conceiving of the Native American literary tradition as a practice of representation that engages cultural difference by performing a strategy of resistance, Arnold Krupat was among the first critics to account for it as constructed on the same premises as those Homi Bhabha observed in post-colonial writing, namely as contestations of imperial efforts to achieve hegemony and of essentialist definitions of Native identity by elaborating a third space of cultural translation, hybridity and interstitiality. The ethnocritic should, therefore, seek "to replace oppositional with dialogical model," Krupat argued (Ethnocriticism 26), and join the writers' efforts to challenge Western constructions of history and disrupt the rhetorics of self-evidence of Western thought. In a much quoted essay, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn expressed her dissent with such a perspective, and complained.

Gerald's research on the topic of *Recovering American Indian Intellectual Tradition* attempts the issue of Native Americans culture and the issue of 'othering' of them by mainstream western culture. All native Americans share similar traditional manner of preparation that establish a strong bond with their culture and work. Among American Indian jewelry, turquoise and silver are most famous of all. For

Native Americans Turquoise has aesthetic origin. Dutton in his book (*Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions*) writes, "there isn't just a group of American "Indian", but rather individual societies marked with differences and similarities-that from what is called Native American culture" (11). Despite the differences, all Native Americans share the same bond of love; love of nature and origin and mythmaking and storytelling. Not only this, Native American also shears similarity in their work of art and craft pottery, painting, basketry, waving and jocularly. Along with art, they perform ritualistic dance accomplished with folk music. All these practice have traditional significance in Native American tribe.

Anna Secco in her book, writes, "Native Americans transfer and extend their culture through oral tradition, teaching, storytelling and mythmaking" (1). Besides, Native Americans proceed their own traditional way of healing and curing. For the treatment Native American people believe in medicine man and women go to them. These people have many features that distinguish them from rest of the cultures of words like in dialect, tongue, clothing and eating habits, tradition and skill.

Native Americans are unique in their clothing and eating habit. They are practicing the traditional manner of clothing and eating manner. Originally, there were many different traditional Native American clothing styles in North America. Nearly every tribe had its own distinctive style of dress, and the people could often tell each other's identities by looking at their tribal clothes, headdresses, and ornamentation. In this context Regna Darnell puts:

Because of the image of the buckskin-wearing brave—or the even more elaborately buckskin-clothed chief crowned with the sine quanon of primal leadership (the eagle headdress replete with large, perfectly shaped feathers that trail down both sides nearly to the

ground)—Americans and movie-goers of the world think that all Native people dress like that today, the few of us who are left, that is. “How quaint they are, how unique!”. (45)

Native Americans are generally identified as indigenous people of North America having their settlement in places of United states, Canada, parts of Alaska and island of Hawaii. Native Americans, also termed as first peoples of North America, are believed to have arrived in the native land fifteen thousand to forty thousand or more years ago. During 1492, the time of discovery of North America, about sixty thousand to two millions indigenous people were extended in the areas that are now called United States and Canada. Many research state that the ancestral Native Americans were migrated from and Asia and parts of Europe, by walking across Bering Street and crossing many seas and oceans.

Thus the present research aims to uncover the issues of Native American culture in the text *The Antelope Wife*. The research unfolds in its three chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the research with the discussion of the tool and the context of the theorists. The second chapter is the application of Native American culture in the text *The Antelope Wife*. The third chapter is the conclusion of the research. The research is based on the authentic cites, books on the issues of Native American culture in the text *The Antelope Wife*. The guidance of the lecturers are taken as the supportive tools along with the quotes from the text that support the hypothesis of the research being based on the terms and vocabularies of Native Americans.

II. Valorization of Native American Culture in Erdrich's *The Antelope Wife*

In *The Antelope Wife* (1998), Erdrich includes many of the elements, symbols, and viewpoints of the processes of cultural renewal occurring throughout the Native American world today. These characters, symbols, and events are mythically shaped to reflect lives, concerns, events, and dichotomies felt by many contemporary Native Americans who struggle to integrate various cultural components and heritages into a coherent and successful identity. The major images and characters involve a perceived split between Native American and non-Native American cultures. The split manifests itself in a variety of dualistic images including animal / human relationships, twins and gender confusion. Resolving “splits,” reconciling realities, and mediating between them to make sense of the world, are major endeavors of the characters. The plurality of characters, lives, and voices in the novel helps underscore the widespread effects of cultural revitalization and deepens the complexity of novel. *The Antelope Wife* works as a myth by offering images and symbols of the re-birth of Native culture, suggesting how to maintain traditions while thriving today.

Most of the characters in *The Antelope Wife* are mixed-blood, like Erdrich herself (whose ancestry includes German and Chippewa heritage). In foregrounding the realities and confusion of being “mixed” or “split” throughout the story, Erdrich considers identity in terms of being Indian, American, and human today. In a 1987 interview, Erdrich stated that identity is a major concern to her, it’s kind of incomprehensible that there’s this ability to take in non-Indian culture and be comfortable in both world. Incomprehensible though it may seem, Erdrich’s novel confirms that being comfortable in split/mixed/blended worlds is possible. Lorena Stookey agrees that one of her central themes is an ability to endure even apparent

incompatibility: *The Antelope Wife* relates stories of characters' survival of catastrophe, and, as one of its central themes, it celebrates the life-affirming power of the will to survive. . . celebrates the endurance of Ojibwa cultural tradition (139).

Erdrich brings to life the reality and some of the symbols the language, powwows, beading, etc.) of the cultural revitalization movement, in which she herself participates, as she has stated in interviews. Her use of Ojibwe language – even in her personal preface – and ideas expressed within the novel help demonstrates her awareness of the importance and beauty of Ojibwe culture. In another interview she explains further: “I recently came from Manitoulin Island, a beautiful place. People are quite traditional and keep a lot of the old, particularly the very old crafts” (1). In this novel many characters' lives are crafted as examples of the revival of culture and its consequent confusions and rewards.

The Antelope Wife departs from the fictional North Dakota community that centered Erdrich's earlier novels for a new set of characters and concerns in Minnesota. This new work spans generations and ethnicities, but circles around three complicated, multi-generationally inter-connected, extended families – the Roys, the Whiteheart Beads, and the Shawanos. The most notably heroic character, Cally, is a member of all three families. She is a modern, Native, young woman who successfully, delicately mediates between worlds to create a new meaning, or pattern (in fact she emerges as the pattern maker – or storyteller). In contrast to Cally, those characters who fail existentially in this story either cannot let go of the past (nor see it properly), or are too entrenched in the negative aspects of the modern, Western society. The characters and how they live represent poignantly the struggle for cultural identity among Native Americans today.

Erdrich's title proclaims her work "a novel," a literary genre which is usually considered distinct from the oral genre of myth, though novels often intentionally involve mythological elements. Yet this work fulfills many of the definitions of myth, as a story of re-birth which provides order symbolically for the Ojibwe universe today, and even involves heroes and some supernatural aspects. At the very least this is a novel which is "highly mythically tinged" (25). Blending and blurring generic categories, this work should be considered a novel and a myth at once, or a hybrid form unique to this novel.

As more than a novel, *The Antelope Wife's* central themes place it directly in line with typical Native American twin myths. Myths are tales of the distant past (or origin) of cultures that may serve to direct social action and values. Since Ojibwe culture is undergoing a renaissance, it is appropriate that there be a mythic expression of this re-birth of culture. Among many applicable theories of myth, the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Paul Radin emerge as helpful in illuminating the mythic elements of *The Antelope Wife* because they discuss Native American twin myths with which Erdrich's tale resonates. In fact, twin myths stand out as the classic examples of Native American myths, most "common" in Lévi-Strauss' terms, most "basic" in Radin's terms. Twin myths are so common and popular throughout the American Indian world that they beg and attract attention, and have apparently shaped Erdrich's work, which so aptly fits the twin myth pattern.

Radin, recognizes myth as a fluid narrative form in his article "The Basic Myth of the North American Indians." He affirms, "folktale, myth and legend flow into each other continually and continuously" (19). Radin emphasizes that the "form and content" of myths "is not fixed," which would be impossible because of a continuous barrage of new influences and priorities, as is constant to all human

communities (370). The flexibility of the genre in Radin's definition better accounts for the real stories which he and other fieldworkers typically encounter. He maintains: "It can, in fact, be said that every generation strives to 'rewrite' its folktales" (370). Likewise, Franz Boas, one of anthropology's founding fathers in the U.S., also recognizes the variability of generic form and content when he analyzes myths of the Northwest Coast Indians: "It would seem that mythological worlds have been built up only to be shattered again, and that new worlds were built from the fragments" (18).

Though the ancient, real and mythical worlds of the Ojibwe may have been "shattered," or "cracked apart", by European and American invasions and assimilation, contemporary Ojibwe people build new worlds from those fragments, as Erdrich builds her myth representing this process. Her novel includes obvious fragments from the mythic traditions of her culture, while offering images for how to blend coherently various impulses into a comprehensive and meaningful worldview, and thrive as Native Americans in today's world. Clear mythic tendencies within the novel direct the reader to consider it in terms of scholarship on myth. Mythology theories are typically applied to oral forms. Erdrich's novel encourages us to notice that such fluidity of form as has been noticed in oral genres also applies to written genres.

Weigle employs images of spinning and weaving in her analysis of the world-creating, life-affirming functions of myth. Similarly, it draws upon the image of one who weaves together bits and pieces of culture, in the image of the bricoleur. He also draws upon sewing imagery in discussing the function and method of the bricoleur:

More rapid cross-references, together with an increase in the number of points of view and angles of approach have made it possible to consolidate into a whole what might at first have seemed to be a loose and precarious assemblage of odds and ends, all dissimilar in form, texture and color... In this picture, the tiniest details, however gratuitous, bizarre, and even absurd they may have seemed at the beginning, acquire both meaning and function. (562)

As myth gives meaning and purpose to even the most seemingly disparate and fragmented elements of culture, so it affirms life processes of cultural change or renewal and refashioning identity. In reading *The Antelope Wife* as a myth, we expect it to involve key images of both duality and mediating, and indeed it is replete with both themes.

Erdrich's novel reveals feelings that are typical of mixed-bloods searching for identity and a culture undergoing a renaissance. She represents this complex process by images and the word (in Ojibwa) for splitting: *daashkiika*. Although Ojibwe language is included in non-distinct type style, its distinctness is clear (Ojibwe words look very different from English). Similarly, these characters and the story are part of America, yet their Indian identity, language, and character imbue them with a unique quality. The characters that Erdrich creates, like many Native Americans, feel and often experience painfully or positively, a split between cultures, languages, and identities. Erdrich gives the images of splitting and duality primacy in this novel, implicitly and explicitly.

Erdrich begins the novel from the description by the activities of twins who are involving in the process of sewing. Beyond such formal signal, the opening passage image verifies the duality and splitting of the world. The novel presents the

harsh condition of Native Americans who lived in America from ancient like the twins with mainstream Americans but the relation with them is torn and accepted as the 'others' in their own land. Human life, specially the life of native Americans is fragmented which is symbolized by the following lines:

Ever since the beginning these twins are sewing. One sews with light and one with dark. The first twin's beads are cut-glass whites and pales, and the other twin's beads are glittering deep red and blue-black indigo. One twin uses an awl made of an otter's sharpened penis bone, the other uses that of a bear. They sew with a single sinew thread, in, out, fast and furious, each trying to set one more bead into the pattern than her sister, each trying to upset the balance of the world. (1)

The aforementioned quote shows the struggle between balance and splitting are clearly signaled as major themes of the novel right from the outset. "Fast and furious" work on an intricate pattern of "light and dark" is obvious indicators of the duality of the pattern of Native American life. The mythic dimension of twins necessarily invokes basic social problems of struggle or splitting, which illuminates as basic and universal aspects of myth in *The Antelope Wife*. Here, the single thread refers humanity by which we can blur all the boundaries of Native and mainstream Americans which is practiced from the ancient time. The single thread of humanity can sew the hierarchy between them as it stereotyped as the condition of light and dark.

Identical twins are the most obvious symbol of the split-apart world in *The Antelope Wife*. Typically twins are the heroes of myths. Lévi-Strauss writes that "this division between two individuals who are at the beginning presented as twins,

either real twins or equivalents to twins, is a basic characteristic of all the myths in South America or North America” (15). Though the twin hero Cally loses her twin sister Deanna early on, she finds a replacement in the title character the antelope wife, who manifests a split between woman and hooved one. Incipient twinhood, as in something that appears about to split apart because of its physical traits such as a cleft palate, cloven hooves, etc., plays as crucial a role as actual twins in representing inherent duality typical of myth, according to Lévi-Strauss. Erdrich recognizes that the significant feature of antelope and deer is their split hooves, as seen in her frequent references to “hooved ones” rather than just deer or antelope.

Furthermore, when So Hungry takes a deer as husband, this communion links her with all hooved ones. So it is acceptable when antelope (the hooved ones of the Plains where she is trapped) take charge of Matilda, daughter of their cousin hooved ones, the deer, and ancestor of the antelope wife. Incipient or actual twinhood always involves and represents inherent dualities which must be symbolically resolved, or mediated, says Lévi-Strauss (99). Many characters in *The Antelope Wife* suffer crises which must be resolved or mediated. Such crises comprise climatic moments of the novel.

In *The Antelope Wife*, the use of Native American language valorizes the cultural tradition of Native Americans. In the first part of novel narrator use the Native American language to valorize the culture of Native Americans. The character Matilda Roy who was captured by Scranton Roy and ties with a dog when she was free she uttered in her language which is proved by the following quotes:

He braced himself against her to pull free, set his boot between her legs to tug the blade from her stomach, and as he did so tried to avoid her eyes but did not manage. His gaze was rawn into hers and he sank

with it into the dark unaccompanied moment before his birth. There was a word she uttered in her language. *Daashkikaa. Daashkikaa.* A groan of heat and blood. He saw his mother, yanked the bayonet out with a huge cry, and began to run. (50)

The extracted lines show the relation between the signifier and the signified, which is fixed by our cultural codes, is not permanently fixed. By the presentation of the words like '*Daashkikaa. Daashkikaa*' Erdrich focuses upon the unique language patron of the Native Americans. The act of using Native American words is the clear depiction of the Native American culture. Among the various ways of the identity has been defined, language plays the vital role to identify and examine the culture. So, the novelist depiction of the presentation of Native American culture is clearly shown by the abovementioned quotes.

The baby he "saves" becomes Scranton Roy's daughter – Matilda Roy – for whom he moves closer to civilization after years of healing in the wilderness following the massacre. In the white world, the new culture, Matilda seems happy, with a school teacher she loves as friend, then sister, and who would have been her step-mother. But her birth mother, Blue Prairie Woman, cannot accept losing this daughter, seems to know she is in a foreign world, and longs to find her. After a period with her husband of such abandon that "twins are born" from it. From the physical relationship of Blue Prairie and Shwano, Blue Prairie woman has given birth to the twins. The traditional culture of Native Americans, marriage is considered as only the part of sex which can be shown from the following lines:

They got teased too much and moved farther off, into the brush, into the nesting ground of shy and holy loons. There, no one could hear them. In solitude they made love until they became gaunt and hungry,

pale windigos with aching eyes, tongues of flame. Twins are born of such immoderation. By the time her husband left again with his sled of traps, she was pregnant and calm. (13)

Because she looks for her daughter on the horizon day after day, she is renamed "Other Side of the Earth," which again conjures images of a split. In American society, part of the discussion about marriage is really about sex. While sex was a part of traditional Native American marriage, marriage was not about sex. Prior to marriage, young people were expected to engage in sexual activities. Sex was not confined to marriage.

In spite of her new name and twin babies whom she feels inside her, "forming, creating themselves just as the first twin gods did at the beginning," her lost daughter's fate torments her (15). Other Side of the Earth cannot accept her daughter being on the "other side of the earth" she gazes toward every evening. Even with the birth of her new children, she cannot accept being split from her daughter, because she cannot accept losing her to the other world. Her agony presents the emotions of many families whose children were "lost" to the white world. From her perspective, Scranton has not really "saved" the baby, but kidnaped her. This too represents typical relations and misunderstandings between Indians and whites historically. As historian Debo notes in regard to such white adoptions and education of Indian children:

No other tragedy of frontier life brought such anguish, no other phase of Indian warfare aroused such hatred as this capture of children.

White men . . . never understood the desperation of the bereaved parents. Even the Apache prisoners crowded within stockades found

ways to hide some of their children from the Carlisle kidnapers”
(288).

Like so many Indian parents, *Other Side of the Earth* is bereaved to have lost a daughter to this alien culture of the whites. The loss of this daughter “cracks apart” her world, so she leaves her twins and walks west until she finds her first daughter. The twins were left under the nursing of their grandmother. When they are leaving with their grandparents they become sick and they treated by the healers. Focusing on the treatment by the healers is the native American cultural practice which was clearly presented from the following lines:

Those old ladies? Sure! They’re healers, beadworkers, tanners of hides. They make cedar boxes. Or they work as language consultants in the school system. Maybe one’s a housekeeper for a priest. The other dances. I hear she won the Senior Ladies Traditional twelve years in a row. Bums, they roam the streets. Windigos, they ate a husband. Oh, too bad, one or the other died and was buried the month before. Tough luck, I missed her. But then, once I worry she’s dead, the next day it is in the paper how Mrs. Zosie Roy or Mary Shawano just won a big jackpot at bingo. (71)

Many Native Americans continue to practice tribal religions and traditional medicine. The infant death rate is high, a fact attributed to a high incidence of diarrhea and a harsh physical environment. The ritual practice of spiritual healing are inherent in Native American culture. This rituals may should significant and unnatural in today's world of consumer culture but for Native Americans these are closely associated with their everyday life. These rituals were practice from the time immemorial.

Although she appears happy, Matilda Roy – 7 years old – recognizes the pull of this other world. Even though she loves her “father” Roy and her teacher who lives with them and ultimately marries Scranton Roy, Matilda feels her mother’s presence, and leaves with a “clatter of beads” and a brief note, “She came for me, I went with her” (16). The blue beads were on Matilda’s cradle board when Scranton rescued her, and she carries them away with her. The whole episode echoes the contradictory impulses many Indian children felt when they were “saved” / kidnapped by the white world and put into boarding schools or other white institutions as part of the general assimilation policy in America. Matilda feels and responds to the pull of her mother and culture, even though she doesn’t understand either. Here she literally cannot verbally communicate with her mother because she can’t speak the language. Like Matilda, many Indian children often came to appreciate, even love, aspects of or people in the new world, but nevertheless they felt a strong pull for the traditional world of their relatives, even if they didn’t understand it.

As the novel jumps forward to the present time, the next significant character introduced is Klaus Shawano, a trader in and of itself a profession which mediates between people and in some cases worlds. Shawano’s profession is held with some regard as a traditional role for Indian people, yet Shawano represents many typical modern images of Natives as a self-proclaimed “urban Indian,” whom we first see working at a powwow – Crow Fair – in the Plains (21). He thus represents another mediation between worlds: a trader (traditional and modern work) working at modern festival events – powwows – that are generally seen as a way for Native people to connect with their traditions.

Klaus is obsessed with the title character and gets medicine from Jimmy Badger – an elder – to help him win “Sweetheart Calico” who is the “Antelope Wife.” In a magical realistic stroke typical of Erdrich, Sweetheart Calico is literally the antelope – incomprehensible, beautiful, graceful, and other worldly – but also a woman, silent and aloof for the most part (and in all such respects representative of the ideal Indian of the past). Although her exact lineage and history are never clearly revealed, events and facts of the novel suggest that her ancestor is Matilda Roy who was left to live among the antelope.

Cally’s mother Rozina Roy (a.k.a. Roz or Rozin) marries Richard Whiteheart Beads. Rozina is a member of the community to whom Klaus Shawano returns with Sweetheart Calico. Like others in this community, she struggles to integrate and understand her identity. Rozin’s discussion of her connection to “continuity” (or tradition) reveals her struggle to find a balance between old and new, between the dualities in her world:

I named my girls Cally and Deanna. Bad choice. I broke more continuity, and they suffered for it, too [as she and her sister suffered for their “new” names]. Should have kept the protection. Should have kept the names that gave the protection. Should have kept the old ways just as much as I could, and the tradition that guarded us. Should have rode horses. Kept dogs. Stayed away from Richard Whiteheart Beads, Frank Shawano, or maybe Klaus’s woman with the flashy walk and broken teeth. I would go back, if I could, unweave the pattern of destruction. Take it all apart occurrence by slow event. But how can you pick out the strands of all you might have changed and all you couldn’t? (35-36)

The universal sentiment Rozina expresses here, of wanting to go back and change the pattern of history, is impossible. She and other Native Americans must accept that the pattern as it is now woven involves changes. Broken patterns and consequences thereof cannot be re-made exactly as they were before: “How can you pick out the strands of all you might have changed and all you couldn’t?”(35) New patterns are infinitely possible according to the nature of culture and the human condition, but one senses that Rozina doesn’t know what she should be doing, or how she should be living. She struggles with her choices and the pattern of her life. Women can only change the pattern of their own lives to come, not the past, but Rozina dwells in regret. Her regret and sorrow over Deanna’s death almost consume her. Cally ultimately draws her back to the present when she grows so ill that she would die without care.

Rozina completes her regretful thoughts in the earlier passage: “How could I not have noticed Sweetheart Calico?” (36). Sweetheart Calico’s centrality is obvious yet elusive. Rozina’s regret keeps her focused upon this shadowy figure of past culture, so that she cannot embrace her present, until the end when Sweetheart Calico leaves. Her lament, like her wish for keeping other traditions, seems a cry of regret for all she has lost, including past ways of living, which she apparently feels would be superior. Yet ironically Sweetheart Calico, according to Rozina, set the steps in motion for this future happiness. Rozina offers her assessment of Sweetheart Calico in her first words: “When she first came here with Klaus we all wondered, couldn’t help it. Why she made so much sense and none at all. His sweetheart calico. Why she seemed one of us and different, wholly other and yet familiar”(34). Rozina sums up the sentiment toward Sweetheart Calico as representative of the past cleverly, “familiar” but “wholly other,” “one of us and different,” like the world they

are no longer part of, but look to longingly for guidance. So though Rozin wants to hang onto the past, she recognizes it as alien. Her torn impulse representative of the struggle between the twins to sew the pattern of life.

Questioning fate and history leads Rozina only to despair. Only when she stops worrying about such things does she find happiness. Cally sees her mother as untroubled by the tugs of gravity that would cause such concern. In fact, later in the novel, after the tragedies she endured, Cally describes her mother thus, “she has no seeming interest left” (143). Frank and Rozina ride the “gravitron,” a carnival ride that spins very fast. This time the ride is thrown out of control by a crazy operator. Once the ride is stopped, “each rider, coming into focus, is the very picture of sick and dazzled terror except for one. My mother. She steps out of her cage, doesn’t falter, not a single misstep” (147). After this, she seems cured of her inability to embrace life and be happy. Cally explains:

The way she acts is so different, so natural, so real, so warm and naked that I suddenly have this picture of what has just happened to her. My mother has been scaled. All the scales of convention and ironic distance have been scuffed off her. All the boney armor she affects against the world. She has been stripped by centrifugal force and jumbled up inside. The wrench of gravity has undone all her strings. (147)

Without the “strings” of other people’s and her own expectations and burdens, Rozina is able to find her center. She is authentic, “so natural, so real, so warm and naked.” After this, Rozina accepts the love between her and Frank, and thus finds happiness. The existential message of the novel emerges in the sense that only when

characters act within their own world and according to their own nature do they thrive.

Rozina's new relationship frees her from the "toxic" Richard with whom she shares twins Cally and Deanna, even though she realizes presciently to be "afraid for my daughters," after starting the affair (38). These "twins descended of twins for generations" see their mother Rozin in her "*other life*" while they are out walking with their father. While with Frank Shawano, who is the true, sweet-like-the-baked-goods-he-makes love of her life, Rozina is so different from the person who is his wife when she is with Frank, that Richard denies that it is her. Lorena Stookey notices the differences in Rozina's relationships:

Frank Shawano is the emblem of the nurturing lover, the man who relishes "every hour. . . every solid, aching minute" (233) of his life with his beloved. With Richard, Rozin was clumsy, somehow made inept by her constant awareness of his hungry needs (even her beading went wrong, and he was not pleased with the loomed watchband she made for him one Christmas). Rozin's marriages, then, offer a study in contrasts, for with Frank she always feels at ease, even after he has unquestionably "lost his funny bone" (143). In this partnership, where the lovers share their interests in family and cultural tradition, each also pursues an independent interest. (136)

Cally is so convinced that her mother is different with Frank, that after seeing them in the park together, she decides to herself, "our father was right. We were looking at some other woman whose face, alight and radiant and still with anticipation, we had never seen before" (54). So Rozina is also a "split" woman – *daashkiika* – not only by virtue of being a twin, but by her choices and impulses. She longs for the

past, but is firmly in the present. The side of her life with Frank is a “clear stream” she drinks from. The other side is less beautiful (55).

There are two great stories of preternatural hunger and thirst woven into the novel, both further deepening the novel’s mythical tendencies. Klaus Shawano cannot quench his thirst until he drinks from the Mississippi. Blue Prairie Woman’s hunger so overwhelms her that she is renamed “So Hungry.” Each story of insatiability is symbolic of longings and impulses typical of humans. Blue Prairie Woman manages to find satisfaction for her hunger. She does so by going into nature and finding beauty in the eyes of the animal who becomes her husband. Klaus Shawano, who stole an animal wife from its natural environment and brought her forcibly into his world, is perpetually thirsty.

Cally retains and retells “The Deer Husband” story of Blue Prairie Woman (her grandmother’s grandmother). As a young woman this ancestor goes into the woods to cook herself a satisfying meal. Even after eating “the whole rabbit. Ears too,” she wants more. “She wanted to eat her own arm. So Hungry. That’s what they named her. So Hungry. Apijigo Bakaday” (56). When a deer joins her she thinks of eating him and approaches with her hatchet. But when she looks into his eyes she sees real hunger and qualities of peace and contentment which she finds attractive. Instead of eating him, she shares her stew with him. Afterward, she is finally:

Unafraid. She had this feeling. Full. So this was what other people felt. She looked over at the deer. His eyes were steady and warm with a deep black light ... Who he is. No different. Of course, too bad that he’s a deer. Still, she made a bed out of young hemlock branches and curled against his short, stiff pelt. She began to live with him, stayed with him out in the woods, and traveled with him on into the open

spaces. Became beloved by his family, too. Got so that she knew how to call the hooved ones toward her. They came when she stood in the open. Her song was peculiar, soft, questing. (56)

So Hungry finds satisfaction with her deer husband. She demonstrates a choice in her kinship idiom with relationship to nature that was typical among Native American myths. The structural relationship is based upon an affinal connection, rather than consanguinity. This reflects the Native American cosmology of seeing nature as a potential partner, a relationship of reciprocity.

Hence she recognizes the deer as “no different.” In fact, animal husband and wife stories are abundant in traditional literature collections of Indians throughout North America. It is an indication of a stronger and healthier relationship with nature than that experienced by modern Americans, who like Richard are more likely to pollute nature, or to kill and eat it, than to see its potential as a partner. Of course, the traditional Native American relationship with nature was not all nice. And So Hungry was quite willing to eat the deer before she saw his potential as husband (similarly other characters in the novel are willing to eat puppies in soup).

Mythological stories of animal spouses do not idealize nature, but rather represent it as a partner, one we have to work at getting along with as we must with spouses. Even though her family intervenes, So Hungry succeeds where Klaus and Richard fail in their respective quests.

In fact her family drags her away from this life (her brothers kill her husband). But So Hungry “was not hungry anymore, and she was grown” (57). She maintains good relations with “the hooved ones,” twice saviors of her daughter. First they warn her of the attack so that she straps her daughter to a dog’s back to save her. Later, upon her death, it is the hooved ones to whom she commends Matilda. It

is likely that Matilda is the daughter of the deer husband, which would explain her ability to adapt to life with other hooved ones and pass down a line of descendent “antelope women” like the title character. Interestingly, this story, and the many traditional stories to which it hearkens, reveal that mixed blood was not an unusual concept even to traditional Natives. Thus her story confirms that mixing (bloods, cultures, species) is okay. She too has a symbolic function much like a bricoleur.

As he thirsts, Klaus sees an image representative of the strange and detrimental attraction he feels for his antelope wife: “he couldn’t stop his mind from turning his sweetheart into a Disney character. The Blue Fairy. Her light increased. Her smile spread slowly into jag-toothed mercy and then her voice flowed, the cool of a river” (94). He confuses his love for this “magical” being who is split between antelope and woman with love he felt for the magical fairies of childhood films. Just as Sweetheart Calico’s love overwhelms him, now this vision of her does so. His needs overtake his senses, and he feels he cannot ignore his physical need to drink. She torments his thirst in his vision:

His lady love was still there in the back of his mind, standing in a ball of blue light. “I’d like a drink of water,” he said to her. She had a glass of water in her hand, too, Sweetheart Calico, but she poured it out in front of his eyes. The molecules dissolved all around him and did nothing for his thirst. (94)

His Sweetheart remains confused in Klaus’s mind with the Disney fairy, “standing in a ball of blue light.” But much as he needs and wants her to, Sweetheart Calico cannot or will not quench his thirst. The sustenance she provides is as elusive as the molecule-like dust from the fairy’s wand.

So Hungry's preternatural hunger is fulfilled by connecting intimately with the natural world. She feeds her hunger with the help of her deer husband. Stories of such preternatural urges among humans and seemingly impossible, bizarre ways of satisfying them, often baffle modern readers of traditional tales. Left in the past, this story might have found itself a lifeless and obscure reference to another time, resurrected, but without power in this novel. But its resurrection is more thorough and pervasive. So Hungry's actions have consequences and counterparts for her descendants in the present-day Minneapolis. First there is Sweetheart Calico, the Antelope Wife, a product of the affinal relationship between So Hungry and her deer spouse.

Furthermore, such overwhelming hunger finds its counterpart in Klaus's overwhelming thirst. He too finds a not quite human spouse, though his spouse is less obviously or fully animal than So Hungry's deer husband. Since Klaus's connection to the old ways and his blood line are diluted, it seems appropriate that his animal spouse is also somewhat diluted (i.e. actually half human). It is equally appropriate that his relationship with her, along with his thirst, are as modern as he: an abduction in a van, a wedding night in a hotel, and great thirst coming from alcohol-induced dehydration.

Klaus Shawano experiences tremendous thirst, paralleling So Hungry's insatiable hunger. While she fulfills cultural traditions, relating to nature and finding satisfaction there, Klaus's thirst seems unquenchable. His wife also longs for something, freedom. Lorena Stookey discusses their longing: "Both characters are trapped, immobilized by the spell of their unfulfilled desires and thus live their days in a state of waiting" (1999, 135). Klaus and Richard are on a drinking binge when Klaus begins to realize he is sick, though Richard ignores his repeated pleas: "I'm

sick,' said Klaus. 'Water'" (94). He cannot escape his obsession with Sweetheart Calico. This is obviously the root cause of his malady of extreme thirst, as it is the cause of his alcoholism.

Still Klaus is thirsty. He and Richard wander through Minneapolis looking for water. Klaus drinks from a sprinkler system at the museum but is chased off by guards before he can really drink. Store keepers won't serve these drunken Indians. Pictures of water in businesses taunt him, as does the image of his sweetheart:

That's all you need," said the Blue Fairy, holding up the bottle before his eyes. Twice, with her glass hoof, she struck the hollow ground.

"Let's mogate."

"To the big water. Mizi zipi."

"Howah."

They walked. Hotter. Hotter. A few times they took a drink from their bottles, but mainly they wanted to get there, so they walked.

Shaking a little, hungry. Went around the back of a pizza place where the manager left unclaimed orders every once in a while. (115)

Richard and Klaus follow the vision Klaus receives from his antelope wife / blue fairy and work their way toward the "Mizi zipi," or Mississippi. This river is significant as the major natural detail of the city, and was important in Ojibwe culture. On their way there we see the city through the eyes of alcoholics, the sleazy underclass side of the city. They are very much in and of this modern world. They know where to get the free food and how to interpret the actions of women they encounter on their way this day. These are two Indians following a vision to drink from an ancient and sacred river, but also two sad, sick alcoholics stumbling dehydrated through the city, pathetically in need of the simplest sustenance

water. Here, the term "*Mizi zipi*," shows the Native American culture through the Native American ruler language.

When the story was going on Matilda Roy is searched by her mother Blue Prairie Woman. When she is left by her mother and tied with the dogs back unknowingly. When she came back in the house she can't find her lovely daughter there and she involved in the process of searching of her daughter.

Once she was named for the place toward which she traveled, the young mother was able to be in both places at once—she was following her child into the sun and also pounding the way between rocks to dried scruffs of pemmican ... She starved and wandered, tracking the faint marks the dog left as he passed into the blue distance. At the same time, she knocked rice. She parched and stored the grains. (12)

The aforementioned quotes is extracted from the situation of the loss of Matilda Roy. Matilda Roy is a typical Native American character that not only represents the native American culture but also the identity, existence and way of life of Native American people. The loss of Matilda Roy symbolizes the loss of faith and loss of Native American culture. The journey of Blue Prairie Woman is the symbol of the journey from the physical world to the spiritual world. Native Americans believe in spirituality rather than physicality. Furthermore, the journey of Blue Prairie Woman is the journey of American culture to the Native American culture which has great significance for Native American people. By presenting the journey of western world to the Native American world, Erdrich shows the quest of the own culture by Native Americans.

Blue Prairie Woman is still searching her daughter but she couldn't find her anywhere. In the situation of tiredness and awful condition of not finding of her daughter she sat under the tree and started to shucking her breast to a dog which has been suggested by the following lines:

An old midwife gave her a new puppy and she put it to her breasts.
 Holding to her nipple the tiny wet muzzle, cradling the needy bit of fur, she cried. All that night the tiny dog mercifully drew off the shooting pains in her breasts and at dawn, drowsy and comfortable, she finally cuddled the sweet-fleshed puppy to her, breathed its salty odor, and slept. (15)

The above quotes extend the deep relationship of Native Americans with the animals. The pastoral setting and the relationship with domestic animals is the totally different culture of Native Americans in comparison to the modern western culture. Generally native Americans are lives in rural areas and engaged in agriculture and cattle farming. By above mentioned lines Erdrich shows the unique lifestyle of Native Americans which is unique in itself.

As he thirsts, he sees an image representative of the strange and detrimental attraction he feels for his antelope wife: "he couldn't stop his mind from turning his sweetheart into a Disney character. The Blue Fairy. Her light increased. Her smile spread slowly into jag-toothed mercy and then her voice flowed, the cool of a river" (94). He confuses his love for this "magical" being who is split between antelope and woman with love he felt for the magical fairies of childhood films. Just as Sweetheart Calico's love overwhelms him, now this vision of her does so. His needs overtake his senses, and he feels he cannot ignore his physical need to drink. She torments his thirst in his vision:

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Native American cultural study more or less interprets the culture. It is necessary to search for basic absolute values that can be applied to the study of culture throughout the world. Without a basic value set, the "this is my/our culture" argument can become the final and most powerful argument and the opposition has no option but to respect it. The cultural awareness is vital for uplifting Native American culture. This is especially important since we tend to view most cultures as patriarchal and one of the goals to uplift the culture and introduce it in the world.

III: Edrich's *The Antelope Wife* as Souvenir to Native Americans

Edrich's novel is manifested the issue of Native American culture. Edrich presents the culture of Native Americans through the protagonist Scranton Roy and other Native American characters. Although being aboriginals of America Native American are 'othered' from mainstream American culture and it is presented in the

novel through the unique language, culture, customs and religion of Native Americans.

The novel *Antelope Wife* is the story of modern life of Scranton Roy, Klaus, Matilda, Augustus, and Zosie and Mary Shawano and other several characters. In the story Scranton Roy is the central character and the narration focus upon the life of him. When the story goes on, a girl has been tied on the dogs back and found by an army officer Scranton Roy. She was named as Matilda Roy. Suckles her himself, names her after his mother, Matilda, and care as his own daughter. Scranton marries with Matilda's teacher, Augustus. Blue Prairie Woman is impregnated by her husband, Shawano, and gives birth to twin girls, Josephette (Zosie) and Mary. She finds Matilda and beckons to her, but almost immediately dies of a white man's disease. Before she dies, she renames her daughter Other Side of the Earth and arranges for her to be protected by a herd of antelope.

The split between past and present of the culture is best represented by characters. Antelope wife embodies the bridge between past and present i.e sense of Native American culture and their evolvement in the present context. Her significance as an antelope and woman / wife at the same time shows the Native American culture. All plots and subplots, characters, their activates, and their performance of this novel is sufficient to explore the Native American culture. , Erdrich focuses upon the uniqueness the Native American words like '*Daashkikaa. Daashkikaa*', the process of spiritual healing, tobacco culture, cloths and other rituals, pastoral setting and relationship with animals of Native Americans to present the Native American culture.

Finally, Erdrich preserves the identity and culture through her title character resembling past and present Native Americanness. In derailing condition of Native

Americanism from main stream American history, Erdrich becomes successful to maintain her cultural position as similar to that of the modern Americans. Hand in hand, use of the Native American words like '*Daashkikaa Daashkikaa*' strengthens Native American culture.

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