

Tribhuvan University

Valorization of Native American Cultural Uniqueness in Erdrich's

The Porcupine Year

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Letter of Recommendation

Ramesh Kumar Chaudhary has completed his thesis entitled “Valorization of Native American Cultural Uniqueness in Erdrich's *The Porcupine Year*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from May 2014 to September 2015. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Approval Letter

The thesis entitled, “Valorization of Native American Cultural Uniqueness in Erdrich's *The Porcupine Year*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Ramesh Kumar Chaudhary has been approved by the undersigned members of research committee.

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Abstract

The present thesis entitled "Valorization of Native American Cultural Uniqueness in Louise Erdrich's *The Porcupine Year*" invites readers to understand Native American culture and tradition. In order to unearth the issue, the researcher brings forth the various cultural practices that help to prove the Native American cultural uniqueness. Besides, the researcher presents the representation of Native American people and their culture referring various scholars on Native American life. Oral traditions, myth making, traditional healing and curing, spirituality, religious supremacy, hunting and fishing are some of the characteristics features of Native American culture and tradition which have been valorized as distinct and unique among Native American society. Moreover, the culture is the only thing that establishes each native with distinct rubric called Native Americans. Besides, this research attempts to foreground the distinct rituals and traditions of Native Americans which have been made subversive in the past.

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I. Louise Erdrich and the Representation of Native American Culture

The present thesis is about Native American culture. Native American culture is itself rich. It is different from other European and African cultures. This thesis tries to prove the unique cultural and socio-political realities of Native American societies. Ojibwe family belongs to Native American society. The tradition of telling folklores, storytelling, religious supremacy, healing and curing tradition, hunting etc are cultural uniqueness which have been valorized in the thesis.

The story of the novel is about Omakayas and her family. In the beginning they were living in their own place, Madeline Island that is the Island of Golden-Breasted Woodpecker. But when their land was pushed off by the United States of Government in order to make new homes for European settlers, they were compelled to leave their beloved land so they moved toward the North in search of new home and their relatives. And finally they reached to the North but they could not forget their beloved land where they used to work, play, hunting and fishing, collecting fruits and harvesting wild rice. They were always haunted by the loss of their homeland.

Omakayas and her family moved toward the North. on the way, they faced much difficulties. When their land, home and property were seized off, they had to totally depend on the natural resources. Being depended only on the natural resource, the life became so difficult for them. During the journey, they had to starvation and attack of enemies. They also lost their relatives. They lost beloved Old Tallow. The reason behind death of Old Tallow was struggling for food for her family. Every morning she used to go for hunting. Omakays's family was totally depended on the natural resources. Women used to picking fruits like berries, harvesting wild rice on other hand men used to

go for hunting animals. They used to hunt animals like rabbit and bear. They used to fishing for food. The family was snared in the situation in which they had to collect food at summer and also they had to save for the winter. Despite these difficulties and several losses, Ojibwe followed their own culture and tradition. They have the tradition of storytelling, mythmaking, oral tradition, healing and curing tradition depending on the natural resources, belief of animism and shamanism, the tradition of telling folklores, singing and dancing, tradition of hunting, fishing and gathering.

Ojibwe have the tradition of storytelling. But they preserve the tradition by telling the stories only at the winter time when underwater and under earth creatures sleep. They have a belief that if the stories are told at other time, the great spirits of the animals might be angry at ojibwe for talking about them. Ojibwe have a traditional story "aadizookaan" that often explains how to live as an ojibwe.

They also believe in animism. They have a belief that plants, animals, and objects also have living soul. Spirits or gods are prevalent in them. When they are in problem they pray the plants and objects. In the novel, Omakayas's grandmother Nokomis prays a birch tree when the family is missing. In ojibwe culture, there is the god like "Manidoog". Manidoog is the great spirit for them. Manidoog appears especially in the form of small strange children to help them. For his help, ojibwe have the tradition of thanking but providing something. In the novel, when Omakayas and Pinch were saved by the great spirit, Manidoog. And so that Omakayas thanked him by giving precious red beads on the rock which was given by her grandmother, Nokomis. Similarly,

Nokomis also thanked by throwing tobacco in the fire to appease the spirit. So this tradition is always practiced by the ojibwe family.

Likewise, Native American have healing and curing tradition depending on the natural things. They depend on the herb and shrub. They depend on the medicinal herbs. In the novel when Deydey lost his eyesight because of the flash of gun powder, then the regular washing his eyes with the help of balsam tea his vision gradually recovered. Ojibwe tradition of keeping a great medicine bundle with them. They have a tradition of assembling all the medicines that they would need for winter. They always keep such medicines that help them strengthening, stop bleeding, healing bruises, cramp and fevers. So, ojibwe have the tradition of teaching about medicines through orally. And Omakayas becomes good healer or medicine woman by learning education about medicine with the help of her grandmother, Nokomis.

The purpose of the research is to probe into the Native American Culture uniqueness. This research focuses on exploring the social, political and cultural transformation that indigenous communities experience under the influences of external forces and internal pressures. The present research addresses the compartmentalized and stereotypical representations of the people, cultures and geographies of Native American localities and account for their pluralistic and hybrid identities.

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 Porcupine Year* which is the reversal as well as the subversion of the stereotypes constructed about the native culture.

Erdrich's *The Porcupine Year* has received several critical appraisals since the time of publication. Different critics have analyzed the novel from multiple perspectives which proves the univocal nature of the novel. Eamonn McCabe views *In a Free State* as:

A book of three novellas of similar theme strung between two excerpts from the author's travel journal, whose failures and similar to those of its exiled characters . . . expatriates in countries where the language is never known quite well enough, where customs are followed rather than understood. The African can who marries a black cook to gain U.S. citizenship in "One Out of Many", the West Indian who becomes a dead man's to his family rather than admit trouble in London in "Tell Me Who to Kill", and the homosexual English bureaucrat of the title story caught in the throes of an African revolution all find that geographical displacement has more to do with escape than freedom.

(4)

Thus, it is proved that the author is most successful when dealing with his countrymen, either among themselves or in their hit,-and-miss relationships with English or Americans. The travel journal excerpts seem as irrelevant and slightly arbitrary "frame" for stories lost in the never-never land between allegory and reality which don't quite explode with the momentous themes they always seem on the verge of revealing.

Paul Karl Lukacs views the title of the novel is interesting and masterful. To appease his children, nonetheless, Oliver agrees to take in a lodger. Enter Tessa Butler: 29, caustic and carnal, "With dirty feet and a smudge on her cheek", and "nowhere else to go". For him:

When Omakayas is twelve winters old, she and her family set off on a harrowing journey. They travel by canoe westward from the shores of Lake Superior along the rivers of northern Minnesota in search of a new home. While the family has prepared well, unexpected danger, enemies, and hardships will push them to the brink of survival.

Omakayas continues to learn from the land and the spirits around her, and she discovers that no matter where she is or how she is living, she has the one thing she needs to carry her through. (23)

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 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:

This third entry in the Birchbark House series takes Omakayas and her family west from their home on the Island of the Golden-Breasted Woodpecker, away from land the U.S. government has claimed.

Difficulties about the unknown landscape is fraught with danger; and they are nearing hostile Bwaanag territory. Omakayas's family is not only close but growing. The travelers adopt two young Chimookoman

(White) orphans along the way. When treachery leaves them starving and alone in a northern Minnesota winter, it will take all of their abilities and love to survive. (21)

For Lisa Hill, it is hard to imagine what effects this book might have had when it won the literary prize in 1981. The Booker was less well-known then, and it may not have had much impact on the reading public. If a mass audience did know about it, what did they make of it, then, at the end of the swinging sixties, after decades of post-colonial independence movements and those endless famines in America. She puts:

The Porcupine Year, sequel to *The Birchbark House* and *The Game of Silence*, continues the adventures of an Anishinabe, or Ojibwe girl, Omakayas (Little Frog). In *The Porcupine Year*, so named for the porcupine "medicine animal" that befriends Omakayas' brother. Omakayas is now twelve years old and is traveling with her family in 1852. The U.S. government is moving the native people ever westward, and Omakayas' family hopes to join their relatives somewhere northwest of their homeland in current-day Minnesota. (1)

Thus, it is evident that different critics have analyzed the novel from multiple perspectives but the issue Native American studies have been yet untouched which proves the innovation of the research.

To justify the issue of valorization of Native American culture uniqueness with reference to Erdrich's *The Porcupine year*, this research makes significant application of Native American Cultural studies and cultural identity as a research methods for the analysis of Erdrich's work. So, in the succeeding chapter, this

research studies Erdrich's novel from the perspective of Native American Cultural studies through the voices of different characters. Moreover, the focus of the researcher is on the issue what are the features of the Native American Culture to make it powerful? Which aspects of the text empower the position of the Native American Culture? What is the motto of the author to empower the Native American Cultural uniqueness? Besides, the researcher comes with argument that there is the symbolism behind Omakayas's decision to leave her precious red beads on a rock by the river as a gesture of thankfulness to spirits, Manidoog when Omakayas and Pinch narrowly survived a trip through dangerous rapids. Similarly, Nokomis's throwing tobacco in the fire to appease the spirits to give thanks for returning her children. In addition, Native American have the tradition of storytelling in the winter. Likewise, the tradition of healing is depended on the natural things. When Dayday lost his eye sight because of the gun powders, it was the balsam tea from which his eye vision recovered. These cultural practices are interpreted by researcher as valorization of Native American Cultural uniqueness.

Native American culture is one of the distinct and ancient cultures of North America. Native American culture, life style, eating habit, values, morals, myths, and languages prove their existence and identity in society and the world. Culture is attached to their daily life as means of survival and source of existence. Culture for Native Americans is linked with everyday life activities. Their daily work and efforts are allied with culture. The life they live, the language they speak, the morals they follow, the rituals they celebrate expose the meaning of Native American cultural uniqueness as a whole.

Oral tradition, storytelling, religious supremacy, folklore and mythmaking play important role in the Native American Culture. To preserve culture, the tradition of story telling is transmitted from one generation to other generation. According to Louise Erdrich, "In Ojibwe culture there is a traditional story 'Aadizookaanag' that often helps explain how to live as on Ojibwe" (121). But they follow the tradition of story telling only in winter when the under water and under ground creatures sleep. They have a belief that if the story is told at the other time, the great spirit of the creatures might be angry at Ojibwe for talking about them. These are cultural practices that act as an essence of Native American People in the world. These aspects of culture are considered as a tradition that is acquired, inherited and accepted from one generation to next generation. It means to say that culture has characteristics of transmission. According to Anna Secco, "Native Americans Transfer and extend their culture through oral tradition, teachings, story telling and mythmaking" (1). Besides, Native Americans proceed their own traditional way of healing and curing. For the treatment, native people depend on the natural things like herbs and shrubs. Erdrich in the text has shown the Native American people depend on the natural treatment by presenting the characters like Omakayas, Nokomis, Deydey and Old Tallow. In the text, when Deydey was blinded by the flash of powder from the gun then he was totally depended on the herb.

Native American people are different from the rest of the cultures in terms of dialect, tongues, clothing eating habits, tradition and skill. Native Americans are also termed as the first people of Native America and it is believed that they have arrived in the native land before "fifty thousand to forty thousand or more years ago" Barry M. (Pritzker). During 1492 at the time of the 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 researchers have shown that the ancestral Native Americans were migrated from Asia and parts of Europe by walking Bering Street and crossing many seas and oceans.

Native American people now at present time live together with typical lifestyle culture, language, ethnicity and religion. They have their own types of values, morals and customs. They are different from other European and African culture. Erdrich in the text has shown Ojibwe believes in religion, by presenting the character like Nokomis. When Nokomis's family was missing then she prayed a birch tree by putting her hand on it. Apart from this, it is true that not all the Native American people share the same type of living. They are too different in terms of tribes, ethnic groups, living habits, languages, attributes, behaviours and social values. In this regard, Kathleen Kuiper writes in her book, "there isn't just a group of American "Indian", but rather individual societies marked with differences and similarities - that form what is called Native American Culture" (11). Despite their differences, all the Native Americans share the same bond of love that is love for nature and origin and enjoy mythmaking and storytelling. Not only this, Native Americans have also. Similarity in their work of art and craft like basketry, weaving, sewing and jewelry. Along with this, they also perform ritualistic dance accompanied with folk music. All these practices have traditional significance in Native American people and their culture. The things like mythmaking, the tradition of storytelling, folklore are done to preserve their culture and to respect their origin.

Likewise, Native American people also have strong similarities in their belief of spirituality and religious ceremonies Kuiper further says "While there existed many

differences in what is celebrated and when, there were a number of common central belief shares by most cultures including Animism, Shamanism, Vision quest and Spirit" (14). Spirituality and supernaturalism is sole and important aspect of Native American people. This commonness in spite of differences has allied of these native indigenous people within a distinct rubric of what is now known as "American Indians" or "Native Americans". In the text, spirituality is found among the characters. Similarly, Omakayas and her younger brother believed that they were saved by the spirits Manidoog. They were kept safe by the Gizhe Manidoog the greatest and kindest one.

Language is a chief and important aspect of Native American culture because it proves the presence of all native indigenous people. Native American people speak variety of tongues with different linguistic stocks Bertha P. Dutton writes "Native Americans not only differ in language but also in linguistic pattern" (27). There are different languages prevailing among Native American people. It has been estimated that approximately three hundred different Native American languages were spoken throughout North America. Some of the major groups and subgroups in their Native places are listed below:

Algonquian in Eastern Subarctic Plains and North East (e.g. Cree, Ojibwa and cheyenne); Iroquoian in Northeast and South West (e.g. Cherokee, Seneca and Mohawk); Holoan and Uto-Aatecan in Great Basin and Southwest of North America (e.g. Paiute, Shoshone). (Kuiper 12)

Native Americans are compiled with variety of languages but there is no any common language to represent Native American language as a whole. Commonness among

languages and existence of one or main chief language is not found in Native American culture.

Further, songs, music, folklore and storytelling are closely connected with the life of Native American people. Native American pains, efforts and hardworks are expressed in their native songs and storytelling songs and music have cultural relevance. Native American tradition and rituals are connected with native songs and music. They have also distinct features of traditional songs. The song composed by particular community is performed by people belonging to that particular community only. No outsider is allowed for participation without granting any permission. Kuiper in this context writes:

Specific pieces of music belongs to an ensemble or to entire community should not be performed by outsider without specific permission performance rights are granted according to the principals established by the group through long practice. (203)

Native American people have strong belief in spirituality and supernatural beings. Meditation is practiced as a part of their spirituality. Anything can be an object of meditation. Plants, trees, animals anything becomes the means of their medication. Erdrich in the text has shown Nokomis's throwing tobacco in the fire to appease the real spirits of the dead, Manidoog for returning the children. Nokomis's praying a birch tree when her family was in a trouble. Besides, Native Americans believe in the presence of God or deity in the form of human activities and behaviours. When Omakayas and her younger brother were narrowly survived they saw a small figure standing on the opposite bank. He was dressed in buckskins and kneehigh makizinan. His hair was stuck out all over like Quill's hair. After that small figure abruptly

disappeared from there. Omakayas and Pinch were helped by the God or deity in the form of human. Not only this, Shamanism, animism and spirit is common to all Native Americans. And these things are practiced as tradition in Native American culture. To some extent Native Americans are superstitious in their daily activities and they are found to be involved in this irrational belief.

Native Americans have religious supremacy. They believe in animism. Animism is the belief that souls or spirits are not only in human beings but also in animals, rocks, trees, rivers, plants, lightening. It means to say that souls or spirits dwell in all natural phenomena. According to this belief, many wild animals function similar to human beings. They possess emotions and have ability to reason and speak. In fact, some of the tribes even believe that animal existed before humankind and established on Earth the various rules and guidelines that humans were meant to follow (Dan Story 4).

Similarly, Native Americans have a belief in shamanism. Shamanism is a system of belief and practice for them that is designed to establish communication with spirit world. It is an anthropological term for defining a person who is raised in native tradition somewhere in the world. Shamans are the people believed to be able to communicate with spirit world. Shamans become the way to connect the world of spirit with human world. The things that are beyond the control of humans are balanced by shamans. Generally Shamans in western culture are also referred as medicine person who have ability to communicate with spirit, fortell future and heal. So, Shamanism is in general all about healing the mind and heart (Janis Masky-Jackson 3).

Native Americans also have a belief that there is a Great Spirit; the Supreme Being. This Great Spirit is recognized as a supreme being who is the powerful originator and ruler of the universe. The Native Indian concept of the Great Spirit differs from tribe to tribe by different appellation but matter is that every culture prays Great Spirit as overseer of life and the earth (www.nativeindians.tribes.com 4).

Native Americans are one of the native indigenous peoples of Native America. They have distinct features and attributes. These features and attributes are symbol to represent their existence and identity. Likewise, the culture, life style, language, habits, orals, values, tradition and myths reflect the presence of Native American people in the world. Moreover, these things distinguish them from other European and American culture and establish native culture as a distinct and unique culture throughout the world. Erdrich in the text focuses on these cultural practices and has given a broad space in her writings. Native American culture and writings are marginalized in dominant Euro-American world. But Erdrich is a writer gives space to Native American culture and in the novel she presents Native American cultural heritage with positive attitude.

The research is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the brief introduction of the writer and Native American culture. It also tries to clarify the main problem that the research has tried to investigate throughout the research. It also mentions the main contention of the researcher. Similarly, it also shows the Native American Culture and its connection to Native American people. In the second part, the researcher has tried to mobilize the theoretical insights of cultural studies especially that of Native American Culture to interpret Erdrich's *The Porcupine Year*. This chapter tries to prove the claim of the researcher with a lot of evidences from the text. Finally, the last part deals with the conclusion especially focusing on the findings of the researcher.

II. Valorization of Native American Cultural Uniqueness in Louise Erdrich's

The Porcupine Year

The exposition of various cultural and social activities of Native American Societies in Erdrich's *The Porcupine Year* shows that the writer has foregrounded Native American Culture in the text which are distinct and unique from other European and American Culture. In addition, the focus of native writer presents this indigenous culture with positive attribute. Erdrich valorizes Native American Culture by highlighting the practices of hunting and fishing, tradition of storytelling, healing and curing tradition, mythmaking, religious supremacy, telling folklore, singing and dancing, animism and shamanism. Erdrich in the text gives high importance to these different cultural practices of Native American Culture.

Erdrich also focuses on the other social aspect such as language, rituals, religious practices, cultural habits, arts and crafts works and so on. In the context of language, through the novel is written in English language, Erdrich which suggests that she is giving equal value to Native American languages. Ojibwe language which is one of the major language group of Native Americans is used here as colloquial language.

Erdrich focuses on the culture and society of Native American people. The setting of the novel ranges from Lake Superior's Madeline Island (the Island of Golden - Breasted Woodpecker) to the lake of the Woods in Northern Minnesota. The Island of Golden-Breasted Woodpecker is ancestral land of native American people. Kathleen Kuiper in her book writes, "most of the native indigenous people of North American have their settlements in the place of Canada and United States. They were in the native land since fifteen thousand to forty thousand years" (11). They were the

initiator who gave life to the land of North America particularly Canada and United States. In the text, Omakayas and her family were living and spending their lives at the Island of Golden-Breasted Woodpecker. They were happy at their ancestral land. But when their land was pushed off by the United States of Government in order to make room for white settlers, they were compelled to move towards the north in search of new land and home and also to rejoin the rest of their extended family near the lake of the Woods in Northern Minnesota. During this journey, they suffered from starvation and lack of clothing. They had to face attack from enemy.

In the novel, Erdrich valorizes the social aspect of Native American culture as some of the language group is focused in the text. In the text, there are two languages: English and Ojibwe. Ojibwe is one of the major groups of indigenous people living in North America. In the text, almost every person is interconnected with Ojibwe language. Except Deydey, no other characters understand and know to speak English language. From the very beginning of the novel, the Ojibwe language has been used. Omakayas froze and held tight to her paddle with one hand and said, "Bek aa ! Bek aa !" (1). That means wait in English language. Similarly, when Omakayas and her younger brother, Pinch were saved from the rapid-filled river then she thanked to the spirit grasping a little rock in Ojibwe language. Before she closed her eyes, she said to it, "Thank you, miigwech" (8).

Ojibwe is native language of people of North America. Time and again the expression of joys and sorrows are expressed in Ojibwe tongue. It is believed that people express their emotions in native tongue whether they are happy or sad, or in the mood of celebration or grief. Such as there are many lines that are expressed by the characters in the text. Omakayas says to Pinch, "Puuu, hiyn ! you stink !" (10).

Similarly, Pinch's scream of pain. Pinch screams, "Yii, Yii, Oyii !!" (14). Likewise, in Omakayas's praying. She says, "Dagasana, nimishoomis, Gizhe Manidoo" (24).

Further, Omakayas's questioning to her grandmother. Omakayas says to her grandmother, "Minopogwad ina ? Dos it taste good ?" (32). In the same manner, the words like "Giizhawenimin Giizhawenimin", "Gego" and so on (28). Although people are modern and speak standard English language but in the extreme situation of their life, native words come out naturally in Ojibwe language. Erdrich writes, "Deydeys' shouting of N'dawnins ! N'dawins !" to her daughter in Ojibwe language" (53). Native tongues denote our origin and identities. The ritual we celebrate and the prayers we perform are often expressed in native tongues. Besides, it is obvious that when people speak to God or pray to deity, they use native language.

Erdrich also valorizes the use and importance of the things like medicine herbs and balsam tea. She has talked about "Place of Medicines in the text (103). In the novel, when Nokomis realized that her medicines and her garden had been stolen, she had actually cried. The seeds were her life's work. Each was selected over the years from the corn or potato or squash with the vigorous qualities Nokomis coveted. There was no replacing such a treasure. Omakayas had never seen her grandmother weep before. But at least she has something they need right there. She has a great medicine bundle and she walked out into the Wasabashkiki (Swamp land) with Omakayas to sow the seeds. Ojibwe have the tradition of assembling all the medicines that they would need for the winter. In this regard Erdrich writes:

They gathered baakwaanatig, the staghorn sumac, whose furry red berries made a strengthening drink when added to water. Nokomis dried great clumps of these berries as well, for they would stop

bleeding. They picked bagizowim, mugwort, which was a good heart medicine. They dug the roots of ininiwa'inzh, milkweed, and collected the leaves of oja'cidji'bik, which they used to heal bruises, and the roots that cured boils. They collected wishkobi-mashkosi, sweetgrass, and wiikenh, sweet flag, for colds and coughs, toothaches, cramps, fevers. (104)

Similarly, there is also found the native American tradition of assembling a little porcupine's quill as a medicinal use. When Pinch's hand and fingers were stuck with quills, Omakayas put each quill on a piece of bark until she had a little stack. And when she was finished, she meticulously wrapped the quills in the bark and put them in the pouch at her waist. From this, it seems to be clear that Native Americans depend on the natural treatment.

Likewise, Native Americans are known for traditional healing. They totally depend on the natural things for healing and curing. They collect medicinal herbs from forest and use them for healing and curing. So, medicinal herbs have religious as well as medicinal works. Nokomis who is Omakayas grandmother preserves these medicinal herbs for curing. She performs as traditional doctor and makes medicine out of these herbs and shrubs. And to preserve this tradition, Nokomis teaches all these things to her grand daughter, Omakayas. Finally, Omakayas learns all those things and becomes a good healer. When Deydey was blinded by the flash of powder from the gun, his treatment depended on the natural things. His eyes were washed with balsam tea. According to Erdrich, "Hold still", said Nokomis impatiently. She was bathing Deydey's face and eyes with warm tea brewed from the needles and his

eyes with balsam tea made him regain his sights are totally following the traditional type of healing and curing depending on the nature.

Erdrich in the text also valorizes the tradition of story telling. Storytelling is one of the forms of oral traditions that are practiced in native culture from time memorial. In Native American Culture, story telling is highly practiced. Story telling is ancient and keeps very important role among them. They preserve the culture of story telling in the form of songs, myth, rituals etc. In the time when Indian culture is losing ground, the tradition of story telling situates as revitalizing strength for preserving and extending Native American culture. That is why story telling plays important role to reflect the identity and existence of native peoples.

Ojibwe have the tradition of story telling. But they preserve their tradition by telling the stories only at the time of winter season. They have a belief that if the stories are told at the other time, the great spirits of the animals might be angry at the Ojibwe for talking about them. They only tell the stories if the underwater and underground creatures go to sleep. So, the stories like "The Bear Girl", "Nanabozho and the Buffalo" are told only at the time of winter. When Omakayas asked Nokomis, the story about how those little birds had once been boys who lost their little sister in the woods then Nokomis reminded her that she would only tell her to wait until the snakes and frogs were sleeping. In this sense Erdrich says:

Omakayas stood up, grumping for that story. But she knew that if underground and under water creatures heard the stories, they might repeat them to the powerful under water spirits, or the great spirits of the animals, who might be angry at the Ojibwe for talking about them.

(38)

Ojibwe tell their traditional story "Aadizookaanag". This is a traditional story that often helps explain how to live as an Ojibwe. When the main person of the family died, then they got several losses. They always missed old Tallow. Although Old Tallow was old in age she was always active and responsible for her family members. She always supported her family in pain and joy. She sacrificed her life for her family but never saw inequality and discrimination among her family members. To gain strength and laugh, Nokomis often used to tell their traditional story "Aadizookaanag". In this way Erdrich has presented Ojibwe culture in the text. She claims:

Nokomis told stories to keep up their spirits. She told stories to teach them, to heal them. Nokomis could tell the stories of the old times, the aadizookaanag, because the frogs and snakes were frozen in the ground. So as the little family mourned and recovered, she told stories to help them gain their strength and laugh again. (122)

Apart from this, there is Old Tallows' story which had been told by Nokomis to Omakayas. In it, the Bwaan chief and Deydey agreed to have peaceful talks. The chief and Deydey smoked the pipe and started the talk. In this story, the Bwaan chief's son, Animikiins had offered to be the son of the chief instead of Quill. He said that Quill was not yet old enough nor was the porcupine upon his head. Animikiins, named for the thunders had told that he would take his place. Similarly, there is another story that is "Nanabozho and the Buffalo" told by Nokomis to her grand daughter. In this story, there is shown that how Nanabozho being a trickster in Ojibwe culture has been deceived by the buffalo. In it, Nanabozho's arms becomes limp and useless. And buffalo escapes from his hand. Native American have tradition of giving something before requesting to tell the story. In the text Erdrich has shown this trend by

presenting the character like Omakayas who often used to put some crushed leaves in her grandmother's hand and also used to pretend for bringing real tobacco.

The tradition of hunting and fishing is also widely practiced in Native American culture. Native American believe that it is their ancestral wisdom that is provided by gods to them. From early periods; natives are involved in hunting and fishing. It is said that it is the first occupation of the Native Americans when they first settled in the land of America. The profession of hunting and fishing is taken as sacred in Native American culture. Secco writes, "Hunting and fishing were not destructive acts in the modern sense, but rather rituals undertaken after long period of apprenticeship and endurance" (9). In the text, Omakayas also explains the meaning of hunting to Pinch. Omakayas says to Pinch, "Remember what Deydey said? A good hunter never blames another for a missed shot" (2). Native Americans hunt for food. They have adopted this profession for their livelihood. They kill animals for stomach. So, it is sacred. They set a snare to catch a rabbit. They make a fire to roast it. Erdrich in her novel writes:

Deydey and Old Tallow hunted for their meat, as did Animikiins and the old chief, Miskobines. Quill even brought back a partridge or trapped a fish from time to time. But though they could hunt, too, and set snares every morning, the women loved gathering the new fruits and berries of the spring. They could spend hours picking, eating enough berries to keep their strength up, of course, and filling their makakoon. (33)

Native American people not only hunt at day but also they go for hunting at night. Erdrich in chapter "Night Hunting" has shown the tradition of hunting animals at

night for the food. If they do not hunt, it becomes difficult for their family to survive. Not only this, they have to save food for the whole year. But it becomes very difficult for them because of only depending on the natural resources. Sometimes they have to suffer from starvation due to the lack of food. They have to face enemy or bwaan. Besides, hunting and fishing, women also go for collecting berries, strawberries, harvesting wild rice.

Among Native Americans, the custom of valuing tobacco is highly practiced. Erdrich valorizes the same custom and ritual of Native Americans. This ritual of valuing tobacco is performed by almost all native people in their everyday life. In every custom and celebration, tobacco has equal importance. Tobacco is symbol either to welcome the guest or a gift taken for the relatives in visit. Similarly, Native Americans believe tobacco to be sacred. So, it has high religious and cultural value. This sacredness is also valorized in Erdrich's *The Porcupine Year*. Erdrich writes, "Nokomis threw tobacco in the fire to appease the real spirits of the dead, to thank the Manidoog for returning the children" (28). Nokomis along with her family were worried about Omakayas and Pinch. Omakayas and Pinch had gone for hunting at night. But they could not return at the camp at right time. They were narrowly survived from rapid-fled river. Seeing her children came back, Nokomis happily thanked the spirit with tobacco. Similarly, when the Bwaan chief and Deydey agreed to have peaceful talks at that time they also smoked the pipes. Not only this, in Ojibwe cultures in the text, almost all the characters smoke Kinnikinnick (a mixture of smoking materials). When they suffered from hunger pains, they all smoked Kinnikinnick to dull the stabs in their guts. In this way, tobacco has high value in Native American culture.

Tobacco is a kind of herb that is preserved by native people from time immemorial. It also has religious origin. Goodman in his book writes, "tobacco is heart of Native American religion and core of American Indian Culture Tobacco has remained a constant unifying force linking all tribes together for thousand of years" (380). Native Americans believe tobacco as a medium that connects every native people together in the band of love and religion. Though Native Americans are composed of differences but the things like tobacco and cigarette connect them together. Moreover, tobacco is also believed as a source of spiritual power by Native Americans. It is used by Gods and deities in the act of creation. Goodman further says, "Many Native Americans throughout North and South America believe tobacco is so powerful that it was involved in the very act of creating the world" (385). There are many saying and writing popular among Americans Indians about the power of tobacco. In every occasions of joy or sorrow, life or death, marriage or birth, tobacco is widely used. Even in the process of spiritual work like to heal or to bless tobacco is always used.

Natives Americans have the tradition of making Sweat Lodge and celebrating the Sweat Lodge ceremony on the success of the family members which have been valorized by Erdrich in the text. When Omakayas got success in plucking feathers from a living eagle then her family members became happy. They praised Omakayas that this work can be only done by grown men. She did such a great work that a warrior does. But she is just a little girl and got a great success according to her Deydey. In the text, Omakayas's family members Deydey, Fishtail, Animikins,

Angeline, Quill, Nokomis and Old Tallow seem to be built Sweat Lodge together. The meaning of Sweet Lodge is clearly found on these characters. So, Erdrich writes:

Fishtail cut pliable green willow and Deydey and Animikins bent the poles and anchored them in the ground. Angeline and Quill laced the poles together. Nokomis and Omakayas gathered the skins and blankets that they would drape over the sweat lodge to keep in the heat. Old Tallow hunted out the strongest grand fathers, the asiniig,, the stones that would be heated white-hot and then carried into the fire pit in the center of the lodge. Whom medicines were placed on these rocks and water splashed over them the steam would rise. First the women would use the lodge, then the men. (55)

Erdrich in the text also valorizes Medicine Bag and its use in Native American culture. The Native American Medicine Bag finds facts and information about Native Americans. They have a belief in the power of Medicine Bag. For them, Medicine Bag is a special and sacred container for different objects. Objects like a pipe, paint, skins, appendages of various animals are kept safely in the bag. Apart from this, different herbal things like tobacco, cedar, sage and sweetgrass, feather are also kept in the bag. Erdrich in the novel has shown these things. When Deydey's Medicine Bag was stolen by LaPautre he was in a great tension. And the very worse thing is that he was also blinded by the flash of powder from the gun. Deydey says to Omakayas that he lost all the things that he had kept in Medicine Bag. He says,

I have had a great deal of time to reflect as I lie here. One of the things that I regret most, stolen from us by LaPautre, was my medicine bag. I

was keeping your feathers in that bag. Also, the stone pipe that belonged to my father and his father before him. (107)

Apart from this, Nakomis's medicines had been stolen which has been stolen in "Place of Medicines" (103). When she realized that her medicines and her garden had been stolen, she had actually cried. The seeds were her life's work - each was selected over the years from the corn or potato or squash with the vigorous qualities she coveted. There was no replacing such a treasure. Native Americans assemble all the medicines in their medicine bag that they would need for all the time. In this regard., Erdrich explains:

They gather baakwanatig, the staghorn sumac, whose furry red berries made a strengthening drink when added to water Dried great clumps of berries, for they would stop bleeding, bagizowim, mugwort which was a good heart medicine. They collected wiishkobi-mashkosi, sweetgrass, and Wiikench, sweet flag, for colds and coughs, toothaches, cramps, fevers. (104)

Among Native Americans, Medicine Bag is highly valued. For them, Medicine Bag is a priceless object and it is beyond all price. They have a belief that if Medicine Bag is lost especially to an enemy, it becomes great dishonor and bad omen for the future. In the text when Deydey got his medicine bag from the hand of Miskobines, he could not control his emotion. "Deydey could not conceal his emotion as he accepted the bag, which contained his father's pipe from the hands of Miskobines. For a long while, he could not speak. He began, but could not continue". (138). From this line it seems to clear that how valuable the Medicine Bag is among Native Americans.

A 'Medicine Bag' is an important part of the equipment used by a shaman. It is a special container for various items of supernatural power used by a medicine man to carry 'Medicine' or Symbols, of animal spirits used for treating sickness and disease. Medicine Man or medicine person is English term which is used to describe a person who has spiritual. The person having this power can guide or control beings, either natural or supernatural. The practice of medicine person is famous among Native American tribes. Native Americans are superstitious so they believe in belief of spirituality and supernatural healing and medicine persons are believed to one among supernatural being in Native American cultures. According to Webster's New Dictionary of American language, medicine person stands for, "a man supposed to have supernatural power of curing disease and controlling spirits." Similarly, according to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, medicine man stands for, "a person who is believed to have special magic parts of healing".

In the text Omakayas and Nokomis are regarded as medicine woman and porcupine is a medicine animal. Nokomis is concerned with medicine bag. She always carries medicine bag with her. She teaches her grand daughter, Omakayas about medicines. She learns all these things that Nokomis knows and as a result Omakayas becomes a good healer. Similarly, a little porcupine is announced as a medicine animal by Pinch and he also becomes Quillboy because of porcupine's quills stuck on his palms and body. It is also seen that all members of his family have accepted a little porcupine as a medicine animal. They believe that this medicine animal is directly and indirectly helping them. Omakayas and pinch were very hungry at once but after arrival of the porcupine, Pinch was able to catch a fish instantly. They believe that it is a helping spirit. Gaping at the fish in his hand, he says to Omakayas, "How ? Look,

Sister ! The porcupine is definitely a helping spirit !" (17). Likewise, when Omakayas's family was in starvation and at danger, they had a faith only at medicine animal. In Quill's voice, "My medicine animal would save our lives. My family, I will get him for you. As my strength is gone I have asked him for help" (115). Similarly, in Old Tallow's voice, "He tried to save us, that porcupine ! I will never forget how he quilled Lapautre ! That brave little creature took our only revenge. He is medicine for us all ! " (115).

Erdrich in the text has shown what kind of food and cloths Native Americans eat and wear in everyday life. According to Business Dictionary. Com 'food' stands for, "Edible or potable substance (usually of animal or plant origin), consisting of nourishing and nutritive components such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, essential mineral and vitamins, which (when ingested and assimilated through digestion sustains life, generates energy, and provides growth, maintenance and health of the body". They not only snare rabbit and hunt fish and other large animals but also small reptiles like snakes, turtles, lizards etc. Along with these animals food, they also eat plant food like berries, strawberries, wild rice, pemmican, manoomin, balsam tea etc. In the novel there are characters like Omakayas, Nokomis, Old Tallow, Deydey, Miskobines, Angelline and their family who are totally depended on these food. Among Native Americans porcupine soup is a special meal. They enjoy a lot eating this soup. In Omakaya's line, "Tucked into the crook of a branch, a porcupine, or gaag, rested. It was only a baby but looked quite plump and would certainly be tender stewed up in a porcupine soup" (13). From this it seems to learn that how greedy Native American people are. Similarly, they collect dried fish, meat and berries. Erdrich says, "They were all wedged in surrounded by packs of furs and bark packs of

mancomin, bags of weyass, dried meat or pemmican, pots, tanned skins, and bundles of their blankets" (90).

Buckskin clothing and deerskin clothing are very popular among Native American society. They not only hunt deer to provide food for the family but also for the clothing. Deerskin is one of the most important elements in the life of Native Americans. To make deerskin clothing, the hide is removed and various processes are applied. Scraping, smoking, softening, stretching and dyeing and decorating the deerskin hide are applied during making the cloth. These processes are clearly shown in the text. But they follow the tradition of wearing deerskin clothing by women and buckskin clothing by men in the society. According to Erdrich, "Old Tallow reached into her pack and shook out a beautiful dress made of white doeskin" (85). Buckskin clothing is made from soft strong leather, usually yellow or grayish in color, made of smoked deerskin. The name derives from buck skin, the word 'buck' meaning a male deer. Buckskin clothing or Buckskins originated from the deerskin clothing worn by Native American Indians. There is another line in which a little anishinable man is dressed in bucksking clothing. So, Erdrich writes:

To both of them, it looked at first like a small child with a heary head. They crouched low. The little person moved his arm, as if making an offering to the rapids, and they show that he was proportioned like a fully grown Anishinable man. He was dressed in buckskins and knee high makizinan, and his hair stuk out all over, like Quill's hair. (22)

In the novel, Erdrich has also shown Native American belief in animism. Animism is a belief based on the spiritual idea that the universe and all natural objects within the universe have souls or spirits. Animists believe that souls or spirits exist

not only in humans but also in animals, plants, trees, rocks and all natural forces and phenomena such as the rain, sun and moon. In the text the belief of animism is found in Nokomis. When Nokomis's family was missing at that time she had only belief in praying, she had a belief that praying had a power and it would be the solution of the problems. In this regard Erdrich writes, "Nokomis prayed, her hand on a birch tree her lips moving softly when the family is missing" (78).

Similarly, birch tree is highly valorized in Native American culture. The birch tree is important for them because it is tough and flexible. They use it for making canoes, houses, baskets and art works. They even practice their writing on a piece of birchbark. This tradition can be seen in Ageline's word. Angeline said, "I practice the chimookoman alphabet on a piece of birchbark" (40). Not only this, "Bizheens carried a tiny makak made out of birchbark, a gathering basket" (32). Similarly, 'Nokomis keeps the seeds in her bark packs" (40). Likewise, "The birchbark houses were set in the great bank of trees that gave them shelter from the wind. A tall outcrop of stone gave them ability to see across the ice to other islands, and to watch for enemies or friends' (147). All these prove that birchbark is very important for them.

Apart from this, Erdrich in the text gives high importance to Native American Culture and their identity. Traditional belief concerning relation, harmony, balance and spirituality are valued by Native American people. There is unity among Native Americans. They maintain harmony among them helping to each other in each and every turning point of their lives. And this unity is clearly found in Omakayas's family. In this regard Garret writes Native American cultural values and practice:

Native American's traditional values reflect the importance placed upon community contribution, sharing, co-operation being non-

interference, community and extended family harmony with nature, a time orientation towards living in the present, preference for explanations of natural phenomena according to spiritual, and a deep respect for elders. (160)

It is clear that Native American people value unity in community. Family harmony and common feeling are their beliefs towards the community. They respect these things spiritually.

Native American Culture and its identity are also concerned with religious practices and spirituality. For Allison and Vinning, "Today, Native American families may identify themselves as either traditional, bio-cultural, or assimilated, which is largely based on the locations of the household, language spoken at home, and the participation in religious event" (114).

Native American people are physically similar to Asian people. They appear to have descended from Asia who migrated across the Bering land during the Ice Age perhaps some thirteen years ago. Similarly, other people who have Mongolian characteristics, Native American characterize light brown skin, brown eyes and dark straight hair. They differ from Asians, however in their characteristics blood types. As many Native American today have had one or more European Americans or African Americans among their ancestors, numerous people who are legally and culturally Native American may look fairer or darker than Mongolian people's or may have markedly non Mongolian facial features.

Furthermore, every population includes persons who vary from the average populations. Some physical characteristics of native people have been influenced by diet or by the environmental conditions of their societies. For instances, the short

statue of some native Guatemalans seems to result at least in part from diets in protein, the broad chest and large hearts and lungs of native Andeans represent an adaptation to the low-oxygen atmosphere of the high mountains they inhabit. There are some evidences that indicate the first people to migrate into the Americas. They come from north eastern Siberia into Alaska by carrying stone tools and other equipments typical of the middle and end of the paleolithic period.

Native American people still live doing fishing and hunting heard animals such as reindeer and mammoths. They used skin tents for shelter and they must have tanned reindeer skin by sewing them into clothing similar to that made by the input parks, bots and mittens. Thirteen thousand years ago early inhabitants of the Americas known as Polea-Indians hunted large mammal such as bison, mamoth and mastoden. The hunting of such larger prey was a late development in human pre-history. It required sophisticated stone weaponry and a kind of planning and co-ordination possible only with as elaborate system of communication such as languages. Paleo-Indian people were nomadic. They make moving camp at least several times each year to take advantage of seasonal sources of food. They gathered each summer for a few weeks with other brands to celebrate religious ceremonies and to trade, complete in sports, game and visit. These are the evidences from the comparative study of Native American Cultures. It suggests that these earliest migrations may have taken place around thirty thousand years ago. It is their source of cultural uniqueness and identity.

In their Native American Culture, beliefs are deeply rooted. They believe that everything is sacred. They believe that from the largest mountains to the smallest plants and animals, all lesson can be found. They also realize that everything have a

purpose. Native Americans love, honor and respect their creators and their mother earth along with every living things. It is their elder's culture that keeps them alive. They proudly say that they have learned from their elders. They deserve and respect their culture that has become cultural identity. In this regard Anthony D. Smith says:

. . . but from the way events, heroes, and landscapes have been woven by myth, memory and symbol into the popular consciousness. For this drama, ethno-history has a 'primordial' quality, or it is powerless . . . for the populations which have come to feel excluded, neglected or suppressed . . . For many, the only guarantee of preserving of some of form of identity is in the appeal to 'posterity' to the future generations that 'ours', because they think and feel as 'we do, just as our children are supposed to feel and think like each of us individually. (282)

The twentieth century has brought opportunity and challenges of a rapidity and magnitude regarding the preceding century. The major forces that have shaped history of Native Americans after 1900 were a fulfillment of trends that were already apparent in American history. Basically we can claim to have succeeding rate of the twentieth century as unique, modern, space for marginal favor was that of change in moral, social, cultural and political values and practices. Vicissitudes in the life of nations, strokes and tensions had relatively local and limited effects in earlier times. But such efforts and impacts also produced wider and wider repercussions after 1900 as result of rapid growth in transport and communication. They become almost instantaneous. The physical atmosphere of the twentieth century came along with rise and consciousness in native people's cultural spirit with their cultural identity because of changes in the human mind.

It shows that different ethnic communities have become conscious about their ethnic history towards which they prioritize them with great interest and resistance. In fact, they want to shape their culture and identify. Smith further says, "Old religious sagas, saints can now be turned into national heroes, ancient chronicles and epics become example of the creative genius, while great ages of achievement in nobility" (283). The art and any form of literature focus on their people, nature and their culture that explains about the history of overall accomplishments of past deeds as they turn into many forms of culture. Erdrich also does the same thing in her novel.

Human relationship is the most important in Native American Culture and society. Relationship is embodied within the idea of community. The linkage of land and people reflect the spatial orientation of native people according to Geary Hobson, "the relationship between land and people is unforgettable. The people claim that our land is our strength and our people that land, on the same, as it always has been and always will be" (8). When native are removed from their traditional land, they are robbed of more than territory. They are deprived of numinous landscapes that are centre to their faith and identity. Land populated by their relations, ancestors, animals and being both physical and mythological is primarily centered on rituals, festivities and beliefs that construct Native American identity.

Through the case studies narrative and studies of language, Native American researchers continued to adopt resilient strategies to overcome acts of linguistic oppression against their cultural group. Language, culture, lifestyle, belief, housing, dress, food and so on are some of the sources that represent native American culture and their identity. The family structure varies from tribes to tribes including to gender roles, from the Ojibwe to patriarchal family practices and traditions. Most of the

Native American families are extended and often include mothers, farmers, grandparents, aunts, uncle and cousins. This line may provide reliable example what Locust writes about Native American Culture, "In many Native American languages, there is no word for religion because spiritual practices are integral part of every aspects of daily life; spirituality is necessary for the harmony and balance, or well being of the individual, family, class and community" (1988).

The indigenous people of North America lived as hunters from the Stone Age until the encounter with the Europeans. During the Stone Age, the people of North America share a common culture with other people of the far-north. The people at that time established culture area, such as geographical regions populated by peoples having more or less similar ways of life adapted to their physical surroundings. Eventually, millions of people were living in Kinship, communities throughout North America. They produce own religious forms. The farming replaced hunting and gathering as a means of producing food, more ancient activities persisted including traditional religious practices. In the ancient period of that time, there were different communities which maintained their characteristics world view passed down their own myths, conducted their own rituals and acted according to their own fundamental values. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the first European explorers and missionaries began to document the religious patterns of indigenous American, they were confronted with cultures that had remained unaffected by development in the civilization of Europe and Asia. These features can be taken as Native American culture and its practice which also become their source of identity.

The Native American cultures and traditions were based on oral tradition. They were children of native. They had no such letters and or texts like the European

language had. The oral tradition is only one generation away from extinction. It depends on being told to each generation to survive The Native Americans identity which was dependent on the written word for its survival. This survival feature becomes one of integrated life style and activities that they one way to other discover Native American cultural uniqueness and its identity.

III. Native American Culture and Tradition as the Source of Native American Cultural Uniqueness

After discussion and analysis of Louise Erdrich's *The Porcupine* year, the researcher comes to conclusion that Erdrich valorizes Native American culture by foregrounding various cultural practices, rituals, customs, traditions and myths in the text. These practices and rituals intricately reflect Native American cultural uniqueness and the ways of life to the readers. Moreover, these practices and customs are the soul of Native American's presence, existence and identity and Erdrich presents them with equal respect and honor.

Erdrich in the novel focuses on some of the distinct rituals that are celebrated in Native American culture. The practice of fishing and hunting which reflect the ancient art of Native American people is foregrounded in the text. For Native Americans, fishing and hunting are believed to be sacred and they are performed as rituals by natives. Erdrich in the text focuses these arts by learning and practicing them to achieve the goal. By relating the culture of hunting, Erdrich gives tribute to ancient occupation of native peoples, when they first arrived in the land of North America. In the ancient time hunting was the major occupation, of native indigenous people and Erdrich presents such as unusual art with admiration and loyalty. Thus, it can be concluded that Erdrich valorizes native art of hunting and fishing.

Similarly, Erdrich in the presentation of characters also focuses on Native American culture. She presents all her characters with Ojibwe attribute. The characters such as Omakayas, Pinch, Nokomis, Old Tallow, Deydey, Miskobines represent Native American world. They all are natives with Native American world. They all are natives with Native American features. They reflect Native American

way of life and cultural habit. In the text, the characterization of all the characters prioritize Native American culture.

Erdrich in the novel also provides ritualistic and ceremonial importance of tobacco. Tobacco for Native American is a herb needed for every type of religious work and social celebration. Erdrich in the text valorizes tobacco by presenting the character like Nokomis who throws tobacco in the fire to appease the real spirits of the dead, to thank the Manidoog for returning the children. So by presenting the power of tobacco, Erdrich again values Native American culture over other culture.

Furthermore, Native American's tradition of preserving medicinal herb is also presented by Erdrich in the text. Native Americans practice traditional way of healing and curing. For treatment no modern doctors are appointed, rather they go to medicine man or medicine woman for their treatment. In the text, Nokomis and Deydey being medicine persons collect and preserve these herbs. Moreover, the text also focuses on the religious use of herbs. In ritualistic works, herbs are used as sacred thing to pray the spirit. By presenting the importance of herbs in religious and medicinal work, Erdrich again prioritizes Native American way of life.

Likewise, Erdrich in the novel presents the Native American tradition of story telling. Storytelling is one of the forms of oral traditions that are practiced in native culture from time memorial. In Native American culture story telling is highly practiced. Storytelling is ancient and keeps very important role among them. They preserve the culture of storytelling in the form of songs, myth, rituals et. In the text, Ojibwe tell their traditional story entitled "Aadizookaanag". This is a traditional story that after helps explain how to live as an Ojibwe So Erdrich by presenting this Native American tradition of story telling proves Native American culture as unique.

Erdrich valorizes the social aspect of Native American culture as some of the language group is focused in the text. In the text, Ojibwe is native language of people of North America. Time and again the expression of joys and sorrows are expressed in Ojibwe tongue. It is believed that people express their emotions in native tongue whether they are happy or sad or in the mood of celebration or grief. So by presenting Ojibwe tongue of the characters in the text, Erdrich valorizes native American culture

Erdrich in the text valorizes the tradition of making Sweat Lodge and its ceremony. It is Native American tradition of celebrating Sweat Lodge ceremony. The aim of the sweat lodge ceremony is to purify one's mind, body, spirit and heart. Similarly, Medicine Bag and its use in Native American is highly valued in Native American society. The Native American Medicine Bag discover facts and information about the culture of Native American Indians and their belief in the power of Medicine Bag. So, the tradition of making Sweat Lodge and its ceremony and giving the importance of Medicine Bag in Native American culture process Native American cultural uniqueness.

Birch tree is highly valorized in Native American culture. Birchbark has been used by Native Americans for everything from papering the exteriors of Canoes and houses to making baskets and works. Native American people even practice their writing their on a piece of birchbark. They also pray and worship birch tree when their family is in trouble. Apart from this, Native American clothing and fooding show Native American culture as distinct and unique in the text.

Louise Erdrich in the text introduces all the cultural practices and beliefs of Native Americans. She minutely presents each aspect of native culture with full

respect and reverence. Erdrich in the text presents the use and importance of the things like medicine herbs and balsam tea, tradition of story telling, valuing tobacco myth and trickster, notion of building Sweat Lodge and its ceremony, Medicine Bag and its importance, valuing birchbark tree and clothing and fooding among Native American society. All these practices, beliefs, traditions, rituals myths, arts are the evidences that help to justify Native American culture as distinct and unique from other cultures. In a nutshell, Erdrich work represents Native American culture as the source of Native American cultural uniqueness.

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