

LOUISE ERDRICH AND NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING

Mirzayeva Parvina Ulugbek kizi

Email: mustafoyevaparvina@icloud.com

An independent researcher

Bukhara State University

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Annotation: Louise Erdrich is widely regarded as one of the most significant and influential voices among Native American authors, making substantial contributions to the second wave of the Renaissance of Native American literature. This paper explores the literary contribution of Louise Erdrich within the broader context of Native American writing, with particular attention to themes of identity, memory, and place. As one of the most prominent contemporary Indigenous authors, Erdrich’s work reflects the complex intersections of personal and collective histories shaped by colonialism, cultural resilience, and spiritual continuity.

Key words: narration, US literature, theme, native, indigenous, Ojibwa, Louise Erdrich, identity, Native American writing.

Introduction American literature, while relatively young in the context of World Literature, is renowned for its dramatic diversity. This diversity is especially evident in Multicultural American literature, which encompasses a range of voices including Asian-American, Jewish American, European American, and notably, Native American literature. Native American writing, a marginalized literary tradition, represents the indigenous peoples of the United States and reflects the legacy of post-colonialism in the nation.

Literature review Native American literature has recently come under scrutiny by many critics and in his article “Colonialism and Native American Literature: Analysis” Jack Forbes states ‘*Some recent articles about American Indian literature suffer from a failure to view this literature holistically and within a realistic cultural, historical and social context*’ [7; 17]. The author endeavors to explore the distinctions between *National* and *Ethnic Literature*, emphasizing the notion that Native writing should originate from individuals of native descent. To illustrate this perspective, the author cites “Navaho Literature.” Additionally, the author underscores the significance of literature and its intrinsic connection to culture, advocating for the integration of literature as an integral component of culture.

Results Louise Erdrich, a contemporary writer of mixed European and Chippewa heritage has made significant contributions to the advancement of Native American Literature. Her notable works include novels such as ‘*Love Medicine*’ (1984), ‘*The Beet Queen*’ (1986), and ‘*Tracks*’ (1988), among many other literary pieces within the realm of Native American Literature. Her characters not only depict the cultural and social issues within their communities but also embody duality and conflict as representatives of mixed heritages.

Louise Erdrich has authored over 30 books to date, including nearly 17 novels. These novels encompass the Birchbark series and trilogy. Furthermore, two children’s books, one collection of short stories, three poetry collections, four nonfiction works, and various other literary contributions. Moreover, Louise Erdrich is a recipient of two highly prestigious awards: the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, recognizing her remarkable contributions to literature. In interviews and discussions, Louise Erdrich often emphasizes that the primary

source that propelled her to become a prominent writer of the Native American Renaissance is the firsthand experiences and memories from her time spent with her grandparents.

Louise Erdrich gained valuable experiences in her grandparents' home, situated in the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa near the Canadian border. Here, she absorbed a wealth of knowledge about tribal values, traditions, and cultural heritage, which later served as a wellspring of inspiration for her highly sought-after novels, children's books, and poems. Primarily, her work centers on depicting the lives of indigenous peoples in the Upper Midwest. In November 2021, in a TV interview for PBS News with Jeffrey Brown, Louise Erdrich delves into topics such as racial tensions, her grandfather's role among the Chippewa Indians, and the challenges of addressing tension in literature [2]. She highlights that her grandfather was once the sole fluent speaker of the Ojibwe language, expressing his longing to converse with others who shared his language fluency. Erdrich's daughter, Persia, has since studied and now teaches the Native Ojibwe Language to young learners. Erdrich envisions her daughter as someone who could have conversed with her grandfather in his native language. This narrative underscores how one's environment shapes their identity and the profound influence of societal surroundings on an individual's development and future. These themes will be further explored in the subsequent paragraphs. During the interview, the interviewer delves into the topic of tension, particularly racial tension, and directs questions to Louise Erdrich about the complexities of portraying such tension in writing. The author's response captivates the viewers' attention with its insights and perspectives on this challenging aspect of storytelling.

Louise Erdrich reflects on her grandfather's experience of being '*faced with termination*,' emphasizing how crucial the land is to one's way of life and existence. She notes that when an individual's livelihood and essence are tied to the land, the situation becomes profoundly significant. Erdrich suggests that writing about termination can be *really boring and technical*, but when approached *through the eyes of someone who is suddenly faced with termination and really the extinction of one's standing world*, it becomes a matter of great importance and impact. This particular aspect draws attention to the depth of the author's body of work and her ability to depict reality not just as she perceives it, but as she authentically witnesses it. It underscores how, due to her deep regard for her grandfather, she gained profound insights into the lives, cultures, and traditions of indigenous peoples. This factor played a pivotal role in shaping her into one of the influential and prolific authors of the Native American Renaissance.

The rise of American Native literature has not only led to a flourishing of literary works but has also spurred the development of literary criticism and critical theory. Authors within Native American literature, including Louise Erdrich, predominantly engage with the content they present to readers, often focusing on the intricate relationship between oral tradition, speech, and written narratives. Louise Erdrich is an author who delves deeply into her writing. She goes beyond merely portraying individuals in her novels; she meticulously examines and portrays the relationships between characters, their connections with nature, society, and community. Her works delve not only into individual psychology but also explores the psychological dynamics within groups as well.

Conclusion Louise Erdrich's works serve as a vital bridge between tradition and modernity, offering nuanced insights into Native American experience while expanding the scope and significance of contemporary American literary studies.

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