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Author

Walsh, Dennis

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Catholicism in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*

DENNIS WALSH

Readers and critics have long noted the important presence of Catholicism in most of Louise Erdrich's novels, notably *Love Medicine* (1984 and 1993), *The Beet Queen* (1986), *Tracks* (1988), and *Tales of Burning Love* (1996). *The Bingo Palace* (1994) and *The Antelope Wife* (1998) focus on Chippewa¹ culture and spirituality, and largely exclude Catholicism. I believe the critics are incomplete in their analyses of the roles of Catholicism in *Love Medicine* and *Tracks* where it is a much more central theme than in Erdrich's other fiction.

My chief purpose in this article is to provide a broader and deeper view of the matter in question than anyone has previously attempted by joining literary, biographical, and historical analyses. My argument concerning *Love Medicine* is that the conflict of Catholicism with shamanic religion and traditional culture provides perhaps the strongest single unifying addition to the 1993 revised edition of the novel. Additionally, I argue that the same theme in *Tracks* is considerably more ambivalent than it is in *Love Medicine*—and more pervasive than the critics have acknowledged. I especially press for a revised view of Pauline, one of the two narrators in the novel, who later becomes Sister Leopolda and appears in several other Erdrich novels. In the second part of this study, I assemble Erdrich's comments in interviews regarding Catholicism in her life and works and draw conclusions about these remarks, especially in regard to the novels in question. Erdrich, in both the fiction and interviews, identifies the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation as an important source for the settings of the two novels. Peter G. Beidler and Gay Barton also assert that the reservation can easily be identified as Turtle Mountain in *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*, though in other novels both the fictitious reservation and Argus, a fictional town, are removed from the actual Turtle Mountain Reservation.² My contribution here is to assemble a short his-

Dennis Walsh is a professor of English at Idaho State University where he teaches advanced writing, linguistics, and nineteenth-century and Indian literatures. His recent publications are in Indian literature, and he has a personal essay forthcoming on his Fulbright experience in Rwanda, entitled "As a Crested Crane."

tory of Catholicism on that reservation and to speculate that Erdrich's fictional settings could indeed be closely based on historical realities.

CATHOLICISM IN *LOVE MEDICINE*

Love Medicine has provoked more scholarship than any of Erdrich's other works, though nearly all of that scholarship critiques the 1984 rather than the 1993 "new and expanded" edition. Debra Burdick's 1996 annotated survey of criticism of *Love Medicine*, *Tracks*, and *The Beet Queen* up to 1994 demonstrates that the attention given to *Love Medicine* centers on narrative style, the cyclical portrayal of time, the prose lyricism, trickster characters, oral tradition and culture, the homing issue, postmodern and feminist elements, and the tension between Christian and Chippewa mythologies and beliefs. In regard to this latter concern, Burdick points to articles by Catherine Rainwater and Helen Jaskowski and also notes that most work on the religious theme has focused on *Tracks*.³ I find the subject important in *Love Medicine* as well, particularly in the expanded version where it strengthens themes and unifies the 1984 text. The fictional uses of Catholicism in *Love Medicine* are less complex than those in *Tracks*, but no less crucial.

Catherine Rainwater argues that conflicting codes in Erdrich's fiction produce "in the reader an experience of marginality."⁴ One of these conflicts of marginality is between "Christianity and shamanic religion."⁵ In *Love Medicine*, Lipsha, for example, is sometimes "paralyzed between contradictory systems of belief."⁶ Chapter titles, such as "Saint Marie," "require the reader to recognize and assimilate a host of biblical references."⁷ In turn, the reader is cued "to expect the story to unfold within an intertextual framework of references . . . within a Judeo-Christian value system."⁸ However, that expectation is not fulfilled because the Christian allusion is juxtaposed to the "American Indian shamanic tradition," religious systems fundamentally opposed to one another.⁹ Similarly conflicting codes arise between mechanical time (dates) and suggestions of "Christian millennial time," as well as between codes of water and fishing.¹⁰ Finally, Rainwater argues that the marginality and disempowerment of the reader is temporary and leads to "epistemological insight," that what we think is solid ground can shift.¹¹ Rainwater's findings apply best to *Love Medicine*—though they are limited because she critiques the 1984 edition—but are at least partly mistaken in regard to *Tracks*.

A substantial 1995 article by Hertha Wong comments on the expanded *Love Medicine* and has something to say about Catholicism in the novel as well.¹² In searching for elements that connect the narratives, Wong finds images of water and fishing, which can both be interpreted as Catholic and Chippewa:

Water can join or separate, cleanse or kill, save or erode. . . . [F]ishing is a process of acquiring, pulling something back to ourselves. As an old and senile man, Nector fishes for thoughts in the depths of Lake Turcot, while the would-be martyr, Sister Leopolda, fishes for souls, hooking children together like a stringer of fish.¹³

Wong discovers many new connective elements in the 1993 edition. Prominent are “the second and penultimate stories [which] both present characters seeking a better life by adapting to colonial impositions, Catholicism and capitalism.”¹⁴

My own views build on Wong's and argue that the newer edition of *Love Medicine* contains other elements that assert the primacy of Chippewa values over Catholic values for the Chippewa and Métis characters. Religious incorporation seems impossible in *Love Medicine*. Erdrich's revised edition salts the text with Ojibwa words, increases the water imagery, more clearly identifies Eli as a repository of traditional values, plainly converts Marie from one once insistent on her whiteness and Catholicism to one who embraces Ojibwa and tribal activism, and spiritually empowers Lipsha.

Water and fishing are central to the Chippewa worldview, as Basil Johnston, a Canadian Ojibwa, points out. For instance, the creation of the world took place on “the back of a turtle.” The later creation of the Ojibwa was on the same turtle's back covered with soil brought up by a muskrat.¹⁵ In Ojibwa religious ceremonies, “the sacred shell was the most essential and important element.”¹⁶ Of the ten traditional Ojibwa leadership totems, three are animals related to water. All five learning totems are water creatures.¹⁷ Further, “By hunting and fishing, that is, providing food for the community, the boys became an integral part of the community.”¹⁸ Morality for men—manhood itself—is closely related to cleverness and medicine in hunting and fishing; thus Eli, truly “the world's greatest fisherman,” is a repository of value in *Love Medicine*.¹⁹

Both versions of *Love Medicine* contain many obvious allusions to water and fishing that would seem associated with Catholicism. The Chippewa and Catholic codes are thus thrown into conflict though it becomes clear as the novel progresses that the Chippewa code has primacy. In a setting where most are at least nominally Catholic, allusions to Catholic practice, belief, and terminology are nearly ubiquitous. Some examples from the first pages include Andy (Jack Mauser in *Tales of Burning Love*) saying, “Oh God, Mary. . . Oh God, it's good” (*LM* 5) and June describing the Rigger Bar as an aqueous world (*LM* 2), an image furthered when she sets out in a snowstorm—“walked over [the fresh snow] like water and came home” (*LM* 7). Nector describes himself as a fish at the start of the novel and the whole episode about “the world's greatest fisherman” follows. In the Catholic view this expression alludes to Christ, but in this particular Chippewa view it is certainly Eli. In the “Saint Marie” episode, Marie thinks of going to the convent in terms of fishing:

I knew the dark fish must rise. . . . For maybe Jesus did not take my bait, but them Sisters tried to cram me right down whole. You ever see a walleye strike so bad the lure is practically out its back before you reel it in? . . . I had the mail-order Catholic soul you get in a girl raised out in the bush (*LM* 43–44)

I bring up these early examples to demonstrate how thoroughly both editions of the novel are saturated in this mixture of Catholic and Chippewa fishing and water allusions. The above statement by Marie illustrates that she is thinking in Ojibwa terms about Catholic conversion.

Among the 1993 expansions of the text—beyond those Wong discusses—is Eli saying “*Ekewaynzee*,” which emphasizes his balance in the world and King’s fragmentation (*LM* 33). This is one of roughly a dozen Ojibwa words or phrases not in the 1984 text. Sometimes these terms are trivial semantically and are more important for their accumulation and appearance at crucial junctures; other times their semantic meaning is crucial. All posit the novel’s central Chippewa value system. Perhaps the most crucial Ojibwa words are used by Marie who ultimately realizes that Catholicism has failed her and her people and that shamanistic religion and Chippewa culture and language hold promise. After the birth of her last child, she rarely speaks English and abandons Catholicism.

Four new Ojibwa words appear in “The Island” chapter, including Lulu’s memory of “the old language in my mother’s mouth”—“*N’dawnis, n’dawnis*. My daughter” (*LM* 69); Rushes Bear’s terms for Moses—“*djessikid*” (*LM* 74) and “*windigo*” (*LM* 75); and Moses’ “*Kaween onjidah*” (*LM* 80) when he first touches Lulu’s hair. She tells him not to be sorry and notes that he is “caught” by her “*windigo*” stare and the Pillager wolfish flash of teeth. He appears to speak entirely to her in “Indian,” while she speaks English to him. The child of their union of course is Gerry Nanapush, the novel’s central trickster figure, who is Pillager on both sides.

More Ojibwa words appear in an augmentation of “The Beads,” a chapter that among other things provides additional information about Rushes Bear, Fleur, and Eli. Ojibwa words are spoken by Marie in childbirth: “N’gushi,” she says when she feels Fleur’s touch, “it was like the touch of peace, such mercy” (*LM* 102). Just before Fleur’s arrival Marie thinks of “*Babawawaebigowin*, and I understood that I was to let my body be driven by the waves, like a boat to shore, like someone swimming toward a very small light” (*LM* 103). This is accompanied by Fleur’s “ghost lights” and Rushes Bear’s offering of tobacco and sage accompanied by “only the old language” (*LM* 103). Rushes Bear becomes “[Marie’s] own mother, my own blood” in place of Bernadette Morrissey who partly raised her and Pauline Puyat/Sister Leopolda, her biological mother (*LM* 104). This is a turning point in Marie’s life. After this she speaks mainly Ojibwa and abandons a Catholic worldview.

The second new section focuses again on Marie and contains more words in the old language. The chapter title “Resurrection” ironically pertains to Gordie but is perhaps the culmination of Marie’s turning to the old ways—her resurrection—even in her treatment of Gordie. Sorting through her house after Nector’s death from Lipsha’s love medicine, trying to cope with Gordie’s alcoholism, she says to herself, “*Ahnee, n’kawanis*”:

Since she had lived among other old people at the Senior Citizens, Marie had started speaking the old language, falling back through time to the words the Lazarres had used among themselves, shucking

off the Kashpaw pride, yet holding to the old strengths Rushes Bear had taught her, having seen the new, the Catholic, the Bureau fail her children, having known how comfortless words of English sounded in her ears. (*LM* 263)

She attempts to give Gordie a shirt of Nector's: "Beeskim k'papigeweyaun," which he understands but responds to in English (*LM* 263). He later says, "N'gushi, I'm sorry," regarding his drinking (*LM* 265). She will witness his death but refuses to let him into the road or woods, seeming to know that he will die—there is no hope for him. Marie believes he can die with some dignity in her house: "Still, she sat firm in her chair and did not let go of the ax handle" (*LM* 275).

"Resurrection" follows shortly after Lipsha's "God's been going deaf" speech:

God used to pay attention, is what I'm saying. . . . Now there's your God in the Old Testament and there is Chippewa Gods as well. Indian Gods, good and bad, like tricky Nanabozho or the water monster Missepeshu. . . . Our Gods aren't perfect, but at least they come around. (*LM* 236)

"Resurrection" drives home this powerful sense that the Christian God is absent, while imperfect traditional deities are present and paying attention. It is no surprise that Marie, early in this section, gives the Kashpaw ceremonial pipe, the two pieces of which "connect heaven and earth," to Lipsha (*LM* 260). He becomes a repository of faith, confirmed by June's beads, which are given to him by Marie, who resolves that they are medicine beads and not rosary beads. "I almost cried when she did this," he says (*LM* 257).

The final added chapters, "The Tomahawk Factory" and "Lyman's Luck," emphasize the failure that Chippewas face when dealing with yet another colonial imposition, capitalism, taking the place of traditional trading/sharing/kinship economy. The chapters contain several Ojibwa words and clear oppositions between Pillager traditional power and Catholicism. While the reader follows Marie's shift to traditional ways, one is surprised to find her foil, Lulu, "heavy into politics": she and Marie are "Traditionals. Back-to-the-buffalo types" (*LM* 303). Lulu has been part of an effort to reintroduce buffalo to the reservation. She talks of animals as the "four-legged people" and "fish people" as the "no-legged" (*LM* 308), creation being "all connected as in the olden times" (*LM* 307). She compels Lyman to hire workers for the factory in an egalitarian way by clans and families, and she and Marie keep "[Lyman's] workers from each others' throats" (*LM* 313). In the context of hiring his half-nephew Lipsha, Lyman himself knows Pillager power has long conflicted with Catholic power:

The Pillagers had been the holdouts, the ones who wouldn't sign the treaties, the keepers of the birch bark scroll and practitioners of medicines so dark and helpful that the more devout Catholic Indians crossed their breasts when a Pillager happened to look straight at them. (*LM* 312)

Lyman uses an Ojibwa word in trying to fire his mother: "So I'm thanking you. *Megwitch*. Now you're fired" (LM 313). The old language is a surprise coming from him, as is the "*windigo* yell [from Marie] that at once paralyzed and mobilized every worker on the line" (LM 318). During the ensuing communal destruction of the factory, Lyman looks at Lipsha, who is looking at Lulu:

For when she showed the grin that made Catholics kiss their scapulars, the grin I had seen at the pool table. . . . [I]t was her wolf smile, the Pillager grin. (LM 326)

Erdrich adds Ojibwa words while focusing on Marie's abandonment of English, Catholicism, and the Bureau, having seen that whole worldview "fail her children" (LM 263). *Love Medicine* ends by returning to Lipsha and positing traditional Chippewa values and epistemology. Lipsha has a newfound "talent to touch the sick and heal their individual problems." He has "powers which come down from Old Man Pillager" and "the newfound fact of insight [he] inherited from Lulu, as well as the familiar teachings of Grandma Kashpaw on visioning" (LM 341). He is able to deliver his father, Gerry, to Canada and "bring [his mother, June] home" (LM 367). The conflict of Catholic and shamanic codes throughout the novel finally allows readers to experience an oral discourse which asserts Chippewa values and culture. Conversely, colonialist impositions, Catholicism and capitalism especially, are derided and satirized as lacking wisdom, humanity, and spirituality. The text establishes this theme as perhaps the single most important unifying factor in the revised edition of the novel.

CATHOLICISM IN *TRACKS*²⁰

Tracks was the first drafted of Erdrich's novels, has the earliest setting (1912–1924), and has received the most critical attention in regard to its Catholic undertones. Catherine Rainwater's previously mentioned article explores ways in which Erdrich deliberately uses ambivalence, tension, and contradiction to create in readers a sense of marginality and liminality. In this view, Erdrich's texts "frustrate narrativity," the process by which readers construct a story from the data in a narrative.²¹ As formerly noted, among the "conflicting codes" is "Christianity versus shamanic religion." Thus with *Tracks*, as well as *Love Medicine* and *The Beet Queen*, "These religions are epistemologically, experientially, and teleologically different."²² While this view seems accurate in theory, Rainwater's approach ignores that the experience and practice of Catholicism could and can vary widely according to the ethnic character of the group, whether French, Irish, or German. And, even more germane, Catholicism has incorporated with apparently incompatible religions. For example, in Native religions, reverence for the Holy Family of Saints has often been incorporated easily with ancestor reverence. In James McKenzie's 1991 "'Sharing What I Know': An Interview with Francis Cree," Cree, a Turtle Mountain Chippewa spiritual leader and former tribal chairman, draws many parallels between Catholicism and traditional belief. For

example, Cree sees the pipe and rosary as “interpreters between God and man,” the sweat lodge as symbolizing baptism—the fire as God, the rock as Christ, and the water as the Holy Spirit. Sweetgrass and incense both serve for purification.²³ At the same time, he does not ignore conflicts, historical and contemporary.

In Rainwater’s analysis of religious conflict in *Tracks*, she focuses on Pauline’s “sado-masochistic Christianity,” which is an “amalgam of religious views,” “a twisted and deformed” grafting of shamanic religion “into Christian cosmology.”²⁴ The reverse, it seems to me, is true: Pauline grafts Christianity onto shamanic religion. Rainwater uses the example of Pauline seeing the lake creature as both Satan and Chippewa monster, ultimately more horrible than either because he can victimize the innocent and is unappeasable (*LM* 409). Rainwater tries too hard to insist on the sameness of *Love Medicine* and *Tracks* and, in doing so, does not see that the clear opposition of Catholicism and shamanic religion in *Love Medicine* is not so conspicuous in *Tracks*. Rainwater also blurs the time periods of the novels (1934–1984 in *Love Medicine* and 1912–1924 in *Tracks*); these different periods could reflect changing attitudes toward Catholicism in the community. Erdrich’s novels also do so.

A larger view than Rainwater’s, one which explores religious incorporation, is offered by Susan Stanford Friedman:

[The novel] can be read as a religious parable open to two seemingly contradictory readings: first, as a promotion of Anishinabe spirituality; and second, as an exploration of religious syncretism. . . . [T]he novel acknowledges an interpenetration of and hybridization of Anishinabe and European spirituality and identity.²⁵

Friedman reads the “embattled opposition” of the two narrators from a post-colonial perspective: Nanapush, then, is “culture hero and trickster figure Nanabozho . . . defender of traditional beliefs and practices and . . . resistor of Euro-American culture.”²⁶ On the other hand,

[Pauline] represents the colonized subject about whom Franz Fanon writes in *Black Skin, White Masks*. . . . Pauline’s hatred of her Indian identity and desire to “pass” or become visible in a white world take symptomatic form in her hallucinations, paranoia, masochism, and neurotic repressions and twisted expressions of her sexuality. . . . Nanapush and Pauline function metonymically as representations of two kinds of spirituality that differ radically in their concepts of deity, supernatural intervention, and religious practice.²⁷

Fleur Pillager is the battleground: “Defeating Fleur would pave the way for Pauline to complete her special mission, the full conversion of the Chippewa to Christianity.”²⁸ During the shaking-tent ceremony, which Nanapush initiates “to marshal all the powers of the manitous to aid in [Fleur’s] survival,” Pauline not only disrupts the ceremony but also badly burns herself, comprehending

that Catholicism is defeated. Additionally, Pauline's murder of Napoleon "symbolically enacts the psychodynamics of desire, guilt, and repression that the novel associates with Catholicism's teaching about sexuality and the body."²⁹ Finally, her guilt-provoked "extremes of mortification" are "exposed and mocked" by Nanapush's storytelling humor.³⁰ Taken altogether, missionary Catholicism is exposed as irrational, cruel, repressive, and uncivilized. It seems impossible, in this reading, to side with Pauline and, as Friedman notes,

the politics of the novel seem firmly rooted in identity politics, in the condemnation of assimilation as a form of Fanonian self-hatred, in the reclamation and affirmation of traditional Anishinabe ways and world views.³¹

However, Friedman cites biographical data, particularly Erdrich's affection for her grandfather, Patrick Gourneau, to assert that a more postmodern reading of *Tracks* should be explored.

Turning to Erdrich's poetry and fiction, we find tracks everywhere of the Catholicism she seeks to exorcise, but strong traces as well of the way in which Catholic symbolism and mysticism permeate her world view.³²

Erdrich's poetry and *The Beet Queen* in particular,

testify to an ongoing engagement with Christianity, particularly in its mystical forms. . . . [I]n *The Beet Queen* and *The Baptism of Desire*, the mysteries of Catholicism appear not to be exorcised but to serve as pathways to a syncretist spirituality.³³

Friedman demonstrates the need to regard Pauline in a different light because her mortifications are similar to those of medieval saints, such as Catherine, Perpetua, and Cecelia, to whom Pauline compares herself. These mystics had difficulty establishing the legitimacy of their visions because such visions signified direct access to the divine, the "priority of their visions over the words of male authority."³² Excessive mortification of the flesh replicated Christ's suffering and served as "the precondition of visionary experience."³⁵ While Friedman does not ignore the considerable irony and humor attached to Pauline's mortifications, she asserts that "the novel does not entirely reject her narrative authority." In the poetry, "no such irony undermines the stories of saints." In *Tracks*, "the medieval mystic analogue . . . both ridicules and elevates Pauline."³⁶

Pauline's semi-ironic tie to medieval martyrs, a related factor that relieves the negative reading of Catholicism in the novel, "helps to bring into focus certain parallels between medieval mysticism in general and Ojibway religious tradition." To both beliefs, "vision is primary, the central pathway to the realm of the spirit."³⁷ Bodily deprivation and fasting are necessary to visionary experience in both traditions. Friedman carefully argues that Nanapush's fasting and call to the manitous is parallel to Pauline's mortifications and imitation of the saints. Both characters are deeply religious storytellers, and both,

assume the possibility of direct communion with the spirits. . . . Both rely on vision and dreams to provide the central guidance for life. . . . Both are capable of sending their own spirits into the bodies of others.³⁸

Finally, both practice syncretism, exemplified by Pauline in the many details surrounding Napoleon's murder and by Nanapush in the use of his Jesuit education to recover Lulu from boarding school.

Friedman does not argue that the syncretist reading makes Pauline a "positive" character, but that "Nanapush and Pauline exist in perpetual interplay as positive and negative manifestations of similar forces." These parallels "invite us to read them as necessary to each other, as metonymic combatants neither of whom can ever defeat the other." Together they provide "a balance constituted through dynamic interplay." Cultural and religious syncretism "helps bring into view their undying similarities, their symbiosis."³⁹

In addition to what has been written about characters in *Tracks*, my own analysis of their Catholicism provides some new insights. First, Nanapush, always the trickster, uses some of the forms of the Church—just as he uses his Jesuit education—for his own ends, mainly to preserve community. His first-person, past-tense narratives, with Lulu as audience, relate to events occurring during the winter of 1912 to the spring of 1924. Lulu is born in the spring of 1914 and is a young woman when Nanapush tells his tale, perhaps in 1930. Nanapush was about fifty in 1912 and is in his late sixties in 1930, giving him considerable perspective on events that took place six to eighteen years before the telling. Thus, early in his tale he makes it clear that he abandoned Catholicism as a belief system at an early age: "I had a Jesuit education in the halls of Saint John before I ran back to the woods and forgot all my prayers" (*T* 33). An early example of his using his Catholic background but not incorporating it into his Chippewa beliefs is in "the first days of the fevers": when Moses Pillager was a child, Nanapush "spoke a cure for him, gave him a new name [Moses] to fool death, a white name, one I'd learned from the Jesuits" (*T* 35). Later we find Nanapush wearing glasses from Father Damien, whom he thinks of as "our friend," partly because Damien respects Chippewa customs (*T* 61).

Once Nanapush becomes interested in Margaret we find him attending Catholic Mass. I suggest the obvious, that he is not only changing shape to please Margaret but also adapting to the community beginning to form around him, composed of the Kashpaws and Fleur and Lulu. On the first noted instance of being "dragged" to (Benediction) Mass by Margaret, he jokes with Damien about the pews:

A god who enters through the rear door . . . is no better than a thief. I felt no great presence and decided that the old gods were better, the Anishinabe characters who were not exactly perfect but at least did not require sitting on hard planks. (*T* 110)

When we next find him at Mass, he hatches the idea to take wire from Damien's piano for a snare to avenge his and Margaret's humiliation, a most unchristian act, but one that will satisfy "an old Anishinabe warrior" (T 116). After Clarence has been snared and Boy Lazarre hexed and bitten, Nanapush participates in Ash Wednesday ceremonies and proceeds afterward to tell Damien that he is "having relations with Margaret already" (T 123). While confessing, he stuns Damien with details of "what he had been doing with Margaret" and of stealing Damien's wire for the snare (T 124). Nanapush is having great fun, as is the reader, and uses the confessional to restore balance in the Chippewa manner, now that revenge appears complete.

From the beginning to the end of his narrative, Nanapush follows traditional Chippewa religious ceremonies but finds himself unable to restore balance using the old ways alone. He admits to Damien that he "should have tried to grasp this new way of wielding influence" (T 209). He adapts by using his Jesuit training to be elected tribal chair and researches church records to prove he is Lulu's father. As a result, he and Margaret recover Lulu from boarding school in 1924. Our last view of him in church is when Fleur has left, Lulu has been sent away, and the tribal policeman, Edgar Pukwan Junior, is trying to prove Fleur guilty of Napoleon's death. Pukwan spies outside the confessional, and Nanapush humiliates him by going to confession and relating loudly to everyone in the room the "terrible thing" he has witnessed: Pukwan making "love to himself" (T 216). In spite of all the tragedy around him, Nanapush is ever the trickster, using whatever means he has to complete his Chippewa agenda. If Pukwan takes revenge, he will "Out-talk him" or "snare him like the other" (T 217). While no evidence exists of him incorporating Catholicism into his Chippewa belief, this is not the clear denial of Catholicism seen in *Love Medicine*.

As with Nanapush, Pauline is interesting for her own sake: I would emphasize her loneliness, alienation, and search for community. Her becoming a Catholic nun is directly related to these elements. Before I examine this issue, however, much is revealed, as with Nanapush, by a close examination of Pauline's narrative voice. Her first narrative is mainly in the past tense, told when she has gone to live with the Morrisseys after the dramatic events in Argus surrounding Fleur's rape. That summer in 1913 in Argus, Pauline is fifteen years old. She remains with the Morrisseys until late November 1915, just after Marie is born, then goes to the convent. Her other three narratives are also in past tense but are told in 1919 when she is about to take permanent vows as a nun—"I am now sanctified, recovered, and about to be married here at the church in our diocese and by our bishop. I will be the bride and Christ will take me as wife"—and takes the name of Leopolda (T 204). Her youth and closeness to events are important, as are the points in time at which she relates these incidents.

The argument for the sympathetic Pauline who can only end loneliness and find community by becoming a nun runs essentially as follows. Pauline comes from a deracinated Métis family of little status, which has lost its clan name. She identifies with her French Canadian grandfather and refuses to speak Ojibwa. When she is sent to Argus to learn lace-making from the nuns,

she feels she is "made for better" (T114). At some point before going to Argus she does attend school with the nuns. Instead of elevating herself in Argus, she lives with her Aunt Regina, sweeping butcher-shop floors and caring for Russell, her cousin. While she witnesses the events surrounding the rape of Fleur and does nothing to prevent the rape, Pauline helps Russell take revenge on the rapists by locking them in the freezer. She blames herself for not helping Fleur—probably a result of her jealousy for Fleur's attractiveness and daring—and suffers terrible dreams as a result. She is "a skinny big-nosed girl with staring eyes" with a stooped back (T15). During this time, Pauline appears to have lost her immediate family and moves in with the Morrisseys—"well-off" Métis with 640 acres of land—comes to identify with Bernadette (whom she resembles physically), and begins washing and laying out the dead with her new friend, who is "French educated in Quebec" (T63–64). At this point, Nanapush calls Pauline "the crow of the reservation," probably referring to her appearance in dark clothes (T54). Possibly, from his mythical role as healer and restorer of families and clans, Nanapush alludes to her as raven-like because of its association with witches who steal children and thus destroy families.

Nothing works to rid Pauline of her terrible dreams about Fleur until witnessing/willing the death of Mary Pepewas, at which time she learns death to be "a form of grace," has a visionary experience, and afterward sleeps "black and dreamless" (T68). At this point she wears nuns' castoff clothing, has "the merciful scavenger's heart," makes "death welcome," handles "the dead until the cold feel of their skin was a comfort, until [she] no longer bothered to bathe once [she] left the cabin but touched others with the same hands, passed death on" (T69). She participates in both the Catholic and Chippewa burials. She shows no signs of Catholic belief at all but clearly believes in the power of the old gods. She continues to hover about the Nanapush-Margaret "clan" but is not very welcome. In her own words, Pauline is "stretched long as a hayrake and acquired no softening grace in [her] features"; she is "angles and sharp edges, a girl of bent tin" (T71). For a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old child, her life experiences since leaving her family represent considerable pain, deracination, and confusion. The twenty-one-year-old telling us of it cannot possibly comprehend these events in *Tracks* in the way the much older Nanapush, who has had fifteen years to think, can.

Things become much worse for Pauline when she is overcome with sexual jealousy for Eli and Fleur and she sets off events that alienate her from both Chippewas and Métis, forcing her into the arms of the Church. When Pauline uses medicine from Moses to drive Eli and Sophie into sexual ecstasies, she demonstrates her belief in Chippewa medicine. Her conversion to the new way begins when she witnesses the Virgin weeping in Fleur's yard, though her liaison with Napoleon takes place after this. As she looks back on these events from the age of twenty-one, she sees that the Virgin in respect to God, like herself with Napoleon, "did not want Him" (T95). She gives birth to Marie, named after the Virgin, and begins to identify Napoleon with Satan (T134). As she is about to bear the child, she thinks, "If I gave birth, I would be lonelier. I saw, and I saw too well. I would be an outcast, a thing set aside for God's use, a human who could be touched by no other human"

(*T* 135). She is cut off from the Morrisseys and has cut herself off from the Nanapush clan. All ensuing events regarding Pauline follow from this. Though she continues to believe fully in the Chippewa gods, and even thinks of the Christian deity as the “Lord and author of all lies,” she claims to be white so she can enter the convent and join the order of nuns (*T* 158). Mistaking him for Christ, Pauline is instructed by a satanic figure to “Fetch more souls” for him (*T* 140). While she sees the power of the old ways, represented by Fleur, she wants to open the door to the new way. She travels with Fleur on the Path of Souls to the Place of Souls to gamble for Lulu’s life. When she is burned in the shaking-tent ceremony, she decides Christ is “weak . . . a tame newcomer” (*T* 192), but will become his “champion” and “savior” regardless (*T* 195).

In our last sighting of Pauline before she takes her vows, she is on the lake in a storm to “suffer in the desert” and confront her “tempter,” a combination of the lake man and Satan, who finally takes the form of Napoleon, whom she strangles with her rosary (*T* 202). She escapes to the convent, naked, covered with mud, leaves and moss, animal defecation, and feathers—“no more than a piece of the woods” (*T* 204). While much of this is darkly humorous, it is also the tale of a very young woman who is profoundly lonely and cosmically alone, and who becomes deranged as a result. Finally, the nuns become “[her] sisters” and only family, the Church her only retreat (*T* 204). This sympathetic picture overrides that of the absurd Pauline wearing her shoes reversed and dirty potato sacks for underwear. It makes the convent a valid community in an unbalanced world.

Yet another view of Pauline is related to her visionary intensity, a capacity never to be taken lightly in Erdrich’s fiction. Once she is relieved of guilt over Fleur and finds “death as a form of grace,” she flies: “Twirling dizzily, my wings raked the air, and I rose in three powerful beats and saw what lay below” (*T* 68). The next morning she “hung, precarious, above the ground” in a tree—“the trunk was smooth for seven feet and there were no hand- or footholds of any sort” (*T* 68). We have every indication that Pauline, though deranged, is experiencing a vision. After this, she says, “I knew I was different. I had the merciful scavenger’s heart. I became devious and bold, dangerously meek and mild. I wore the nuns’ castoffs” (*T* 69). Shortly after this, she “is drawn by Eli’s heat” and sets off the feud between the Morrisseys and the Nanapush group (*T* 76). The events surrounding Pauline’s vision of the Virgin weeping are indeed humorous. After Clarence appropriates the statue from the mission to bring Sophie out of her catatonic state, Sophie kneels in Fleur’s yard, “stiff as a soldier, hands a steeple” (*T* 88). The Virgin and Sophie “gazed at one another: the Virgin, so curious and alive, and Sophie, dull. . . . That’s when I saw the first tear. . . . She wept a hail of rain from Her wide brown eyes” (*T* 88). The drops freeze, strike the snake at the foot of the statue, and Sophie is released and sprawls in the snow. Pauline collects the frozen tears which later melt. While surrounding events are treated satirically, her vision is not. The same is true later when she has a vision of Lucifer and the lake monster. While to some extent these visions juxtapose those of Nanapush, they have their own validity and deepen and enrich our understanding of Pauline’s character and suffering.

Pauline's Catholicism and Chippewa beliefs incorporate partly, but remain mainly at odds. In our last view of her, on the eve of taking her vows and the veil, she thinks, "I believe that the monster was tamed that night, sent to the bottom of the lake and chained there by my deed" (*T* 204). Fleur is driven away, her land sold and denuded, but the Pillager spirits still haunt the environs with their "low voices" and "still shadows." Pauline will "teach arithmetic at St. Catherine's school in Argus" (*T* 204–205). The old ways and old gods are still very real to her but have been driven into hiding by the new.

ERDRICH ON CATHOLICISM IN INTERVIEWS

In interviews Erdrich has been unusually forthcoming about her fiction and poetry. It has often been noted that she was raised in Wahpeton in eastern North Dakota, a Red River Valley agricultural town, by a German-American father and a Turtle Mountain Chippewa mother. She was raised as a Catholic, attended a Catholic school for several years, and spent many school vacations on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation in north-central North Dakota. There she stayed with her maternal grandparents, a mile west of Belcourt, in an environment where most are at least nominally Catholic. In Belcourt itself the Catholic church, Saint Ann's, and mission stand above and dominate the small town. Erdrich's Catholic legacy from her childhood is powerful and complex. The only ambivalence toward Catholicism seems to be in her belief in the magical and miraculous—and her admiration for her grandfather who practiced religious incorporation:

[I] grew up with all the accepted truths [of Catholicism] but . . . I don't have a central metaphor for my life. I have only chaos.⁴⁰

. . . the events people pick out as magical don't seem unreal to me. Unusual, yes, but I was raised believing in miracles and hearing of true events that may seem unbelievable.⁴¹

I don't deal much with religion except Catholicism. Although Ojibway religion is flourishing, I don't feel comfortable discussing it. I guess I have my beefs about Catholicism. Although you never change once you're raised a Catholic—you've got that. You've got that symbolism, that guilt, you've got the whole works and you really can't change that. That's easy to talk about because you have to exorcise it somehow. That's why there's a lot of Catholicism in both books [*Love Medicine* and *The Beet Queen*].⁴²

One of the strongest influences in Erdrich's childhood was her grandfather, Patrick Gourneau, whom she speaks of as "a great storyteller, a very colorful guy, a traditional Pow Wow dancer".⁴³

Catholicism is very important up there at Turtle Mountain. When you go up there, you go to Church! My grandfather has had a real mixture of old time and church religion—which is another way of incorporating. He would do pipe ceremonies for ordinations and things like that. He just had a grasp on both realities, in both religions.⁴⁴

He prayed in the woods, he prayed in the mission, to him it was all connected, and all politics.⁴⁵

Other important influences in terms of religion are Michael Dorris, her now deceased husband, collaborator, editor, manager, and agent, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Flannery O'Connor.⁴⁶ Erdrich and Dorris shared much in their backgrounds: "Both were half-Indian, both had been 'missionized' Catholic, and both were unquestionably achievers."⁴⁷ Both came from "lower middle class"⁴⁸ backgrounds, and Dorris went to a Jesuit high school in Montana and later to a Jesuit university, Georgetown, where altogether he would have studied a considerable amount of Catholic philosophy and theology. The closeness of the collaboration, especially in regard to Catholicism, is demonstrated by Dorris being the source of Sister Leopolda:

Sometimes, says Dorris, he contributes "whole episodes [to *Love Medicine*]." "Sister Leopolda in the 'Saint Marie' story was a character I knew well in the fourth grade—the closet, the shoe, the window stick. And suddenly that appeared, subsumed, as a story. Louise said, 'The complete image popped out of my head.'"⁴⁹

Of O'Connor, Erdrich says "one of the reasons" she loves her work is, "Everything is so Catholic and bizarre at the same time."⁵⁰ In regard to Marquez, the magic realism in his work corresponds to that in her own—the sense that miracles, magic, and mystery are part of everyday life. At one point, Erdrich describes the priest who levitates while drinking hot chocolate in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as impressive.⁵¹

In Erdrich's comments on her novels in interviews, depicting community and creating character—characters who are full and credible, including their religious inheritance—are primary in relation to other concerns, such as plot, ethnicity, politics, and ideals. She seems similar to Virginia Woolf in regard to the emphasis on character exposition for its own sake, and similar to other Indian writers in her focus on community. The interviews I have been discussing, finally, demonstrate that Erdrich is deeply knowledgeable about Catholic practices and symbolism: she has guilt to exorcise; she admires Catholic writers Flannery O'Connor and Garcia Marquez; she continues to read of saints and devotional practices; she greatly admires her grandfather, Patrick Gourneau—who could worship in the church or in the woods (incorporation); and, like the magic realism in the novels, she accepts as real events that seem unreal or unbelievable as a result of her religious background. As she writes in the final poem in *Jacklight*, "'Turtle Mountain Reservation'—For Pat Gourneau, my grandfather":

Twenty nuns
fall through clouds to park their butts
on the metal hasp. Surely that
would be considered miraculous almost anyplace,
but here in the Turtle Mountains

it is not more than common fact.⁵²

The question remains: What historical circumstances gave rise to the Catholicism that saturates the lives of her characters in *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*? Are the conflicts between traditional religion and Catholicism plausible from a historical viewpoint?

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CATHOLICISM ON THE TURTLE MOUNTAIN RESERVATION

The simple answer to the above question is that the religious circumstances that Erdrich encountered as a child, that Patrick Gournneau lived all his life, and that the characters in *Love Medicine* and *Tracks* struggle with have a long and complex history. A review of this history partly explains the religious environment of the novels and the conflicts encountered by the characters.

The Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribe has at its core Pembina Métis and the Pembina Band of Saulteaux (Plains Chippewa), but contains descendants of the refugees of the 1870 and 1885 failed Métis rebellions in Canada, other Algonquian-speaking people, especially Plains Cree, and some other Native groups. Patrick Gournneau's brief history indicates that the 1892 McCumber Commission counted, among the Turtle Mountain Band, "283 full-bloods and 1476 mixed-bloods, or 'Mechifs,' a total of 1759. Considering the rejection of 522 probably eligible tribal roll applicants, the total could have been 2281."⁵³ The origins of the Catholicism of today's Turtle Mountain people lie in the North West Company trading post at Pembina, North Dakota—first thought to be in Canada but later found to be in the United States—and in the Red River Valley colony in what is now Manitoba, Canada.

Very briefly, the larger historical circumstances follow from the War of 1812, leaving Canada in British, Protestant control. The Catholic French Canadians were outraged: "Bitter resentment of the conquest still burned in the bosoms of the proud descendants of the first settlers of Canada."⁵⁴ The established church was Anglican, its leader in England, and French Catholics had only a bishop in Quebec. Anything like a Catholic hierarchy would require at minimum two bishops and an archbishop.

A related set of circumstances involves the conflict between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company for control of the western fur trade. The former "employed thousands of canoemen, guides, and interpreters from the province of Quebec."⁵⁵ Further, though directed by Scotsmen, the North West Company's headquarters were in Montreal. The latter was British owned and directed. The conflict became especially bloody between 1815 and 1818 and resulted in a battle near the present city of Winnipeg where the governor of Red River Colony was killed. The colonists and Thomas Douglas, Lord Selkirk, requested that Catholic Bishop Plessis of Quebec send priests to establish order among the French Canadian *engages*.

Pembina is roughly 110 miles east of today's Turtle Mountain Reservation and sixty miles south of Winnipeg. The Chippewa ancestors of today's Turtle Mountain band came from the east following the fur trade and were adapting to life on the Plains when camped around the North West Company trading post at Pembina. At this point the present Turtle Mountain Reservation was

clearly in Sioux country.⁵⁶ Alexander Henry established the Pembina post in 1802 and lived there until 1808. Among the many concerns voiced in his journal are the effects of liquor on Indians and French Canadians alike—and the number of the many mixed-blood children produced by unions between mainly French Canadian men and Chippewa and Cree women. Henry lists the number of European or Canadian men at the Upper Red River posts in 1805 as fifty-six, their Indian women as fifty-two, and their mixed-blood children as eighty-two.⁵⁷ All sources demonstrate the widespread impact of liquor on Chippewa culture by the late eighteenth century, before Lewis and Clark passed not far from the Red River country. Further, the country was already being overhunted, and the Chippewa seemed to hunt constantly, primarily to sustain their alcoholism, which produced impoverishment, violence, social destabilization, and human destruction.

Joseph Norbert Provencher and Severe Joseph Nicolas Dumoulin were the priests sent to Pembina from Quebec by Bishop Plessis. Dumoulin was there from 1818 to 1823, built a mission with residence and church, and was deeply involved with the residents when Pembina was discovered to be a part of the United States. Canadian priests were then concerned, as one would expect, with saving souls, glorifying God, and, at least implicitly, increasing the power of the Church. They often equated being Christian with being civilized and had no sympathy with Native religions. What is unexpected is the absence of racism, the interest in Indian languages and cultures, the concern for the humanity of the Indians and Métis, the constantly stated assertion that the liquor trade needed to stop, and that Canadian (French Canadian for the most part) men needed to quell their tendency to drunkenness (they were not admitted to the sacraments until they could) so they could treat their Indian wives and mixed-blood children in humane and responsible ways. By 1825 the liquor trade had officially stopped, though it continued illegally, in Canada and the United States, largely through the efforts of Christian churches. In Pembina by 1821, Dumoulin listed 450 Catholics, but found the Pembina full-blood Chippewas “not those easily adapted to the reception of Christianity.”⁵⁸ In short, the full-blood traditionals were consistent in maintaining their old ways in the midst of cultural confusion.

Father Dumoulin left Pembina in 1823, and the first resident priest in Belcourt was John Malo in 1890. Interim events are somewhat sketchy and anecdotal. It appears that Belcourt began as a campsite because of its location on the border between the forest and the plains, its ample wood and water supply, and the then year-round supply of fish and game (deer and wildfowl especially) to complement the buffalo hunting. The town was named “sometime between 1860 to 1882” after Father George Belcourt who was a Pembina-based “itinerant” priest and who “labored among the Saulteaux (Ojibwa), Cree and mixed blood Indians for nearly thirty years, June 1st, 1831 to March, 1859.”⁵⁹ By 1840 a small settlement of Canadian and Pembina Métis had formed, though it seems doubtful that many full-bloods lived there initially (except for wintering). Father Belcourt stopped and “said Mass, heard confessions, performed marriages and baptisms and even had catechism classes.”⁶⁰ According to Gourneau, the initial language spoken by the Turtle Mountain Métis was

Mechif, sometimes known as Mechif-Cree to distinguish it from true Cree, and sometimes called just Cree. A language that has developed considerably since its early nineteenth-century origins, it is made up chiefly of French and Cree, but contains Plains Ojibwa and English. A whole Mechif culture developed as well, a unique mixture of French and Indian, "which includes dancing and forms of worship."⁶¹ Gourneau comments on religious differences in the present and past between Mechifs and traditionals:

As a general rule directed by preference, almost all the "Mechifs" never take part in Indian ceremonies, except as spectators. They have always looked upon their "Full-Blood" fellowman with mild contempt, scorn and ridicule, and have always termed them "les sauvages," or savages. They were predominately Roman Catholic in faith and rejected the beliefs of the people they termed "les sauvages." In our modern day, however, all full-bloods have accepted and practice Christianity but still cling to some of their Indian beliefs. Also in our modern day, some of the young generation "Mechifs" have changed their attitudes and have become more conscious and respectful of their Indian blood.⁶²

The small group of Mechifs and Indians who lived at Belcourt was augmented in 1870 and 1885 by refugees from the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Métis rebellions and by Plains Chippewa and Ojibwa from 1863 to 1892 as a result of treaties, executive orders, agreements, the disappearance of the buffalo, and the pressure of European and American settlers. The Métis rebellions are documented by Joseph Kinsey Howard.⁶³ *St. Ann's Centennial* sums up the Canadian Métis situation as follows:

[The Métis] were put down by the British army and as many as could escaped to the United States and came to live with the people of Turtle Mountain. Many of these refugees left their wives and children in Canada and because of fear of the British did not return to Canada. They remarried Métis women of Turtle Mountain and raised families there.⁶⁴

In 1863 the Pembina full-bloods split. Those who went to the Turtle Mountain Reservation had adapted to "Plains Indian characteristics, including the tipi, the buffalo hunt and the Sun Dance," and they continued the clan system of the traditional Chippewa, as well as political structures such as "partially hereditary" leadership, military police, and camp council. In religious tradition they combined the Medicine Lodge (Midewiwin) of the woodland tribes with the "Sun Dance or Thirsting Dance" of Plains peoples.⁶⁵

Permanent Catholic institutions followed upon the establishment of the reservation in 1882. The Sisters of Mercy, who were Irish and Irish-American, managed St. Mary's Boarding School from 1884 to 1907, when it burned down. It was started by Father Belcourt and had thirty-eight students in 1886, with accommodations for seventy. By 1895 it had 130 pupils and nine nuns.

When the school burned, the Sisters of Mercy were replaced by Benedictine nuns with German names who rebuilt the school and named it Saint Ann's Ojibwa School. In 1890 Father Malo was in residence in Belcourt and became the first resident pastor of Saint Ann's Church (after Saint Ann de Beaupré). The early priests had Irish or French names, and the first priest from the Turtle Mountain Reservation, Clarence Laframboise, returned in the 1930s. Those with French names were often French Canadian, often born in Quebec. Gradually, priests and nuns were teaching religion in the public schools as well: "In 1974, St. Ann's School was turned over to the tribe to operate as a BIA contract school, administered by the tribe."⁶⁶ Saint Ann's today flourishes as church and mission. The outside is plain brick, but the inside is decorated with Indian designs and motifs. The Sun Dance has not been held since the 1970s, but the community celebrates an annual summer or fall powwow as well as a summer Saint Ann's festival and novena of masses.

From the spectrum of historical texts to which I have alluded, I believe I can venture some germane and modest conclusions. First, the Catholicism of the Turtle Mountain Reservation is linked to large historical events and is not so much part of early colonial occupation—as, for example, in Spanish California—as it is the result of it. In some ways parallel to the Jesuits protecting the Yaqui in Mexico, Catholic clergy in North Dakota and Manitoba did much to stem the excesses of the liquor trade and give the Métis pride and a sense of individual identity. While traditionally religious Indians and Métis must have felt pressure to convert to Catholicism, it must have been mainly social. They continued to practice both Medicine Lodge traditions and the Sun Dance at a time when the nearby Sioux were not allowed many traditional practices. Second, it seems certain that many Métis and full-bloods practiced incorporation or syncretism of Catholicism and traditional Chippewa religion—and that many still do today. Third, it seems probable that considerable social unease existed between traditionals and Catholics, and that adhering to Catholic and French cultural models was related to grasping power and land. Finally, it is likely that nearly all Turtle Mountain Chippewa today are at least nominally Catholic, and that the social unease mentioned earlier has dissipated to a great extent as more religious incorporation has taken place among most parties. However, *Love Medicine* and *Tracks* take place in earlier time periods when conflicts between Catholic Métis and traditionals, such as Gourneau describes, were often bitter.

CONCLUSIONS

Louise Erdrich—indeed not a practicing Catholic—may be considered a Catholic novelist in that her most important novels are saturated with Catholicism. She does what most novelists do: she writes from the environment and symbolism she knows best: her Catholic upbringing in Wahpeton and her Catholic experiences in Belcourt. Further, her admiration for such Catholic writers as O'Connor and Marquez, as well as her continued interest in the lives of the saints and the like, demonstrate a fascination with Catholicism. In *Love Medicine* and *Tracks* Erdrich uses Catholicism importantly, the

former emphasizing the spiritual failure of this European religion for her Chippewas and Métis characters. This failure is a central unifying device for the revised version of the novel. Perhaps for Erdrich this depiction is a way of exercising personal feelings about Catholicism.

In *Tracks*, Catholicism, while it also largely fails the Chippewa, functions to provide the dense background that best reveals her complex characters, especially their religious conflicts and the possibility of religious incorporation. Particularly, I have emphasized a new view of Pauline as a sympathetic character. I can only speculate—from my discussions of the novels and of the historical background of Catholicism—that both novels reveal with historical accuracy some of the range of conflicts Turtle Mountain people must have felt toward religion. While characters and events in *Love Medicine* and *Tracks* are likely fictionalized, the larger spiritual conflicts seem to have historical grounding.

NOTES

1. Usage of the terms *Ojibwa* and *Chippewa* varies among scholars. The *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* follows the style described in the *Handbook of North American Indians*: "The spelling Chippewa is preferred for groups in the United States . . . and Ojibwa, or especially in Canadian usage Ojibway, for those in the rest of Canada. Ojibwa is also the linguistic cover term used for the language spoken, in numerous local varieties, by all the groups under discussion" (E. S. Rogers, "Southeastern Ojibwa," in *Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger, vol. 15 of *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant [Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978], 768–769).

2. Peter G. Beidler and Gay Barton, *A Reader's Guide to the Novels of Louise Erdrich* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 10–13.

3. Debra Burdick, "Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, and *Tracks*: An Annotated Survey of Criticism through 1994," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 20, no. 3 (1996): 137–166.

4. Catherine Rainwater, "Reading between Worlds: Narrativity in the Fiction of Louise Erdrich," *American Literature* 62, no. 3 (September 1990): 406.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, 405.

7. *Ibid.*, 407.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 414.

11. *Ibid.*, 422.

12. Hertha Wong, "Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*: Narrative Communities and the Short Story Sequence," in *American Short Story Sequences: Composite and Fictive Communities*, ed. J. Gerald Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 170–193.

13. *Ibid.*, 176.

14. *Ibid.*, 180.

15. Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Ceremonies* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 164.
16. *Ibid.*, 108.
17. Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 60.
18. *Ibid.*, 123.
19. Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993), 1 ff. Future citations will appear in the text as *LM*.
20. Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988). Future citations will appear in the text as *T*.
21. Rainwater, "Reading Between Worlds," 406.
22. *Ibid.*, 406–407.
23. James McKenzie, "Sharing What I Know: An Interview with Francis Cree," *North Dakota Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (1991): 105–106.
24. Rainwater, "Reading Between Worlds," 409.
25. Susan Stanford Friedman, "Identity, Politics, Syncretism, Catholicism, and Anishinabe Religion in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*," *Religion and Literature* (Spring 1994): 107–133.
26. *Ibid.*, 111.
27. *Ibid.*, 112.
28. *Ibid.*, 113.
29. *Ibid.*, 115.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, 117.
32. *Ibid.*, 119.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, 121.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, 123.
38. *Ibid.*, 124.
39. *Ibid.*, 126.
40. Louise Erdrich, "Louise Erdrich," interview by Mickey Pearlman, in *Conversations with Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris*, eds. Allan Chavkin and Nancy Feyl Chavkin (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994), 155.
41. Louise Erdrich, "An Interview with Louise Erdrich," interview by Nancy Feyl Chavkin and Allan Chavkin, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 221.
42. Louise Erdrich, "Whatever Is Really Yours: An Interview with Louise Erdrich," interview by Joseph Bruchac, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 100.
43. Louise Erdrich, "Louise Erdrich," interview by Nora Frenkiel, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 77.
44. Erdrich, "Whatever Is Really Yours: An Interview with Louise Erdrich," interview by Bruchac, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 99.
45. Erdrich, "An Interview with Louise Erdrich," interview by Chavkin and Chavkin, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 231.
46. Louise Erdrich, "Writers and Partners," interview by Gail Caldwell, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 67.

47. Louise Erdrich, "Behind Every Great Woman . . . ? Luoise Erdrich's True-Life Adventures," interview by Geoffrey Stokes, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 57.
48. Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris, "Intimate Collaboration or 'Novel Partnership,'" interview by Shelby Grantham, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 11.
49. *Ibid.*, 17.
50. Erdrich, "Writers and Partners," interview by Caldwell, in *Conversations*, eds. Chavkin and Chavkin, 67–68.
51. *Ibid.*, 67.
52. Louise Erdrich, *Jacklight* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1984), 83.
53. Patrick Gourneau, *History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians*, ninth edition (Belcourt, ND: Gorneau, 1993), 14.
54. Grace Lee Nute, ed., *Documents Relating to Northwest Missions, 1815–1827* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1985), xii.
55. *Ibid.*, xi–xiii.
56. Eliot Coues, ed., *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and David Thompson, 1799–1814* (New York: Harper, 1897).
57. *Ibid.*, 282.
58. Nute, *Documents Relating to the Northwest Missions*, 431 and 176.
59. *St. Ann's Centennial* (Belcourt, ND, 1985), 139.
60. *Ibid.*
61. Gourneau, *History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians*, 9.
62. *Ibid.*, 12.
63. Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire* (New York: Morrow, 1952).
64. *St. Ann's Centennial*, 90.
65. Mary Jane Schneider, *North Dakota Indians* (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1994), 90.
66. *St. Ann's Centennial*, 91; and Schneider, *North Dakota Indians*, 215.