

# Socio~Cultural Impacts in Literature

Editor

P. Veerasamy



**THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**ARUL ANANDAR COLLEGE (Autonomous)**

*(Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University)*

Reaccredited (3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle) by NAAC at 'A' Grade with a CGPA of 3.66

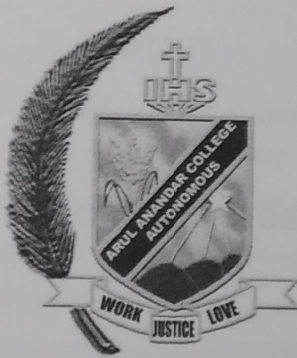
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## INDIGENOUS SURVIVAL IN LOUISE ERDRICH'S *THE PLAGUE OF DOVES*

(Mrs. A. J. Aruna, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Fatima College, Madurai)

Native American Literature has long been neglected by the world. The Natives did not begin publishing fiction until the mid nineteenth century. N. Scott Momaday, a prominent indigenous writer marks the steady beginning of literary production among the American Indian scenario. Paula Gunn Allen, as cited by James Ruppert in his essay, "Fiction: 1968 to the present" traced the Native American fiction into three distinct waves. The first wave reacted to the loss of land and culture. In her introduction to "Song of the Turtle", Allen examines the second wave as: a sense of renewal and hope, reasserted often deeply angry, Native identity; and incorporation of ritual elements in both structure and content drawn from the ceremonial traditions. (8)

The third wave of writers create a more authentic picture of the experience of the modern Native Americans. The chosen Native American fiction for this paper, Louise Erdrich's *The Plague of Doves* falls under the second wave. In this novel, Erdrich projects the loss of native land which is transmitted to Evelina, a teen-aged girl through her grandfather Mooshum. Erdrich takes this tragic loss of sovereignty as a base and instructs the present generation to be aware of this historic injustice. She also warns them "how to behave when our moment of recognition or perhaps our romantic trail, should arrive" (9)

Louise Erdrich is a phenomenal contemporary Native American writer. She is a versatile writer who has attained success in novels, poetry and children's literature. Her fictional world is influenced both by her mixed blood heritage and the experience which she gained from her fellow people. She relates her tribal history from the second half of the nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century. She is an Anishinaabe (anthropologists and linguists refer as Ojibwe or Chippewa Indians) on her mother's side and a German-Jewish -Catholic decent on her father's side. She is an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa Indians of northern North Dakota. Her maternal grandfather, Patrick Gourneau served as tribal chairman for many years. Most of the incidents which she narrated in her books are from the mouth of her grandfather. She celebrates American Indian culture in her novels. She populates her novels with the real portrayals of the natives, the white folks and the mixed blood in her novels.

Lisa S. Atchison contributed a geographical map about the historical and current turtle mountain homeland in the book *Approaches to teaching the works of Louise Erdrich*. Her geographical sketch substantiates the tragic loss of land in Louise Erdrich's *The Plague of Doves*. The readers can understand how the Natives lost their land and how they are dwindled. In her analysis, the original lands claimed by the Turtle Mountain Chippewa constituted about one-fifth of the state of North Dakota. Two well known trading posts were established in the year