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The Affect in Louise Erdrich's *The Plague of Dove*

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ABSTRACT

The present study addresses Louise Erdrich's The Plague of Doves in the light of Patrick Colm Hogan's affect notions of the narrative concerning the emotional experiences of the subjects. This paper attempts to trace the concepts of affect, emotional narrative, attachment relations, emotional geography and emotional history in Erdrich's novel in order to explore how emotions and relations are interrelated in the narrative of geography, history, and, particularly, in what affects the narrative and the subjects in fiction. The present paper, specifically, demonstrates how Erdrich's mentioned novel acts as the affect study and narrative of emotion that vocalizes the history and geography of Native American people of the Ojibwa which have not been divulged due to social and ontological factors. The study thus investigates the ontological and epistemological paradigms in Native American life and history experienced by Ojibwa survivors. In addition, it argues how emotionology works for minority subjects and how the notion of affect in terms of Hogan's theory is traceable in Erdrich's novel. In The Plague of Doves, the affected survivors are haunted by the emotional memory of their present as a consequence of which the subjects continuously shift from the present time to the past – whereby time loses its linearity in the narrative.

Keywords: Affect study, Attachment Relations, Emotional Narrative Theory, Emotional Geography, Emotional History

INTRODUCTION

Since Aristotle, the traces of the impact of emotion in the history of literary criticism can be tracked down. However, fundamental books on affect theory have been circulated since 1995. The present article explores the emotional geography, emotional history and concerns of the Native American people embedded in the selection of specific narrative frameworks in Louise Erdrich's *The Plague of Doves* (*PD*), representative of the second-wave of Native American literary works to portray that "your ethnic background is a shaping force of your existence, which you cannot simply walk away from" (Rosenthal, *Narrative Deconstructions* 108).

Louise Erdrich (b. 1954) is a contemporary mixed-blood Native American author, the one who is representative of the Native American style of writing. She is one of the most significant writers of the second wave of the Native American Renaissance as in the words of Connie A. Jacobs: "Erdrich … assume[s] the role of the traditional communal storyteller as (she) creatively approximate[s] the storytelling situation in a written format" (41). Kenneth Lincoln names four writers as the founders of the second wave of American Indian literature Renaissance: N. Scott Momady, James Welch, Leslie Marmon Silko and Louise Erdrich. Er-

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drich was included in this category with her first novel *Love Medicine*. Erdrich and three other authors use the oral tradition of Native American tradition in their stories (Jacobs, "One Story" 144). What distinguishes Erdrich from other writers of this style is that all her novels are connected like a long story, as if they form a very long story, a story that reflects the historical, social and political history of the Ojibwa people who stood with all the ups and downs and did not give up. The tradition of oral storytelling in family gatherings in Erdrich's works is the main point of her narratives. The beginning of her interwoven novels is *Love Medicine*, which has a different narrative pattern than the works of other authors of the same category: related stories, related lives, related landscapes and related times and places. In the introduction to the book *Native Americans Renaissance*, Lincoln states that in *Love Medicine*, all the stories finally come together, from the first to the last, and all the parts and characters are connected to each other (xiii). From the first to the last, Erdrich's works reflect the events and history of the life of the Ojibwa people, which Erdrich considers herself a representative of, to be the voice of their resistance against all kinds of violence and pressures that they have experienced in the reservation.

Louise Erdrich's works clearly express concepts that include the concerns of contemporary Native Americans, especially the Ojibwa people, with topics such as history, land, love and hate, violence, injustice, and survival. They show the effects of devastating experiences that destroy the subject her/himself, her/his identity, her/his family and her/his society, traumatic experiences that are widespread and the consequences that do not diminish with the passage of time but continue to plague the members of the society. The narrators of Erdrich's stories, from mono-narrative to multi-narrative, are representatives of the past, which are expressed by present experiences and affect the subjects and emotional concerns and obsessions. In order to survive, the subjects either surrender to their feelings or try to maintain their position and revive their rights, or ignore their feelings and run away from their history, land and geography and their true selves. Ojibwa's spirit and emotions have a deep root in the author's existence and make her take up the pen to change the situation and improve her society.

Erdrich is well known for her tetralogy – *Love Medicine* (1984), *The Beet Queen* (1986), *Tracks* (1988), and *The Bingo Palace* (1994) – and trilogy – *The Plague of Doves* (2008), *The Round House* (2012) and *LaRose* (2016) – as well as other novels, poems and short stories. In 2015 she was awarded the Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction at the National Book Festival. Her latest prize, the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, was awarded in 2021 for her novel *The Night Watchman*.

In *PD*, the target of this study, Erdrich through various nonlinear narrators illustrates the townsfolk of the fictional Pluto, North Dakota. The title of the novel is a metaphor for the misfortunes and calamities the Ojibwa suffer from. The novel inaugurates with reference to the murder of the Spicers, a white family of five, the fifth member of which, a baby girl, survives. This plague remains unsolved to the final chapters of the novel. The major plot of the novel centers on a racist event that occurred in the early twentieth century. Peter G. Beidler delineates that the real-life events that took place in North Dakota in the late 1890s were the inspiration for Erdrich's plot for *PD* (*Murdering* 4-6). A group of Native Americans were known to be the assassins. The citizens of Pluto believed that the three witnesses – also Native American – were in question as well. Nine months after the first group of assassins was tried and sentenced to death, the citizens rushed to the prison, vanquished the watchmen and hung the three witnesses. Paul Holy Track, a 19-year-old boy, is considered to be the influential figure for Holy Track, the thirteen-year-old boy in Erdrich's *PD*. In order to be more discursive and elaborative, the researchers are going to apply Hogan's narrative techniques to this literary work.

Within the context of narrative studies, Hogan stands for introducing the affect study of narrative and emotion throughout the literary works. The term 'affective narratology' is coined by Patrick Colm Hogan in his book *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure*

of Stories (2011). The term "affection" is, nonetheless, not a new one as Hogan argues in his other book, *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (2003), where he goes through the literary history and background of emotion and affection. In his *Mind and Its Stories* (2003), Hogan examines the historical background for narrative and emotion since he believes that there is a deep relation between narrative and emotion – two essential elements of literature and the human mind (4). Narrative is naturally emotional and emotion is naturally narrative (Mind 234).

Considering the theoretical framework, Hogan's theory of emotional narrative, including "attachment relations" will be applied to Erdrich's work, which argues that the agents in relation become attached. Hogan focuses on one instance of attachment goal: the stories concerning the parent-child separation and reunion. Initially, Hogan divides attachment into two types of secure and insecure. Furthermore, considering the security and insecurity of attachment, Hogan categorizes the stories of parent-child separation into four types. In each case of separation, a reunion may or may not happen (*Affective* 202-3). The "ideological complications," emotional memories rooted in childhood, earlier life experiences and the attachment to certain traumas intensify the emotional effect of attachment relations. Nostalgic events also manipulate emotional experiences and are emotionally eliciting conditions (204). These notions will be further explained in the following sections.

The present paper first introduces the review of recent literature on Louise Erdrich's *The Plague of Doves*. The next section includes the critical approach to exploring the novel, addressing the major critical concepts employed in Hogan's studies of the affect and emotional narrative. Then, the close reading and the discussion of the novel in terms of the concepts are presented in which the extracts from the novel are examined and read according to the terminology on attachment relations, emotional history and emotional geography observed by Hogan's theories. Finally, the concluding section of the paper follows where the findings and implications are presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Louise Erdrich's fiction explicitly articulates conceptions that highlight the contemporary Native Americans', specifically Ojibwas', concerns primarily with the themes of history, land, love and hate, motherhood, homecoming and survival. They illustrate the impacts of a devastating experience that disturbs the subject's self and identity, a traumatic experience that has the capacity to remain overwhelmingly present. There is no chronological order in her works. Thus, the absence of linearity in her fiction best reflects the affect on the subjects and their emotional concerns and obsessions. In order to survive, the subjects either surrender their emotions or endeavor to maintain their positions or ignore their emotions and flee their history, land and geography and real selves. The emotional narrative of events, such as the murder of the white family, the Specters, along with flashbacks to other sufferings and tortures are central in her fiction, particularly, in *PD*. The spirit and emotion of the Ojibwa are blended in her work.

Louise Erdrich: A Critical Companion (1999) by L. Lorena Stookey is a critical book that begins with Erdrich's complete biographical account, tracing early influences in her life. Her place in the literary tradition as a novelist, poet, and storyteller is reinforced by her skill to reconcile traditional and experimental approaches to the construction of her fiction. Erdrich's major novels are analyzed from chapters three to eight. Each novel is examined in terms of literary style, plot, character, theme and narrative. Alternate critical approaches to Erdrich's writing are also given for each of her six major works to date. It is an indispensable resource for any reader seeking to develop a greater understanding of Erdrich's writings.

David Stirrup's *Louise Erdrich* (2010) is the asset of roughly new and different attitudes toward Erdrich's tetralogy and other works. The book is about authorship and authority of Native American literature of which Erdrich is a representative. Moreover, being a Native American besides a female writer is examined in the book. Finally, the significance of spatial relations in Native Americans' life and the cultivation of such relations in their values in

terms of geoculture in addition to Erdrich's success in portraying her own culture in a pedagogical manner are other major topics discussed in this literary study.

Peter G. Beidler facilitates the historical evidence in Erdrich's *PD* in his *Murdering Indians: A Documentary History of the 1897 Killings that Inspired Louise Erdrich's The Plague of Doves*. Other than the trial documents and the court statement, Beidler provides the reader with his comments on the startling events of racism and revenge in the life of the Native Americans, a stimulus for Erdrich's first novel within her trilogy *PD*. This documentary initiates with the concepts of despair, murder, and drinks and continues with the trial, the lynching, the residents' recollections, confessions of the witnesses, the quest for healing and the epilogues of suffering for the Native American citizens.

The hardships tolerated by Native Americans and their torments by the immigrants and colonizers are the focus of Susan Strehle's article. She debates that Louise Erdrich, as a mixed-blood (Ojibwa and German American) author, endeavors to search for a recovery in *PD* to redeem the toleration and traumas of the Native Americans who had long been regarded as savages by the Americans. The article focuses on *PD* as representative of "America's exceptionalist history" (124), scrutinizing the relations between Native Americans, Euro-Americans and the mixed-blood ones. Such relations between various ethnicities are contorted due to the disgust, loathing and delusion spread in the community by the Euro-Americans. American exceptionalism developed its roots in the canon by the misconceptions, abhorrence and repressions as Antone Coutts's suggestion in the novel is: "But what is the difference between the influence of instinct upon a wolf and history upon a man? In both cases, justice is prey to unknown dreams" (117). Strehle debates that Erdrich endeavors to demonstrate the "exceptionalist" view of the American dream and seeks to for awaken her people and the universe to rise and amend this view.

Philately and stamp collection are delineated in Robert C. Hamilton's article "Disaster Stamps': The Significance of Philately in Louise Erdrich's *The Plague of Doves.*" Hamilton argues that Erdrich's utmost reflection of the colonial and fragmented community of America is vividly represented through the stamps collected by the Ojibwas. The traumatic significance and startling reality of the stamp album is that the Ojibwas quest for their identity and real selves in the stamps that are distributed by the whites, the dominant majority in the community; nevertheless, the final chapter of Erdrich's *PD* exclusively demonstrates that the endeavor for maintaining identity crumbles and turns to a mirage when most of the stamps become scattered in the mud and "disintegrated into a minute confetti" (266).

THEORETICAL Framework: Emotional Narrative

Hogan's affect studies center on the emotional narrative. The term "affection" is not a new one as Hogan argues in his other book, *The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion* (2003), where he goes through the literary history and background of emotion and affection. He also argues that emotion is part of biological evolution (252) and emotions are embedded in the narrative (240); therefore, to perceive emotion is to perceive narrative.

The term 'affective narratology' is coined by Patrick Colm Hogan in his book *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories* (2011). Hogan discusses the theories of emotion, delineating the "attachment theory" designating emotions that are interrelated, one being the effect of the other. Therefore, the agents in relation become attached. He specifically maneuvers on the parent-child separation and union while debating "attachment relations," (202) leading to secure and insecure attachments (203). To Hogan, the "dominant and resistant" ideologies in the social context are related to the hierarchy of the society. The "ideological complications," emotional memories rooted in childhood, earlier life experiences and the attachment to certain traumas make the emotional effect of at-

tachment relations intense. Nostalgic events also manipulate emotional experiences and are emotional eliciting conditions (204).

Moreover, Hogan proposes "emotional geography" and "emotional history" (*Mind* 110), arguing that emotional geography indicates spatial experiences while emotional history involves lengthy emotional experiences and that both emotional domains require interpretation. The chain of actions, emotions and later actions are provoked by incidents suffused with particular times and places. Time and spatial experiences evocative of emotional experiences are referred to as emotional history and emotional geography. Emotional principles are decisive in selecting, structuring and organizing goals and events. The expectations, their attachment to normalcy and the experiences are reflective of the emotional history and emotional geography (Affective 41).

Therefore, being conscious of the events at a specific time and place would be leading to the agent's awareness, survival and managing the traumas as Bakhtiar Sadjadi, et al. maintain in their article "Trauma and Narrating World War I: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Pat Barker's *Another World*": "Being unconscious to the event at the moment of its happening, the flashbacks and nightmares are the only witness to a survival that the traumatized is incapable of understanding, yet, this does not mean that unconsciousness and survival are straightly interconnected (164).

Diverse time scales of expectations and objectives are correlated with emotional life. The embedding of events and incidents is suggestive of such a correlation. While the incidents narrow down the emotional experiences to enduring points, fiction extends them to lengthy experiences, surviving for decades and years. Therefore, the events and aspirations interact with life and fiction (Hogan, Affective 42). The extent to which an emotion is accepted in society determines the amount of emotion expressed in that social context. The social norms are traced in the emotional experiences, representations and manifestations of emotion (Hogan, *Emotion* 71).

DISCUSSION

Perception of Emotions through the Emplotment of Events

In order to study *PD* through emotional perception, the characters, their relationship, and the value of their actions and decisions are investigated to achieve the emotional narratives in the novel, which will be evaluated through the application of Hogan's principles of attachment relations. The characters' behavior, memories, reactions and judgments shed light on the way characters articulate their identities. The originality of this novel is because of its documented references and descriptions pertaining to the 1897 assassinations in America. Up to the final part, the reader has indirect access to the decades and experiences of three generations embedded in the novel.

Emotion and Attachment Relations

Hogan's discussion of the perception theory of Emotion focuses on the automatic and mechanical processes of the evocation of emotional responses. The perception theory of emotion centers on the events and incidents in the story to trace the emotional responses in the work. The protagonists' and heroes' concerns and interests are the targets of study and interpretation. The judgments, evaluations and anticipations are examined. Hogan debates that expectations make the brain come to perceptions, whether short-term or long-term (Affective 43-4). As in attachment relations experiences are interrelated, one experience could be the effect of other similar experiences. The childhood experiences of emotions are the roots for further adulthood emotional experiences (5).

Erdrich's narrative style is a disguised one since she conceals the associations between the past and present, the characters keep secrets through decades and the relations between the characters remain silent to the final pages. *PD* consists of twenty-nine sections. The first section, "Solo," is emotionally evoking since the odor of blood is felt and what is lost in the gramophone sound is the cry of the baby frightened, embarrassed and bewildered looking at the gun. The baby daughter of the white family of five, the Spicers, has the opportunity to survive the murder and is saved

by one of the murderers who is later revealed to be a member of a group of Native Americans. From the very beginning of the novel the ignition of emotion is vivid, the traces of the arousal of emotion are observed in the last words of the novel. It seems that the book consists of disjointed and fragmented sections; however, the last section sheds light on the fact that the whole novel is an album of stamps collected to record the injustices imposed on and suffered by the Native Americans through the decades.

The vivid instance of attachment relations is Dr. Cordelia Lochren who appears to be the baby daughter of the first section of the novel, revealing her identity and past in the final pages of *PD*. She started her secret affairs with the thirteen-year-old boy Antone, becoming Judge Antone Bazil Coutts, for decades and continues his seduction for years. Cordelia's refusal of Antone's marriage proposal, after decades of leading secret affairs with him, is her tool for escaping attachment relations with her nation and her real self. Rejecting the attachment relation with her real identity is vividly seen when she expresses that their marriage would be a barrier to her profession and social reputation and the "trust of her patients" (279).

Toward the end of the novel Antone recognizes that he is the only Ojibwa visited by Cordelia and that she actually refuses to treat other Native Americans. Cordelia maintains the affair since it is beneficial for her. Finally, Geraldine identifies Cordelia. Her refusal of attachment relations with her nation is portrayed in Gerldine's view that "they always need an exception" to deny their own racism and identity (291). Her affair with Antone provides her the opportunity to stand away from a nation that caused the murder of her innocent family and her separation from her mother. Cordelia, all through her life, experiences and suffers from Hogan's terms as insecure attachment resulting from her growth lack of a mother and a family whose reunion is impossible since they are dead. Within decades, Cordelia resists this detachment by ignoring her racism and national identity while she avoids visiting the Ojibwa and treats them as her patients. The trauma of detachment relation rooted in her childhood needs to be cured through her secret meetings and affairs with Antone as he says. "I'd always been her one exception. Or worse, her absolution. Every time I touched her, she was forgiven" (292).

Secure/Insecure Attachment

The first and the youngest narrator in *PD* is Evelina who paves the way from experiencing secure attachment in the early section to the insecure one in the end. Evelina narrates her section while she hears and comes to know the history of her people from the adults. She is in her early adolescence when she gets to know the bitter history of her race, the violence and lynches of her nation. Evelina's grandfather Mooshum tells them about the events of the plague of doves in 1896. During her adolescence, she experiences a period of complexity and confusion over her land, ancestors and nation. While Evelina is haunted by the memories of the history of her nation and experiences a nervous breakdown in the hospital, the embedding of emotional history in the Ojibwa is reflected when Evelina says, "History works itself out in the living" (243). Debra K. S. Barker believes that "the dispossession of ancestral, tribal land" would be the presupposition for the trauma, the psychic wound the family suffers from (8). Evelina is the representative of such a family and Ojibwa who suffer from traumatic experiences rooted in what Hogan refers to as emotional land and emotional history.

As the land stands for Mother Nature and constitutes part of one's identity, we might take Hogan's specific notion of par- ent-child separation to a more general level of land-individual separation. In his speech "Message to the Grass Roots," Malcom X refers to the land as Mother Nature is "the basis of independence" (7). Later, in "Last Answers and Interviews," Malcom designates that losing one's land equals losing one's identity, spirit and goals. The individual becomes "rootless, he's not uptown and he's not fully downtown" (207).

Nevertheless, Evelina does not feel satisfied with her insecure attachment since she leaves Pluto for college, and as she cannot come to a satisfactory communication with anybody, she recognizes that she does not "fit

in with anybody," whether Native Americans, whites or even mixed-bloods (222). She attempts to ignore her Native ancestors and flee her land; however, at every attempt, she feels more rooted in her ethnicity and Pluto, leading to dissatisfaction and despair. Evelina's maturity is presumably achieved when her insecure attachment becomes fixed.

Evelina's first affair experiences while she works as an intern in a mental hospital could be recognized as her attempt at recompense for the absence of a secure attachment. She becomes familiar with Warren Wolde, a patient in the mental hospital. Later, Evelina's passionate affair with Nonette indicates her endeavor to achieve a secure attachment to the new land. Nonette is from Paris and, through the affair, Evelina endeavors for replacing Paris for Pluto, "I didn't know at the time women could kiss women in that way anywhere but in Paris" Enthusiastic for the affair could "set me outside the narrative of Pluto" (235). Nonetheless, Evelina's attempts to find a secure attachment in a land other than Pluto crumble since Nonette's passion for her grows much deeper as Evelina is an Indian from America, encountering the "American face" (239).

The trial of achieving a secure attachment in her land occurs after a period of depression in the mental hospital while Evelina decides to return to Pluto. Her maturity coincides with the insecure attachment with Pluto since she acknowledges that she cannot escape her ancestors and the events foregrounding the history of her land and nation. She gets to know Mooshum's repressions and that Mooshum was one of the people who hanged the murderers of the 1897 assassination (251). *PD* is a true historical novel, the emotional narrative of which represents "a true story of racism and revenge, a true story of the misery, mistrust, frustration, and impatience that are the unfortunate origins of modern America" (Beidler 4-5). Pluto is replete with insecurity, and the history of the land and her nation is not an honor to her; however, she is doomed to stay in Pluto, and experience the insecure attachment since a reunion with her Pluto does not mean that she will live in a dreamland, but that has to await an undetermined future. The portrayal of the emotional land in Evelina is exemplified in Arnold's description of her feeling while she spends time in the mental hospital; she is obsessed with both feelings of "the loss and the promise" (71). She remembers her grandfather's notion of the presence of doves "The doves are still up there" (Erdrich 254). Her insecure attachment to nature and land does not last long and she decides to return to Pluto as she says in the hospital: "Sometimes doves seem to hover in this room. At night when I can't sleep, I hear the flutter of their wings" (Erdrich 244). Evelina's emotional land conducts her through what Ellen L. Arnold refers to as the "trajectory from violence to healing" (68).

EMOTIONAL NARRATIVE

Emotional History and Emotional Geography

To study *PD* through emotional history and emotional geography, the multi-narration, the different sections of the novel, the characters and their relations with one another and the emotions in their actions, thoughts and decisions are investigated in order to reconstruct the emotional realm of the work, evaluated by relying on Hogan's critical principles concerning emotional issues. The emotional narrative, therefore, is adapted from Hogan's view and applied to the character's thoughts, actions, and judgments to acknowledge how the characters articulate their real selves through emotional geography and land.

The apparently heterogeneous narrative and fragmented sections become homogeneous and consistent when we go through the last section of the novel. The first section in which there is a reference to stamp collection is titled "A Little Nip." Evelina refers to her father's and brother's "fascination" with "collecting stamps […] which was a way of traveling without leaving" (28). "Travelling without leaving" is Evelina's view of collecting stamps; the kind of view rooted in the emotional geography and land of the Ojibwa people who cannot leave their land emotionally even despite the utmost pressures and sufferings. There are also flashbacks to the Native American antecedents and their immigration from Canada to America. The very early sentences of "A Little Nip" render descriptions of the three pictures on the wall. The two colorful ones, received by the school and church, are John F. Kennedy

and Pope John XXIII. However, the third one is the "yellowed and frail" photograph of Louis Riel who was "the visionary hero" of the Ojibwa and the "near leader of what could have been […their] Michif nation." (21) Later on, the debates over Riel's revolt is disappointing and a desire destroyer since the Native People still have their emotional obsessions with their land, geography and settlement.

As Hamilton explains, there is no clear explanation and direct reference to the relation between Riel and "the lost possibility of a 'Michif nation'" (267) on the one hand and the immigration of their antecedents and the connection of all of the events with philately on the other. However, the Ojibwa live with a feeling of statelessness; they long for travelling "without leaving." They are emotionally obsessed with their land in Canada and they are afflicted with the U.S. government for they are forced to live in reservations as the setting of *PD* is the fictional Pluto in North Dakota. They are not the residents of their own land but "travelers" who can neither stay nor leave. The stamps in the novel are a manifestation of their fragmented emotions toward their land and geography of life.

The dual geographical emotion towards their land and the dilemma of travelling and leaving or resistance and settlement runs through the novel. The theme of troubled inheritance and "uneasy bequest" (Hamilton 267) casts its shadow on all the sections of the novel. The stamp collection ties the Ojibwa to their land and origin; simultaneously, they are associated with hardship and suffering. Thus, the collection is worthy while causing hardships for the nation. The emotions of sorrow, helplessness, "despair" and geographical emotion are juxtaposed at the end of the novel, representing the fact that the Ojibwas cannot emotionally leave their land nor their past and history; they are doomed to resist, there is no way out.

David Stirrup in his book *Louise Erdrich* refers to her "treatment of the land…addressing not only the histories but the historiography itself" (12). Later, Stirrup brings a quotation from the fifth page of Erdrich's essay "Where I Ought to Be: A Writer's Sense of Place," concerning what is referred to in this paper of emotional geography:

> Although fiction alone may lack the power to head our government leaders off the course of destruction, it affects us as individuals and can spur us to treat the earth as we would treat our own mothers and fathers. For once we no longer live in the land of our mother's body, it is the earth with which we form the same dependent relationship helpless without its protective embrace (12).

What Stirrup has in mind can presumably be elaborated by Hogan's notion of emotional history which is going to be discussed.

The concerns of the emotional geography and history reach a climax when Evelina's father has a car accident whereby the stamp collection becomes deformed, distorted and blended with the dust and the earth as if the stamps are rooted in the land and geography of the nation of North Dakota:

> The leather-bound books were splayed open, warped, and ruined. We picked stamps off cattails and peeled stamps from wet clods of mud. When we brought what we'd found to his hospital bed, Dad looked sick. He pretended to fall asleep. Our mother said, 'He is in despair.' We hadn't known the stamps could really be that valuable (266).

Erdrich applies the metaphor of the philately for the colonized, fragmented and unstable life of the Ojibwa. It is the American government that issues postage stamps; paradoxically, however, they stand for the oppressed geographical emotions of the Native Americans. *PD* is narrated in the oral tradition, Erdrich's sincere obsession, and in fragmented, apparently unrelated sections; nevertheless, the muddy stamps combined with the geographical emotions of the Ojibwa portray the worth of the "flaws, differences, forgeries, and inheritances, ultimately adding up to more than the sum of their parts" (Hamilton 270). In her interview, Neve reveals that many of the stamps are counterfeit. For example, Neve regretfully refers to Uncle Octave's collection and states that there were "forged" stamps in that collection, believing that he "was experimenting with forged disaster mail," and she subsequently adds that he attempted to sell

the "fake authenticated letter to a dealer in London" (306) as well. The disaster stamps are supposed to circulate the misfortunes and calamities of the nation. In case they could not commemorate the significant events in the life of the Ojibwa, the function would be under question.

CONCLUSION

The plague of Doves is the first novel of the trilogy called "justice" trilogy concerning the attachment relations and the historical and geographical emotions suffered by the Ojibwas to establish justice in their land and history. In Hoganian affect terms, the emotion-provoking incidents and events, enable Erdrich's characters to redefine and rearticulate themselves constantly through attachment relations and the emotional experiences of history and geography. However, the emotional perceptions help such characters to pave the way for the cultural, ontological and epistemological cognition of themselves and their nation as well.

The final section "Disaster Stamps of Pluto" resolves the writer's intention to use fragmentation and imbalances in the sections of the novel. "Disaster Stamps of Pluto" represent the disaster in the land, the emotion and identical obsessions of the Native Americans. The novel begins with a threat and panic of assassination with "Solo" and ends while the riddle is solved and many secrets revealed.

Erdrich tries multi-narrators with no specific sense of closure and no definite conclusion as if to run around in circles, emphasizing the fact that such stories "do not end with their telling, but rather continue, transformed, in a circular manner" (Jacobs 14). The final paragraph of the novel is Cordelia Lochren's narrative, reflecting the uncertainty of the ending. She expresses that her narrative is "too apocalyptic" (311). On the one hand, the apocalypse here reflects the uncertainty intertwined with the lives of the Ojibwa people; on the other hand, it "reveals too much" of their life and identity (Hamilton 271). Finally, new elaborations are surmised from the stamps "disintegrated into a minute confetto" (266) while spread on the earth: the quest for the real self and identity remains unraveled.

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