

A Brief Analysis of American Indian Identity in the Post-colonial Context -- Taking Love Medicine as an Example

QiYue Zhao

Beijing International Studies University, Beijing, China

Email: 2927508190@qq.com

How to cite this paper: Zhao, Q. Y. (2026). A brief analysis of American Indian identity in the post-colonial context: Taking Love Medicine as an example. *Literature, Language and Cultural Studies*, 5(2), 13–25. ISSN Print: 3079-5095, ISSN Online: 3079-5109.

<https://doi.org/10.63313/LLCS.2007>

Published: 2026-05-20

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and

Erytis Publishing Limited.

This work is licensed under the Creative

Commons Attribution International

License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Abstract

Until today, when American multiculturalism is flourishing, the rights and interests of ethnic minorities in the United States still suffer from many deficiencies. Based on the post-colonial context, this paper will take the famous American Indian female writer Louise Erdrich's novel *Love Medicine* as an example, through the analysis of the protagonist's emotional experience and life tribulations, reveal the identity dilemma that the American Indians are faced with in the aspects of culture, history, and politics, etc., and analyze the struggle and exploration of the American Indians in the face of the dilemma.

Keywords

Post-Colonial Context; American Indian Identity; Love Medicine

1. Introduction

The field of Indian identity studies in the postcolonial context is an interdisciplinary study involving a range of disciplines such as psychology and literary criticism. Research in this area began in the mid to late 20th century, and with the rise and development of postcolonial theory, researchers began to look at identity formation and cultural expression of indigenous peoples in colonial history and the postcolonial era.

1.1. Background Introduction

Before the colonial invasion, the identity of American Indians was based on their respective tribal, linguistic and cultural traditions. Their way of life was closely connected to nature and created unique social structures and cultural practices. With the arrival of European settlers, the identity of the North American Indians began to suffer. Colonial policies led to land theft, cultural assimilation and genocide,

and Native Americans were forced to adapt to new ways of life and belief systems. After the founding of the United States, the US government passed a series of laws and policies such as the Indian Removal Act (1830) and the Dawes Act (1887) that further stripped Native Americans of their sovereignty and land and furthered the policy of Native American assimilation. It was not until the mid-20th century that the U.S. government adopted a relatively liberal policy that allowed tribal autonomy and the revitalization of their culture. During this time, Native Americans began to reevaluate and reconstruct their identity.

Since the post-colonial period, with the civil rights movement and the Native American self-determination movement, American Indians have become more active in preserving and revitalizing their cultural traditions, mainly in the form of cultural festivals, language revitalization projects and artistic expressions. Although American Indian culture improved during this period, it remained marginalized. The post-colonial period is often defined as the period following the end of colonial rule, a time when individual and collective identities have been affected by the colonial past, and a time when American Indians are experiencing the complex reconstruction and negotiation of their cultural, racial and ethnic identities.

1.2. Research Purpose and Significance

This paper examines the complexity, challenges and process of the search for an Indian identity in a postcolonial context through the combination of literature analysis, textual close reading and illustrative method, by analyzing the long novel *Love Medicine* by Louis Erdrich, a celebrated contemporary Indian writer in the USA, to show how, in the face of the invasion of foreign cultures and social change, Indians attempt to find their orientation and personal identity in modern society while preserving their traditional cultural identities. The analysis shows that Indian identity in the post-colonial context is a dynamic process that encompasses cultural conflicts, economic pressures, family and community relations and other aspects. These factors interact with each other, leading to the complexity and contradictions of Indian identity in modern society.

Postcolonial theory offers a new perspective for analyzing and understanding American Indian identity. Unlike traditional historical narratives and Western-centered perspectives, the postcolonial context is grounded in Indian history and culture, which allows for a more objective exploration of the complex relationship between culture, power, and identity and breaks down stereotypes of Indians. At the same time, the study of American Indian identity integrates many disciplines, such as psychology and literary criticism, and promotes dialogue and cooperation between different fields through a multidimensional research perspective, as well as providing cases and experiences for the protection of global cultural diversity. The study will help to better understand the American Indian identity journey, raise awareness and understanding of the oppression and

distortion of Native American identity by Western colonialism, and strengthen the concept of harmonious multicultural development.

1.3. Domestic and Foreign Research Status

As far as domestic research is concerned, studies on American Indian identity mainly focus on the following aspects: tracing the colonial experience of American Indians from a historical perspective, exploring the conflict and integration of indigenous and colonial American Indian cultures from a cultural perspective and analyzing the survival dilemma of American Indians from a social and political perspective.(Chen 2006: 9) Representative result, such as Sheng Anfeng's book *Resistance, Survival, and the Negotiation of Cultural Identity: A Study of American Indian Literature*, are important results in the study of American Indian literature in the domestic academic circles, covering the development of American Indian literature from ancient times to the present day, and exploring the role of American Indian literature in the construction of cultural identity; as well as Luo Ruchun 's book *Native and Localized Discourses of Cultural Identity in Postcolonial Theory*, which explores the postcolonial theory of Indian colonialism. In this book, Luo Ruchun explores the discourse of localized identity in postcolonial theory, which often rejects the dominant process of globalization initiated by the West, and promotes indigenous and localized identities.

Abroad, there is a relative abundance of research on the subject of American Indian identity. Many researchers have studied this subject in depth, from different angles and in a variety of disciplinary contexts, for example from the angle of intercultural communication, ecological issues, globalization, etc. Representative results include the book *Indigenous Peoples in the Postcolonial World: The Politics of Recognition and Resistance* by David E. Smith and Robert J. Ortiz, which takes an in-depth look at the postcolonial era. James C. O'Connor's *Indigenous Americans in the United States: Identities, Communities, and Change*, also examines the question of American Indian identity in the United States. These findings shed valuable light on our understanding of the challenges and dilemmas faced by American Indians in the post-colonial era, as well as providing lessons for us in dealing with similar issues.

This paper is divided into five main sections: Introduction, Overview of Postcolonial Theory, Introduction to Love Medicine and Analysis of American Indian identity in a Post-colonial Context, and Conclusion. The first part explains the background, purpose and importance of the study, and makes a brief introduction to the domestic and foreign studies of the field . The second part focuses on the origin, development, key concepts and ideas of postcolonial theory, and highlights the relationship between postcolonial theory and the concept of identity. The third part briefly presents the context in which Love Medicine was written, the author, the summary of the work and the characters, focusing on explaining the relationship between the work and American Indian identity. Part IV analyzes American Indian

identity in the context of postcolonialism through the specific representations in *Love Medicine*. Finally, the fifth part summarizes the above, draws conclusions and presents limitations and prospects for the future.

2. Overview of Post-colonial Theory

This chapter gives a general overview to the post-colonial theory in three parts: its historical origins and development, its concepts and core ideas as well as its relationship to the concept of identity.

2.1. Historical Origins and Development

The ideological roots of postcolonialism can be traced back to the earliest critiques of colonialism, such as the writings of the 16th-century Spanish Catholic priest Bartolomé de las Casa, who denounced the atrocities committed by Spanish colonialists in America and Latin America in works such as *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the West Indies* and *A History of the Indians*.

After the Second World War, the term "postcolonial" first appeared to describe countries that had succeeded in freeing themselves from colonial domination and gaining their independence. The term is mainly used in political theory, and refers to the period following the independence of colonized countries.

In 1978, Edward Said's book *Orientalism* provided an in-depth critique of the history of Orientalism in the West, and put forward the famous thesis that "the Orient is merely imaginary".(Zhao 2012) Although *Orientalism* was primarily an examination of the colonial discourse of Orientalism, it laid the foundations for the development of postcolonialism.

Under Edward Said's influence, critics such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha began publishing research on postcolonial issues in the 1980s, which had a major impact on the academic world.

In 1989, Bill Ashcroft and others redefined the term "postcolonial" in *Writing Empire in Reverse* to apply to the entire period from the beginning of colonization to the present day, a definition that broadened the original concept of "postcolonial" and led to a divergence in the staging of postcolonialism. This definition broadened the initial concept of postcoloniality and led to a divergence in the staging of postcolonialism. The subsequent publication of works such as *Readings in Postcolonial Theory* and *Keywords in Postcolonial Studies* completed the process of regular construction of postcolonial theory and established postcolonialism as an academic theory. (Zhao 2012)

In 1990, Robert Young, in his book *The White Myth*, dealt in depth with the ideas of Said, Spivak and Homi Baba, noting their centrality in postcolonial theory and highlighting their contributions, while *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*, published in 1993, brought the theoretical currents after Said more to the fore. Post-colonial development has diversified.

Even today, postcolonialism is still an active field of research in which new theories and practices are constantly being developed.

2.2. Concepts and Core Ideas

Postcolonialism is an academic direction that emerged after the postmodernist trend, which explores the situation of imperialism and colonization and takes power, history, culture, the role of propaganda media on colonialism, identity, nationality, subversion, oppression and rebellion as its main themes, which emerged in the 1970s in the Western academic world with strong political and cultural criticism.

Postcolonialism mainly focuses on the relationship between the sovereign and the former colonies and is based on the study of the complex relationship between the original sovereign, the former colonies and the Third World countries, which is different from the colonial period, and it criticizes Eurocentrism. By reinterpreting colonial history, it purges the cultural, psychological, ideological, conceptual affiliations and imaginative structures of the various colonialisms in order to reproduce and regenerate them in the new global environment through images, texts, policies and institutions, thus breaking through the dominant images constituted by colonial discourse.

The most important elements of postcolonial studies are the following:

1. The Critique Of Orientalism And Cultural Imperialism;
2. Reproduction Of The Repressed Historical Memory Of The Colonies;
3. Studies On Cultural Identity;
4. Analysis Of The Discourse Of The Colonized;
5. "Attitudes And Reference Structures" In Literary Criticism.

2.3. Post-colonial Theory and Identity

The issue of identity is a hot topic in postcolonial studies and has attracted the attention of many researchers.

The issue of identity is a historical legacy of colonial culture. At the heart of colonial culture is the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer over the colonized. This assumption not only establishes a relationship of dominance and subordination on a political and economic level, but also creates a dichotomy between "us" and "them" on a cultural level. The colonizer tends to regard his own culture as superior and civilized, while the culture of the colonized is considered backward and barbaric. This cultural hegemony leads to an identity crisis for the colonized, who are forced to accept and adapt to the colonizer's culture while having to preserve their own. Thus, the critical situation of the identity of the colonized is a direct consequence of colonial history. Colonial culture has a profound influence on the identity of the colonized peoples by imposing foreign values, languages, religions and social structures. This influence was not only evident during the colonial period, but also persisted in the post-colonial era, leading to deep contradictions in the cultural

identity of individuals and groups.

Postcolonialism, like colonialism, is a form of imperialist or colonialist or "Western" control over the colonies and the Third World more broadly, while postcolonial cultural theory and criticism, like colonial criticism and anti-colonial movements, is a form of resistance to imperialism. Postcolonialism itself is anti-colonial in nature and mainly explores the cultural discourse of power relations between the original sovereign and the original colonies, providing theoretical support and research perspectives for the study of the identity of the colonized. Postcolonial theory builds on colonial history, emphasizes the combination of global and local practices, and focuses on oppressed groups in the context of an era in which colonial culture has become the dominant culture of society, so that it can observe and explore the identity of the colonized from a relatively objective perspective and explore the possibilities for rebuilding a more equitable and inclusive identity in the postcolonial era. The postcolonial context is therefore an indispensable entry point for the identity issues.

3. Introduction to Love Medicine

Having gained a general understanding of the post-colonial theory, this section will provide a brief background and synopsis of Love Medicine that form the basis of this paper's analysis.

3.1. Background of the Work and Author Louise Erdrich

Louise Erdrich, author of Love Medicine. Erdrich is one of the most prolific and active contemporary writers in the USA. She became a representative of the second great wave of the American Indian Renaissance and won two prizes, the National Book Critics Circle Award and the National Book Award. She was born in Minnesota (USA) in 1954 and grew up in North Dakota. She is of Ojibwa descent, as her father is of German-American descent and her mother is from the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation in North America. Both parents worked at the Indian Affairs school on the reservation and her maternal grandfather was a tribal leader. Because of this family background, Erdrich was familiar with Native American culture and history, elements that are reflected extensively in her novels. The novel Love Medicine, published in 1984, was Erdrich's first full-length novel and was a huge success, winning her numerous awards.

During Erdrich's growing up years, the U.S. government's termination policy had a profound effect on the Native American community. This policy aimed to end federal recognition of tribes and force the assimilation of Native Americans into society. The civil rights movement that followed emphasized Native rights, and the movement for American Indian self-determination promoted tribal autonomy and cultural renewal. These historical contexts provide the social and political framework for the issues of culture and identity explored in Love Medicine.(Wang 2014).

3.2. Synopsis of the Work and Its Characters

Love Medicine consists of 18 chapters of short stories that describe the journeys and emotional bonds of various individuals from three families of the Ojibwa tribe over a period of 50 years (1934-1984).

Instead of a single central character, the novel tells their stories from the perspectives of several characters. These characters are Nector Kashpaw, his wife Mary Kashpaw, his first love Lulu Nanapush and others. Nector Kashpaw begins to reflect on his life in middle age and realizes that while he has worked hard to provide for his family, he has neglected his pursuit of personal happiness. His tribal wife, Mary, is motherly but domineering, and Nector feels stifled in his married life. The relationship between Nector and Lulu, the love of his youth, has weathered storms and the two are separated by trials and tribulations. After the death of Lulu's husband, Nector reunites with her, but their relationship becomes more and more complicated for various reasons. Nector accidentally sets a fire that destroys Lulu's house, causing Lulu to resent him, and the two are separated again, with Nector returning to his own family. Over time, Nector begins to suffer from dementia and Lulu loses her sight. After a chance reunion, the two surprisingly begin to fall in love again. Meanwhile, a reluctant Mary tries to win back her husband's heart with a mysterious Indian formula - the Love Medicine. But in the end, after a series of misunderstandings and tragedies, Nector dies in an accident.

The non-linear narrative style is the most notable feature of this novel. Although it makes it more difficult to read, the constant alternation of the first person is better able to portray the inner world of the characters, and the change of the characters' perspectives gives the work a sense of tribal magic and mystery. (Song 2013)

3.3. Love Medicine and American Indian Identity

Spanning a period of 50 years, Love Medicine is a realistic portrayal of American Indian life at that time, centering on the emotional relationships of Nector Kashpaw, Mary Kashpaw and Lulu Nanapush.

The book realistically depicts the situation of American Indians at that time, who were oppressed from an indigenous majority population to a minority in the context of the white cultural invasion and the difficult subversion of the times, clinging to their own culture but finding it difficult to break away from the influence of the foreign culture and times. Their passion and vigor are dissolved by reality and they fall into confusion and spiritual depression. (Shen 2019)

This story reflects the American Indians' confusion about their identity, as well as the cultural loss and inner struggle they experience under the dual pressures of colonial history and modern social values. Through these three stories, Edrich explores the efforts and struggles of American Indians between maintaining their cultural identity and adapting to the modern society, which is precisely the realistic dilemma faced by American Indian identity and the theme that post-colonial

theories aim to explore. Therefore, *Love Medicine* is a highly persuasive and representative text for the study of American Indian identity.

4. Analyzing American Indian Identity in a Post-colonial Context

On the basis of the theoretical knowledge and the introduction to the work in the previous two chapters, this section will analyze the complexity, paradox and influence factors of American Indian identity in a postcolonial context, using *Love Medicine* as an example.

4.1. The Complexity of American Indian Identity

In the post-colonial context, the identity of American Indians is reflected above all in their inability to find a balance between adhering to traditional culture and adapting to the prevailing modern culture.

After the colonial invasion, American Indians were seen as the lowest primitive savages. In the traditional colonial-era historical narrative, American Indians were portrayed as cruel, bloodthirsty murderous devils and depraved, vicious heathens, and this stereotype became a legacy of colonial history. After the founding of the United States, American Indians were therefore excluded from the development of modern society.(Zhang 2017: 49)

With the passage of time, the glory of American Indian civilization has become a distant memory for the new generation of American Indian youth. The ancient and glorious civilization that they have inherited from their elders through word and deed is facing poverty. Belief in tribal cultures and deities does not help them, which makes them doubt their traditional Indian identity. Their adherence to traditional culture prevents them from integrating into society and forces them to make compromises. In *Love Medicine*, Sr. Kasper had to send the older of the two children, Nector, to school, and the younger, Eli, "to hide in the cellar under his room", which fully reflects the inner struggle of the American Indians, who on the one hand wanted to integrate into the white mainstream culture in order to survive, and on the other hand wanted to preserve their traditional culture and tried to find a balance in the culture shock. They tried to find a balance in the culture shock.

However, after being educated by the whites, Nector returned to the reservation and assumed the position of tribal chief, but his life remained fraught with hardship. In accordance with postcolonial theory, Nector's realization that his national culture must be subjected to the scrutiny of another culturally critical standard has led him into a state of psychological exile in which he is faced with a loss of cultural belonging and confusion about his national identity. He is both bound by traditional American Indian values and weighed down by modern social and economic constraints. He negotiates with the government and fights for the interests of the tribe, but is unable to change the fact that the tribe has been marginalized and dispossessed of its land by the white society. Eventually, Nector, who "wrote as if he

had been born white," was struck down by Alzheimer's disease. Ironically, Nector willingly accepts the disease because he has been through so many trials and hardships in his life that forgetting is a cure for him. This suggests that for American Indians, integration into the dominant white culture is not the best solution to the problem of identity.

Nector and Eli's experiences point to the inevitable divergence of Indian culture. They stand passively at this point of divergence, but attachment to tribal culture and adaptation to modern mainstream culture seem to be contradictions in themselves, fully reflecting the complexity of Indian identity.

4.2. The Paradox of American Indian Cultural Self-Consciousness and Hybridity

Even before the colonial invasion, Native American cultures in North America exhibited great diversity, and they passed down their cultures and established their identities through unique means such as historical narratives and oral traditions. The fact that American Indian identity did not erode after the devastating blow of colonial culture is due to their genetically rooted cultural consciousness.

The nonlinear narrative of *Love Medicine* very clearly reflects the author's sense of cultural self-consciousness. The work employs a polyphonic narrative very similar to traditional American Indian oral literature. The same story is told not only from the perspectives of different characters, but also from the perspectives of the main character's children and grandchildren, implying a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation. The different attitudes of different family members or different members of a family towards their own culture and that of the white man, as well as the different behaviors, incongruities, and complex voices displayed in the tribe, are based on these oral stories, stemming from the cultural consciousness of American Indians. The novel also mentions traditional Ojibwa rituals and beliefs, such as sacrifice and ancestor worship, subliminally embedding Native American identity in these subtle traditional details. (Zhao 2012)

Nevertheless, the American Indian identity in *Love Medicine* causes some controversy. Although Louise Erdrich is a American Indian writer, the fact that she is of mixed race with American Indian ancestry and writes in English when creating works about American Indian is in itself an expression of cultural hybridity. The term "hybridity" was coined by the post-colonial scholar Homi Bhabha and refers to the mixing of different cultures that occurs through contact and interaction. This mixing is not only a physical union, but also a fusion of meanings and symbols, and hybridity is an inevitable product of cultural hegemony. (Zhang and Wang 2013: 43) This leads to the contradiction between cultural self-consciousness and cultural hybridization in American Indian identity. Under the influence of American Indian cultural self-consciousness, many scholars have argued that American Indian identity should be pure, and that it should be isolated as much as possible from the

influence of colonial culture, including language, religion, and ideology. From a postcolonial perspective, they argue that discourse presupposes culture, and that colonization in terms of language is largely indicative of human consciousness, and that those who own the language also own the world that it carries and expresses. The language used by colonizers to rule their colonies in the post-colonial era should be abandoned.(Cheng 2015)

However, it seems that colonial culture cannot be completely isolated from the blow dealt to American Indian culture. Prior to colonization, North American Indian culture was essentially tribal, with no uniform language or writing, relying mainly on oral tradition, which was devastated by the massacres and depopulation of the colonizers. Many tribes were wiped out, and in the absence of written records, very few traces of the culture remain, and it is very difficult to find them in their entirety. In addition, the influence of the colonizers on the American Indians extended over five centuries, so the original American Indian culture may be missing; after all, cultural assimilation and dislocation are inevitable. Since the most primitive mode of transmission was oral, these missing and dislocated parts are no longer traceable, which proves that the existence of cultural hybridity is very reasonable.

With the development of the times and the improvement of academic theories, the contradiction between cultural self-consciousness and cultural hybridity develops dynamically, which makes the identity of Native Americans more complicated.

4.3. Internal and External Factors Affecting American Indian Identity

The complexity and ambivalence of American Indian identity is shaped by the interaction of internal and external factors.

Internal factors include primarily blood and community, cultural traditions and beliefs, but also the characteristics of American Indian culture itself. In Love Medicine, monogamy is ambiguous in all American Indian tribes, leading to the fact that some American Indian children don't even know who their biological fathers are, and unclear blood relations lead to their lack of tribal belonging. However, having grown up in American Indians tribes, they naturally accept the cultural traditions and beliefs of community life, which is the basis for them to form a cultural consciousness and establish an identity. In addition, due to the decentralized and diverse nature of American Indian culture, part of the cultural coverage can be as small as a tribal unit without being exposed to too many cultural differences, which makes their beliefs pure and fragile. In the face of the invasion of strong foreign cultures, American Indians, who are organized as individuals and tribes, are more prone to cultural spillover effects and disorientation, which has a very strong impact on their identity.

The impact of external factors on American Indian identity has been manifested mainly in the form of cultural conflict. This conflict is not only in terms of loss of territory and depopulation at the material level, but also in terms of cultural

assimilation and racial discrimination at a deeper level. The traumas experienced by American Indians are multidimensional, and they have profoundly affected their lifestyles, social status, and self-perception.

Historically, American Indians have been subjected to systematic cultural assimilation policies designed to eradicate their cultural identity and force them to adopt the language, religion, and values of whites. The boarding school system is a prime example of cultural assimilation, where Indian children were forced to leave their families, cut their long hair, and were prohibited from using their own language and participating in traditional ceremonies. Such policies created a cultural rupture between generations, and many Indians lost touch with their own culture.(Liu 2017: 139)

Racial discrimination further exacerbated the marginalization of Indians. Even though they were educated by whites and complied with all the unjust laws and regulations, they were still excluded from the white-dominated society. This exclusion was reflected not only in social interactions, but also in employment, education, and the legal system, limiting their social mobility and economic opportunities.

Socioeconomic marginalization and poverty is another major challenge facing American Indians. Many Indian communities are located in remote areas and lack adequate infrastructure and resources, which contributes to high unemployment and poverty. Economic hardship has affected their lifestyles, forcing some Indians to leave reservations in search of better life opportunities, as well as their ability to maintain their traditional cultures.

Finding a balance between the demands of modern society and traditional ways of life is a key aspect of American Indian identity. They strive to maintain strong ties to the land and preserve traditional knowledge and practices, while at the same time needing to adapt to the educational systems, economic structures, and technological developments of modern society. This search for balance is not only an exploration of individual identity, but also a reflection on the future direction of the community as a whole.

5. Conclusion

In short, from the perspective of postcolonial theory, American Indian identity is not static. In his theory of hybridity, Homi Bhabha emphasizes that cultural identity is not fixed, but fluid and changing in constant cultural exchanges and power struggles. Whether it is the adherence to traditional tribal culture or the adaptation to modern culture, whether it is cultural self-consciousness or cultural hybridization, the identity of contemporary American Indians is a deconstruction and reconstruction of two cultures, which does not belong to any one culture but relies on the dynamic balance between the two cultures in order to construct a brand new identity. Instead, it is based on the dynamic balance between the two cultures in order to

construct an entirely new identity.(Gao 2012: 108)

Their historical experiences and real-life challenges have forced them to develop strategies for adapting to modern society while preserving their cultural traditions. This adaptation is not simply assimilation or resistance, but a dynamic cultural interaction to cope with a changing world.(Hu 2021)This is exactly what Louise Erdrich, author of *Love Medicine*, alludes to in her book.

Through rich narrative and profound characterization, *Love Medicine* depicts the identity of American Indians in the context of the interdependence of internal and external factors. These themes not only reflect personal emotions and life experiences, but also reveal the conflict and integration of American Indian culture with modern civilization, as well as the reality of cultural diversity and struggle for survival in the context of globalization.(Yao 2016).

However, there is no doubt that American Indians should face the fact that white culture has inevitably influenced traditional culture, and they need to provide cultural space for the construction of a new American Indian identity with an open and objective mind.

Of course, the study of American Indian identity is inevitably limited, because each era has its own priorities and biases, and the writing pattern differs from one another. Any study of new dimensions of American Indian identity requires an accurate reading of society. American Indians, like white people, are a race of entity. Researchers should also refer to the viewpoints and positions of different races in the research method, and theorize the narration of different groups after combining with reality.

In general, the study of American Indian identity is always worthy of sustained attention. Through its specific thematic and methodological perspective, it offers an alternative way to study racial issues. It is to reveal and reproduce the history of marginalized groups in the context of the pluralistic reality of American society and the revival of multiculturalism, seeking to make their voices heard under the current system and preventing vulnerable groups from "losing their voices" in the discourse of social rights. This research dimension is not only of great significance to the study of American Indian identity, but also its methodology and perspective may inspire the study of race relations in other multi-ethnic countries in the world, which deserves more attention from Chinese researchers.

References

- [1] Cheng Shuang. An Analysis of The Characters' Cultural Identities in *Love Medicine* in Post-Colonial Context. Master Thesis, Harbin Normal University, 2015.
- [2] Liu, Wei-Zhen. The Plight of Indians and the Return of the Nation in "*Love Medicine*". *Guizhou Ethnic Studies* 11, 2017: 138-142.
- [3] Song, Sai-Nan. *Root and Route: Erdrich's Writing on the Survivance in Catastrophe*. Doctoral Dissertation, Beijing Foreign Study University, 2013.
- [4] Shen, Ya-Ru. *Louise Erdrich's Reflection on Indian Culture from The Love Medicine and The Plague of Dove*. Master Thesis, Yunnan Normal University, 2019.

-
- [5] Yao Yao. *An Intertextual Interpretation of Love Medicine*. Master Thesis, Shandong University, 2016.
- [6] Chen Xu. Focusing on Recent American Indian Literary Creation and Research. *Foreign Literature Trends* 3, 2006: 8–10.
- [7] Gao Dongyan. Discovery, Identity, and Balance: An Analysis of the Identity Construction of American Indians in Louise Erdrich's *The Round House*. *Heze University Journal* 3, 2023: 106–109.
- [8] Hu Zhihong. Indigenous Ecological Criticism and Mainstream White Literary Ecology: Dialogic Deconstruction and Reconstruction. *Mianyang Normal University Journal* 12, 2021: 1–8.
- [9] Wang Jianping. *Research on American Indian Literature and Modernity*. Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2014.
- [10] Zhang Minglan, Wang Fade. Interpreting the Hybrid Identity Construction of American Indians in *The Tracks* from a Postcolonial Perspective. *Journal of Hunan Engineering College (Social Science Edition)* 3, 2013: 42–45.
- [11] Zhang Mozhi. The "Other" Image of American Indians and the Evolution of North American Colonial Identity Consciousness — A Study Centered on the Captivity Narratives of American Indians (1675–1783). *Studies in Early American Political Culture* 6, 2017: 37–49.
- [12] Zhao Xifang. *Postcolonial Theory*. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2012.