

**Red, White, and Deleuze:
The Fiction of Louise Erdrich as a Minor Literature**

**Thesis in partial fulfillment of the Master of Arts
The University of Manitoba
Department of English**

Colin John Russell

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The Fiction of Louise Erdrich as a Minor Literature

by

Colin John Russell

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of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

of

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Abstract - M.A. Thesis of Colin John Russell

Red, White, and Deleuze: The Fiction of Louise Erdrich as a Minor Literature

As a product of two cultures, Euro-American and Native American, Louise Erdrich has access to the perspectives of both the majority and a very distinct minority in American society. In this paper, the ways in which the Native American perspective informs and structures her novels, *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, *Tracks*, *The Bingo Palace*, and *Tales of Burning Love*, are explored by considering Erdrich's work as a minor literature, according to the criteria established by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their book *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*.

After a survey of the field of criticism of Erdrich's work, the critical position is explained. Deleuze and Guattari define minor literature as a literature which a minority constructs within a major language. They find that a minor literature has a "high degree of territorialization," by which they mean that it subverts codings and rules. A minor literature, they argue, is highly political and it takes on collective value. Louise Erdrich, writing novels in American English from the perspective of Native American culture, is particularly apt for a study utilizing this approach.

The three criteria that define a minor literature are considered in turn. To explore the notion that the majority language is "deterritorialized," the concept of "Red English" and the tetralinguistic system of Henri Gobard are introduced. Deleuze and Guattari use Gobard's model in their study of Kafka, and it is also helpful in shedding light on Erdrich's work. The political aspect of Erdrich's work is considered in her treatment of treaty negotiations, criminality, military service and tendencies toward or away from conformity with white culture. Closely related to the necessarily political nature of a minor literature is its equally necessary collective value. In this context, Erdrich uses Chippewa story-telling techniques, mythology and cosmology in her narrative structure, characterization and plot events. She also illustrates the magnetic influence of the native community on those who try to leave.

In conclusion, the paper addresses the issue of the subversive revolutionary project which Deleuze and Guattari envision for a minor literature within the majoritarian literature and culture. An explanation of Deleuze's politics of life and a further explanation of deterritorialization precede the consideration of Erdrich's position within such a revolutionary project.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

For some years, the application of critical theory to the writing of Native American authors has been a popular choice among critics in the continuing attempt to explain the striking qualities of this body of literature. As Robert Silberman explains, Native American literature seems particularly suited to a variety of contemporary critical approaches.

The many shared elements in the works, as well as the equally telling differences, make them a perfect case study for the analysis of combinations, oppositions and inversions beloved in structuralist criticism. Though not engaged in a technical, philosophical debate, Native American writers reveal an obsessive concern with the relation between speech and writing that is worthy of the deconstructionist critics. Finally, this body of literature incorporates among its major social and political concerns a preoccupation with origins, marginality and otherness that would have delighted Foucault. (Silberman 102)

Louise Erdrich is a Native American novelist whose work has been the subject of many such studies. In this paper, a new approach, the theory of minor literature of French critic/philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, will be conscripted to the task of examining five of Erdrich's novels: *Love Medicine*, *The Beet Queen*, *Tracks*, *The Bingo Palace*, and *Tales of Burning Love*. Before explaining this approach, it would be helpful to examine some of the applications of theory and other approaches that have been brought to bear on Erdrich's writing in the past.

Most of the work done with Erdrich's novels falls into the last group delineated by Silberman. These papers take as their focus the aspects of "origins, marginality and otherness," or the ways in which the struggle against the effacement of native culture and society by American culture and society in general is reflected in Erdrich's work. Michelle Schiavonne's paper entitled "Images of Marginalized Cultures," compares Erdrich's work to African-American writers Paule Marshall and Toni Morrison in terms of their treatment of marginality. Sidner Larson sees *Tracks* as "an autopsy of [the] process whereby place becomes property" (Larson 1). The novel records the struggle of the Chippewa to deal with the consequences of the General Allotment Act of

1887, the partition of their sacred land into Euro-American parcels of real estate, and with the imposition of Catholicism and other features of the white onslaught that destroyed their cultural autonomy.

Against this tide of white assimilationism and genocide, the native community must maintain a sense of its persistence, and Margie Towery traces the history of individual characters and the connections between them through the first three novels, *Tracks*, *Love Medicine* and *The Beet Queen*, in order to suggest that Erdrich is "emphasizing the importance of continuity in native culture" (Towery 99). The bonds within families and communities are a testament to the survival of a culture whose demise was certain, according to Towery, in the opinion of most early twentieth century writers, both Euro-American and Native American. Native people need to recover a vanishing way of life in order to support the continuity of family and community. Dennis M. Walsh and Ann Braley briefly summarize the hunt for "Ojibway (Chippewa / Anishnabeg) myth and ceremony" (Walsh & Braley 1), in *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*, and then assess the "Indianness" of *The Beet Queen* in terms of absence or latency. The authors contend that the latter novel is set mainly in the town of Argus, so the dominant culture effaces the Ojibway worldview, which nevertheless continues to permeate the terrain of the novel.

One prominent element in this Ojibway worldview is the trickster figure. This archetype informs the chance configurations which characterize familial relationships in *The Beet Queen*, according to Pauline Woodward. The fragmentary quality of relationships is conveyed to the reader through a more formal and cohesive narrative structure than that of *Love Medicine*, but that "consonance of voices" lends an "amorphous" quality to community even as it reinforces the "communal aspect" (Woodward 112) of the story. The effect is that of a spider web, in which the strands form a whole which is exquisitely detailed, yet never completed. A further aspect of the trickster motif is the quality of adaptation and change which the characters undergo in order to fabricate workable family ties, and simply in order to survive. Woodward follows Gerald Vizenor in seeing this adaptation for survival as a central quality in the life of Native Americans, and in seeing its manifestation in contemporary Native American literature as a postmodern approach to the spirit of trickster. John S.

Slack concurs that the trickster figure informs the comic sequence of events in *Love Medicine*. Sharon Manybeads Bowers views Erdrich herself in terms of a Nanapush character who writes her comic narratives in trickster fashion.

Another aspect of the Ojibway worldview is the tradition of twinning, a common mythic feature in Native American cultures. Kristan Sarvé Gorham draws on this motif to examine the conflict between the ultra-traditionalism of Fleur Pillager and the ultra-assimilationism of Pauline Puyat, suggesting that, "the twinship of these two medicine women represents the dilemma confronting modern Native Americans" (Sarvé-Gorham 167). The choice between standing up for the traditional ways and becoming "an apple," red on the outside and white inside, is certainly presented in the lives of a great number of other characters in Erdrich's novels.

It is significant that this choice is delineated most sharply in the lives of two medicine woman figures, as Julie Tharp considers the isolation of female characters in Erdrich's novels in terms of a loss of the powerful women's groups that characterized an earlier era of native culture. She concurs with Sarvé-Gorham that Fleur and Pauline represent adherence to tradition and assimilation, respectively, and cites the relationship of Lulu Nanapush and Marie Kashpaw as another example of the division of women which has occurred in the native society. The rare instances of female friendship, such as that between Mary Adare and Celestine, "only exist because of the women's particular circumstances" (Tharp 166). I would add that this relationship, and the relationships among Jack Mauser's wives, are interracial, and these apparent exceptions do not pertain to Tharp's deductive conclusion regarding relationships among native women.

Hertha D. Wong also sees the emphasis on "strained mothering relationships" in Erdrich's novels as symptomatic of these women feeling the "tremendous responsibility of family/clan relationships which, although often troubled, sustain both individual and community" (Wong "Adoptive Mothers" 177). Wong interrogates the difference between Native American women's struggles and the mainstream, white, middle class feminism which informs the "women's movement" as it is generally perceived. Despite their frequent failures to conquer all the challenges that face them, native women in Erdrich's

fiction offer the best hope for the continued survival of their community. The title of Susan Castillo's paper "Women Aging into Power," conveys a sense of the significant role of matriarchs in Erdrich's novels.

If women have a pivotal position in this society, the "differently gendered" are also an important part of the Anishnabe world. Deleuze and Guattari speculate that there are n genders, rather than two, that there is a spectrum of gender which has been arbitrarily fixed as *either male or female*. *Berdache* is the Anishnabe term for someone who exhibits both male and female sexual characteristics, and Julie Barak addresses the gender mixing in Erdrich's work in her article "Blurs, Blends, Berdaches." Louise Flavin considers the ways in which gender is constructed when families are fragmented in *The Beet Queen*. Jennifer Shaddock examines the dynamics of relationships between women. Both gender and race are considered in an article on *The Beet Queen* by Susan Meisenhelder.

Margaret J. Downes also acknowledges the difficulties in achieving their goals and maintaining their society that Erdrich's characters experience in *Love Medicine*. Nevertheless, despite all the failure, the myth which underlies the narrative still provides a unifying vision. Downes sees the novel in terms of "narrative as *omphalos* : constantly, it pulls its characters and its readers toward the center, the tribe, the source of life and myth" (Downes 58). This positive resolution of the characters' troubles also informs William Gleason's catalogue of the aspects of humour in *Love Medicine*, which he insists is a fundamentally comic novel, over the objections of critics who assert that the book is tragic. Gleason counters these pessimists with the suggestions that "Erdrich's characters by novel's end are not far gone, but close to home; she evokes a culture not in severe ruin, but about to rise; she chronicles not defeat, but survival" (Gleason 51).

One of the means of survival for the native culture can be the subversive appropriation of aspects of Euro-American culture, both by the characters and by Erdrich herself. Paul Pasquaretta analyzes the function of gambling in *Love Medicine*, with passing reference to Fleur's fateful poker game in *Tracks* and Lipsha's fateful pursuit of the bingo grand prize van in *The Bingo Palace*. Pasquaretta uses Gerald Vizenor's model of "cross-blood" activity, in which the

native people have appropriated a potentially divisive cultural practice introduced to them by their colonial oppressors. While such "imported" forms may not be normally compatible with traditional native culture, the poker that Gerry, Lipsha and King play "upholds traditional communal values like virtue, wisdom and self-sacrifice; in Erdrich's treatment, it becomes a medium through which the ancient tribal past is made manifest in the modern present" (Pasquaretta 29).

A similar cross-fertilization operates with regard to religion in *Tracks*, according to Susan Stanford Friedman. She draws parallels between Anishinabe spirituality and a mystical stream of Catholicism through the juxtaposition of the two narrators, Nanapush and Pauline. They represent, respectively, "the return to a traditional tribal identity," and "the internalized self-hatred of the colonial subject, the Indian who wants to be white" (Friedman 110), yet Friedman's careful syncretic approach refuses to stop at the overt positive/negative polarity of the two characters. She asserts instead that they function similarly in many ways, suggesting a symbiotic relationship which metonymizes the religious and political syncretism essential for the eventual termination of conflict between the native and white inhabitants of the region. Michelle R. Hessler also compares Pauline and Fleur as representatives of two religious world-views which have co-existed uneasily since the meeting of Euro-Americans and Native Americans.

Barbara Pittman utilizes several concepts from Mikhail Bakhtin to examine *Love Medicine* as a dialogic encounter between white and native culture, both for Erdrich as writer and for the reader. First is the concept of "creative understanding," or a dialogic encounter in which neither possibility is afforded primacy over the other. To this end, Pittman invokes another Bakhtinian term, the chronotope, to examine the motif of the road in the novel. The linear progression of both space and time in the Euro-American tradition is contrasted with the multidimensionality of space and the timelessness of time in the Native American tradition. These two visions of what might constitute the picaresque aspect of the novel are further illuminated by the presence of the native trickster motif, which Pittman equates with Bakhtin's carnivalesque figure --- the rogue, the clown, the fool. Ultimately, Pittman finds Euro-American ways

of reading, such as Bakhtinian dialogics, helpful in reading Native American literature “because reading as an outsider is an inherently dialogic act” (Pittman 789).

Of particular interest in the dialogue between native culture and Euro-American culture are the comparisons which some critics draw between Erdrich's work and the work of canonical white male writers in American literature. One of the few books specifically cited by one of Erdrich's characters is *Moby Dick*, the favourite novel of Nector Kashpaw. Thomas Matchie calls *Love Medicine* a “female Moby-Dick,” carefully drawing comparisons between the vision of Erdrich and that of Melville in terms of episodic or disjointed structures, characters and motifs, asserting that “the truest unity and deepest values of *Love Medicine* come clear when juxtaposed with Melville's classic novel of the sea” (Matchie *Moby-Dick* 478). *Moby-Dick* is also the analogy employed by Theresa S. Smith to present the water monster Mishebeshu in her anthropological study of the Ojibway world-view (101). Mishebeshu, the mysterious, fearsome presence in Matchimanito lake, certainly figures large in *Tracks* and the other Erdrich novels, and the connection between Erdrich's work and Melville's classic novel lingers in the mind. In another article, Matchie compares the treatment of female sexuality in *Tales of Burning Love* to Hawthorne's treatment of the subject in *The Scarlet Letter*. Mary A. McCay compares the depiction of “Indians” in Cooper's *Leather Stocking Tales* with that of “native people” in Erdrich's work. Jadwiga Maszewska compares the narrative technique in *Tracks* to that of Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* Hertha Wong points out that while Erdrich's use of “multiple narrative voices indeed may be an extension of a Chippewa or a female oral tradition...such a narrative technique derives as much from Faulkner and other Euroamerican canonical writers” (Wong “Adoptive Mothers” 191). On the other hand, in another article, Wong uses the same spider web image as Pauline Woodward to characterize a very specifically native oral tradition, in which “one story, though it can be read in isolation from the others, cannot be fully comprehended without considering its connection to the others” (Wong “Narrative Communities” 172). It appears that the source of this fragmented narrative style remains controversial.

While these critics explore the connections between Erdrich's work and

canonical works of American literature, others view Erdrich's writing as a body of work in dialogue with standard texts in Native American literature. According to Robert Silberman, *Love Medicine* marks a departure from a mainstream tradition in Native American writing, in which one typically encounters "a young man's troubled homecoming" (Silberman 102). Silberman sees Erdrich's novel as the story of June Kashpaw's homecoming, so a woman's story is the focus. Nevertheless, Erdrich's work shares common concerns with the body of Native American literature that Silberman surveys: "the consequences of an individual's return or attempted return to the reservation, the significance of home and family, the politics of language and the relation between speaking and writing" (Silberman 103).

Louise Flavin also suggests that *Love Medicine* marks a departure from the traditional Native American novel as a "homing" plot, but makes a different distinction than Silberman's remarking the change of gender. The classic American novel, she asserts, examines a character's attempts to achieve freedom by leaving the home, while the hero of the classic Native American novel finds redemption in the return to home after foraying into the outside world. Erdrich's characters, in Flavin's opinion, are drawn irresistibly back to the reservation, but it is not redemption which they find there. Instead, "the tribe has disintegrated, the past has been forgotten, and the reservation lands no longer support a livelihood" (Flavin "Loving" 56).

Erdrich's stylistics are a source of discontent for critics such as Louis Owens, who suggests that the poetic style of *Love Medicine* and *The Beet Queen* blunts the "whetted edge found in fiction by such Indian authors as [Leslie] Silko and [James] Welch" (Owens 54). The tragedy of the Chippewas' losses is made clear, but "nowhere is the conflict between Indian and white communities merely explicit" (54). Similarly, Owens sees *The Beet Queen* as a novel in which "Indianness doesn't serve to distinguish characters.... Cultural conflict is never explicit" (Owens 54).

Silko herself writes scathingly of Erdrich's "poet's prose" in a review of *The Beet Queen*. The failure to properly represent native history and contemporary life is predicated on this writerly quality of the novel as "an outgrowth of academic, post-modern, so-called experimental influences" (Silko

178-79). After all, as Erdrich herself notes, she "had a literary education" (Bruchac 203). Erdrich, in Silko's mind, fails to remain true to the native community which in part produced her, and fails to write in a way which satisfactorily conveys the experience of that community. She writes in a way which merely shows off her lyrical skills with language. Susan Castillo examines the different perspectives of Silko and Erdrich on representation in an article entitled "Post-Modernism and Referentiality." In another article, Castillo compares the construction of gender as well as ethnicity in the work of the two Native American writers.

This survey of the field of Erdrich criticism outlines the diversity of theoretical perspectives which have been applied to her work. Postmodernists, New Historicists, cultural critics, post-colonial critics and feminists appear to be well-represented in the pack. The present study of Erdrich's work utilizes a contemporary theoretical perspective which has not yet been applied to these novels. The issues of otherness, marginality, historicity and sociological analysis delineated above mark her fiction writing as an appropriate subject for the theory of minor literature developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. They approach the mysterious Czech writer from the perspective that his writing is a minor literature, "that which a minority constructs within a major language" (*Kafka* 16). The concept is derived from Kafka's own musings in his diary (25 December 1911) on the situation of Yiddish literature in Warsaw and Czech literature in Prague.

A minor literature arises from the "minor use" of a major language. A cultural minority, which may or may not possess its own language, uses the language of the surrounding majority in subversive ways, according to Deleuze and Guattari. This subversive variation on the major language is a minor language. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, the second volume of their major work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari place their conception of major and minor language within the context of linguistic theory. They argue that there is a fundamentally political purpose underlying the efforts of linguists such as Noam Chomsky to "homogenize" language according to a standard system which reflects linguistic competence in that particular language. They ask, "What is grammaticality, and the sign S, the categorical symbol that

dominates statements? It is a power marker before it is a syntactical marker, and Chomsky's trees establish constant relations between power variables. Forming grammatically correct sentences is for the normal individual the prerequisite for any submission to social laws.... The unity of language is fundamentally political" (*Thousand Plateaus* 101). If one establishes a standard form of a language, one is equating that way of expressing oneself with the social and political power in that community. If one speaks in a way that deviates from that model, one is automatically relegated to a minority position in social and political power. As Therese Grisham explains, in an article on Deleuzoguattarian linguistics, the designation of Black English as a "deviation" from standard English "may seem a necessary move for a social science to make, since it guarantees the constancy of the forms under study and is one condition for considering Black English as a unity, [but] it cannot be separated from the political and social processes that treat Black English as part of a sub-standard" (Grisham 43).

Deleuze and Guattari play with the notion that standard English, or French, or German, is a *constant*, and that any dialect or patois is *avariation*. Both species of language possess 'power' in the relationship between them, but the French text distinguishes between the *pouvoir* of the constant and the *puissance* of the variation. While there is considerable overlap in the denotations of these two words, the various dictionary definitions of *pouvoir* tend toward senses of power tied to authorization --- influence, government, proxy, power of attorney, purchasing power, executive power, spiritual and temporal power, "by virtue of the power vested in me." *Puissance*, on the other hand, tends to be associated with physical power, or the capacity to act --- muscle, stereo and light bulb wattage, horse-power, fire power, occult powers, power of suggestion or of seduction, "I have you in my power." Thus the constant standard system asserts its power of authority against the forcefulness and energy of the "minor variation," which in turn subverts the nice neat model proffered for its edification and improvement.

Deleuze and Guattari continue in this mode as they dissect the concept of dialect itself, and offer minor language as a preferred term, since "it is the minor language that defines dialects through its own possibilities for variation"

(Thousand Plateaus 102). A dialect tries to establish itself as a derivative or deviant major language. Black English or Québécois have their own "standard grammars," which are not primarily based on infraction against standard American English or Parisian French respectively, but rather on their own terms of practice within a community. A linguist can study these dialects in the same way as she studies their "betters." Any language always attempts to construct itself as major, to create the conditions for its own standardization and constancy. Yet it is always subject to the "continuous variations that transpose it into a 'minor' language" *(Thousand Plateaus 102)*. In Kafka's Prague, German was the major language in contradistinction to the languages spoken by the minority subjects of the Austrian empire. Yet this relationship itself assured that German as *used* by these minorities would itself become a "minor language in relation to the German of the Germans" *(Thousand Plateaus 103)*. This dance of constants and variations is a continuous process of modification, codification and further modification in all languages.

If major and minor do not designate two different languages but two "usages or functions" of language, which are in a state of constant negotiation, the literature which is written in the minor mode will do strange things to the putative constancy of the major mode:

Kafka, a Czechoslovakian Jew writing in German, submits German to creative treatment as a minor language, constructing a continuum of variation, negotiating all of the variables both to constrict the constants and to expand the variables: make language stammer, or make it 'wail,' stretch tensors through all of language, even written language, and draw from it cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities. Two conjoined tendencies in so-called minor languages have often been noted: an impoverishment, a shedding of syntactical and lexical forms; but simultaneously a strange proliferation of shifting effects, a taste for overload and paraphrase. This applies to the German of Prague, Black English, and Québécois. *(Thousand Plateaus 104)*

Deleuze and Guattari, however, do not agree with the linguist's characteristic assessment of a "consubstantial poverty and preciousness." The poverty they attribute to the effort of the writer to "restrict" the constants, or attack the oppressive regime of the standard language in a covert fashion, from the outside rather than from within it. The overload is the writer's attempt to "extend"

the variations. Since the writer is aware of his function in relation to the standard language, and of his inevitable need to use this language, albeit in a minor mode, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the "excess" ascribed to such a writer is in fact "a mobile paraphrase bearing witness to the unlocalized presence of an indirect discourse at the heart of every statement" (*Thousand Plateaus* 104). The dynamism which is ubiquitous in Deleuzoguattarian theory is key to an understanding of this writerly sabotage of the major language. Mobility allows paraphrase to always recreate the standard forms in subversive ways. Presence is unlocalized because such a writing is always a "becoming," and cannot be pinned down to any essential structure, particularly with regard to its relation to the standard language and its uses. Every statement is hollow, devoid of this essentiality as well, because the "indirect discourse" at its heart prevents the immediate access to the mind of a speaker. All statements in minor literature, as they strive to convey a minority's view through the linguistic dimension of the majority's regime, are reportage. They operate in a diegetic, rather than mimetic mode, because they are always telling the story of X, not representing X directly. They cannot represent directly, when the language in which they are written is only possessed by the writer by means of squatter's rights: "Minor authors are foreigners in their own tongue" (*Thousand Plateaus* 105).

The minor literature that such authors produce has three characteristics, which will serve as the organizing principles for the three chapters to follow this introduction. The first characteristic is "a strong co-efficient of deterritorialization" (*Kafka* 16) which Deleuze and Guattari identify in Kafka's work. Closely tied to this element are the other two characteristics, the necessarily political and collective aspects of a minor literature.

Defined in a very basic way, deterritorialization is the attempt by something to subvert or take over a "territory," or to override the codings which had characterized that entity. That which has been subverted or taken over typically engages in its own subversive process of reterritorialization. In a body of thought which they would hesitate to call a system, Deleuze and Guattari draw upon Nietzsche's metaphor of a universe filled with contesting wills to power in seeing "flow" as the operative principle in the world. In a world

characterized by flows, everything is always being territorialized, deterritorialized and reterritorialized.

The most fundamental form of this process in human history has been the encoding of each successive socius which formed a basis for a particular type of society. From the materialist perspective of Deleuze and Guattari, everything in the world which acts as a point at which flows occur is designated as a "machine." At the macro-social level, the abstract and diffuse points of flow between the world and the conceptions about it harboured by the individuals who live in it, constitute a "social machine."

The social machine is literally a machine, irrespective of any metaphor, inasmuch as it exhibits an immobile motor and undertakes a variety of interventions: flows are set apart, elements are detached from a chain, and portions of the tasks to be performed are distributed. Coding the flows implies all these operations. This is the social machine's supreme task, inasmuch as the apportioning of production corresponds to extractions from the chain, resulting in a residual share for each member, in a global system of desire and destiny that organizes the productions of production, the productions of recording, and the productions of consumption. (*Anti-Oedipus* 141-42)

In the beginning was the primitive socius, the tribal hunting-gathering and agricultural societies in which the focus of desire and the "immobile motor" are the Earth. Deleuze and Guattari therefore refer to this first socius as a "primitive territorial machine." Everything is social, static, coded and rule-bound in such a socius, and the great power of the Earth to bring forth the means of survival results in a veneration of the Earth which is far more extensive than a mere religious orientation toward pantheism or Nature worship.

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that this tribal society is deterritorialized by the "barbarian despotic machine," which arises "every time the categories of new alliance and direct filiation are mobilized" (*Anti-Oedipus* 193). In the despotic society, desire is inscribed on the body of the despot, because the flows of production and consumption have been redirected through this leader. An empire is born, or a new charismatic figure draws a portion of his society off on a new path, and that new grouping has a new alliance, informed by their leader. The "direct filiation" is the ubiquitous link between the despot and deity.

A society coded in this way is still highly coded, and rule-bound by the divinely authorized fiat of the despot.

In the capitalist society, desire is inscribed on capital. The “civilized capitalist machine” is the ultimate deterritorialization, since it decodes all the flows. Capital was always present in previous socii, but it was capital of alliance, rather than capital of filiation. Money connected directly to the crops in the primitive socius, to the despot’s treasure-house in the barbaric socius. By contrast, capital “becomes filiative when money begets money, or value a surplus value” (*Anti-Oedipus* 227). The new prominence of the individual, who is responsible for his own labour, requires that the codes which previously restricted his behaviour must be jettisoned. All the flows must be decoded to create the freedom to make money. Yet at the same time, the abstraction of this new socius requires concretization through the resurgence of old codes. If primitive societies are connective and despotic societies disjunctive, then capitalist society is conjunctive, in that it maintains partnership with feudal systems, religious powers, nation states, or whatever is necessary in order to facilitate its continued operation. A socius built entirely on the principle of total deterritorialization must engage in continual reterritorialization to keep itself operative. Deleuze and Guattari thus suggest that capitalism is “the *relative* limit of every society; it effects *relative* breaks, because it substitutes for the codes an extremely rigorous axiomatic that maintains the energy of the flows in a bound state on the body of capital as a socius that is deterritorialized...” (*Anti-Oedipus* 246). The deterritorialization of a primitive socius by a capitalist one is certainly a part of the Native American experience of Euro-Americans.

Territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization occur in specific linguistic ways in the continuous negotiation, codification and modification between major and minor language. In this context, Deleuze and Guattari utilize the tetralinguistic model Henri Gobard proposes to account for the different types of discourse within a language community. Gobard suggests that the members of a linguistic community possess a vernacular language, “local, parlé spontanément, moins fait pour communiquer que pour *communier* et qui seul peut être considéré comme langue maternelle (ou langue natale)” [local, spoken spontaneously, made less for the purpose of communication than

for communion, and which alone can be considered as a mother tongue (or native language)] (Gobard 34). Communion of the members of the community is possible through this local means of communication. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the spatiotemporal reference of vernacular language is "here," and that it tends to be a rural phenomenon, or rural in its origins" (Deleuze and Guattari *Kafka* 23).

Vehicular language, Gobard's second category is "everywhere." Gobard describes it as "national ou régional, appris par nécessité, destiné aux *communications* à l'échelle des villes" [national or regional, learned by necessity, intended for communications on an urban scale] (Gobard 34). It is the language imposed by the government, business and other modes of exchange with the urban and secular world outside the rural, local community. Thus vehicular language, while acting as the "vehicle" for necessary economic and social exchange, is also inevitably "a language of the first sort of deterritorialization" (*Kafka* 23), as the communion of the inward-looking community is broken and power is exercised from the outside in the determination of events in the village.

Deleuze and Guattari see cultural reterritorialization happening in referential language, which exists "over there" (*Kafka* 23). This language allows the community to recoup the control over its values through the inscription of these values in stories which counter the mundane tedium of vehicular language and exchange. Gobard asserts that such a language is "lié aux traditions culturelles, orales ou écrites, assurant la continuité des valeurs par une référence systématique aux oeuvres du passé pérennisées" [tied to cultural traditions, oral or written, assuring the continuity of values by systematic reference to perpetuated works of the past] (Gobard 34).

Finally, there is the level of mythic language, "qui fonctionne comme ultime recours, magie verbale dont on comprend l'incompréhensibilité comme preuve irréfutable du sacré" [which functions like an ultimate recourse, verbal magic whose incomprehensibility is understood as irrefutable proof of the sacred] (Gobard 34). For Deleuze and Guattari, this recovery of the values of the community, usually in relation to a larger social unit with whom they consider themselves tied in sacred rather than secular, is the language of the

"beyond" (*Kafka* 23).

According to Ronald Bogue, Kafka's writing conveys the conflicting linguistic territorializations of the Jews of Prague, caught between the "Czech of their rural origins" (117), the German that served as the official language of bureaucracy and commerce, a "paper" language, the Hebrew of their religion, from which they felt removed in their day to day lives by its sacred context, and the Yiddish derived from Hebrew, which instilled in many "a dread mingled with a certain fundamental distaste" (*Kafka Dearest Father* 382, qu. in Bogue 117). Bogue argues that this "linguistic dispossession, claim Deleuze and Guattari, is not unique to Prague Jews in the early twentieth century, but is typical of those minorities and marginalized groups the world over who must express themselves in a language of an alien culture" (117). One of the other "minorities and marginalized groups" that Bogue specifically cites is the instance of American Indians speaking English. The second chapter of this paper will examine the ways in which Erdrich as a writer, and the characters that she creates, operate as minorities within a major language which deterritorializes them, and the ways in which they in turn reterritorialize by modifying the major language to make it their own.

Deleuze and Guattari write that "[t]he second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political" (*Kafka* 17). While the "social milieu" serves as "a mere environment or a background" (*Kafka* 17) for the concerns of individuals in majoritarian literature, the writing of a minor literature forces individual concerns to connect automatically to the political situation of the writer and her social group. Michael Hardt examines Deleuze's philosophical roots to find the source for his notions of socio-political praxis.

In Nietzsche, Deleuze discerns a distinction between two qualities of power, the active and the reactive, that is, power linked to what it can do and power separated from what it can do. In Spinoza, this same distinction is given a richer definition with respect to the adequate and the inadequate. The adequate is that which expresses (or envelops or comprehends) its cause; the inadequate is mute. Like the active, the adequate is linked forward to what it can do; but it is also linked backward to its internal genealogy of affects, the genealogy of its own production. The adequate gives full view to both the productivity and the producibility of being. (118)

Perhaps it is the constant awareness within one's minoritarian position of the potential inadequacy that threatens one's community that causes the necessarily and inevitable political quality of the writing produced. The minor subverts the major in order to proliferate, to produce, to achieve activity and adequacy, to avoid reactivity and that muteness which is inadequacy of expression. The minor literature is always an expression of the political urge to produce one's own being, or orchestrate one's own becoming. As Ronald Bogue suggests, "...politics and literature are intimately related in a minor literature, and the maintenance of literary tradition is central to public life..." (116). The individual concern in a minor literature is amplified or magnified, according to Deleuze and Guattari, by the fact that "a whole other story is vibrating within it" (*Kafka* 17). The purpose of the third chapter of this paper will be to discern the other story vibrating within the individual stories of Erdrich's characters. If her work is a minor literature, then these individual concerns are inextricably tied to the political reality of the community, which supersedes the significance of the individual's story. "The political domain has contaminated every statement" (*Kafka* 17).

The collective aspect of this political representation of the community is the third characteristic of minor literature which Deleuze and Guattari adumbrate in *Kafka*. Bogue explains that a "minor literature, in Kafka's analysis, serves as the focus of an ethnic group's collective life and, without solving social problems, provides a medium in which conflicts may be articulated....[It] fosters collective rather than individual utterances" (116). Indeed, the commonality of concern can contribute to the success of a minor writer despite differences from the minor community as a whole. As Deleuze and Guattari opine, "[i]t is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility" (*Kafka* 17).

It is the limited pool of talent in the minority community which reduces the likelihood of there being literary masters who rise above their fellows in the minority writers guild. Each statement is collective, as well as political, precisely

because the minority writer does not speak so much as a distinct individual, but rather in a "common enunciation." Deleuze and Guattari see Kafka going as far as eliminating the individual subject from the writing, in favour of "collective assemblages of enunciation." The writer is a writing machine, at which locus the flows of ideas expressing the community to and for itself are exchanged. Only the literary machine can do this for a community whose political aspirations are submerged to prevent adverse reaction from the authorities. The writing machine can be the revolutionary-machine-to-come. Louise Erdrich's novels are points where the flow of ideas about the Chippewa or Ojibway community occurs between the writer and that community that produced her. These novels are a collective enunciation of the people, even if the people do not always agree with what is said.

The fact that the writing machine can become the revolutionary machine is most important. As Hardt's analysis conveys, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari are committed to praxis, to the revolutionary project of bringing about a better world, as they were in 1968 when the student revolution failed in Paris, and when *Anti-Oedipus* was first published four years later. The point of the elaborate diagnosis of socio-political situations, power relationships, and the linkage between writing and "real life," is to bring about a new and better state of being, a more truly democratic society for all people, a more equal distribution of resources, and a life of freedom to become. Everything they do is grounded in a belief in life as positive, affirmative and productive. The project of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* runs counter to the dominant strain of "lack" which characterizes most of Western thought, including Judeo-Christian religion, Hegelian and Marxist dialectic, and Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is affirmative and productive, rather than negative and characterized by lack.

In the concluding chapter of this paper, attention will be given to the subversive revolutionary project which Deleuze and Guattari envisage for a minor literature. They attest that it is only through minor literature that truly great literature happens. Joyce and Beckett, for instance, were Irishmen writing in the English of the majority that surrounded their community, yet there is little else in contemporary English literature that stands out so strongly as a beacon

heralding the possibility of revolution for all English-speaking society. Similarly, the literature of Louise Erdrich may offer the possibility of revolution not only for the Chippewa or Ojibway community in both the United States and Canada, but also for the wider, majoritarian population of these two countries. It is only by using the language in subversive ways that one can transcend it to create a new perspective on the life it attempts to express. Deleuze and Guattari ask, "How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language? Kafka answers: steal the baby from its crib, walk the tightrope" (*Kafka* 19). In the next three chapters, the focus will be the theft, and in the concluding chapter, the high-wire act.

Chapter 2 - Deterritorialization of Language in a Minor Literature

A consideration of the deterritorialization of English which Louise Erdrich effects in her novels requires that one first acquire a sense of what constitutes "Red English," or the way that Native Americans speak English. The term originates in linguistic anthropology. For the linguistic anthropologist or the mythographer, the task of translating and editing oral narratives for analysis and publication presents a dilemma. What means are to be employed to represent the idiosyncrasies of native people speaking their own language, to find an English form that faithfully "transcribes" the way they talk in their native language? According to mythographer Anthony Mattina, the attempts of a couple of his colleagues to render their subjects' stories in translation include verse in ragged-right format, and verse whose form varies according to the mythographer's rhetorical assessment of the transcript. Mattina prefers the "Red English" spoken by one of his consultants and translators. She listened to the original oral narrative, and then, in translating, spoke English the way she normally spoke. That way of speaking is itself culturally specific in native communities, but there is a general way of speaking English that is identifiably "native," and which is often presented in native writing in English as well.

Mattina cites an example from Leslie Silko's *Storyteller*. "This book, an Indian writer's telling of Indian story-telling. . . shows us how an educated and widely published Indian artist repeats and reports (in poetry-like verses and prose-like lines) stories that Indians tell --- and these are not just Indian mythologies, but all kinds of stories" (142). In reference to this and other passages from Native American writers, Mattina cites "sub-standard expressions, ungrammatical conjunctions, elliptical sentences" (142) and "lack of subject-verb agreement" (141) among the aspects of English expression which reveal "impoverishment." Mattina suggests that this Native American use of English is parallel to the use made of English by Australian aborigines according to the linguistic analysis of Brice Rigsby, who contends that they "have made English into an aboriginal language" (Mattina 140). Deleuze and Guattari would concur, asserting that the language of oppression is

deterritorialized by the minority speaker, for the subversive cultural purpose of staking one's claim to the world and to the words that name all the things contained in that world. As Vincent B. Leitch explains,

For Deleuze and Guattari the term "minor literature" designates the ubiquitous collective and political utilizations of *major* languages in strange, anarchic, heteroglot ways. Among examples, they surprisingly cite works by Joyce, Artaud, and Kafka, whose inventive and intense employments of major languages, based on hatred of the languages of masters, effect alienations, escapes, and carnivalizations from within, but adjacent to, majoritarian regimes. (Leitch 99)

The use of Red English by Native Americans conforms to Deleuze and Guattari's theory of subversive functionality in the minority's use of the majority language, in order to alienate, escape and carnivalize. Mattina's reference to Silko, however, raises another issue. What is the impact of native writers replicating Red English in their writing? Is it appropriate only in the recording of dialogue of native characters who presumably would "speak this way" in conversation? Is it appropriate for a writer writing in English to adopt this minor form of the language for the act of writing? The poet Duane Niatum, a member of the Klallam tribe, argues against the position that there is a distinctive Native American aesthetic with "separate principles from the standards of artists from Western European and American cultures" (554).

[A]ny Native American who takes the written arts seriously - I speak solely of artists possessed by the spirit of the arts - must train himself or herself to become sensitive to the many facets of the English language and the world this language calls a home, with the same devotion a shaman had for the word in his healing songs thousands of years ago....It is not impossible to maintain ethnic pride and values within the sphere of a dominant society - take the Jews, as just one example - while at the same time learning what you can from those around you. There is no longer any choice for the Native American and other minorities in this country when the language of those around you now happens to be the dominant language of the tribe. (554)

Niatum compares excerpts from poetry by Anglo-American Richard Blessing, Englishman Ted Hughes and Simon J. Ortiz, an Acoma Pueblo, to show that the poetry of the first two could be interpreted according to various Native American mythological schema, and that the poetry of the latter is rife with conventional

Anglo-American poetic imagery. Similarly, a passage from *House Made of Dawn*, by the native writer N. Scott Momaday, is compared with an excerpt from Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, to show the similarity in stream-of-consciousness style. Niatum's purpose is to envision the elimination of "Native American" as a modifier for "writer." Those who know about native culture from first hand experience may still portray it realistically in their writing, but the aesthetic by which a work is judged should be of broader composition than that of readers and critics aligned with or "sympathetic to" the native community. The merit of characters should be their humanness, rather than their Indianness.

While not arguing with the spirit of Niatum's argument, Deleuze and Guattari would take issue with the latter, specifically the notion that a purportedly objective aesthetic principle from a majoritarian community can be effectively applied to the work of the minority within it. The English used by Native American writers in an Anglo-American setting is and must be different from that of the surrounding community. It is in the subversive variation that the Native American's writing deterritorializes the constancy of the majority language. Acceptance of an aesthetic standard based on the standard language means acquiescence to the political and social agenda of the standard-bearing majority. Rather than the realization of a multicultural buffet in which the unique culture of each component of society is celebrated, such acquiescence would instead result in assimilation, and it is only the radical project of deterritorialization which allows the minority group to maintain its hope for freedom from oppression. Deleuze and Guattari would suggest that assimilation itself is a hopeless cause, since the radical quality of cultural differences prevents one culture from effectively silencing another. Genocide is the only effective solution to cultural diversity, but is seldom undertaken for obvious reasons. Where there is a minority, its difference from the majority will always constitute a subversive flow against the grain of the majority's standards.

In linguistic and literary terms, this subversive flow is the project of the minor writer. Native American authors represent their communities through the insidious havoc they wreak upon the English language. Blessing and Hughes may write poetry which resonates with Native American cosmology; they may

even have deliberately modelled their writing on such a cosmology. Such a stance could be seen positively as celebration of diversity or negatively as cultural appropriation. Either way, their poetry is not "Indian" in a sense which permits it to speak for the Indian community. Ortiz's poetry, on the other hand, may indeed resonate with imagery derived from his own encounters with and education in Tennyson or Whitman, but his cultural position places him as a political representative of his minority against the Anglo-American majoritarian regime. Though the style of Faulkner and Momaday may seem similar, its purpose is different in the writing of each. Momaday uses English in a way which undermines English for the political purpose of his community, Deleuze and Guattari would suggest. Faulkner uses English in a way which represents the inability of a socioeconomic class of Southern society to measure up to standard English, but which does not represent a separate ethnic minority's subversion of that standard for the purpose of political expression. Louise Erdrich's writing does deterritorialize English in this subversive way.

The deterritorialization by means of Red English is clearest in the narrative voice of Nanapush in *Tracks*. While the text is written in a fairly conventional grammatical form, certain characteristics mark it as a "transcription" of oral narrative Red English. The first sentence of Nanapush's tale to Lulu reports that "We started dying before the snow" (*Tracks* 1). To be precise, the word "snow" needs a verb such as "came" or "started," in order to convey accurately the onset of winter. The smallpox visited on the people by the whites is called "spotted sickness" (1), and "exile in a storm of government papers" was brought by "a wind from the east" (1). Lulu is addressed as "Granddaughter," emphasizing the familial relationship rather than the individual reality of her own name. She is "the child of the invisible, the ones who disappeared..." (1). In this sentence, the adjective "invisible" serves as a noun, in an expression which pushes the envelope of grammatical correctness, but the subsequent clause renders the noun plural, further compromising standard English. The consumption which followed the pox "came on slow" (2), rather than the grammatically correct "slowly." The report that the people "lay ill and helpless in its breath" (2) is a poetic but imprecise description of the condition. He refers to himself in the third person; "only Nanapush" (2) was left.

Time is expressed in terms of a number of winters, and more change had occurred during his lifetime "than in a hundred upon a hundred before" (2). There is the rhetorical effect of the short sentences with their reiterated commencing "I" in Nanapush's account of his exploits which marked the demise of a way of life.

I guided the last buffalo hunt. I saw the last bear shot. I trapped the last beaver with a pelt of more than two years' growth. I spoke aloud the words of the government treaty, and refused to sign the settlement papers that would take away our woods and lake. I axed the last birch that was older than I, and I saved the last Pillager. (2)

That last Pillager is "Fleur, the one you will not call mother" (2), identified in this compound sentence without a predicate for the first clause. As Mattina points out in his analysis of Silko, this passage is characterized by elliptical constructions: "we thought disaster must surely have spent its force, that disease must have claimed all of the Anishinabe..." (1); "Our tribe unraveled like a coarse rope, frayed at either end..." (2).

The opening narration of *The Bingo Palace* also features some characteristic 'impoverishment' of expression which actually enhances the artistry of the writing. The narrator reports that Lulu was "sighted before her normal get-up time" (1). The sentence fragment "[t]he gas pumps - she could be starting out on a longer trip - or the post office" (1) conveys a stream-of-consciousness speculation on her destination. The reference to "Josette herself" (2) contains the conversational extraneous emphatic pronoun. Similarly, Lulu and Marie Kashpaw share grandson Lipsha "between themselves" (3). When Lipsha relates to Marie the mess resulting from the sugar that fills his clothes at work, the narrator expresses the anecdote with a conversational fragmentary tag clause: "Nothing was ever clean, he told Marie, us listening" (8). Shawnee Ray says to Lipsha, "You got the medicine, but you don't got the love" (153). The failure of subject-verb agreement is another characteristic feature of Red English, as Mattina indicates.

It is important to reiterate at this juncture that none of the identified departures from standard English are unique to Native American English speech in general, or to Ojibway or Chippewa speech in particular. Many grammatical errors are present in the dialogue of white characters in Erdrich's

novels. Such "mistakes" are made by many people speaking and writing English, and in this context they are mistakes only in a pedantic sense, since they enrich the expression of the passage. The errors are purposeful in conveying the way these people would really speak English, or the way that one might translate their spoken Chippewa. "Errors" or "mistakes" are only accurate evaluative terms if one assumes the sovereignty of the "Queen's English." It is in the juxtaposition of the minor subversion with this major standard form that Deleuze and Guattari see the political and collective efficacy of such a deterritorialization. Nanapush, Lipsha and Shawnee Ray speak the way they do because their community (and Erdrich's) is struggling to survive, and does so in part by undermining the language of their oppressors. Erdrich's white characters who speak ungrammatically, as in the example of Faulkner's Southern white trash, merely display their socio-economically determined failure to achieve the educational level of an elite. There is something different happening in the language of the natives. Erdrich's native characters use English, but it is a "strange and minor use" of the language which was foisted upon them by their conquerors, that "United States Government" to which characters often refer, and the people of white America. The natives have appropriated this foreign language and made their own peculiar use of it as a community, a usage which Erdrich's narrative and dialogue evoke.

In this context, one can apply the tetralinguistic model of Henri Gobard, as Deleuze and Guattari do in *Kafka*. They suggest that the study of the functions of language "alone can account for social factors, relations of force, diverse centers of power," and can therefore escape from "the 'informational' myth in order to evaluate the hierarchic and imperative system of language as a transmission of orders, an exercise of power or of resistance to this exercise" (*Kafka* 23). Gobard's model can be applied to Erdrich's writing, in order to interrogate this hierarchical functionality of language and the ways in which deterritorialization and reterritorialization occur linguistically in the writing of a minor author. As outlined in the introduction, the uses of language divide it into categories which Gobard designates as follows: vernacular, the language of the hearth or the rural area; vehicular, the worldwide urban language of commerce; referential, a language of sense and culture; and mythic, a religious or spiritual

language "on the horizon of cultures."

With a bilingual culture, it is important that Gobard's functions of language "can work in the same group across different languages" (*Kafka* 23), as Deleuze and Guattari put it. The native community lives between two languages. They have "the old language," Chippewa, which was once vernacular but becomes referential and mythic, a means of reterritorialization. English is the vehicular language imposed on them, the language of deterritorialization. It also becomes, in a subverted minor fashion, the vernacular in the community, the new language of territorialization, as the young people grow less and less familiar with the Chippewa of their elders.

There are copious references to the old language, and the use of Ojibway is sporadic but omnipresent in the novels. "Eli would sing his songs. Wild unholy songs. Cree songs that made you lonely" (*Love Medicine* 69). This description suggests the "asignifying *intensive utilization* of language" that Deleuze and Guattari find in Kafka and particularly in the predilection of Antonin Artaud for cries and yells in the productions of his Theatre of Cruelty. "Language stops being representative in order to now move toward its extremities or limits" (*Kafka* 23). Particularly for listeners whose grasp of the old language is slipping or defunct, such singing connects on a visceral level without the comprehension of words which all members of the tribe must once have possessed. It is mainly the older people who use the old language in conversation, but it resonates with the young as well. In this context of hearing the spoken native language "at the knee of an elder," the young people retain the vernacular element of "language of the hearth or home." It is also an opportunity for inter-generational communion that transgresses the boundaries dictated by the type of contact each party has had with the outside, English-speaking world.

As Gobard suggests, the vernacular is "le *shibboleth* irréversible de l'identité fière d'elle-même de toute communauté linguistique circonscrite dans le temps et l'espace et bénéficiant d'une isolation suffisante par rapport aux autres communautés pour réduire les interférences au minimum et préserver son idiosyncrasie linguistique, reflet, cause et effet de toute sa conception du monde" [the irreversible shibboleth of identity, proud of itself, of a linguistic

community circumscribed in time and space and enjoying a sufficient degree of isolation from other communities to reduce interference to a minimum and preserve its linguistic idiosyncrasy, reflection, cause and effect of all its conception of the world] (Gobard 34, his italics). Albertine Johnson goes to medical school, Henry Lamartine Jr. goes to Vietnam, his brother Beverly sells books in St. Paul and Lipsha Morrissey works in the sugar factory. All these experiences in the outside world dilute the individual's sense of community because there is a breach in that isolation of one community from others which Gobard's model requires. Nevertheless, it is partly in the *shibboleth* experience of hearing the old language spoken that the younger generation recovers that sense of community when they do return to the reservation. The Hebrew root of Gobard's choice of word is particularly appropriate to his meaning. *Shibboleth* means an ear of corn, which is not remarkable except that the word is difficult to say if one is not a native Hebrew. Therefore this word, mundane in meaning as it is, became a test of nationality in the deeply tribal world of the Middle East.

While not necessary in a similar gate-keeping fashion against interlopers on the reserve, the Ojibway or Chippewa language does act as a ritual acknowledgement of nationality or ethnicity. For instance, the word "Peendigaen," meaning "Come in," is used periodically in a way which suggests a ritual welcome for a close friend. Conversely, its absence indicates the turning of the community against someone who is perceived to have betrayed the people or transgressed boundaries. When Fleur Pillager comes to the reservation for "the fourth and last time,"

[e]veryone knew and did not know her. There were no cries of greeting, no hands held admiringly to the face and smiles. No one smoothed Fleur's hair down on each side of her forehead and said *Daughter, daughter, we've missed you. Peendigaen. Sit and eat some of this good soup. No one offered her bread and tea. (The Bingo Palace 139)*

The special invitation in the old language is a ritual part of the homecoming reception, which is deliberately ignored in Fleur's case. It is in such words, perhaps exotic to a white reader of Erdrich's novels, that the hearth and home may be present for an Ojibway reader, and for the characters between whom these exchanges take place within the narratives.

Both the characters who leave the reserve and those who stay are

affected by the imposition of English as a vehicular language, the urban language of commerce and government. Gobard describes the vehicular language as "un langue d'intermédiaires, le langage non plus de la médiation qui est du ressort du vernaculaire ou du mythique mais de la *médiatisation* qui relève du véhiculaire et du référential" [a language of intermediaries, a language not of mediation, which is the purview of vernacular or mythic language, but rather of that state of making mediatory, which goes beyond the vehicular and the referential] (35). The vehicular language does not so much mediate relationships between people, or between people and the beyond, as the vernacular and mythic functions do, respectively, but rather makes things 'mediatory,' or based upon the mediary, the middle man, the broker, if one can attempt thus to convey the sense of Gobard's *médiatisation*. An interloper makes himself an indispensable third party to the hitherto direct communication between interlocutors. It is interesting that Gobard chooses the verb 'relever de' to express the relationship between *médiatisation* and the vehicular and mythic functions. 'Relever' means to lift up, or raise up, and with 'de' is often followed by the name of a disease, with the connotation that the subject of the predicate is recovering from the malady. From the perspective of the majoritarian group that imposes such a language function, the vehicular language certainly has a medicinal purpose. It is good for the minority, though it tastes bad. The function of such language is to redirect the flows, to use Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor, so that all things pass through the assessment and re-engineering processes that the majority must inflict upon its wayward minorities to maintain order.

'La relève' is also Jacques Derrida's choice for translating Hegel's untranslatable 'Aufhebung,' the dialectical function in which a concept is simultaneously negated and 'lifted up' to the next level in the continuing saga of Geist. In the article "Différance," Derrida asserts that through the 'différance' inherent in the ambiguity of word meaning, "the very project of philosophy, under the privileged heading of Hegelianism, is displaced and reinscribed. The *Aufhebung* - *la relève* - is constrained into writing itself otherwise" (19). Perhaps the interactive effects of vehicular and vernacular can be expressed through the metaphor of 'la relève,' in which the vehicular function of language

attempts to overwrite the vernacular, or capture it in order to achieve a 'higher purpose.' The majoritarian segment of the community inevitably asserts its projects against those of the minority with the intention of incorporating the perceived positive elements and negating the perceived negative elements, and then moving on. At the same time, the equally inevitable 'différance' which sets apart that minority acts subversively against the ordering impulse of the majority. Traces appear and margins blur. The operating principles of commerce are fudged by traditional practices. The rural sullies the urban. The local confounds the regional or the national. Against its will, the vehicular function must 'write itself otherwise,' or speak otherwise, because 'the other' will not stay in line. The subversive activities of the minoritarian and of the vernacular operate as lines of flight, in Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor, the radical flows that nomadically seek freedom.

Gobard parallels vernacular and vehicular language to the two titular elements of a book by F. Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. The English translation of the title is *Community and Association*, but *Gesellschaft* can also mean 'society.' The vernacular language is the means of expression of a community, with its connotations of small geographic domain and somewhat uniform values. The vehicular language derives instead from a society, which implies a broader region and a heterogeneous incidence of value systems. Again, the role of the majority in the society is the attempted correction of those disparate tendencies in the mores of the minorities.

The English of the majority of Americans is imposed on the Chippewa in an attempt to bring them in line with the social processes of the larger society. Nanapush warns Lulu that their name

...loses power every time it is written and stored in a government file.

That is why I only gave it out once in all those years.

No Name, I told Father Damien when he came to take the church census.

No Name, I told the Agent when he made up the tribal roll. (*Tracks* 32)

Against this tendency of the majoritarian language to impose an external order on the community, the language that once was vernacular may become referential. Gobard suggests that, "[d]ans les sociétés en voie de dislocation (quel que soit leur degré de développement) le référentiaire peut servir un

temps de ciment comme ersatz de cohésion ethnique ou nationale qui transforme leur chaos ostissique en cosmos culturel jusqu'au moment où ce château de textes ne tient plus que par l'opération du Saint-Esprit référentiaire et qu'il suffit d'un bâillement pour engloutir les Lettres" [in dislocated societies, whatever their degree of development, the referential serves for a time as a cement substituting for ethnic or national cohesion, which transforms their cultural chaos until the moment that the textual house of cards no longer holds except by the operation of a referential Holy Spirit and which is enough of a yawn to swallow Letters] (37 his italics). While Nanapush had a direct connection to the ancestors who lived according to the old ways, each succeeding generation experiences progressively less of that tradition in their daily lives. The Chippewa words that appear in dialogue and in the third person narrative voice hearken back to a past which offers identity and power. As indicated above, the young people experience these words as a vernacular function of language, in that the language offers the communal quality of home and hearth. They also experience them as a referential function, in that the language provides a connection to a cultural heritage threatened with extinction. Finally, as the language of the spirituality which is sometimes contrasted, sometimes syncretistically linked with the Catholicism of the whites, Chippewa operates also as a mythic function. The means to reaching beyond present circumstances to the 'horizon of cultures' is provided by the language which identifies the Anishinabe cosmos, again recalling a time when these were the people, the measure of all people. Like the referential function, according to Gobard, the mythic is "dans un rapport direct à la temporalité, mais une temporalité *en dehors du siècle*, non pas de la durée mais de l'éternité. Ce rapport se double d'une relation spatiale qui place le langage mythique *au-delà de la compréhensibilité, au ciel des cultures, ou dans leur enfer*" [directly connected to temporality, but a temporality outside the age, not of life but of eternity. This connection is coupled with a spatial relation which places the mythic language beyond comprehensibility, in the heaven of cultures, or in their hell] (37 his italics). These referential and mythic functions of Chippewa allow for some cultural and spiritual reterritorialization. The community can recover its sense of identity and power from the past through the referential function of

Chippewa, and its hope for the future through the mythic function, the linguistic relation between the people and the beyond.

However, as the incidence of Chippewa words is sporadic in the novels, one must contend more directly with the vehicular language of English, which is after all the vehicle of communication for the authorial narrative voice and all characters, both narrated and narrating, in Erdrich's books. There is no disputing the vehicular quality of English, according to Gobard's scheme. As Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge, "English has become the worldwide vehicular language for today's world" (*Kafka* 24). In North Dakota and Minnesota, English is the undisputed language for all transactions on and off the reserve. In 1913-14, Nanapush could still refuse to participate in the census and treaties, to use the English learned during "a Jesuit education in the halls of Saint John before I ran back to the woods and forgot my prayers" (*Tracks* 33). In contemporary Argus, Fargo and Minneapolis, Lipsha Morrissey must shovel sugar, Lyman Lamartine must broker deals, Jack Mauser must build roads and Beverly Lamartine must sell books. English is a necessity, the vehicular language that allows these characters to participate in their more or less limited ways in the mainstream American society. That participation is facilitated if their true identity can be hidden, as Beverly's wife Elsa does by only taking him to visit her family "at the height of summer, when they admired his perfect tan" (*Love Medicine* 79). The quality of English they can muster helps to hide their Indian identity, too. While Lipsha is too inarticulate to make headway with the border guard who has seized Nector's ceremonial pipe, Lyman knows how to talk to the white man. Shawnee Ray and Lipsha watch as he "confers with the guard, using soothing hand gestures, shaking his head, smiling briefly, and then examining with zealous eyes the pipe offered to him, holding forth then, explaining tradition with a simple courtesy I wish that I could imitate.... After a while, the conversation seems to take on a friendlier overtone, for the guard nods his head once, and then straightens with an air of discovery" (*Bingo Palace* 38).

Lyman uses English to explain the sacred pipe to an outsider, and English becomes the vernacular for generations on the reserve whose exposure to Chippewa becomes more and more sporadic with the passing of

the old ones. Yet the use of English by the narrators and in characters' dialogue is subversive. The English language there is "strange, anarchic, heteroglot...inventive and intense" (Leitch 99), a minor use and a linguistic reterritorialization by the community. There is a disconcerting coincidence of recognizably conversational language and highly poetic diction. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Leslie Silko condemns this characteristic as the unfortunate "outgrowth of academic, post-modern, so-called experimental influences" (Silko 178-79). From Silko's perspective, an academic education and postmodern verbal play hopelessly compromise Erdrich's storytelling ability. The "overly poetic" language does not represent the real world of Native life. According to the Deleuzoguattarian perspective, however, it is just this "intense employment" of the language that would align Erdrich's work with the work of Kafka, Artaud, Joyce or Beckett. The "impoverishment" of the Red English coincides with the "excess" of the stylized imagery and diction. Red English here occupies the same situation as the "German language in Prague - a withered vocabulary, an incorrect syntax" (*Kafka* 22), that Deleuze and Guattari discern in Kafka.

Generally, we might call the linguistic elements, however varied they may be, that express the "internal tensions of a language" *intensives* or *tensors*. It is in this sense that the linguist Vidal Sephiha terms intensive "any linguistic tool that allows a move toward the limit of a notion or a surpassing of it," marking a movement of language toward its extremes, toward a reversible beyond or before. Sephiha well shows the variety of such elements which can be all sorts of master-words, verbs, or prepositions that assume all sorts of senses; prenominal or purely intensive verbs as in Hebrew; conjunctions, exclamations, adverbs; and *terms that connote pain*. One could equally cite the accents that are interior to words, their discordant function. And it would seem that the language of a minor literature particularly develops these tensors or these intensives. (*Kafka* 22-23 their italics)

Lipsha is the king of profound and poetic statements mildly curdled by poor grammar and diction. The final paragraph of *Love Medicine* records his narratorial reverie at the border river.

I still had Grandma's hankie in my pocket. The sun flared. I'd heard that this river was the last of an ancient ocean, miles deep, that once had covered the Dakotas and solved all our problems. It was easy to still imagine us beneath them vast unreasonable waves, but the truth is we

live on dry land. I got inside. The morning was clear. A good road led on. So there was nothing to do but cross the water, and bring her home. (*Love Medicine* 272)

The expressive word "flared," the phrase "vast unreasonable waves," the complexity of thought and the length of the compound third and fourth sentences contrast with the generally simple, "impoverished" vocabulary and short sentences of the rest of the paragraph. The "unnatural" components of expression push the language to its limits, and escape from the mundane reality in which Lipsha lives. In generic terms, this "carnivalization" of the narrative could be said to contribute to a certain magic realism which recalls much Latin American fiction. While the vocabulary and diction are not consistently striking in the way that Jorge Luis Borges for instance renders his prose "vertiginous," to use one of his favourite words, the disconcerting moments when Lipsha's expression transcends one's realistic expectations create pockets of escape in the same fashion. In terms of the functions of language, these subversive and heteroglot uses of the English language act as "intensives" according to Sefiha's model. Because this linguistic activity occurs in a majoritarian language used by a minor writer and minority characters, such intensive use of English constitutes a deterritorialization, according to Deleuze and Guattari's model.

This deterritorialization occurs in an intertextual literary fashion as well, through the subversive treatment of classics of majoritarian literature. One of the commentators mentioned in the introduction was Thomas Matchie, whose article "*Love Medicine: A Female Moby-Dick*" addresses the parallels between Erdrich's novel and Melville's classic. Matchie sees *Love Medicine* as "different from so much of Native American literature in that it is not polemic - there is no ax to grind, no major indictment of white society. It is simply a story about Indian life" (Matchie 478). According to Deleuze and Guattari, however, it would be impossible for a minority writer's work to be "not polemic." The minor literature is necessarily opposed in a subversive way to the major language and literature onto which it is grafted by the shared use of that language, in the respective major and minor modes. Matchie sees Erdrich's novel as a "virtual allegory" (480) of Melville's. Among the parallels he cites are the "similar episodic or

disjointed structures" (479), the direct correspondence of characters, and the coincidence of several motifs, such as "water and fishing, wildness - particularly among the males, preoccupation with power as well as the importance of the heart, the alternating realities of life and death, [and] concern with colors, especially white and red" (479). While Matchie makes a convincing argument in favour of the contribution of these equivalencies to American literary continuity, the perspective of minor literature requires one to see the correspondences in a different way.

Nector reveals that *Moby Dick* is his talisman book and focus of meditation, because it is "the one book I read in high school. For some reason the priest in Flandreau would teach no other book all four years..." (*Love Medicine* 91). Instead of representing a canonical tradition as part of a judiciously selected curriculum, this particular American canonical book is the obsessive/compulsive focus of an inferior training in literature, though one could argue that there are worse choices if one must receive one's entire literary education through one book! Such inferior training occurs at the hands of a priest whose curriculum and instruction are obviously not determined and authorized by the state. It is a minor education for a minority whose preparation for the normal uses of literary training is immaterial, since that path is not deemed appropriate for them.

Yet what has Nector done with this book, despite the failure of white education for natives? He has learned that book "inside and out. I'd even stolen a copy from school and taken it home in my suitcase" (91). The minor learner has capitalized on an inferior education, and appropriated the symbol of the cultural imperialism thrust upon him. Not only has he achieved mastery of the white book, "inside and out," but he has actually stolen and taken home something which ought not to be a legitimate portion of his legacy from America. In practical terms *Moby Dick* is an official textbook, in symbolic terms a canonical work of white America's literary heritage. At both levels, Nector's theft transgresses his normal bounds as a Native American in a predominantly white society.

The reaction of his mother, Margaret Rushes Bear Kashpaw, further highlights Erdrich's subversive use of the literary classic. When she is told that

it is the "story of the great white whale," Margaret asks, "What do they got to wail about, those whites?" (91). Again, the intensive use of language allows English to escape its limits, as a grammatically "impoverished" interrogative uses a sophisticated pun masquerading as misunderstanding. The minor author speaks through the simplicity of the minor character to comment on the position of her community within the larger society. It is the natives in their condition of oppression who have something to "wail about." Nector tries to correct his mother's misunderstanding by telling her that the whale "was a fish as big as the church. She did not believe this either. Who would?" (91). The articles of faith of the white worldview are not acknowledged in hers. The white students must accept that such a fantastic thing is possible because they have faith in their study of science, though cetology evinces bleak employment prospects on the prairie, as Aritha Van Herk's story "At Land" demonstrates. Margaret Rushes Bear Kashpaw's reaction carnivalizes the staid American literary classic. Her refusal to accept the basic premises that must be entertained in order to read this white fiction subverts the hold of this book on the American mind and the literary referential function of American English.

While Nector incorporates the American way to a sufficient extent that he plays along with the whites, and goes to Washington to plead the cause of his community, he too subverts the referential function of this literary classic. He quotes "Call me Ishmael" (91) from the novel, but says it only to himself. This famous line establishes the relationship between narrator and reader in Melville's book, and Nector's hoarding of the talismanic line eliminates the communication which would herald a shared experience. That book belongs to him, but not to a wider community of which he is a part. Like Ahab, rather than Ishmael, he goes down with this ship in his elusive quest. In the end, Nector becomes senile, his mind weighed down with *Moby Dick* and treaty negotiations in Washington and the State capital. Meanwhile, his twin brother Eli, living in the woods and singing songs in the old language, retains his mental sharpness. *Moby Dick* has scuttled Nector, but the referential function of the use of language in a majoritarian literary classic has been deterritorialized by its treatment in the minor literature.

Love Medicine also features a deterritorialization through an unofficial

educational system, and through texts which do not achieve the mark of literary canonicity. Nector goes into the white world to fight the battles of the community as best he knows how. His rival for the affections of Lulu, Beverly Lamartine, moves into the white world because "there were great relocation opportunities for Indians with a certain amount of stick-to-it-iveness and pride" (*Love Medicine* 77). Beverly sells children's home workbooks door to door. The narrator points out the incongruity of his successful sales of such books, "for he was not an educated man and if the customers had, as they might naturally do, considered him an example of his product's efficiency they might not have entrusted their own children to those pages of sums and reading exercises" (77). However, Bev's "ploy" is the use of "his humble appearance and faulty grammar" (77) to establish a rapport with people who were interested in something better than that for their children. The white community is founded on the principles of evolutionary progress within families as well as in the broader social fabric. Beverly plays on people's desire for the children to have a better life than they have lived themselves. The means to this end is the white educational system, which promises success through better employment and more money. While the reader is not treated to an example of Bev's "faulty grammar," this intensive use of language carnivalizes the aspirations of the white community. The pitch is topped with the display of the photo of Henry Lamartine Junior, the son whose success Bev attributes to this after school study program. But Henry Junior is not Bev's son in the conventional way, though Bev believes that he is the biological father. The customers never see the inscription "To Uncle Bev" on the back of the wallet photo. The relationship between father and son which grounds that belief in evolutionary familial progress is illegitimate in Bev's case, unbeknownst to that "small-town world of earnest dreamers" (77) to whom he is making his pitch. The hope for the future aroused by this initiative in purchasing the "cheap pulp-flecked pages" is quashed for these parents "only later, when they found themselves rolling up a work-skills book to slaughter a fly or scribbling phone numbers down on the back of *Math Enrichment*" when they "realize that their children had absolutely no interest in taking the world by storm through self-enlightenment" (78). In this entrepreneurial realm of pseudo-education, the native trickster subverts the course of white progress, offering a

neat bookend to the subversion of native progress in the official pseudo-education of the residential school.

While the attempted subversion of native community by white society results in much grief and suffering, the attempted subversion of white society by the native community proceeds apace. In this minor literature, Erdrich utilizes Red English and an intensive use of English, in order to deterritorialize the majoritarian language in which she writes. The encroachment of English in a vernacular function may be lamentable, as the use of Chippewa declines. However, the vehicular function of English is destabilized by this subversive, minor use of the language, and the opportunity for referential and mythic reterritorialization for the community remains alive. The author and her characters live in a language which is not theirs, a curious heteroglot variation on English that allows them to fight for freedom in linguistic terms. That fight for freedom is inevitably political, and the ways in which these lines of flight transgress the imposed structure of the majoritarian society are the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 3 - Political Aspects of a Minor Literature

The political parts of the book, I think, are woven into people's lives, but do not completely control their lives. I think our primary concern was to have characters who were like people that really could exist, and whose lives were not taken up in thinking "I'm an Indian, so I'm in this political situation." Obviously politics influences people's lives in every conceivable human way in this book, but we hoped it would be more affecting, and more obvious, maybe, to people to have them see it from the human point of view, rather than making political statements every time someone turned around.

By virtue of the fact that we are Indians and we are writing, people are going to inevitably read the books as some sort of a statement; but we don't feel in a position to be spokesperson. What we can do, if we do it well and we do it right, is reflect the reality of our perceptions, and that reality is enmeshed in politics - in a whole history of race relations, and economics, and a whole future, as well - and we're trying to capture a moment of it in time, and make it true, because in our understanding of the world, that truth speaks for itself without us editorializing about it. If it is true, it has meaning. (Bonetti 88-89)

In an interview with Kay Bonetti, Louis Erdrich and husband/collaborator Michael Dorris, in the first and second paragraphs respectively, address the issue of the "political" aspects of *Love Medicine*. Like Kafka, Erdrich and Dorris decline to make overt political statements in their work. The fiction is instead a running commentary on the political situation of characters who, as Erdrich suggests, live lives into which politics are "woven," though one does not think about politics all the time. For Deleuze and Guattari, the political aspect of Kafka's minor literature is tied to what they call the continuity of "segments" on a line of flight. In Erdrich's novels, one can observe this trait in the political relations of the native community with the white society, particularly in the treatment of treaty negotiations, notions of criminality, the patriotic function of military service, and tendencies toward either conformity or non-conformity with white modes of operating. These are not issues about which characters or the author make great polemical pronouncements, but rather issues which are revealed through the events of daily "human" lives necessarily "enmeshed" in

politics.

The chapter "Proliferation of Series" in *Kafka* examines the ways in which Kafka's characters proliferate as "segments," or participants in the trial or in the castle. Everyone is somehow connected with the judicial system in one novel, and with the defense of the Castle against interlopers in the other. The protagonist segment and those who do support him "tend to distribute themselves along a line of escape, to take flight on this line, in relation to the contiguous segments - police segment, lawyer segment, judge segment, ecclesiastical segment" (*Kafka* 55). The segments or terms in the justice system and other institutions of the alienating society "don't appear or don't appear only as the hierarchized representatives of the law but become agents, connective cogs of an assemblage of justice, each cog corresponding to a position of desire, all the cogs and all the positions communicating with each other through successive continuities" (55).

Kafka's purpose in creating such a juridical machine, or a castle-defense machine, is to expose the relationship of immanence and desire in repression. There is not simply one who represses and one who is repressed. Rather both are caught up in a machinic assemblage in which power and desire are identical, since for Deleuze and Guattari, desire is plenitude and not lack. "Repression, for both the represser and the repressed, flows from this or that assemblage of power - desire, from this or that state of the machine..." (56). As all parts of the machine participate in the power and desire in greater or lesser degree, the repression is always immanent. No one is removed from relationship to repression because he fits into a position with relative lack of authority within a hierarchy. Indeed, "[p]ower is not pyramidal as the Law would have us believe; it is segmentary and linear, and it proceeds by means of contiguity, and not by height and farawayness" (56). Bureaucrats and players in the justice system are machines which relate to one another along the chains of command and repression within the larger assemblage that is "the system," that malevolent force impotently maligned by those unfortunate enough to run afoul of its strictures. Such systems operate through the "gears" of their machines, the segments along the way which "determine, as a function of the social field in which they are held, the engineers as well as the engineered" (57).

In the relationship of minority and majority in a social field, both parties are caught up in the machinic functioning which determines their reciprocal involvement in repression. As the majority deterritorializes the minority, in linguistic, political, social, economic and other ways, this re-engineering occurs through the offices of various "segments" in the majoritarian social structures. The converse deterritorialization of the majoritarian project by the insidious minority is similarly undertaken by the grinding of gears which will not slip into place, by the obnoxious racket of square cogs protesting within the mechanism. Desire is working both ways, at once "caught up in this or that segment, this or that office, this or that machine or state of machine" and simultaneously taking "flight on the whole line," and "finding a way out, precisely a way out, in the discovery that machines are only the concretions of historically determined desire and that desire doesn't cease to undo them..." (59). These two states of desire Deleuze and Guattari define as the two states of the law, the "paranoiac transcendental law that never stops agitating a finite segment and making it into a completed object," and the "immanent schizo-law that functions like justice, an antilaw, a 'procedure' that will dismantle all the assemblages of the paranoiac law" (59). Lines of escape are created by the schizo-law as it destroys the machinery of the paranoiac transcendental law. Freedom for a minority can be achieved through the deterritorialization of "hardened segments" which seek inappropriately to impose transcendental and paranoiac solutions on a disparate array of machinery in the social field.

Minor literature is the main life-support system for such aspirations, since the feasibility of full-scale revolution is usually bleak for such groups. However, as Vincent Leitch points out, "the main risks run by such minor literatures, according to Deleuze and Guattari, are the temptations to reconstitute power and law, reterritorialize the social field, refashion stable family units, and remake 'great literatures.' Here it is a matter of revolt turning into reaction" (99-100). As the actions of many native characters in Erdrich's novels demonstrate, their community is not above engaging in repression. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that desire is always present in both its states, and the danger of a successful reterritorialization is the potential crystallization of a new paranoiac transcendental law. Nevertheless, with this caveat in mind, one can affirm that

the perspective of the minor literature constructs the repressive majority as a paranoiac transcendental inscription of law, while the efforts of the repressed minority to subvert and escape this situation constitute a schizo-law with a view to a way out.

Among the key embodiments of the paranoiac transcendental law which Erdrich incorporates in her novels is the American government and its treatment of the native community. As Michael Dorris suggests, the predicament of American Indians is based on "a whole history of race relations." The horrendous treatment of native people by the white newcomers to North America is common knowledge. The presence of the "U.S. Government" is subtle but ubiquitous in the lives of the characters. When Henry Lamartine and Albertine Johnson end their night of drinking on NP Avenue in Fargo, the U.S. Government appears ominously above them on "a high shelf behind the hotel desk. President Nixon's face drooped across the screen" (*Love Medicine* 135). In Erdrich's series of novels, the recording of interaction with government begins with Nanapush's reaction to the Allotment Act in *Tracks*. This was the transcendental law that inscribed capitalist desire on Indian land and appropriated it. In a broad historical introduction to American Indian literatures, A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff explains the provenance and impact of this policy.

As part of its policy of assimilationism, the government passed the General Allotment Act of 1887, which had been sponsored by Senator Henry L. Dawes. Popularly called the Dawes Act, it allotted in severalty land previously owned by tribes. This bill was supported by the liberals, who felt that the Indians could survive only by becoming independent farmers, and by land grabbers, who plotted to gain Indian territory by legal and illegal means. It was also supported by Indians like Sarah Winnemucca (Paiute) and Charles A. Eastman (Sioux), who felt it offered Indians independence and citizenship. The Allotment Act resulted in enormous losses of Indian land, however. Wilcomb E. Washburn estimates that by 1934, Indians had lost over sixty percent of the land they owned in 1887 (*The Indian in America* 242-43). (Ruoff 3)

Nanapush relates to Lulu the succession of events put into motion by this decree, "a wind from the east, bringing exile in a storm of government papers" (*Tracks* 1). The basic need of physical survival in the face of disease and starvation conflicts with the desire to maintain the sacred land. In the winter of

1912, Nanapush explains that

some had sold their allotment land for one hundred poundweight of flour. Others, who were desperate to hold on, now urged that we get together and buy back our land, or at least pay a tax and refuse the lumbering money that would sweep the marks of our boundaries off the map like a pattern of straws. Many were determined not to allow the hired surveyors, or even our own people, to enter the deepest bush. (8)

By the winter of 1918, the little family cobbled together from Nanapush, Pillager and Kashpaw must register for government commodities in order to survive, and in their fateful meeting with Father Damien,

he pulled out the annual fee lists and foreclosure notices sent by the Agent and showed us how most families, at the end of this long winter, were behind in what they owed, how some had lost their allotments. We traced the list until we found the names we sought - Pillager, Kashpaw, Nanapush. All were there, figures and numbers, and all impossible. We stared without feeling at the amounts due before summer....we examined the lines and circles of the homesteads paid up - Morrissey, Pukwan, Hat, Lazarres everywhere. They were colored green. The lands that were gone out of the tribe - to deaths with no heirs, to sales, to the lumber company - were painted a pale and rotten pink. Those in question, a sharper yellow. (172-73)

The pink colouring, like the sickly pink of the white man's skin, spreads over the map as a visual reminder of the destruction of a way of life and a people. The green coloured sections identify families who are racially mixed, such as the Morrisseys and Lazarres, or linked by employment with the white power structures, like Hat and Pukwan. They will keep their land because they have capitulated to the white plans, but the true representatives of the tribal legacy, Pillager, Kashpaw and Nanapush, are among those who are "in question." Their portion of the land is dwindling, and prospects look bleak for the reversal of that trend, as the fees that must be paid appear "impossible." Years later, the yellow patches are obviously no longer in question, as Albertine Johnson refers to the "land my great-grandparents were allotted when the government decided to turn Indians into farmers. The policy of allotment was a joke. As I was driving toward the land, looking around, I saw as usual how much of the reservation was sold to whites and lost forever" (*Love Medicine* 11). The efforts to reverse the white onslaught through violence have been

futile, too, as Albertine demonstrates in casually remarking the profusion of "rock cairns commemorating Indian defeats around here" (14-15). The defeats are not only historical. Albertine realizes the quotidian nature of June's tragic end, since the "rich, single cowboy-rigger oil trash" (9) types in Williston think that "an Indian woman's nothing but an easy night" (10). It is tragically ironic that June's final cowboy-rigger trash is the half-Chippewa Jack Mauser. The oil business is one of the most recent among the white capitalist ventures to appropriate and partition the sacred land, and June is a casualty of the casual self-interest of the oil rigger segment. Jack remains haunted by the idea that he is being punished because he "never even set foot off the road" (*Tales of Burning Love* 108) to look for June, when he awoke in the truck and found her gone. For most of his life, he keeps his Indian half submerged, so that he can function in a white world of real estate and building contracts.

The very idea of dividing the land up into pieces and recording on paper how many people there are and what land they possess runs counter to the Chippewa worldview that Jack ignores. As Lulu Lamartine says, "All my life I never did believe in human measurement. Numbers, inches, feet. All are just ploys for cutting nature down to size.... I never let the United States census in my door, even though they say it's good for Indians. Well, quote me. I say that every time they counted us they knew the precise number to get rid of" (*Love Medicine* 221). Her husband Henry never filed on or bought his land, and so its ownership was questioned, perhaps in terms of a yellow colouring on the official map at the state Land Titles office or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Next to the appropriation of land and destruction of a general way of life and culture, the most active "hard segment" of white society in the native community is the justice system. The natural criminalization of native people in the eyes of the white community is humourously exhibited in the detention of Lipsha and Shawnee Ray at the border, for Nector's ceremonial *Po-gun* and Zelda's pemmican fruitcake are automatically assumed to be contraband by the guard. "I've heard it all and seen it all. But this is a pipe and I know hash" (*The Bingo Palace* 34). The humour of this scene turns bitter as the sacrilege of the guard's action in assembling the pipe mortifies Lipsha, who fears that, "in the hands of the first non-Indian who ever attached that pipe together, sky would

crash to earth" (34-35). As the guard paces the room while phoning for lab analysis on the alleged hash fruitcake, the "pipe hung from his hand, backwards, casual as a bat. The eagle feather dragged lower, lower, until it finally touched the floor" (35). The degradation of a ceremonial artifact is complete. The border guard segment of the justice system has crystallized the paranoiac transcendental law on the minority way of life without any conception of the enormous travesty of his actions.

Of course Lipsha could be expected to be a "bad Indian," since he is the offspring of the dangerous criminal, Gerry Nanapush. In the eyes of white society, there is no doubt that Gerry is a criminal, and the corrections system has certainly turned him into one, whatever the initial validity of the label. He sees jail as a "hate factory" that "manufactured black poisons in his stomach that he couldn't get rid of although he poked a finger down his throat and retched and tried to be a clean and normal person in spite of everything" (*Love Medicine* 161). He keeps breaking out of the "brick shitboxes," heaping further time upon his sentence of incarceration. "He was mainly in the penitentiary for breaking out of it, anyway, since for his crime of assault and battery he had received three years and time off for good behavior. He just never managed to serve those three years or behave well. He broke out time after time, and was caught each time he did it, regular as clockwork" (*Love Medicine* 160).

The treatment of Gerry's original crime in the court demonstrates the service provided by the "court segment" of the transcendental law. Gerry believes in justice, not laws, and believes that he has done his time. The crime itself concerns a fight in which Gerry bests a cowboy who asserted that the term "nigger" applied to Chippewas, as well as blacks. Defending his people's honour against a white man is a dangerous thing to do, however, and Gerry finds "...that white people are good witnesses to have on your side, because they have names, addresses, social security numbers and work phones. But they are terrible witnesses to have against you, almost as bad as having Indian witnesses for you" (*Love Medicine* 162). The white witnesses, like the white "victim" of Gerry's assault, are legitimate members of the majority culture. The four elements in this list of legitimizing features - names, addresses, social security numbers and work phones - illustrate the values of that culture. In the

native culture, a name is a sacred designation which the manitous have given to an individual, which is not to be divulged to just anyone. As Gerald Vizenor explains,

Individuals were given special names, dream names, at birth. These names were sacred and were not revealed to strangers. An individual was known in the traditional tribal world by a personal nickname; several names were given in some families, and with each nickname there were stories to be told. In the traditional past, a person in the tribe was selected to present a sacred name to a child. The parents gave nicknames, but a sacred name, a dream name, was a ceremonious event. (Vizenor 13)

In the white culture, some people are baptised to present their names in a ritual fashion to their religious community, but in general names are not a sacred, personal matter, but a public record of a person's participation in the society. In the native culture, it is unseemly to write one's name and make it a material thing, as Nanapush illustrates with his defiant *No Name* inscribed on the priest's church census and on the Agent's tribal roll. In the white culture, the most important feature of one's name for official purposes is that it be copiously inscribed on cards in the wallet and files held by official registrars of all kinds. One of the most important repositories of files is the national social security registry, where one is assigned a number to accompany the name, a number which entitles one to work and to receive the economic and social benefits of the society. Another feature of many of the cards and files that record one's name is the designation of address, where one lives. In the native culture the address traditionally is not fixed, because the nature of tribal life is nomadic. The people were so attuned to their physical environment, however, that an individual's location in space could be satisfactorily determined by reference to natural markers such as lakes, hills, woods, etc. In the majoritarian white culture, an artificial and static system has been imposed on the physical environment, whereby spatial locations are given numbers which increase or decrease as one proceeds up or down a artificial physical construction called a street or avenue, which in turn exists within a broader artificial construction called a town or city. More abstractly yet, the U.S. Post Office has devised an artificial and static system of numbers called the zip code, whereby that physical

location and several others in close proximity are grouped with a numerical designation that allows the post office to deliver the communications of the society through the preferred means of written letters. In order to be a legitimate member of the society, it is important that one leave one's address, and divulge one's name and social security number in order to obtain a job, where one may be reached at one's "work phone" for communications via another preferred method, the transmogrification of one's spoken word into electrical impulses which traverse buried cables and resume their familiar spoken sound when they emanate from the receiver of the party to whom one is speaking.

These fundamental badges of legitimacy in the white society, the name, address, S.I.N. number and work phone, attest to the reliability, respectability, and credibility of the cowboy's white witnesses before the seat of white justice. Secure in the knowledge of their position in society, the white witnesses can be confident on the stand, look the judge in the eye and give their testimony with the pride and self-congratulation which ought to accompany such sterling community service. On the other hand, all these elements of the white person's social apparatus break down in the native community where they have been imperfectly imposed and maintained, and where they furnish the same qualities of citizenship neither internally within that minority culture, nor externally in the Indians' interaction with the white society.

Not only did Gerry's friends lack all forms of identification except their band cards, not only did they disappear (out of no malice but simply because Gerry was tried during powwow time), but the few he did manage to get were not interested in looking judge or jury in the eyes. They mumbled into their laps. Gerry's friends, you see, had no confidence in the United States judicial system. They did not seem comfortable in the courtroom, and this increased their unreliability in the eyes of judge and jury. If you trust the authorities, they trust you back, it seems. It looked that way to Gerry, anyhow. (*Love Medicine* 162)

Not only were the white witnesses more credible, but the cowboy had expert testimony from a doctor, who confirmed the possibly permanent testicular damage that Gerry had done to his opponent.

Thus Gerry goes to prison "with a sentence that was heavy for a first offence, but not bad for an Indian" (162). With each jailbreak, his trouble with the system compounds. His first offence was the debilitation of a low-class

cowboy, but his serious incarceration begins when he kills the type of white man that the whole society respects, "a clean-shaven man with dark hair and light eyes, a state trooper, a man whose picture was printed in all the papers" (*Love Medicine* 170). The whole white society commiserates with the family of the slain man, as the newspapers give a clean-cut all-American face to the tragedy. Gerry is now a cop-killer, the lowest of the low in the view of the white society. The way in which Gerry seems forced into more and more serious crimes, however, suggests that the paranoiac transcendental law causes criminality to proliferate. The criminal machine and the justice machine are one, and the repression is an ongoing by-product of this machinic continuity of justice system segments. The crystallizing effect of the penal hard segment extends even to the obliteration of narrative, the normal source of identity for people. As Gerry tells his daughter Shawn, "There are no stories in that place" (*Tales of Burning Love* 395). Against this tendency of the state's authoritative law, Gerry the trickster constantly invokes his own schizo-law, the belief in justice rather than laws, which serves as a way out for him. The brick shitboxes cannot hold him, and the justice machine cannot maintain him as a working part. Periodically and inevitably during *Love Medicine*, *The Bingo Palace* and *Tales of Burning Love*, he takes his line of flight and escapes. He even inadvertently steals the baby from its crib, both literally, as Jack Mauser Junior is unfortunately stowed in the car which Gerry and Lipsha steal, and in Kafka's figurative sense, as this gypsy nomad trickster mocks the futile efforts of the white society machine to make him accountable to it.

One of the ways in which red-blooded American men can participate most fully in their society's vision of itself is through the patriotic defence of country in war. It appears red-skinned men are just as red-blooded, and Erdrich's novels are filled with men who exemplify the native participation in American wars, a level of participation vastly out of proportion to their percentage share of the population. There are many fleeting glimpses of the impact of military service on the native community. Beverly Lamartine goes to Henry Lamartine Senior's funeral with "the trophy flag --- a black swastika on torn red cloth --- that he had captured to revenge the oldest Lamartine, a quiet boy, hardly spoken of now, who was killed early on while still in boot camp"

(Love Medicine 76). As with other young men, the military sometimes offers a "way out" which is taken in a rash decision, and regretted later. Lipsha Morrissey joins up in remorse after his turkey heart kills Nector, and is then on the run from the MP's, following in Dad's AWOL footsteps. Jack Mauser threatens to join the army if Eleanor won't marry him, but does not act on the threat. King Kashpaw tries to impress people with his claim to be a "Nam Vet" though there is some dispute over whether he actually went overseas when he was in the Marines. However, the fullest exploration of the consequences of military service occurs in the stories of Russell Kashpaw and Bev's supposed son and official nephew, Henry Lamartine Junior.

Russell goes to war twice, and comes back the second time from Korea with the topography of war engraved on his body. Mary Adare's attraction to him is enhanced by the scars that "stretched up his cheeks like claw marks, angry and long, even running past his temples and parting his hair crooked. I could see that they went downward too, mapping him below" (*Beet Queen 70*). The mental image of the map gives way to the image of the broken land itself when Russell displays his torso on a dare from Sita. Mary cannot help but touch the body that seems as if it had been worked over with farm machinery. "The wounds had been so deep that he was ridged like a gullied field. His chest had been plowed like a tractor gone haywire" (*Beet Queen 74-75*). When Russell is honoured for his heroic service and hauled through Argus in the parade, his response prompts A. Robert Lee to identify "a number of Erdrich hallmarks: her sense of Indian history as a mixture of defeat and victory, her use of the 'four-day road' as indicative of a wholly unique Chippewa-Indian cosmology and way of being, her welltaken smack at stereotype ('The only good Indian...' etc.), and her resort to an irony which can envisage the transformation of a maimed latter-day Indian warrior into an all-American super-patriot" (Lee 149). Each of these elements emphasizes the pathos of the Native American going to war and taking bullets for a nation which despises him and relegates him to second-class citizenship at best.

When Russell comes back from Korea, Argus National offers him a bank-clerk job, "even though he was an Indian" (*Beet Queen 70*). The white townspeople feel indebted to Russell for his military valour, though they remain

uneasy with his race. Similar ambiguousness characterizes the potential romantic intrigue between Russell and Sita Kozka. Sita knows little about her Chippewa neighbours: Russell's mother, Dutch James' housekeeper/wife is "Regina I-don't-know-what" (30). Yet Sita has a finely honed sense of who is an appropriate playfellow. She notes that the half-brother and -sister of her friend Celestine are Chippewas, and refers to Russell as "Celestine's Indian half-brother" (32). These distinctions suggest that Celestine herself, though she is born of a Chippewa mother, is not "Chippewa" in the mind of Sita. Whatever Sita's feelings are about Russell, she turns "a cold cheek, [to] let him know that Sita Kozka was off limits to his type" (72).

Similar attitudes haunt the other main "war hero," Henry Lamartine Junior. The quotation marks must qualify the epithet because Henry's war experience occurs in Vietnam, a conflict whose value is questioned by much of American society. Post traumatic stress disorder and shell shock are culturally stereotypical features of the Vietnam Vet, and their effect on Henry is exacerbated by his outsider status in the society for which he fought. Henry "was released after an honourable peace was not achieved, after the evacuation. Returning home he had been fouled up in red tape, routinely questioned by a military psychiatrist, dismissed" (*Love Medicine* 134). Henry's military service ends in red tape and paper, the paper of bureaucracy, the paper of the white world on which treaties are written and draft notices and discharge papers arrive. The military segment of the paranoiac transcendental law has given him the gears. The attitude of the society toward him, doubly distant as a veteran of a dubious, shameful war and as a native, is apparent in the embarrassment of the airport security guard he encounters when he returns home.

Henry Lamartine Junior carried enough shrapnel deep inside of him, still working its way out, to set off the metal detector in the airport. He had been physically searched there in a small curtained booth. When he told the guard what the problem was, the man just looked at him and said nothing, dumb as stone. Henry had wanted to crush that stupid face the way you crumble a ball of wax paper. (*Love Medicine* 134)

Henry's urge to crumple the wax paper face into a ball represents an urge of native people to crumple all the paper which has taken their land, fenced them

in on reservations, stipulated the treaty money which they receive instead of the opportunity to participate in the white marketplace and earn money for legitimate, respected labour. The paper language of English, like the German of Kafka's Prague, is the vehicle for the repression visited on the minority. It is the official language of the paranoiac transcendental law that seeks to nail everything down, to classify and quantify and control.

Upon his return to "normalcy," Henry responds to his experience in the war in the ways typical of veteran post-traumatic stress syndrome. He explodes when touched in his sleep by Albertine. His tightly wound tension cannot find release. Lyman is sorry that he bought a television because Henry

sat in front of it, watching it, and that was the only time he was completely still. But it was the kind of stillness that you see in a rabbit when it freezes and before it will bolt. He was not easy.... Once I was in the room watching TV with Henry and I heard his teeth click at something. I looked over and he'd bitten through his lip. Blood was going down his chin. (*Love Medicine* 148)

The recommended treatment for his disorder is shunned by his family, because the world of white medicine is a foreign and mistrusted one. Psychiatry is not seen as a good option, and the family "were afraid that if we brought Henry to a regular hospital they would keep him. 'They don't fix them in those places,' Mom said, 'they just give them drugs'" (149).

Henry's drastic reaction to his horrendous experience occurs in an environment in which people are also not aware of its context. The war in Vietnam is doubly foreign for people directed not toward the global world corresponding to the vehicular function of language, but rather toward the local world present in the vernacular. As Lyman Lamartine says when recalling his brother's capture and the consequent end of the letters that came from over there, "I could never keep it straight, which direction those good Vietnam soldiers were from" (147). The experience of the Native American soldier is a lonely one, because they are fighting for the righteous causes of a majoritarian society which is unrighteous in its treatment of them. The war exists only in the newspaper, for those who read it, as the First World War exists for Nanapush, as "bad news from overseas" (*Tracks* 47), to be mentioned in passing rather than as a central concern in one's life. Let the whites wail about that: it's their

problem.

The native participation in white wars may be a discrete and forgivable transgression against the minority tendency to non-conformity with the white models proffered to them. While Gerry Nanapush avoids military service because of the Nanapush heart condition, he does say, "They couldn't pay me enough to commit their murders" (*Love Medicine* 263). From Gerry's perspective, if a native buys into the white ways, as King does when he proudly declares himself a Nam Vet, then he is an apple, "red on the outside, white on the inside" (259). He apparently learned the epithet at his mother's knee, as Lulu also refers to the native council that takes away her house as a red-apple court.

Nector Kashpaw is likely the most outstanding example of an apple. His mother, Margaret Rushes Bear "had let the government put Nector in school, but hidden Eli.... In that way she gained a son on either side of the line. Nector came home from boarding school knowing white reading and writing, while Eli knew the woods" (*Love Medicine* 17). Nector's experiences during his travels acquaint him with the ways of the world in white America. He gets work as an actor, but "[d]eath was the extent of Indian acting in the movie theater" (90). He paraphrases General Custer, that quintessential hero of the eradication of the American Indian: "The only interesting Indian is dead, or dying by falling backwards off a horse" (91). He sacrifices his dignity to pose in a diaper for the eccentric rich lady in Kansas. Her painting *Plunge of the Brave* eventually hangs in the State Capitol, as a tribute to the native citizens of the state. After learning about the outside world, he throws himself into negotiating with it for the benefit of the reserve. "He'd been an astute political dealer, people said, horse-trading with the government for bits and shreds. Somehow he'd gotten a school built, a factory too, and he'd kept the land from losing its special Indian status under that policy called termination" (17-18). However, Nector's political activity, with trips to Washington and constant bargaining with the whites, could be viewed as collaboration with the oppressors, as the weak and unprincipled approach to the paranoiac transcendental law. It is Nector, at the head of the tribal government, who forecloses on the land of his lover Lulu, since her dead husband Henry had never filed on it. That regulation, signed in Nector's hand,

represents the segments of the political scheme imposed by Uncle Sam. The tribal council wants to build a tomahawk factory, an entrepreneurial venture which validates the stereotypical view of native people held by the white society. If anything represents the movement in American history from a xenophobic dread of native people to a patronizing fascination with their culture, it must be the plastic toy tomahawk. Lulu has a particular vested interest in the defeat of the plan, since the proposed site lies on her land, slickly repossessed for the purpose. Nevertheless, her words at the council meeting are an effective indictment of the apple approach of the community leaders: "The United States Government throws crumbs on the floor, and you go down so far to lick up those dollars that you turn your own people off the land. I got mad. 'What's that but *merde*?' I yelled at them. 'False value!'" (*Love Medicine* 223). The false value is bad faith between the leaders of the minority community and the people they are supposed to represent. Their collaboration with the machinic assemblage of white political and economic hegemony mocks the true aspirations of the minority community to achieve their line of escape.

Lyman Lamartine is the natural son of Nector, whose taste for power and negotiation he inherits: "His feet were the size of his father's tracks - ambitions, chances, progress reports, hope" (*Bingo Palace* 148). In the latter novels, *The Bingo Palace* and *Tales of Burning Love*, Lyman is the kingpin on the reserve because of his ability to make money. Earlier in the chronology, he comments on his burgeoning talent for business: "I had a touch for it, unusual in a Chippewa" (*Love Medicine* 143). Lyman struggles between his need to operate within the white machine and the desire he feels to lead his people to a better future. In Las Vegas for the Indian Gaming Convention, he blows both his own money and the tribal accounts in the casinos, even hocking Nector's pipe for a little more cash. His luck had to turn. It doesn't. However, the loss of all that money has a purifying effect on Lyman. He sees a vision of Fleur Pillager in the reflective face of the slot machine.

He was sitting face-to-face with the old lady, listening, as Lipsha had described, to the hot rasp of her bear voice.

Land is the only thing that lasts life to life. Money burns like tinder, flows off like water, and as for the government's promises, the wind is steadier.

She spoke to him, and her tone was not the quiet blessing of other elders he knew, but a hungry voice, still fierce, disdainful and impatient.
This time, don't sell out for a barrel of weevil-shot flour and a mossy pork.
 (Bingo Palace 148, Erdrich's italics)

As Nanapush had cautioned Lyman's mother, the daughter of his own adopted daughter, Fleur, about the dangers of relinquishing the land, now Fleur speaks in a similar vision to her grandson. The urge to not buy into the white way of operating is strong in Lyman, though his entrepreneurial talent would guarantee him some limited access to the white world, where capitalist desire supersedes ethnic and cultural ties. Lyman believes he will succeed because he always has. While his brother Henry, broken by his war experience, succumbs to the river, Lyman survives the icy plunge, on the strength of something that "wasn't in him but outside him, the pull, one inch, the next inch, the tiny article of faith" (149). When Lyman and Jack come to an understanding about Jack's employment prospects, Lyman is "consolidated. He was who he always was, but now more so. Professionally so. Pieces of energy, scattered plans, excited plots - now these had evolved into the serious development schemes of a man who had the local clout and federal money to do as he wished" (*Tales of Burning Love* 404). He is truly his father's son, and has accepted happily the role of intermediary between the Indian world and the white world. There is a grudging admiration for Lyman, an appreciation of what he can do for the community, yet his is not the best way for the minority to find its line of escape. His is a way ultimately of assimilation. The proud dance at the pow-wow is a hat doffed to multiculturalism within the context of continued majoritarian repression. It is perhaps because he, like Nector, does not represent the radical schizo-law future of the community, that he does not get the girl.

Lyman's rival for the affections of Shawnee Ray, Lipsha Morrissey, appears on the surface a weak contender for her hand, and for the role as repository of the hopes of the tribe. Yet he is the son of Gerry Nanapush, the jail-breaking schizo-law activist who confounds the segments of white justice and white society. Through his experiences, Lipsha's potential to realize the future freedom dreamed by his father becomes apparent. Initially, Lipsha shows potential to succeed in Lyman's way, through becoming an apple, as he

scores "high in the state of North Dakota on the college tests" (*Bingo Palace* 7), after high school. However, his adventures in the white world attest to his inability to fit in there.

As well, this sequence of employment efforts reads as a subversive deterritorialization of white ventures that had previously undermined Indian ways of life. The disapproving comment from the reserve community, "What kind of job was that anyway, for a Chippewa?" (8), is directed at his sugar factory job, but it applies a generic critique to each of his employment ventures. His first opportunity comes with a construction crew that is converting an abandoned railway station into a restaurant. "It came out picture-perfect, except that when the trains came through plates fell, glasses shook, and water spilled" (8). The train was one of the first topographical intrusions upon the Chippewa world, and serves as a fitting symbol of the displacement of the traditional way of life by the modern white one. Karl Adare provides a white outsider's gaze on the world of the Indians when Fleur takes him off the train track. As they progress further away from the steel band that epitomizes the eradication of the Indian land and the substitution of white ways, the world becomes stranger for the boy. They move from the track to ox-trail ruts, pass from white, organized farm country to open prairie. "We began to visit low cabins of white-mortared logs, inhabited by Chippewa or fiercer-looking French-Indians with stringy black beards and long moustaches." The women "...were not like Fleur, but all the same they were Indians and spoke a flowing language to each other" (*Beet Queen* 54). The restaurant construction in which the Indian Lipsha Morrissey participates is an ironic cul-de-sac of white progress, as the dynamic symbol of nineteenth century capitalist, imperialist expansion has been replaced in the white world by the parasitic incursion of the effete high-class restaurant. The past cannot be escaped however, and the idle tranquillity of the eatery is ruined by the rumbling movement of the train that once galvanized the production of wealth and eventual decadence. Perhaps this is a job for a radical Chippewa, to be an unwitting participant in anti-establishment sabotage, like Gerry and the other American Indian Movement types from the sixties.

Lipsha's next job, working in the tomahawk factory, should not be the choice of any self-respecting Chippewa, either. Yet again his talent for

catastrophe serves to undermine and deterritorialize the white man's parody of Indian culture. "He helped to bring that enterprise down around his own ears..." (8), suggesting the scalp-taking in which enterprise the original implement was wielded.

Finally, Lipsha works in the sugar factory. What kind of a job is that, for a Chippewa? The beets that produce the sugar are a product of the agricultural movement that eradicated the Indian hunting-gathering way of life. Sugar beets are the brainchild of Wallace Pfef in his attempt to augment commercial prosperity in Argus. Sugar is one of the foreign substances which the white man brought into these parts, and which has hooked the Indians into a life of dependency on candy and liquor. Sugar is graphically depicted as a contributing factor in the life of squalor and dependency into which Lipsha sinks: "He was covered with a sugary chip-proof mist of chemicals, preserved, suspended, trapped like a bug in a plastic weight. He was caught in a foreign skin, drowned in drugs and sugar and money, baked hard in a concrete pie" (9). This major enterprise cannot be undermined by Lipsha's penchant for disaster, but he leaves the job, escaping the subservient role as a wage slave of the white capitalist machine, where his docile participation had been secured with money and drugs.

On the reserve, Lipsha's work at the bingo palace is no less fraught with error, as he now directs his unintentionally deterritorializing abilities toward the business of his rival Lyman. While Lyman appears to have the upper hand throughout, as Lipsha's elder, his uncle, his employer and benefactor, the one who the community seems to favour as a mate for Shawnee Ray, Lipsha gets the girl in the end. And while Lyman has the gift for making money, Lipsha has "the touch," the real gift of the Manitou for healing and wisdom. He has frittered it away for most of his life, but in the end of the saga he seems destined to carry forward the hopes and aspirations of the tribe. Just as Lyman feels the potential still arising in himself after losing at the Vegas casinos, so Lipsha responds to the Montana boys' vandalism of his van by feeling "rich. Sinking away, it seems like everything worth having is within my grasp. All I have to do is reach my hand into the emptiness" (*Bingo Palace* 83).

The emptiness suggests the line of escape to the north, to Canada,

where Lipsha seems to drive his father at the end of each novel. Always an accessory to his father's escapes, Lipsha seems to be preparing for his own escape and the escape of the tribe. Gerry will not be able to effect the political transformation dreamed of during his American Indian Movement experience. As criminal or as fugitive, he is removed from his family and tribe, and cannot help them. The torch is passed to Lipsha, however. The schizo-law lives in the erratic youth whose luck wavers but always ends on the ascendant. He is a Morrissey, a no-good type in the eyes of the "pure" clans on the reserve, but "ha" emanates from his lips. Lips-ha has the touch; he lives the carnivalization and subversion of the majoritarian society and of the minoritarian community, and his defeat of Lyman's assimilationist plan for success anticipates the minor variation that will bring freedom to pass for the community. The female figures that loom large in Lipsha's life, his mother June, his grandmothers Lulu Lamartine and Marie Kashpaw, his great-grandmother Fleur Pillager, his cousin Albertine, and his love, Shawnee Ray, represent the web of community that supports and uplifts Gerry and him, and that ultimately rejects Nector's and Lyman's solution to the tribal dilemma.

The hard segments of white society, the military, the police, the courts, the jail, the capitalist economic powers, grind the native people in the machinic assemblage, but hope springs eternal in the radical schizo-law which seeks to disassemble that machine. The paranoid transcendental law cannot fix everything in place, any more than the constancy of the major language can drown out the wild music of the minor variation. The minor literature accomplishes its goal of deterritorializing the major language and the majoritarian social, economic and political machine, through the nomadic lines of flight effected by the characters who continue to keep Indian time despite the staid tempo to which the white society marches. Erdrich conveys this cacophony by means of the "human point of view" on the daily lives of this community. Here politics constantly influence actions, regardless of the individual's level of personal awareness, because the minority and its literature are necessarily enmeshed in their political situation. And as the deterritorialization of language and the political activity of the schizo-law occur in the context of a community whose values and culture distinguish them

somehow from the majoritarian society around them, we must turn to the final criterion which Deleuze and Guattari deduce from their study of minor literature, the qualities of the collectivity inherent in the writing of one who, despite Michael Dorris' explanation of the political aspect of the Erdrich/Dorris corpus, cannot help but be a spokesperson.

Chapter 4 - Collective Aspects of a Minor Literature

In his study of Deleuze and literature, Andre Colombat aligns the three designated attributes of minor literature - deterritorialization of language, the political aspect, and the collective aspect - with the three syntheses of production described in *Anti-Oedipus*. Near the beginning of that book, Deleuze and Guattari explain that

everything is production: *production of productions*, of actions and of passions; *productions of recording processes*, of distributions and of coordinates that serve as points of reference; *productions of consumptions*, of sensual pleasures, of anxieties, and of pain. Everything is production, since the recording processes are immediately consumed, immediately consummated, and these consumptions directly reproduced. (*Anti-Oedipus* 4 their italics)

Colombat suggests that the deterritorialization of the major language constitutes "production de production," the "connections sur le politique" are the "production d'enregistrement," and the "agencements collectifs" are "production de consommation" (Colombat 232). If one considers Erdrich's novels as collective assemblages of enunciation in service of the production of consumption, the implications of the collective aspect of the minor literature become clear. As Deleuze and Guattari assert, production, recording and consumption are tied up into one continuous activity. The previous two chapters show how the connection between literature and people is accomplished through the linguistic production of production, the "Red English" deterritorialization of standard English, and through the recording production of the political influence inevitably "woven into people's lives." This chapter explores the qualities of the writing which are identifiably "native," and which establish connections between the writing and the population which will identify with it. The collective quality of this collective assemblage is achieved through Chippewa story-telling techniques, mythology and cosmology in the narrative structure, characterization and plot events of the texts.

As in any community, there is a dialogic tension in the traditional Anishinabe worldview between the individual and the collective. The traditional

society is a primitive socius in Deleuze and Guattari's model, which inscribes the earth with value because it provides the basic necessities of life. Those basic necessities are the first and abiding prerogative of a social field in which the main business is simply survival, and the only means to survival is the successful operation of resourceful individuals within a vital communal way of life, as Basil Johnston explains.

Gleaning life from the land and the lakes bound them to their community, much more closely than today. They moved as one, hunted and fished as one, celebrated triumphs as one, and mourned losses as one. They shared beliefs, customs, risks, rewards, and hopes.

Yet despite the traditional communal spirit and mode of life, the Anishinaubae people championed and upheld the importance of individuality and personal independence on the promise that the more self-reliant and free the individual, the stronger and better the well-being of the community. Both the individual and the community were best served by nurturing men and women who were resourceful, independent masters of their own time, space, and spirit, the equals of all other men and women in the community.

By the same token, men and women were also instilled with a sense of obligation to the community that required them to give something back to the people for all the benefits and favors they received. That which made men and women Anishinaubae was considered to be owed to the entire heritage of the community and the nation, and each person was bound to return something to his or her heritage and so add to its worth.

(Johnston xix)

This tension between individuality and communalism is very present in Erdrich's characters. There are strong individual characters, but they are drawn to the community, and their lives are enmeshed with the lives of their families and the wider social group. They are always tending to "come home" despite their remove from the reservation. The special ones who are chosen by the manitous and by the community to be leaders are watched with particular interest, since their duty is the submission of their individual destiny for the improvement of the condition of the whole group. In this regard, Nector and Lyman struggle to put community ahead of the self-interest which they are only too capable of serving, while the special medicine boy, Lipsha, unwittingly works toward the good of the community even as he tries unsuccessfully to advance his own interests. Fleur Pillager and Lulu Lamartine stand up for the

community against the assimilationist families of the allotment period and the assimilationist tendencies of the old boys on council, respectively, though each is motivated by the personal goal of retaining her own property. Perhaps the lesson in their little parables is that the modern Chippewa world still holds up the strength of the individual in the service of the community as a paramount social goal.

Such recurrence of similar events, validating traditional wisdom of the community, contributes to the quality of spokesperson which the author, despite her verbal disavowal, retains in the Chippewa community. Part of that appeal of Erdrich's writing for the collectivity is the extent to which her narratives follow what could arguably be called native patterns, cyclical rather than linear. As A. Robert Lee suggests,

[f]iguratively speaking an 'Indian' pattern runs right through her novels, one in which the circle is all and life operates as a kind of mysterious or magic revolving wheel. Her story-logic so foregoes linear development. Characters, mainly indeed from Chippewa dynasties like the Kashpaws and the Lamartines, touch, move on, intermarry and feud, all of them contributing human spokes in the turning order of things.... Each of the...novels, accordingly, offers stories (often enough monologues) complete in themselves yet at the same time circularly webbed one into the other. Erdrich moves in this way back and forth through both space and time.... (Lee 150)

Erdrich is a product of both the majority white and minority Native cultures in the United States, and her work is to a certain extent a synthesis of two narrative traditions. Clearly, narrative devices from the Chippewa oral storytelling tradition are utilized, as several critics mentioned in the introduction attest. Gerald Vizenor explains that the "Anishinaabeg did not have written histories; their world views were not linear narratives that started and stopped in manifest binaries. The tribal past lived as an event in visual memories and oratorical gestures; woodland identities turned on dreams and visions.... Tribal leaders were dreamers and orators, speaking in visual metaphors as if the past were a state of being in the telling" (24). This temporal inclination to the circle is echoed in the spatial realm, as Lipsha discovers when he is threatened with the tattoo of a square state - Montana, Kansas or South Dakota.

It isn't that I really have a thing against those places, understand, it's just

that the straight-edged shape is not a Chippewa preference. You look around, and everything you see is round, everything in nature. There are no perfect boundaries, no natural borders except winding rivers. Only human-made things tend toward cubes and squares - the van, for instance. That is an example. Suddenly I realize that I am driving a four-wheeled version of the state of North Dakota. (*Bingo Palace* 80)

There certainly is a linear progression of time in Erdrich's novels, but the narrative does not necessarily follow the chronological dictates of the dates which appear often as subheadings of chapters. Particularly the recurrence of events of a mythic stature undermines that linearity. Often the same events are reiterated from different narrative perspectives, subverting the methodical progression of a unified narrator in a unified chronological telling. Lipsha drives his father to the Canadian border on a line of escape twice, but the iteration of the second time in both *The Bingo Palace* and *Tales of Burning Love*, after the first time occurred in *Love Medicine*, makes it seem as though the incident itself happens again and again. The past seems to acquire "a state of being in the telling." Sometimes a character reiterates another's previous action, again subverting the notion of a linear progression of events. Dot flies away with the crop duster pilot hired by Wallace to write her title in the sky, just as her grandmother flew away from her troubles with the Great Omar. Sometimes a character reiterates his or her own action in a way which collapses time as well. Fleur drowns three times. The word "drowned" is deliberately used without the mediation of the word "almost," which a journalistic linear narrative would require. Drowning should be the end of that person's "time" in this world, at any rate, but Fleur has conquered death by having suffered it thrice. This mythical achievement mocks the finality which death normally marks in the linear conception of time.

The intermingling of characters in Chippewa mythology also contributes to the circularity of narrative. In Erdrich, the same effect is achieved through the bewildering profusion of Kashpaws and Lamartines. In the chapter "Proliferation of Series" in *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari examine the ways in which Kafka's characters proliferate. In the letters and the stories, they suggest, Kafka focusses on triangulation of characters, or doubling of characters. Characterization is structured in terms of duos and trios. However, "for doubles

as well as for triangles and for their mutual contacts and interpenetrations, something remains blocked. Why two or three and not more?" (54). In *The Trial*, on the other hand, duos and trios still abound, but all the characters "appear as part of a large series that never stops proliferating" (53). In *The Trial*, everyone is somehow a "functionary or representative of justice," or connected to K's trial, and in *The Castle*, everyone is somehow connected to the castle. Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that "the large series subdivide into subseries. And each of these subseries has its own sort of unlimited schizophrenic proliferation" (53). In these novels, the highest expression of his peculiar, tortured art, Kafka achieves the solution to the stumbling block of "familial triangulation" that Deleuze and Guattari also seek to surpass in *Anti-Oedipus*, through schizoanalysis.

By making triangles transform until they become unlimited, by proliferating doubles until they become indefinite, Kafka opens up the field of immanence that will function as a dismantling, an analysis, a prognostics of social forces and currents.... And to a certain degree, it is no longer even necessary to make use of doubles and triangles; a central figure will start proliferating directly - for example, Klamm or, even more so, K himself. Thus the terms tend to distribute themselves along a line of escape, to take flight on this line, in relation to the contiguous segments - police segment, lawyer segment, judge segment, ecclesiastical segment. At the same time that they lose their double or triangular form, these terms don't appear or don't appear only as the hierarchized representatives of the law but become agents, connective cogs of an assemblage of justice, each cog corresponding to a position of desire, all the cogs and all the positions communicating with each other through successive continuities. (*Kafka* 55)

Just as the segmentation of characters in relation to the political structures of the society adduces the political nature of the minor literature, so this intermingling of characters strengthens the sense of the collectivity. In-breeding has dire genetic consequences, but it does keep the family together. There is some in-breeding in Erdrich's novels, but the incestuousness is accomplished more through the ways in which children are taken in and looked after, and sexual relations between people, whether productive of offspring or not, result in an intermingling of members of the community. To use another metaphor from Deleuze and Guattari, the interconnectedness of these

characters exhibits the relational complexity of the rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari begin from the view that the rhizome represents the proper level of abstraction of a linguistics that goes beyond Chomsky's grammaticality. While "Chomsky's 'tree' is associated with a base sequence and represents the process of its own generation in terms of binary logic," the rhizome "is not amenable to any structural or generative model. It is a stranger to any idea of genetic axis or deep structure" (*Thousand Plateaus* 12). There is no taproot at the base of a tree, but an impossible weave of connections perpetrating flows in every direction. The dichotomies that one may choose to establish between standard language and dialect, for instance, are compromised by the multiplicity of actual connections in the "system." "System" itself is an inappropriate word because it implies a totalizing inclination which cannot in the end incorporate all that multiplicity. Rhizomatic language is the means of expression for a world in which a rhizome "ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (7).

It is in the context of familial organizations of power and of social struggles against totalizing conceptions of the family, the community, and narrative, that one can utilize the concept of rhizome to characterize the "antigenealogical" quality of Erdrich's fictional family tree. Most people's family trees are branched in an "arboreal fashion," with a trunk leading to a series of secondary roots, which in turn split into tertiary roots, and so on. The family spreads out from a patriarch and matriarch, progressively expanding the generations in a methodical way. In the rhizome, the relationships are established haphazardly, at nodes of contact without consideration of a protocol of connectivity. In *Tales of Burning Love*, Jack Mauser's first wife, June, and fifth wife, Dot, have each also been wives of Gerry Nanapush. June was raised by Marie Kashpaw, who is a rival for the affections of Nector with Gerry's mother Lulu, herself the daughter of Nector's brother Eli and the infamous Fleur Pillager. Jack's second wife, Eleanor, becomes obsessed with the life of Sister Leopolda, who is the mother of Marie Kashpaw. The intertwining compounds when Jack's third and fourth wives, Marlis and Candace, meet in a lesbian relationship. However the family rhizome continues here, as they two women

co-parent the son that Marlis has borne to Jack. The son, of course, is unwittingly kidnapped by Gerry and Lipsha, Gerry's son by June, who, like his mother, was raised by Marie Kashpaw. In *The Bingo Palace*, Lipsha is pitted against his uncle, Lyman Lamartine, another son of Lulu, as they compete for the affections of Shawnee Ray Toose, whose uncle was the first love of Zelda Kashpaw, daughter of Nector and Marie. As the narrator explains in *The Bingo Palace*, "[t]he story comes around, pushing at our brains, and soon we are trying to ravel back to the beginning, trying to put families into order and make sense of things. But we start with one person, and soon another and another follows, and still another, until we are lost in the connections" (5).

The Chippewa oral storytelling tradition is also clearly evident in Erdrich's character types. As indicated in the introduction, several previous critics have commented on the Naanabohzo trickster figure in Erdrich's work. As John S. Slack suggests, *Love Medicine* "is actually a retelling of some of the oral myth-tales of Naanabohzo the trickster, set in the medium of late 20th-century fiction. In other words, many of the stories in *Love Medicine* are related to and are a relating of the once verbally preserved cycle of Chippewa folk tales of the trickster" (118). This ambiguous figure appears in each of the novels, and other mythical Chippewa characters make their appearances too.

Nancy J. Peterson examines correspondences between the stories of Nanapush and those of his namesake Naanabohzo:

Both share the ability to come back to life after death or near death; both are noted for their keen ability to track people; both avenge wrongs committed on family members; both are powerful storytellers. Most significant, perhaps, is that both Nanpush and Naanabohzo are tricksters who are sometimes tricked by others. Once duped, however, both adopt the techniques of the oppressor to even the score and to balance the distribution of power. (Peterson 990)

All characters named Nanapush have a similar correspondence to the trickster. Gerry Nanapush is notable for his shape-shifting escape acts. "He boasted that no steel or concrete shitbarn could hold a Chippewa, and he had eellike properties in spite of his enormous size. Greased with lard once, he squirmed into a six-foot-thick prison wall and vanished" (*Love Medicine* 60). In Saint Adalbert's Hospital, while waiting for Dot to give birth, Gerry is spotted again

and must assume his shape-shifter form again in order to escape. "His hair stiffened. His body lifted like a hot-air balloon filling suddenly. Behind him there was a wide, tall window. Gerry opened it and sent the screen into thin air with an elegant chorus-girl kick. Then he followed the screen, squeezing himself unbelievably through the frame like a fat rabbit disappearing down a hole. It was three stories down to the cement and asphalt parking lot" (169). Gerry lands on the police car and escapes, a "godlike leap and recovery" (169), and pops a wheelie on his bike as he roars off, the nose-thumbing gesture of defiance from this contemporary Naanabozho.

Gerry is also the Naanabozho procreator and protector of his tribe. He expands the collectivity from within his prison, somehow copulating with Dot in a visitor's room to conceive Shawn. As his trouble with the law grows, the system distances him further from these contacts. In the prison in Marion, Illinois, he "receives visitors in a room where no touching is allowed, where the voice is carried by phone, glances meet through sheets of Plexiglas, and no children will ever be engendered" (170). Gerry dreams about coming home and experiencing freedom. "Though he'd long since come to terms with his own mind in solitary, this closeness with Dot could still panic him with hope. That in spite of everything they'd make love more than once every ten years. That he'd smell the old smells and walk the old earth. That he'd hold their daughter, touch her hair before she grew up entirely. Ask forgiveness of his mother. Drink an ice-cold beer. Ride a horse. Swim" (*Tales of Burning Love* 376).

Gerry Naanabozho enters like a manitou into the B&B bar and grill where Jack's wives have congregated after Jack's funeral. He appears as a "massive Indian woman," his entrance accompanied by a blast of wind that blows Jack's ashes all over his wives like macabre face powder. The manager and the waitress are uneasy. Is she drunk? Will she be disorderly? Dot sees the trademark "gleam of a wolf-white smile" (*Tales of Burning Love* 175), however, and orders a pizza for the "woman," her first husband.

The first wife of that first husband is June Kashpaw, whom John S. Slack sees as the "preeminent Chippewa woodland trickster figure, that wily, good/evil shape- and sex-changer" (118). She "embodies anagogically" (118) most of

the other characters in the narratives, and her two sons, Lipsha and King, are "good and bad reincarnations" (121) of the trickster figure. Marie Kashpaw says of June's mysterious provenance, "I saw nothing, no feature that belonged to either one, Lazarre or Morrissey, and I was glad. It was as if she really was a child of what the old people called Manitou, invisible ones who live in the woods" (*Love Medicine* 65). Like a manitou, June has cheated death, as she was hanged by her adoptive brothers, and rescued by Marie. She does not avoid death when she leaves Jack's truck in the snowstorm in Williston, the end of the opening scenes in both *Love Medicine* and *Tales of Burning Love*. However, she remains present afterwards as a spirit, a good manitou who watches over and leads her two men, Gerry and Jack, her son Lipsha, and Jack's son John to safety in the snowstorm that provides the climax of *The Bingo Palace* and *Tales of Burning Love*. Leaving the safety of the snowplow to look for the car containing his son, Jack loses his direction and his strength, until

[h]e caught a glimpse of June, just before him. The wind was blowing her hair straight back, banging her purse on her thigh. She was wearing a wedding dress, a real one this time, white net full and stiff with lace. Confidently, over the brilliant drifts, she stepped forward. Her veil was a billow clouding her face. Jack turned around and focused hard on the way he had come. By that time, he'd walked such a great distance, too far to turn around. He had spent so much time getting where he was going. And it was all right. His tracks were obscured, his trail drifted over, his path back to the living blown clean. He followed her meekly. She was bringing him home. (*Tales of Burning Love* 385)

Similarly, Lipsha and Gerry see her in the same storm, as they race for the border in Jack's car, with Jack's son stowed away, their car initially tucked in behind the snowplow which Jack is driving. Lipsha says,

I suppose I should be more amazed than I am to see that it is June's car, and that she is driving. We see her silhouette, the barest outline of her, head high, hands resting on the wheel, one elbow on the open window ledge. Her hair is a black net, her back is held straight. We see her shrug her shoulders once, and smile through the clouds and frost. (*Bingo Palace* 256-57)

June also haunts her first husband, Gordie, who calls her name, even though the names of the dead should never be spoken. He drinks heavily after

her death, and runs down a deer with his car. When he puts the deer in his back seat and sets off again, it turns out to be alive still, and, panic-stricken, Gordie beats it to death with his tire iron, and then trashes the car as well. In his drunken, disoriented state, and having been continually guilt-ridden over the beatings he used to give his wife, Gordie thinks instead that he has just killed June. "She was in the backseat, sprawled, her short skirt hiked up over her hips. The sheer white panties glowed. Her hair was tossed in a dead black swirl. What had he done this time? Had he used the bar? It was in his hands" (*Love Medicine* 181). Gordie tries to attain forgiveness from Sister Mary Martin at the convent, but ends up "crying like a drowned person, howling in the open fields" (188), while "they," the nameless functionaries of the church who take over from the compassionate named nun, wait for "the orderlies and the tribal police to come with cuffs and litters and a court order" (188). Gordie has gone over the edge because he knows his violent treatment of June as a human being will reap an evil harvest with June as a manitou.

In each of these accounts, there is the typical mythological admixture of very precise detail with an otherworldly nebulosity. June is a mythological character, a divinity whose actions determine the fate of the hapless humans who remember her when she was a human being.

Fleur Pillager is another character of mythological proportions. Kristan Sarvé-Gorham identifies her as a daughter of Naanabozho, Oshkikwe, in her study of the twin motif in Erdrich's novels. Fleur's "twin," the character with whom she exists in this polar relationship, is Pauline, whom Sarvé-Gorham identifies with another daughter of Naanabozho, Matchikewis. The two women are like daughters to Nanapush in *Tracks*, too, though obviously Fleur is the good sheep and Pauline the bad as far as the old man is concerned. Fleur is certainly given a substantial mythical persona in the five novels. Both she and Pauline/Leopolda appear throughout this chronology, as very few characters do. Her frequent drowning, her fearsome medicinal powers, her wolf-grin are omnipresent. Her animal cries when raped by the butcher shop men and her presumed relationship with the water monster Misshespeshehu enhance the visions of woman-becoming-manitou that play in the minds of her wary people. The community fears her, and watches from behind curtains as

she passes, when she makes her infrequent trips to town. In the most opaque narrative treatment she receives, as the rescuer recounted by Karl Adare in *The Beet Queen*, Fleur appears very much as a mythical figure to the impressionable youth. "She was massive. Her shadow fell from above," her white scarf "blazed against her dark skin," her earrings "flashed, dizzied me," her fingers "tough and flexible as pliers" (*Beet Queen* 48). This picture of a fierce but benevolent juggernaut angel gradually metamorphoses into a more human picture, but one still charged with exotic intrigue. "Her face was young, broad and dark, but fine around the edges, even delicate. Her heavy mouth curved at the corners, her nose arched like the nose of a royal princess. She was an Indian, a Pillager, one of a wandering bunch that never take hold" (49-50).

Like her mother, Lulu Lamartine is one of a wandering bunch. Lulu summarizes the forced migration of the Chippewa, who "had started off way on the other side of the five great lakes" and ended up "shoved out on this lonesome knob of prairie" (*Love Medicine* 222). She vows that she "refused to move one foot farther west" (222). Lulu bears many resemblances to another human-becoming-manitou Winonah, who is described by Basil Johnston.

The accounts of the manitous that were human or half human in form begin with the story of Ae-pungishimook, the West, who lusted for Winonah, a human woman. This manitou possessed her once every generation, begetting four sons - Maudjee-kawiss, Pukawiss, Cheeby-aub-oozoo, and Nana'b'oozoo - who became the cornerstones of the Anishinaubae heritage and brought lasting tradition to the Anishinaubae people. The sons' gifts were strength and a sense of history; drama and costume; chanting, music and dream-vision quests; and the pipe of peace, as well as a living sense of human potentials and shortcomings. Winonah acquired certain manitou-like attributes that enabled her to bear children a generation apart in age, but she is said to have died shortly after giving birth to her fourth and last son, Nana'b'oozoo. (Johnston xxiii)

Many of the motifs in the accounts of Winonah appear in the tales of Lulu. Most obviously, Winonah is mother to Naanaboozho, among four other sons, as Lulu is mother to Gerry the Naanaboozho figure, one of eight boys in total. Both women are prodigiously fecund, Winonah in the duration of her child-bearing years, and Lulu in the propensity to produce children with each of the numerous

men she beds. In a sense, the eight sons can also be synthesized into four, since Gerry, Lyman and Henry Jr are the only ones given much notice. Two other Pillager/Nanapush sons can be collapsed with Gerry into a single representative individual, and the remaining sons are simply identified as Morrisseys. This attribution lumps them together in the distasteful family against which Nanapush warns Lulu before she embarks on that relationship. While Lulu has children by several different fathers, Winonah bore her boys to the West, whom Johnston identifies with "old age and death --- the destiny and end of everything. He is lured by the youth and beauty of Winonah into possessing her, as age must ravish youth" (Johnston 239). As Jack Mauser's thoughts indicate at the time he assumes his end is near, "straight west" is "the other world of the Ojibwa dead where skeletons gambled, throwing and concealing human wristbones" (*Tales of Burning Love* 384). In Lulu's case, Gerry and two other sons are sired by Old Man Pillager, whose name suggests the motif of old age ravishing or pillaging youth, which was certainly the case in his "cradle-robbing" relationship with the adolescent Lulu. Perhaps, too, Nector could be seen as this fearsome force which threatens to extinguish the youthful vitality of the community and of the woman for whom he lusts, even while he assumes that he has done right by the community in "fighting like a weasel in Washington." His peripatetic career commences with the recommendation that he "go West," to Hollywood, where "they made a lot of westerns in those days" (*Love Medicine* 89). According to the polemic established by Nanapush, any liaison with a Morrissey also involves the sapping of youthful vitality by the treacherous, impure stock of the Morrissey dogs.

Among the significant differences between the two matriarchal figures, Lulu's Naanaboozho is her first born rather than her last, and she does not die after his birth, but her sons do seem to possess the same gifts as those attributed to Winonah's sons. They each possess strength in their own ways, and a sense of history as it pertains to their individual relationship to the tribe, as well as a strong sense of both potential and shortcomings in themselves and their society. Gerry appears costumed, or disguised; Lyman is "costumed" in sartorial splendour everyday, participates in the sacred dances in full regalia, and pursues his dream-quest in the sweat lodge. The pipe of peace is a

devious motif here, as it passes from the hand of Gerry's son to the border guard, to Lyman, to the Vegas pawn shop proprietor, without having a "gift-like" quality after the initial presentation from Nector to Lipsha. Perhaps this deferment of the potential dividends of the artifact for the community is a satirical indictment of the white stereotype of the "Indian giver." To complicate matters further, Lulu has a daughter, Bonita, by an unnamed itinerant Mexican sugar beet worker. In one deft move, Erdrich incorporates the plight of another downtrodden American minority and the exploitative quality of the gift which Wallace Pef bestows upon the white people of the town of Argus. No significant benefits accrue to the native community that has been deterritorialized from the land now producing this non-indigenous crop. The circular irony comes around when Wallacette, or Dot, the favourite for whom Wallace rigs the Beet Queen vote, marries Gerry Nanapush and bears a child. The marriage of the Queen of Beets to Winonah/Lulu's first-born thus symbolically subverts the takeover of the Indian world by the New West cash-crop that Dennis M. Walsh and Ann Braley characterize as "an agribusiness comedown from when the land was wild forest, lakes, meadows, and treeless prairie and plains of the Ojibway" (5).

These mythological characters in Erdrich's novels correspond to the Anishinabe gods that peopled those distant times of wild forest and treeless plains. Though that natural world, its social counterpart, and the cosmological infrastructure that framed it are no longer present, there is an omnipresent theme of return home in these novels. All the characters return to the reserve, to their community, whether they want to or not. Gerry Nanapush desperately wants to return, but cannot because of the judicial system in which he has become more hopelessly enmeshed each time he attempts to escape. "...Gerry knew where he belonged --- out of prison, in the bosom of his new family" (*Love Medicine* 163), and in the bosom of his old family, the Chippewa community. Lipsha returns home after his peripatetic career in white business and industry. Albertine experiences a flood of emotions when she comes back from school for the pie-baking marathon. While Nector returns home and becomes a leader in the community, he does not fully commit to the traditional way of life, and he succumbs to senility, while the mind of his brother Eli, who never left the woods, remains sharp.

One of the most fully developed return narratives is the story of Jack Mauser, like Erdrich half German American, half Chippewa, who is drawn back to his reserve roots by the events of *Tales of Burning Love*. The mysterious appearance of Lyman Lamartine at Jack's funeral suggests that Jack has a past dealing with the reserve, and that Lyman may owe him, somehow. The scene where Jack and his Uncle Chuck are portrayed as viewing the land through eyes the same but different is a telling indication of the way in which Jack has forgotten his Indian heritage.

In Jack's case, to be exact, the Ojibwa part of him was so buried it didn't know what it saw looking at the dirt or sky or into a human face. Jack did not see land in the old-time Ojibwa sense, as belonging to nobody and nothing but itself. Land was something to use, space for sale. It did not occur to him that the ground he put his houses on was alive, could crumble, cave in, betray him, simply turn against him, or in any way fail to return his investment. Land didn't do that. Land seemed dead to Jack. To Chuck, land was living stuff. (152-53)

Jack has lost both the romantic German view of land and the spiritual Ojibway view that form his dual heritage. Jack's Indian background is shrouded in mystery.

His mother, Mary Stamper, came of some wandering people who joined right in with Ojibwas but might have been created out of a lot of different tribes --- Crees, Menominees, even some secret Winnebago knowledge might well have been hers. Who knew? She was listed as a full-blood on the tribal rolls but from somewhere in her background French blood paled her skin to the warmth of brown hen eggs and also freckled her face with childish dots of deep brown. (184)

When he meets his new mother-in-law, Celestine says, "'You're from that line, the old strain, the ones...' She does not finish" (28). Her lineage is more firm. "Kashpaws...are my branch of course. We're probably related" (28). This Kashpaw connection is still a badge of pride, though even in 1957, nearly forty years before this meeting, Celestine's Uncle Nector was speculating that this bloodline was not the reason he "got offers" all the time. "It came from being a Kashpaw, I used to think. Our family was respected as the last hereditary leaders of this tribe. But Kashpaws died out around here, people forgot..." (*Love Medicine* 89).

Jack's faked death begins the journey in which he comes home through

death. Walking in the blizzard in sugar beet country, he expects to really meet his demise. "There were no fence lines. If he missed the car he was looking for maybe he'd walk forever, on and on" (*Tales of Burning Love* 384), to "the other world of the Ojibwa dead." However, through the intercession of June, Jack survives this ordeal, and he finally comes home in the same way as he has made all his previous moves, through a shady business deal. This deal, though, is not of Jack's own making, but rather struck by Lyman with Hegelstead and the rest of Jack's creditors. As an indentured servant, Jack will seek some investors and then supervise the building of the new casino resort. Jack is "acceptable" as a project supervisor because he's enrolled on the reserve. The map among Lyman's blueprints and proposals lists "the present, enrolled owners of the land. Relatives. Jack knew the names. He said nothing" (406). Jack says nothing because he is not in a position to question the plan, even if his attitude to land may have shifted. His position in relation to Lyman is borne out in the contrast of their clothes --- Jack in his "old one-piece workman's overalls," Lyman in his "light wool three-piece suit, tailored perfectly," with "soft elkhide cowboy boots" (406) that emphasize the whitewash applied over his Indian self. Elk, a standard leather for Indian clothesmaking, is now used for cowboy boots, which typify the anti-Indian, as Nector knew from his experience in Westerns and Gerry from his experience in court. Like his father Nector arguing with the governor and fighting in Washington, Lyman must present "a more attractive profile to the state commissioner. That's where you come in, Jack, part of the profile. Tribally operated, tribal employees, tribal management.... And in the first place, first of all, listen to this: built by a tribally enrolled contractor" (407-08)

Jack is coming home on different terms than he would have expected. "He had thought he might come back here if he failed. But never that he'd come back here needing to save his skin" (408). And now he is returning to manage a big project, with the artificial constructs --- "beams, boards, steel, stone," rising up above his head, but more importantly, back to his land, not the land he won and lost on real estate developments in West Fargo, but his own hereditary land, the land of his people, "below him the earth his same childhood dirt --- rising around his ankles" (408), like the dust rising when Lyman and Shawnee

Ray dance.

As Jack's story demonstrates, the return home for the Chippewa is often an experience of being beaten and bloodied, but not broken. Nancy Peterson explains the "cautious optimism" and hope for the future apparent in Lulu's return home from school at the end of *Tracks*.

As Lulu emerges from "the rattling green [government] vehicle," she bears the marks of her encounter with Anglo-American authority: hair shorn, knees scarred from attempts to make her docile, attired in the shameful "smouldering orange" of a runaway. Lulu at first seems alien to Nanapush and Margaret. As they watch, however, Lulu's prim, school-taught walk becomes a leap, and her face is electrified with Fleur's bold grin and white-hot anger. Marked by her encounter with the shapers of mainstream American history, Lulu is only "half-doused" and will carry forward a trace of Anishinabe history and myth. (Peterson 990)

The Anishinabe history and myth underlie the kinship experienced by characters on the reserve, and particularly upon returning to the reserve. Lipsha is kidnapped by the Montana gas jockey he had insulted, and taken to Russell Kashpaw to get a tattoo of the Big Sky Country state. The deal the white boys had made with Russell is invalidated, however, because Russell and Lipsha are kindred spirits. Lipsha's fear is alleviated when the Montana boys leave and Russell's face changes.

You never know where you're going to find your twin in the world, your double. I don't mean in terms of looks, I'm talking about mindset. You never know where you're going to find the same thoughts in another brain, but when it happens you know it right off, just like you were connected by a small electrical wire that suddenly glows red hot and sparks. That's what happens when I stare up at Russell Kashpaw, and he suddenly grins. (*Bingo Palace* 78)

The people stick together, particularly in the face of the white majoritarian society. When Lulu is arrested for harbouring her son Gerry and assisting in his escape to the border, she expresses the jubilation of the collectivity over the subversion perpetrated against white order. The narrator emphasizes the importance for the white society of preventing the broadcast of this expression of defiance.

They should not have let her do the thing that she does, the act that gets onto the six o'clock news, everywhere, all through the country.

Down the frosted squares of the sidewalk, Lulu Lamartine dances the old-lady traditional, a simple step, but complex in its quiet balance, striking. She dances with a tucked-in wildness, exactly like an old-time Pillager. And then, at the door to the official vehicle, just before they whisk her inside, she raises her fan. Noises stop, cameras roll. Out of her mouth comes the old-lady trill, the victory yell that runs up our necks. Microphones squeal. Children cry. Chills form at Lulu's call, fierce and tingling. What can we do? Drawing deep breaths, hearts shaking, we can't help join her. (*Bingo Palace* 265)

Lulu's dance is wild, but tucked-in. She retains the connection to the "old-time Pillagers." She wears her moccasins; "she always called them works of art: smoked deerhide, expertly tanned...and meanwhile the rest of us wore house slippers" (262-63). The deerhide moccasins contrast not only with the characteristic house slippers of the white society that have crept onto the feet of the minority community, but also with elkhide cowboy boots that Lulu's son Lyman wears. The politically incorrect footwear of everyone else is shown as such by Lulu's ceremonial garb. From toe to head, the members of the community are transformed in this moment of ritual participation amid the federal agents.

In the victory trill, the members of the minority community engage in a collective oral enunciation that expresses their desire for freedom and the successful deterritorialization of their oppressors. In a similar fashion, Erdrich's fiction operates as a collective assemblage of enunciation, providing a voice for a minority community that promotes the potential of that community to attain freedom. The collective appeal for that group is achieved in large part through the effective use of native story-telling techniques, mythology and everyday events with which people can identify from their cultural background and their daily lives. The web of the community is drawn tight by means of the rhizomatic relationships which cross the surface of the narrative and create a "burrow" for the group, to adapt another Deleuzoguattarian descriptor for Kafka's work.

The language Erdrich uses, a variation on the constant of standard English, is the production of production itself, and the political manifestations of that deterritorializing impulse inscribe or encode the characteristics of the minoritarian community as a production of recording processes. Finally the sensual pleasures, anxiety and pain that accrue to the lives of individuals within

a group are experienced by characters inside the text and readers outside the text, in a way which achieves the production of consumption or consummation, the third synthesis of production in *Anti-Oedipus*. This consumption or consummation is the effect of the collective assemblage.

Erdrich's collectivity is full of nomads, gypsies and people who become immigrants after the fact when their cultural world is replaced by a foreign one in which they are newly made strange. Lipsha and Gerry unwittingly steal the baby with the car from the parking lot of the Amtrak station. As they and the representative of the future generation make their line of escape from the realm of the deterritorializing railway into the realm of the reterritorializing snowstorm, they accomplish their theft. For Kafka, the need to steal the baby from the crib was the need to become a stranger in one's own language, in order to effect a line of escape. In this collectivity, the Turtle Mountain Chippewa population, the white order-words are whited out by snow, and Gerry makes good his escape. All the rest of the characters come home, and join in their collective enunciation, the trill of victory, the asignifying cry that makes the major minor.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

In a review of *Kafka*, Bob Buckeye concludes that the Kafka of Deleuze and Guattari "resists meaning, interpretation, and his work is sound 'always connected to *its own abolition*... that sound born of silence.' It is the expression of the self in a world which denies the self voice, which Kafka, and Deleuze and Guattari reading Kafka, force us to listen to. For our lives" (Buckeye 203, Deleuze and Guattari's italics). The resistance to meaning and interpretation arises in part because the deterritorialization of language which connects sound to its own abolition cannot be captured in any statement. If one is a minority writer writing in a majoritarian language, the constancy which ought to produce clear meaning in a standard language is subject to variation which removes that possibility. The slippage in meaning of language parallels the gap between two political entities and two collectivities, the minor community and the major society. Thus the writing self must seek self-expression in an environment which precludes that self-expression. If one is a member of the majority, who is attuned to this voice emanating from the minority, one cannot help speculating that this voice offers an opportunity for dialogue. Because history is a series of bloody conflicts that transpire in the absence of effective dialogue, one can see in the establishment of this dialogue a means to bring about a rapprochement between polarized parts of society. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, "[t]hat is the glory of this sort of minor literature - to be the revolutionary force for all literature" (*Kafka* 19), and by extension for all society. Since a minor literature must stay revolutionary, it is important to prove that Erdrich's work does not reterritorialize and become reactionary. Vincent Leitch identifies the main risks run by minor literatures as "the temptations to reconstitute power and law, reterritorialize the social field, refashion stable family units, and remake 'great literatures.' Here it is a matter of revolt turning into reaction" (Leitch 99-100). To see the ways in which Louise Erdrich's fiction achieves the revolutionary goal of a minor literature, we will consider first the Deleuzian politics of life, then the contribution of radical deterritorialization to this political agenda, and finally the transformative effects of Erdrich's fiction not

only for the minority community, but for the majoritarian society.

Leitch criticizes the level of abstraction in Deleuze and Guattari's theory in terms of the "disembodied 'metaphysical' nature" of the concept of minor literature.

It has nothing specifically to do with racial, sexual, economic, or social discriminations nor with imperialist, colonialist, or patriarchal oppressions. Rather it describes a perennial politico-aesthetic option in relation to every ruling regime - continuous anti-authoritarian revolt through inventive linguistic means. "Minor literature" becomes a universal function. It does not help matters that Deleuze and Guattari refuse to argue the merits of their (unspoken) major premise that anarchism constitutes a desirable politics for the modern world. (Leitch 100)

To address this criticism, it is important to outline the nature of the political thought of Gilles Deleuze. To use terms such as 'agenda' or 'program' is misleading, as Todd May indicates, when examining a political theory which is intentionally abstract. May identifies life, in a very broad sense, as the fundamental political category for Deleuze. The term is used in a broad sense because

[w]e speak of life in many senses. There is the life of a society, of a project, of an idea, as well as of a living or organic being.... In conceiving life, we must abandon categories that attempt to fix extension. We must understand it rather as a form of evaluation, as the product of a perspective that does not attempt to fix the boundaries of life once and for all - this is life, that is not - but instead seeks to articulate what may be said to be alive in any given complex that becomes the object of an analysis. (May 25)

May goes on to distinguish three characteristics of life in Deleuzian thought: positivity, productivity, and incorporeality. In the introduction to this paper, the first two principles are delineated. Deleuze's debt to Nietzsche is the conception of a world characterized by affirmation rather than Hegelian negativity. That positive desire which operates all the machines is productive, rather than constituted by the lack hypothesized by the entire history of Platonic philosophy and particularly by Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. The third principle, incorporeality, concerns the preoccupation of life "not so much with the physical as with what occurs between bodies, what changes pass

across the surface of things that are not material but immaterial transformations" (May 26). Life is the events that transpire during it. 'During' is an appropriate word because May asks us to think temporally instead of spatially, in order to accept the three principles of life.

Temporality is the basis of the thought of Henri Bergson, another of Deleuze's philosophical forbears. For Bergson, according to May, "[m]emory is not a series of moments spread out across a continuum; it is a fullness in which all moments coexist in different degrees of 'contraction' and 'relaxation.' As a present moment passes into the past, it passes into all of the past, not just in serial connection to the immediately preceding moment" (May 26). When we experience sensations, 'contractions' are occurring on our sensory apparatus, and space becomes temporalized when these sensations pass into memory. "Thus space can be seen as a dilated or relaxed past that contracts through sensation to become duration. Instead of a dualism of space and time, Bergson recovers a temporal monism in which the sensory present forms the point of contraction for two memories, one residing in things and the other residing in the past" (May 26-27). Deleuze's sense of life, and of concepts such as machines and production, is derived from this Bergsonian model: "[a] life is a temporal event that is both singular - existing at its own level of contraction - and bound to the rest of temporality through duration" (May 27). Thus events in life exist on their own merit, but they are also tied to all other events. For this purpose, Deleuze resurrects the medieval concept of haecceity, the quality of a thing which makes it unique, in order to identify singularities within the duration of temporality. Deleuze suggests that "singularities-events correspond to heterogeneous series which are organized into a system which is neither stable nor unstable, but rather 'metastable,' endowed with a potential energy wherein the differences between series are distributed" (*Logic of Sense* 103). Within this system of potentiality, events occur as productive agents meet and interact in purely positive ways.

Negativity enters because sometimes productive desire desires its own end. Death is merely the transformation dealt to a singularity by its interaction with other singularities - accident, disease, the breakdown of the organism with advancing age. Thus death retains positivity as an event. If the optimum

situation for singularities is continuous change, a nomadic existence, then the negative occurs when forms of constancy are imposed, and become desirable to that singularity, like the slave desiring his own slavery in Nietzsche's explanation of the master/slave dichotomy. Certain forms of life are themselves inimicable to life, and certain social conditions produce an attitude in individuals which promotes their own repression. Deleuze and Guattari explain the ways in which this *ressentiment* enters the capitalist socius.

We have seen how the capitalist machine constituted a system of immanence bordered by a great mutant flow, nonpossessive and nonpossessed, flowing over the full body of capital and forming an absurd power. Everyone in his class and his person receives something from this power, or is excluded from it, insofar as the great flow is converted into incomes, incomes of wages or of enterprises that define aims or spheres of interest, selections, detachments, and portions. But the investment of the flow itself and its axiomatic, which to be sure requires no precise knowledge of political economy, is the business of the unconscious libido, inasmuch as it is presupposed by the aims. We see the most disadvantaged, the most excluded members of society invest with passion the system that oppresses them, and where they always *find* an interest, since it is here that they search for and measure it. Interest always comes after. Antiproduction effuses in the system: antiproduction is loved for itself, as is the way in which desire represses itself in the great capitalist aggregate. (*Anti-Oedipus* 346 their italics)

The individuals within a capitalist socius participate in and desire the perpetuation of the system because they are invested in it. They go with the flow. The system thrives on the tendency of individuals to invest themselves in forms which impose constancy on the fluidity of life and become anathema to that life itself. As May summarizes, "[I]f it produces that which blocks production; it produces anti-production. All other negativity, repression, and death follows from this" (May 30).

What then is the business of politics? If I desire that which oppresses me, then I am the author of my political slavery. Even if I attempt to escape or overthrow the system, I am still complicit in the system, and I am still producing within its structures. I am a squeaky wheel, but I am still part of the machine. May explains the next step in this progression.

Consequently, the two tasks of a politics of life are micropolitical analysis and micropolitical intervention. A politics of life is necessarily

micropolitical, focusing not upon the great unities of state, nation, imperialism, etc., but rather on the specific intertwinings of fluidity and constancy, life and death, becoming and being, that occur on various levels in contemporary society. Art and literature, doctor's offices and mental institutions, factories and schools, are all places for political analysis and intervention; they are sites where the positive, productive, and incorporeal is being both enacted and perverted.... What characterizes micropolitics are the three questions it brings to each situation. What are the forces of life in this situation? What are the forces of negativity in this situation? And how can the forces of life be released? (May 31)

While the macropolitics of mass political movements is necessary as well, it is insufficient. The two Russian experiences of the Soviet overthrow of Tsarist despotism and the replacement of communism by an ineffective injection of American-style capitalism demonstrate that macropolitics are not enough. Change on the big scale without a concomitant change in the micropolitical orientation of all citizens runs the risk Pete Townshend aphorizes in the line "meet the new boss, the same as the old boss" (The Who). As the title of that song declares, an effective micropolitical intervention will mean that individuals "won't get fooled again."

Since one cannot determine, outside a specific social context, what forces or events are for life, and which are against it, Deleuze does not outline a specific political program. The need for constant political evaluation cannot be overemphasized, but the only effective solution in particular concrete situations is the line of flight, the escape, that breaks the over-coding of the despot or the axiomatic of capital. By effecting a line of escape, one can champion the nomadic, fluid quality of life in the face of the stultifying forces that seek to channel that fluidity according to predetermined codes or axioms.

As each of those forces has previously deterritorialized something else to arrive at its position of control, so it too must be deterritorialized in order to achieve the freedom of the line of flight. The previous chapters explored deterritorialization of the major language by the minor, and of minority political and collective autonomy by majoritarian expansionism and social control mechanisms. A further examination of the concept of deterritorialization will shed some light on the prospects for the revolutionary goals of the minor

literature. Eugene Holland explains that Lacan's concept of territorialization refers to the "imprint of maternal nourishment and care-giving on the child's libido" (57). Deterritorialization is an adaptation by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* to designate the converse "freeing of 'schizophrenic' libido from pre-established objects of investment" in psychological terms, and the "freeing of labor-power from the seigneurial plot of land, the assembly line, or other means of production" (57) in social terms. Reterritorialization is the subsequent redeployment of power relations in order to circumvent the revolution. Of course this state of affairs would be seen by the workers as a deterritorialization of their agenda. Thus the re- and de- prefixes would appear to be fixed by the eye of the beholder when describing the characteristics of such an event. Holland suggests that the signs of an expansion in the import of deterritorialization are present in Deleuze and Guattari's second joint effort, *Kafka*, and that the concept has undergone a full transformation by the publication of *A Thousand Plateaus*. In the latter text, Deleuze and Guattari develop their theorems of deterritorialization. The first theorem holds that

[o]ne never deterritorializes alone; there are always at least two terms, hand-use object, mouth-breast, face-landscape. And each of the two terms reterritorializes on the other. Reterritorialization must not be confused with a return to a primitive or older territoriality: it necessarily implies a new set of artifices by which one element, itself deterritorialized, serves as a new territoriality for another, which has lost its territoriality as well. Thus there is an entire system of horizontal and complementary reterritorializations, between hand and tool, mouth and breast, face and landscape. (*Thousand Plateaus* 174)

This type of deterritorialization originates in the primitive development of the becoming-human. Tool use and the more sophisticated application of fine motor skills require a deterritorialization of the paw into the human hand. Language requires a deterritorialization of the mouth from a feeding machine into a speaking machine, and the lengthened period of maternal nurturing required for language development initiates a deterritorialization of the breast from a mammary gland into a source of comfort and symbol of the meeting of needs. The baby's face, turned toward the breast and the mother's face, looking down lovingly on the baby, instigate the relationship of faces, or what come to be the regimes of faciality.

The second theorem holds that

[t]he fastest of two elements or movements of deterritorialization is not necessarily the most intense or most deterritorialized. Intensity of deterritorialization must not be confused with speed of movement or development. The fastest can even connect its intensity to the slowest, which, as an intensity, does not come after the fastest but is simultaneously at work on a different stratum or plane (for example, the way the breast-mouth relation is guided from the start by a plane of faciality) (*Thousand Plateaus* 174)

This state of "double-becoming" occurs in that duration when singularities encounter events which impact on them, regardless of the chronological progression. That is to say, the timing or "speed" of the event is not important, because the relationship between two elements is one of symbiotic development, rather than merely the expansion of the will to power in one, and the contraction of the will to power in the other, as Nietzsche would have explained it. The full-face relationship between mother and baby works at a different "stratum" while the machinic flow is occurring between the breast machine and the mouth machine.

The third theorem holds that

[i]t can even be concluded from this that the *least* deterritorialized reterritorializes on the *most* deterritorialized. This is where the second stream of reterritorializations comes in, the vertical system running from bottom to top. This is the sense in which not only the mouth but also the breast, hand, the entire body, even the tool, are 'facialized.' As a general rule, relative deterritorializations (transcoding) reterritorialize on a deterritorialization that is in certain respects absolute (overcoding). (*Thousand Plateaus* 174-75)

It is in conjunction with this theorem that faciality takes on its role in the turnover of a socius. As Holland suggests, the despotic regime, a fully signifying regime, "is now also characterized as a regime of 'full faciality,' wherein the face of the despot (Christ, the White Man) over-codes the primitive body" (Holland 59). The capitalist regime, and perhaps potential successors, are post-signifying regimes, in which meaning is "forever open to subjective interpretation: the despot has turned his face away, the center no longer holds, no transcendental signifier reigns supreme" (Holland 59-60). This is the regime of the "averted-face."

Holland proposes that Deleuze and Guattari advance a platform of "post-anti-humanism" in the practical warning of *A Thousand Plateaus*. Advanced monopoly capitalism is moving beyond classical market capitalism to remove the face altogether. This new axiomatic "high speed capital...bypasses subjectivity altogether" (Holland 63), and instead creates new organs in the body to respond temporarily to the temporary product offered. Reterritorialization is necessary as a defence mechanism, to take a line of flight from this faceless world of subjection without subjectivity.

A test of Erdrich's fiction as a successful revolutionary minor literature must then be an evaluation of the ways in which she accomplishes such a reterritorialization and such a line of flight. Erdrich does not offer an explicit answer to the plight of the native community in her novels, but she does spotlight several characters whose trajectories offer options in this regard. One option is to buy into the white ways, to assimilate as far as necessary to achieve success in white terms, while hopefully retaining native identity at the core of one's being. This is the option apparent in the double-becoming trajectory of Lyman Lamartine and Jack Mauser. By the end of *Tales of Burning Love*, the two men have come to an agreement for the construction of a resort on the same shore of Machimanito where Fleur once attempted to fend off the white onslaught of logging companies. It is an 'Indian' project, with foreman and workers on the tribal roll. Seed money comes both from white banks and from the arm of the U.S. Government which oversees the administration of native people. The lake is to be deterritorialized from the mysterious home of the water-monster Misshepeshu in *Tracks* to the setting where white people pay money gleaned from the operation of the capitalist regime in order to relax and enjoy themselves. If the bingo palace is to be upgraded to a casino and included in the package, then the whites will have again reterritorialized their gambling practices, card games that were hybridized by the natives with the values of their own ancient gaming with bones. While the men have deterritorialized their communal values, they at least are reterritorializing this land in the sense that it will be under 'native' control. In his dream-vision, Lipsha imagines Lyman emerging unscathed from a future native apocalypse which would send all the native people in the country back to the places from

which their cosmologies had drawn them.

Lyman would finally, and entirely, be in charge. Policies and programs would flow from his desk, examining this problem. He'd issue directives with a calm born of disaster, marshal all his forces. Even if no Indian returned to this world, Lyman Lamartine's paperwork would live on, even flourish, for the types like him are snarled so deeply into the system that they can't be pulled without unraveling the bones and guts. Cabinets of files would shift priorities, regenerate in twice-as-thick reports. (*Bingo Palace* 197)

This is the apocalyptic vision itself, of a Native American completely deterritorialized by the forms of the capitalist bureaucratic machines. The nomadic Chippewa warrior has become a Kafkaesque clerk. Of course, Lyman does his traditional dancing, as well, the testimonial to a multiculturalism in which the quaint practices of minorities are celebrated while the majoritarian social and economic grip and signifying power remains absolute. Lyman is the character who attempts to "reconstitute power and law, reterritorialize the social field, refashion stable family units," to turn to reaction rather than revolt.

Previously, Bev Lamartine's sale of educational books was characterized as a deterritorialization of the white people's aspirations for their children in progressive America. If all faciality is a double-becoming and a joint deterritorialization, then one can say that Bev too adopts the white ways, telling people he is French, rather than Chippewa, in order to take his line of flight through assimilation. Albertine Johnson is a medical student, turning her back on the world of traditional medicine in order to join the white world. Even if she uses her skills to mend the people on the reserve, she remains deterritorialized by the white world. If she attempts to introduce traditional healing into her medical practice, she will be effecting a reterritorialization.

This scenario is complicated by the fact that nobody is a 'pure' territorializing agent. Jack Mauser is half German; Albertine is half Swedish; Lamartines must have some French blood somewhere, by virtue of their name. Perhaps the option of partial assimilation to white ways is offered by characters who are caught in a co-directional becoming-white and becoming-native.

The same composite ethnicity is apparent in some of the characters who undertake a different trajectory, the firm rejection of white ways and the

reterritorialization of the native world. The French blood of Lamartines and Morrisseys mingles with native blood in the bodies of Gerry Nanapush, June Kashpaw, and their son Lipsha Morrissey. Yet these three characters, who all have their fill of forced life in a white context, offer different lines of escape and radical deterritorializations. Gerry is a criminal, whose becoming-criminal trajectory is hastened by his continued deterritorialization by the white justice system. He attains a mythic status in the native community however, and his escape, despite the best efforts of American law enforcement, is a triumphant reciprocal deterritorialization of that hard segment of the justice machine. He is the "famous Chippewa who had songs wrote for him, whose face was on protest buttons, whose fate was argued over in courts of law, who sent press releases to the world" (*Love Medicine* 258). June does not physically survive a lifestyle in which she is deterritorialized by an economic regime in which her usefulness begins and ends as "an easy night" for white trash. Nevertheless, according to a Deleuzian politics of life, June remains vital as an idea, a spirit, an incorporeal, productive positivity that aids and abets the members of her family triangle-becoming-polyhedron.

Lipsha careens from one thing to another, always in positions which provoke the question, "What kind of job is that, for a Chippewa?" His deterritorialization by the white world comes to an end symbolically when his van is trashed. A good old boy hard segment of white bigots attempts to submit him to humiliation, which is thwarted by the complicity of Lipsha and Russell in their subversive attitude toward the white world. The trashing of the van breaks the hold on Lipsha of this white artifact as symbol of success. He is now free to take his line of flight as a chauffeur to his criminal father and a becoming-medicine man. The low point in his traditional shamanistic development, and a clue to the relative merits of the two approaches to deterritorialization is symbolically conveyed in Lipsha's unwitting manslaughter of Nector. He tries to substitute another white artifact, the frozen turkey heart, for the fresh goose heart required for love medicine. Perhaps Nector chokes on the love medicine because it is concocted not of legitimate Chippewa ingredients, but rather of ingredients procured from the white agribusiness capitalist regime with which Nector is associated through his own assimilationist career. Lipsha further

sullies traditional practice by hedging his bets and taking the hearts to the priest and Sister Martin, neither of whom will bless them for him. He dips his fingers in holy water, though, and blesses the hearts himself, thereby running afoul of both the Catholic God and the manitous in his endeavour. From this humourous but disastrous episode, the trajectory of his calling can only be upward.

The line of flight away from the white regime is also offered by strong women such as Nector's wife, Marie Lazarre Kashpaw. Marie raises her own and others' children in Nector's absence, and she fights the influence of her assimilationist mother Pauline/Leopolda, both during her tenure in the convent school and afterward. Marie's daughters, Zelda and Aurelia, also offer a vision of female strength and resistance both against the self-destructive and pie-destroying tendencies of the men, and generally against the attempt of white society to deterritorialize the community. In Zelda this tendency appears in a trajectory away from the Swedish men of her past, Swede Johnson and Bjornson, toward her first love, her native love, Xavier Toose. She goes to him, on the shores of Matchimanito, where he lives not in "a prefabricated government box but an old cabin like hers" (*Bingo Palace* 246). Their meeting exhibits the best of a mutual becoming and faciality: "She saw the window curtain drop," as he has been looking out at her, and "then Xavier appeared." He "leaned down to her window and Zelda's face bloomed toward his as though his features gave out warmth" (246). Marie's nemesis as rival for Nector's affection, Lulu Lamartine, represents the radical reterritorialization of the tribe as well, as indicated in the previous chapter. At the end of *Love Medicine*, Lulu is blind, and Marie takes care of her. With the death of the man they shared, they can come to terms. The faciality of their relationship begins as Lulu's blindness ends, and the fundamental interpersonal facial relationship is echoed in Lulu's metaphor. Lulu says, "She wiped my eyes with a warm washcloth. I blinked. The light was cloudy but I could already see. She swayed down like a dim mountain, huge and blurred, the way a mother must look to her just born child" (*Love Medicine* 236). Soon Lipsha can report that Grandma Kashpaw and Lulu "was thick as thieves now" (241). Fleur Pillager and Margaret Rushes Bear Kashpaw also stand out as strong women who

refuse to capitulate to the advancing tide of white domination.

Erdrich offers at least two visions of methods native people potentially use to deal with their predicament, marooned, or made red, within a white sea. She does not provide a clear indication which of these ways is to be preferred. At the end of *Tales of Burning Love*, things are looking up for Lipsha and Gerry, but also for Lyman and Jack. All the characters must continually grapple with the problem of being an Indian in America, as must the author. A. Robert Lee examines this predicament for minorities in general in the United States, as expressed in the novels of Rudolfo Anaya, Louise Erdrich and Maxine Hong Kingston. Each of these authors, Lee asserts, "have lived both within and at an angle from what passes as 'mainstream' America, a truly hyphenated or joint cultural citizenry as it were. In imagining 'ethnically', thereby, they offer the paradox of having written into being an America the nation barely knew itself to be, another and yet the same America" (Lee 144). Sometimes, the urge for an ethnic minority is to wish away the difference, as Lipsha does in his dream-vision of the Indian apocalypse.

I fall into a dreamy and unpleasant mood and all of a sudden I am annoyed that I turned out as an Indian. If I were something else, maybe all French, maybe nothing, or say, a Norwegian, I'd be sitting in comfort, eating pancakes. Or Chinese. Longingly, I shut my eyes and imagine the snap of fried wontons between my teeth at Ho Wun's. I taste sweet-and-sour fried batter. Hot crispy noodles. No fair. I resent the lengths that I am driven by the blood. I take mental revenge, then, by imagining what would happen if all the Indians in the country suddenly disappeared, went back where they came from. In my mind's eye I see us Chippewas jumping back into the big shell that spawned us.... (*Bingo Palace* 197)

Of course the hyphenation will not go away, and part of the bleak humour of Lipsha's reverie is the idea that his life would be better if he were a Chinese-American. Maxine Hong Kingston would dispute the premise. Even Norwegians are subject to the sort of satirical treatment that marks the movie *Fargo* and the books and radio program of Minnesota humourist Garrison Keillor. In America, one tends to be a hyphenated American, but the myth of the mainstream culture is that anyone can succeed by virtue of being an American first.

Erdrich seeks instead to deterritorialize the 'American' part of her characters through the events that transpire. One cannot go back and recover the 'old ways' in a full sense, but Erdrich is able, as David Murray suggests, to address "the ambiguous legacy of Indianness" in "generational and familial terms, notably in *Love Medicine*, where the father, unlike the failed figures of so many novels, actually himself represents a positive blending of past and present which can help his son" (Murray 96). The hybridization of duration in the 'blending of past and present' functions like the deterritorialization of the major language by the minor writer and community. In both cases, the temporal and the linguistic, the opportunity arrives for an anarchistic derailment of the majority culture, if only in the imagination for now. This is the political and collective expression of the minor literature, a becoming-free while a being-oppressed continues. The effort of the majoritarian community in turn to reassert its values in the face of the subversion represents the other half of a double-becoming. If this interactive model, positive in its productivity, can be turned to more of a dialogue, positive in its product, there is hope for an amicable resolution of the racial tensions within the society.

However, it remains important to avoid the trap of compromise at the expense of the forces of life. The trick in the political program of Deleuze and Guattari is to maintain the revolution interminably. Post-revolutionary phase means reactionary phase, and the old power and law are "reconstituted" in a new system just like the old system. This is a danger which always lurks if the symbiotic becoming puts in place structures that will turn out to be repressive of the fluidity of life. There is a distinct lack of closure in the endings to Erdrich's books, as episodes seem to be resolved without the declaration that characters will simply live happily ever after. That continuation of the promise of deterritorialization and becoming seems to suggest a continuing revolution within the native community, which will avoid the trap of majoritarian fascism by always living on the edge.

Ultimately, these novels are the engagement of a micropolitics in Deleuzian terms. In the church, the convent, the school, the tribal council office, the home, characters are constantly engaged in the sort of experimentation which Deleuze and Guattari advocate for the discovery of lines of flight. Kafka's

minor literature is marked, they say, by "the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise" (*Kafka* 16). One can discern in the writing of Louise Erdrich the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in English, but also the impossibility of writing otherwise. While creating a minor literature is an impossible task in these terms, the literature does exist, the people do respond, the deterritorializations are effected, and the lines of flight are taken. In the subversive minor treatment of the major English language, and the political and collective import of her writing, Erdrich clearly has produced a body of work which can be called a minor literature. It remains to be seen whether this work can be a force for freedom in her community and the wider society, without falling into a reactionary frame which blocks the fluidity of life that so richly courses through it now. If the literature can walk this tightrope, then the theft of the baby from the crib will be complete, and a line of flight can be pursued between minority and majority, now broken down, as a truly symbiotic mutual deterritorialization and a double becoming-something better.

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