The Theme Of Love In Love Medicine By Louise Erdrich

Love Medicine is the first novel by Louis Erdrich, published in 1984. The novel has the quality of "Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award". The novel Love Medicine is interrelated stories which seem as short fictitious story and each story has narrated by various characters, various locations, various years and sometimes various perspectives. In a nutshell, the novel about two American Indian families which are Kashpaw and Lamartina living on resident on Chippewa reservation in North Dakota. The novel comprises diversified themes which are predominantly; love, alcohol, death, sex, racism, religion, family, and magic. However, one of the important messages in the novel is the importance of trying to fight for the unity of a potent family that has been affected by their own pack of lies and issues. Throughout the novel, we can see that the characters' life experiences with various thing and people. In general, it is seen the love which is the most crucial theme and the love connecting each character to another despite their past and complex family communication. Love is the only pure thing in the world and withstands everything.

About the author; ‘’Louis Erdrich grew up in North Dakota and is a mixed blood enrolled in the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwa. She is the author of eight novels, including Love Medicine, as well as poetry, children’s books, and a memoir of early motherhood, The Blue Jay's Dance’’. Mainly of Louis Erdrich's books center on her Native American stripes, but her creations showed another way of her life as well. Like the author, the major characters in the novel part of it the Native American group the Chippewa. Also, women in Chippewa, a strong part of the community; authority was apportioned equally between the man and the woman. About the title; the novel's various characters carry Chippewa Native American blood, and love medicine talk about the Native American mind that nourishing intercourse and sex, have strong curing powers. It besides belongs to the notion of a spiritual worker or healer as a medicine woman or man. In the novel, Nector's mother Rushes using 'love medicine' to wrap her husband Nanapush in a sexual affair. It further ascribes to the magic Lipsha Morrissey usages, which is a 'love medicine' magic, to try out bring in Marie and Nector Kashpaw closer together in spite of Nector's out-of-wedlock relationship with Lulu Lamartine.

Initially, I should say it my expectations about the book, when I read the title of the book I thought it classically loves the book. Yes, the book generally consists of love but in the background, we can observe other events, their inside emotions, and feelings. Because of the book include a variety point of view and narrator, we feel as if within of the novel.

In short, the novel about the people who are living in the Chippewa and their combat to life both internally and externally. These people lived as per to American Indian Tribe tradition. In the novel, we are witnessing their lifestyle, relationships, families, and lovers. Erdrich presents to us very various perspectives from both aspects. In one section to another, the narrator changing. Each narrates their life experiences by using their point of view to events and conditions. In those times, when we think as historically and culturally; in the 1930s the Indian reservations were infamous for their high death rate, constant unemployment, and demolition of the structure of Native American both cultural and social shape. One of the American Government's main principle is, turning Native American into copies of Anglo-Americans. Since the 1970s they have been hoping to achieve this by using religion. In love medicine, the reservation is not built on the

original terrain as the tribe was enforcement to leave it. Although this enforcement moving was highly troublesome for the tribe they have accustomed to the new land and made the home for themselves with old traditions. Therefore, identity creation and building a home are foremost for them. The author Erdrich wants to demonstrate to us this depicts of that the times by using the characters and events. In order to clearly understand the theme and the cultural background of the novel, I want to examine some parts of the novel in three categories.

In abstract the novel based on three generations of Kashpaw and Lamartine families which are lives on Chippewa reservation in nearly fifty years. Mainly the author Erdrich points out a love triangle shape between Lulu Lamartine, Marie Lazarre and Nector Kashpaw but in the end, Nector married Marie.

Firstly, in the novel, Erdrich presents June, who adopted by Nector and Maria Kashpaw. But unfortunately, June has a tragic end. A winter day June meets a guy in the bar, and later they drink, after that, they have sexual intercourse in the man's car. When the man sleeps, June goes out of the car and starts walking home. However, due to the freezing weather, she dies in the morning. In brief, June's life does not fit to the norms of the community, and she does not meet the expectations of society as a woman. As Gordie's wife, she is not accepting her role and does not obey anything, she refrains this role by leaving home. June is trying to get rid of the situation which she is and find peace. Because, in her inner world she feels in the void, lost and broken. We can understand her emotions with this quotation. "It was that moment, that one moment, of realizing you were totally empty. He must have felt that. Sometimes, alone in her room in the dark, she thought she knew what it might be like" (Erdrich 3). Throughout the novel the stories and the characters getting more complicated. After June's death, Albertine Johnson who June's niece comes back to home. Also, other characters gathering at the home. June Kashpaw's son, King Kashpaw, and his white wife named Lynette Kashpaw. However, I should say that do not like King. Because he is violent, drunk and abusive. He bought his new car with June's death insurance, and he tries to drown Lynette his wife. After that King had sex with her in the car. I could not understand what type of man he is. I guess domestic severity is given to him pleasure and ambition. The Native American men see himself above everything, and they do not give any attention to others without himself. We can understand with this statement; "chance. She took her chance when she married me" (Erdrich 26). Later part of the novel, the character Marie a woman who strong, sturdy and matriarch starts tells a story about her experiences in Convent. She says influenced with the Nun abusing to her and she escapes from the Convent. Afterward, she meets with Nector who will be husband in the future. Nector is a reckless and drunk tribal chief. Although she is 14 years old and unknowing him, she had sex with him. In Chippewa, it’s seen as a normal thing. Even though they later married, Nector determined to come back to Lulu Nanapush who his first love. Lulu is a bravely flirtatious and ambitious character. However, Lulu rejects him and married Henry Lamartine. Later when her husband dies after being hit by train she decided to marry Beverly who Henry's brother. Also, she had an affair with another man. Totally she married three times, and she has eight children. In spite of all these events, even she had a relationship with Nector. Until solving the puzzle I really confused. Because so many affairs and love have been presented. Already the novel's structure based on complicated love affairs. But in the end, Marie wants Lipsha's grandchild help for regaining the affection of Nectar. Lipsha made a mystical mixture of love medicine for his grandmother. Although Nector dies after the medicine, it is seen the love medicine did work, and he visits Marie.

Secondly, many of the main characters in the novel, we can see that the effect of alcohol or

their struggle with alcohol. Most of the section in love medicine, demonstrates scenes of alcoholic character, whether in everyday or in more critical issues. Initially, these Native Americans in the novel see drinking alcohol as social and cultural activities. But then it becomes a dependence and a heavy issue for some characters. Erdrich usually mentions in the novel, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, depression, pedophilia, young pregnancy. Also, she presents several of negative conditions which the characters have come across. Another important issue in the novel is an intense faith in death which is inevitable. In the novel, we can see that a few characters really visits the people who they really loved. Nector visited her to show that he really loved Marie and the Love Medicine worked. The most missed ones are which really loved. Although Nector loves Lulu who his first love, he visited Marie when he died. Namely, his true love is Marie. At the beginning of the novel, Marie's grandchild Lipsha made a mixture named love medicine.In those time in Native India, according to Ojibwa myths, people were believing something spiritual like magic. Lipsha were believing himself to the ability of inner strength. He wants to help his grandmother Marie for remake their relationship with Nector who loves his first love, Lulu. Lipsha instead of catching a goose in nature, he buys a goose from the market. After he presents the goose which is love medicine to Marie and Nector, Nector is choking when he eats the goose. In this scene maybe we can think love medicine did not work. Because instead of making them more intimate, it's making them separates into a different world. However in the next part of the chapter, for Nector having return is seen as love medicine did work.

Thirdly, in the Native American culture, the common subject is not planning for the next step in life. Because when life offered them a new challenge every day, it was not possible to plan ahead. This is due to the fact that the belief that they can't self-control their lives. Because they believed their lives managed by main driving forces and it's deciding the direction of their lives. In Native American culture, Lulu's son Gerry is a great example of this subject. Because he was presented as an insurgent character that every time runaway and moment living as if last day. In the last chapter, we can see that the idea of chance and fortune managing their lives when Lipshaw, Gerry, and king playing poker. Moreover, they use auspicious charms rice as poker checks. With this Gerry's quotation chance is seen the basis of their lives. ‘‘Society? Society is like this card game here, cousin. We got dealt our hand before we were born, and as we grow we have to play as best we can’’ (Erdrich 357). Even though King keeps on to reject that is not really fair, this stage demonstrates to us, in fact, life is not quite fair. Yes, actually I agree with King. Because in the life that our living, not everything is fair. Sometimes we need to have big luck for progressing of life. This process can be exam, love, money, or job. Especially in today’s Turkey, it is seen that find a job is not easy without a friend at court even if we more qualified than others. Obviously, that is not really fair. In the Native American culture, they think you have a pure chance when dealing with your hand, and from this point on, you need to keep on do your best. Garry's statement greatly defines this topic in their civilization and Garry's personality symbolize of Native American culture. Gerry is distinct a character who is a cheater, cunning, and absence of planning the life.

After all, I should say it in short, I loved the novel but when I start to book I thought is everything is so complicated and nonsense. Because it was hard to the following in everything when there were so much character and stories. Although all the stories are interconnected each other, sometimes I back to read again the beginning of whose chapter I was reading. In total, I was read twenty-five different character's events. Sometimes I forget who was she or he is. In order to solve this complicating, I drew a family tree and I matched to each other when ? was reading the chapters. Even though Erdrich present a family tree of the character, in the beginning, it was unhelpful for me. So, it was being easy for me to read. Especially the character's name and their

family backgrounds were hard to understand for me. For example, I found very difficult the story of Lulu Lamartine who was continuous sleeping with a man. Because in total she married three men, and she had eight children with different fathers. Also, her children's stories were complex because the one is getting married and the other is dying. On the other hand, Marie's story was like this as well. Definitely, my traditional family is not like this. My parents have only married each other and had two kids. With this aspect, the novel does not match my life.

However, the novel's most exciting part was when Lipsha made Love Medicine. When I was read that part I really thrilled. Because when I was in high school partially I have had the same event. I want to mention briefly about the event. I was 17 years old when ? loved somebody at the school. He was really handsome. Although he had a girlfriend and not give me the attention I could not give up my obsession. Because of my love, I got sick and I was failed in exams. One day while ? was searching for a cure of my illness on the internet I found a website about the spell. I never thought magic to charm him and I wanted just try it what going to happen. I was in contact with a man who claims to make magic. I was explained my condition and love. He said that can make an enchantment for affection to the boy who I loved. In first times I was really afraid. Because it was hard for me in both material and spiritual. Notwithstanding I was want to see whether work or not. Through one of the friend, I send an amount of money to him. I guess it was 150 or 200 liras. Anyway, later two weeks he sends me a packet which how I should apply the magic. The packet contained bottled water and somewhat a sugar which effect of fascination and attraction. The thing I should do it was made the drink that mixture to him. I made a plan to provide drink it to him. When I see him at the canteen I bought two glasses of tea, and I add his tea the mixture of water and sugar. However, I was not alone for not to arouse doubt. With my best friend, we went to his near and serve the magical tea. I was really nervous at that moment. After drinking the tea he has gone. I was sure the tea did not work. Following three weeks later he came to my class to want to say something to me. He said broke up with his girlfriend and want to my support. I guess the tea was starting to work. Throughout the week we talked to each other and studied to exams together. I was really happy because I obtained what I want. Everybody was looking at us very strangely because no one expecting to see us as a couple. However, I felt oddity inside of me when I date with him that do not know why. In sum up we were flirted and dated along two months. In the last of the two months, he started as if apathetic to me. Everything was going upside down. We were starting to debating even trivial something and in the end, he left me. I was really shocked at how it can make happen. Later I learn that he made peace with his old girlfriend. I called the man who makes magic and explained what happened. Afterward, I understood why the magic did not work. Because he was not my real love and I could not make a fake bond. Finally, I gave up, and I decided tried to continue my life. That's why I loved the novel. Because my emotions were like Marie's emotions. She was loving Nector and want to intimate with him. However, Nector was her true love and so love medicine did work. Consequently, if somebody has our true love, ultimately she or he finds us, and it does not matter how she or he tried to find it.