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Neurodivergent Narrative, Psychoanalysis, and Cross-Cultural Communication in Louise Erdrich's Fiction

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ABSTRACT: By making the expectations of language, coherence and meaning subject to challenge, neurodivergent storytelling is the act of foregrounding other modes of perception, expression and relational understanding. This chapter dwells on neurodivergent narrative as a form of cross-cultural communication in the contemporary fiction of Louise Erdrich, based on the psychoanalytic distinction of the semiotic and symbolic of Julia Kristeva. The analysis of *The Night Watchman* (2020), *The Sentence* (2021) and *The Mighty Red* (2024), based on the use of non-linear structures, repetition, sensory description, and affective rhythms, the study discusses the ways Erdrich uses these devices to enumerate Indigenous and marginalized types of consciousness resistant to dominant linguistic and cognitive patterns. The semiotic idea of Kristeva which belongs to pre-verbal drive, rhythm of the body, intensity of emotion provides a fruitful perspective in the interpretation of the story disruptions in Erdrich when meaning is frequently a product of feeling, memory, relationship presence and not logical development. Such semiotic moments do not cancel out the symbolic order of language but exist alongside the symbolic order, and generate narratives that appreciate accessibility, empathy and intuitive comprehension and maintain the principle of coherence. Erdrich transforms the act of storytelling into a communicative space that is inclusive through ghostly figures, fractured time, and highly interior voices. This article states that her fiction presents neurodivergent narrative as a mediating practice of culture, and that ethical reading practices that are based on attentive listening, emotional openness, and mutual vulnerability across cultural borders should be promoted.

1. INTRODUCTION

Narrative has been used for a long time as one of the main approaches, according to which, cultures express memory, identity and structures of meaning. In literature, narrative is not just a formal pattern, however, but a cognitive and ethical process, as it determines the perception, organization and communication of experience. Conventional narratological frameworks have tended to give prominence to linearity, coherence, and causal development, which are notions that are more widely extended in the Enlightenment regarding rationality, language, and unified subject. Nevertheless, the most recent critical movements

have been challenging these assumptions with more and more interest to those narratives that do not conform to closure, clarity, and stable meaning.

In this dynamic academic environment, the questions of difference, such as cultural, cognitive, linguistic, and epistemological have become more urgent. Researchers have started to question the marginalizing effect of major forms of narrative in favor of other forms of thinking, seeing, specifically Indigenous knowledge, disability, trauma, neurodiversity. Narrative in this regard is not anymore perceived as a neutral representation platform but as a conflictual arena, through which power, knowledge and norms of intelligibility are negotiated (Bruner, 1991; Herman, 2009).

At this crossroads neurodivergent storytelling is formed as a critical paradigm of conceptualizing the stories that do not conform to normative cognitive and linguistic conventions. Instead of seeing difference as variance or lack thereof, neurodivergent practices preempt variability in perception, affect, temporality, and relationality. These kinds of stories prompt readers to reconsider the definition of coherence, meaning and comprehension and bring literature to more open ways of interaction.

2. NARRATIVE FORM AND NEURODIVERGENCE

Neurodivergence as a concept was first coined in disability studies and autism advocacy, most commonly as a reaction to the medicalization of cognitive difference. The neurodiversity models believe that neurological diversity is a normal and desirable human diversity (Singer, 1999; Yergeau, 2018). As it applies to narrative analysis, neurodivergence causes one to focus on the practices of storytelling, which do not conform to normalized assumptions of cognition, such as linear time, hierarchical causality, and strictly propositional meaning. Neurodivergent texts have been known to favor sensory description, affective phrenesis, repetition, fragmentation, and associative logic. The meaning of such texts does not appear in the form of a linear exposition but in the form of affective echo, experience of the body, and patterns of relationships. These qualities may be a challenge to traditional reading that emphasises interpretive mastery and closure. But they also provide fertile grounds of ethical practice in that they demand the readers to be patient, careful, and tolerant to ambiguity.

Notably, neurodivergent narratives do not need to be scaled down to depictions of known neurological disorder. Instead, it is a more generalized narration genre that disfigures normalizing assumptions of cognition and communication. Historical marginalization Literatures that fall under this mode are of interest, especially in instances when dominant forms of narrative have tended to marginalize other forms of epistemology and lived realities.

The fiction by Louise Erdrich can be found at this intersection of the Indigenous narrative tradition and the experimentation of the modern literature. Through the analogy of the Ojibwa storytelling traditions and the involvement of the contemporary novelistic methods, Erdrich establishes readings that do not surrender to the main cognitive and cultural patterns but, nevertheless, do not lose their communicative appeal. Her stories require another type of reading, the reading that is sensitive to an affect, relationality, and ethical implication.

2.1 Louise Erdrich and Experimentation of the Contemporary Narrative

Being one of the most prominent Indigenous American authors of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Louise Erdrich has persistently employed narrative to challenge the history of dispossession, cultural continuity, and relation identity. Fiction (her work) does not conform to single points of view, she frequently uses multiple narration, changing frames of time, and stratification of the narrative to manifest the collective experience. These tricks upset traditional realism and still strongly connect with realities lived in.

The Night Watchman (2020), *The Sentence* (2021) and *The Mighty Red* (2024) by Erdrich represent an important step towards her narrative practice. The works involve the modern political, cultural, and ecological crisis and accentuate her experimentation of form, voice and time. Spooky hauntings, cyclical form, and affective narration will be the primary feature of the meaning-making of these texts. This chapter proposes that the following narrative strategies can be fruitfully interpreted as neurodivergent narrative strategies allowing non-assimilationist cross-cultural communication. Instead of putting the Indigenous experience into the language of dominant narrative patterns, Erdrich invites the readers to the sphere of engagement in listening, emotional responsiveness, and ethical receptivity.

3. NEURODIVERGENT LITERARY STUDIES AND NEURODIVERGENT STORYTELLING

Neurodivergence is a notion developed by disability studies and neurodiversity movements in opposition to medicalized and devaluing conceptualizations of cognitive difference. The initial proponents of neurodiversity held that human neurological

diversity like autism, ADHD, and other cognitive disorders should be viewed as normal forms of human diversity, as opposed to needing normalization (Singer, 1999). This redefinition has not only brought tremendous consequences to the field of psychology and education, but also to the humanities, specifically to the literary and cultural studies.

Neurodivergence in a literary context has led scholars to reevaluate traditional beliefs regarding narrative coherence, intelligibility and reader competence. Linear plot, consistency of focalization and causal logic are characteristics of narrative success that are held to prevail in traditional narratology. These types of models implicitly presuppose normative cognitive reader that processes the language in a sequential manner and appreciates closure and resolution. The neurodivergent practices query these presuppositions by preempting narrative modes that act through affect, experience, repetition, and associative reasoning, but not a linear development. More recent criticism has thus started to theorize neurodivergent storytelling as not an experimental or marginal anti-literary deviation, but rather as a viable and productive form of storytelling. According to Yergeau (2018), neurodivergent rhetoric tends to be opposed to being contained within the mainstream models of communicative practices and, instead, expresses meaning through relational, bodily, and affective means. This view of fragmentation, excess, and ambiguity as intentional strategies instead of formal failures enables critics when used on narrative fiction to interpret them as such. Vairavan, C. (2018) examines psychological disturbances in Harold Pinter's The Caretaker, focusing on trauma, fear, identity conflicts, and social alienation. The study explores how the characters' inner conflicts and disturbed behaviours reflect their psychological suffering.

3.1 Narrative Normativity and Cognitive Assumptions

The coherence and rationality within the narrative theory have a historical context that enlightenment epistemologies connect reason to clarity, control and mastery. Practicing western literary traditions have tended to take narrative as a system of sorting experience into intelligible sequences in order to support the ideal of a unified, autonomous subject. In this context, a non-linear or non-causal reasoning is often construed as being disorganized or unsuccessful. This normativity is challenged by neurodivergent storytelling which reveals the cognitive assumptions that lie in the dominant narrative forms. Instead of portraying experience as a sequence of ordered events, the inquiry of neurodiversity tends to be manifested in an imbalanced, repetitive, or dramatic way of perception. There may be looping or falling of time, intrusion of memories and saturation of sense of narrative. These characteristics resemble lived mental experiences which are not in accordance with normative expectations of attention, memory or communication. Notably, these narrative interrupts do not just disrupt the narration of stories, but also disrupt the reading of the same. Neurodivergent narratives require different kinds of engagement which place a greater value on patience, attention, and emotional openness. Reading encourages the reader to abandon the need to master something and join in the process of meaning-making. This turn is ethically important, since it will force the readers to recognize the restraints of their own interpretive systems.

3.2 Accessibility, Neurodivergence, and Language

Accessibility is one of the key issues of neurodivergent storytelling but not the simplification of the process; rather, it is the increase in the possibilities of the meaning transmission among the audience and the communicator. Neurodivergent storytelling tends to use various sensory regimes, emotional indicators, and nonverbal modes of expression to connect with the readers who do not necessarily digest language using abstract logic.

Such an insistence on accessibility is very close to the modern discussions of literary studies on inclusive storytelling practices. In this case, accessibility does not imply the simplification of complexity but it is the acknowledgment of the fact that meaning can be formed using various thinking processes. The neurodivergent stories break the perception that clarity should always be the highest rank among all, or that analysis is better than experience.

The fiction written by Louise Erdrich is an example of this method as it combines intricacy of the story and emotional and sensual relatability. Her repetition, rhythm and internalizing give the entry points to readers with diverse cultural and cognitive background. There is no forced meaning and the invitation to access the Indigenous past and experiences does not necessitate complete cultural translation that can be encountered by the readers.

3.3 Neurodivergent Narration as Cross-Cultural Practice

There are substantial impacts of neurodivergent storytelling to cross-cultural communication. Instead of putting communication in the context of passing information between two stable structures, neurodivergent stories focus on relation and listening ethically. The meaning is not wholly transferable but is developed in a process of long contact with difference.

This strategy creates challenges to the assimilationist models in cross-cultural settings that aim to render the experiences of the marginalized into the dominant language. Rather, neurodivergent narratives challenge the reader to experience the difference in its own dimensions, as a way of being ethical, of having no definite answer, of feeling uncomfortable. This change is particularly significant in the Indigenous literature where cultural knowledge has been widely taken or distorted in the paradigms of mainstream narratives.

The fiction of Erdrich is a good example of how neurodivergent storytelling can serve as a bridge to culture. Her stories do not fully solve the ambiguity and allow some explanatory closure to be left out, which means that the readers need to be highly alert to the voices and experiences that cannot be easily understood. In this sense, cross-cultural communication turns into an ethical process of continuous practice and not an act of understanding that has been achieved.

3.4 Placing Erdrich in the context of Neurodivergent Narrative Discourse

Though Erdrich does not generally fit under the neurodivergent literature, she can be said to use narrative techniques that are specific to neurodivergent aesthetics and morals. Another aspect that her fiction disrupted over and over again is linear temporality, favoring affective experience, and prefiguring relational consciousness. These characteristics cause readers to modify their reading habits and this encourages the development of forms of response that are compassionate, tolerant, and morally sensitive. Placing the work of Erdrich in the context of neurodivergent narratives, this chapter does not aim at imposing diagnostic labels but instead emphasize on the similarities of narrative principles that unify Indigenous narrative with the larger issues of cognitive normativity. It is based on this framework that narrative difference can be more inclusive, that is, accepting to the value of different ways of thinking, perceiving, and communicating.

4. SEMIOTIC AND THE SYMBOLIC OF KRISTEVA

What Julia Kristeva adds to the psychoanalytic theory and literature criticism is the reconsideration of language as a form of dynamic process which is influenced by bodily drives, affect as well as societal structures. As an extension of the work of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Kristeva questions the premise of meaning made only with the help of rational and grammatical language. Rather, she suggests that the linguistic expression is the result of the interdependence of two modalities that are dependent on each other, the symbolic and the semiotic (Kristeva, 1984). The symbolic is the world of structured language, grammar, syntax and social law. It regulates the coherence, intelligibility, and communicative order, which help the subjects to engage themselves in shared systems of significance. The semiotic, on the contrary, is linked to the pre-verbal desires, physical rhythms, emotional energies, sound and motions. It cannot be reduced to signification and functions below and in parallel to language, constantly interrupting and reactivating the symbolic order.

The theory created by Kristeva is especially useful in literature analysis since it does not allow a dichotomy between disorder and order. Instead of placing the semiotic as chaotic and irrational, she focuses on the generative nature of the semiotic in meaning-making. The semiotic in the literary texts is manifested in rhythm, repetition, fragmentation, tonal variations and emotional overload. These factors unstable the fixed meaning and expose language to novel expressive practices.

4.1 Affect, Rhythm and Embodied Meaning Semiotic

The semiotic aspect of language is based on the body and pre-symbolic experience. It is related to the maternal body, early childhood rhythms, and affective drives, which come before the structured language acquisition in Kristeva. The symbolic provides order and differentiation whereas the semiotic brings motion, intensity, and affect into the discourse (Kristeva, 1984).

The semiotic in the context of literary narratives comes in the form of interruptions in the flow of events, instances in which language appears to be displaced by emotion and not reason. These are moments which can involve obsessive repetition, sensory overload, rhythmic phrasing or abrupt intrusion of memory and emotion. According to conventional narratological perspective, these features can seem too many or even absurd. In Kristevan terms, though, they are crucial aspects of meaning that cannot be well expressed in propositional terms. This interpretation of the semiotic concerns neurodivergent storytelling in particular. Neurodivergent narratives usually put sensory perception, affective resonance and embodied experience more prominently than rational account. Rhythm, repetition and the intensity of emotions are what create a meaning instead of

sequential logic. These narrative strategies can be identified as meaningful and not deficient through a theoretical vocabulary of Kristeva semiotic.

4.2 The Symbolic: Structure, Coherence and Social Order

Although Kristeva focuses on the disruptive effect of the semiotic, she does not rule out the symbolic. The symbolic order is necessary to communicate, be coherent, and participate in the social life. It gives the grammatical and narrative patterns which enable the stories to be told, received, and interpreted within a cultural context to exist. The symbolic can be seen in the plot, characterization, time sequence and clarity of language in the story form of fiction. These aspects allow the readers to establish their position in the text and to identify the patterns of meaning. But narrative can be hard and shutting out and no longer part of life when the symbolic takes over without a pause.

The most important point made by Kristeva is the conflict between the semiotic and the symbolic results in meaningful language. Literature is also an advantageous location of this interaction, as it enables disruptions of linguistic order to be controlled. Literary texts have the capacity to contain the experiences that cannot be translated into normative ways of expressing these experiences through poetic language, fragmented narration, and the emotional surplus.

4.3 Semiotic-Symbolic Interaction and Narrative Form

In narrative, the contact between the semiotic and the symbolic yields texts that are communicative but cannot be understood completely. These narratives can be prepared in familiar patterns with affective or sensory hinges reemerging in between the story patterns. This is especially apparent in the texts that deal with the subject of trauma, memory, marginalization, or cultural difference.

The framework introduced by Kristeva can therefore provide an effective method of interpreting stories that seem either discontinuous or incomplete. Instead of seeing these features as failure to act formally, critics can see them as manifestations of embodied and relational meaning. The semiotic never compromises narrative but adds to it by letting the repressed or peripheral experiences stand up and be heard. This strategy is quite similar to neurodivergent narrative theory which questions the superiority of linear thinking and stable subjectivity. Neurodivergent storytelling is often congruent with the lived experience of cognitive difference in which attention, memory, perception work in a non-linear manner. The semiotic of Kristeva enables interpreting such narratives as those that are valid modes of expression and not as deviations of normativity.

4.4 Kristeva, Neurodivergence, and Narrative Accessibility

Among the most important implications that the theory by Kristeva offers to the process of this chapter, one may distinguish the possibility to reformulate access to narratives. When meaning is not restricted to symbolic clarity, but also manifested through affect, rhythm and embodiment, then narratives can be made available in various ways. This is because a reader can approach a text either emotionally or sensorually despite the lack of logical continuity.

Such an enlarged concept of availability is instrumental in comprehending neurodivergent storytelling. Neurodivergent readers can perceive language in different ways, with more use of sensory input, emotional appeal, or association. Stories that support semiotic expression thus provide accommodative areas where various thinking activities are made. Erdrich fiction is such an example of an inclusive narrative. The texts by her strike a balance between the symbolic integrity and the semiotically intense, which means the readers get to enter the narrative via the several narratives. It is this balance that helps in the cross-cultural communication by allowing the readers with different cognitive and cultural backgrounds to interact in a meaningful manner without the need to adopt the same interpretive strategies.

4.5 Kristeva and Aboriginal Narrative

The theory proposed by Kristeva is also very close to the Indigenous storytelling practices where the rhythm, repetitions, and relational meaning are more important than linear exposition. Oral traditions often make use of sound, cadence, and group involvement, which is very close to the semiotic aspect of language. These traditions do not have a fixed meaning but create a sense of meaning that is produced in performance, listening and repetition across scenarios. Reading the fiction by Erdrich through a Kristevan prism, this chapter does not subject Indigenous stories to a Western theory, but she finds the intersection points, which help trace the way her narratives work. The semiotic offers the means of expressing the affective and embodied aspects of indigenous narrative without symbolically explaining them. In this regard, the framework proposed by Kristeva bridges the psychoanalytic theory, neurodivergent narrative, and the Indigenous epistemologies. It enables the critics to

understand that the disruptions of the narrative by Erdrich are communicative strategies that do not remove difference but respect it. The final step is preparing to analyze the text. The close textual analyses that follow are set forth on this theoretical basis. Through seeing Erdrich narrative techniques, as engagements between the semiotic and the symbolic, the chapter can discuss how particular formal elements, including repetition, fragmentation of time, sensory description, are expressive of cognitive and cultural otherness.

This framework is applied to *The Night Watchman*, *The Sentence*, and *The Mighty Red* in the following sections discussing how semiotic disruption as employed in Erdrich fiction is used to encourage neurodivergent ways of interaction and cross-cultural communication.

5. SEMIOTIC RESISTANCE AND VOICE OF THE MULTITUDE IN *THE NIGHT WATCHMAN* (2020)

The Night Watchman (2020) is based on a particular historical context: congressional attempts of ending federal recognition of Native American tribes in 1953. The novel places the Indigenous resistance in the framework of bureaucracy, where the language of legislation, the discourse of policy, and abstraction within institutions are the features of the new reality created by the grandfather of Erdrich. These are the examples of official language that Julia Kristeva refers to as the symbolic order: organized, regulated, and aimed at control and classification (Kristeva, 1984). It is on this context that Erdrich creates a story that continuously challenges symbolic power by using affective, relation-oriented, and collective ways of telling stories. The novel is not focused on a single heroine or a plot twist, but rather on the multi-faceted views, time-crossings and repetitive emotional beats. This is an anti-administrative narrative, opposing the distillation of the Indigenous experience into administrative reasoning, pre-eminently in favor of lived experience, on the one hand, and institutional representation, on the other.

At the very beginning, Erdrich provides a tension between the official speech and embodied reality. The documents and political rhetoric of the legislature seem to be remote, unfocused, and emotionless, whereas the reactions of the community are filled with a sense of urgency, concern, and relational responsibility. This opposition gives the wider context of the novel with semiotic resistance in which affect and rhythm are introduced as responses to bureaucratic abstraction.

5.1 Collective Voice and Neurodivergent Narrative Form

The Night Watchman is one of the most notable in terms of the focus on collective voice. As much as there is the involvement of the individual characters like Thomas Wazhashk, the focus of the story is constantly redirected towards the entire community. This shift towards non-single focalization poses a challenge to the dominant norms of narrative that value the agency of the individual and their inner world. This collective oriented view, according to neurodivergent narrative, destabilizes the intentions of a fixed perspective and linear character growth. The story frequently dwells on minor details, familiar anxieties, and mutual moods instead of moving the story forward with a life-changing decision. The meaning builds up by accumulation and resonance of relation as opposed to causation.

The semiotic suggested by Kristeva would help in understanding this type of narrative. The collective beats of the text its reversion to a common set of anxieties, hopes, and memories are more of semiotic pulses that make the symbolic organization of the novel come to life. The rhythms are expressive in conveying, and the readers get to experience the emotionality of the political struggle as opposed to merely understanding the historical details of the struggle.

5.2 Semiotic Interruptions: Rhythm, Repetition, and Affect

Erdrich uses repetition as one of the primary techniques in *The Night Watchman*. The issue of land, sovereignty, and survival is raised in various chapters and in most cases by different characters in various forms. Such repetition does not serve the plot as a traditional one, yet it makes the narrative more emotionally powerful. The repetition, in Kristevan terms, is a semiotic device, which does not allow closure and fixed meaning. Instead of tension relief, the repetition of motifs maintains the intensity of emotion as the political struggle continues to exist. To neurodivergent readers, this repetition can resonate with cognitive mechanisms of a reinforcement-focused and emotion-oriented reward system at the expense of narrative newness. The emotional scenes in the novel tend to occur because of sensory description and lived experience. The sight of work, care and communal congregation are depicted using the sense of physicality and emotion textures. These instances disrupt the figurative structure of political language, making the abstract arguments reliant on the experience. Meaning does not arise out of

explanation but appears through collective feeling, supporting the narrative accessibility in cross-cultural and cognitive variations.

5.3 Neurodivergence, Attention and Ethical Reading

The Night Watchman is a narrative that needs the specific paying attention by the reader. The lack of the one, moving plot and the focus on the communal rhythm require leniency and receptiveness. The readers are encouraged to commit time to emotional suspense instead of rushing towards a conclusion.

This requirement is complemented by neurodivergent reading styles which are characterized by time-taking as opposed to quick understanding. Meaning develops slowly, sometimes in the affective build up as opposed to narrative climax. These reading habits disrupt the traditional demands of efficiency and mastery in an attempt to promote moral versions of attentiveness.

Erdrich promotes cross-cultural communication based on listening instead of translation by making readers engage in this manner. It does not place readers as observers of the Indigenous experience but as members of a participatory space of narration, where humility and emotional receptivity are needed.

5.4 Aboriginal resistance as Semiotic Practice

The opposition in *The Night Watchman* does not only end in political action but in the form of the narration as well. The rejection of linearity and uniqueness of perception in the novel is a formal resistance to the norms of discourse in the existing narratives. This opposition is parallel to Indigenous epistemologies which prioritize relational continuity to individual achievement. Erdrich conveys resistance as lived experience as opposed to ideological abstraction through semiotic storytelling practices. Rhythm, repetition, and affect help the reader to experience the emotional reality of the community. This strategy strengthens narrative as a means of cross cultural comprehension, one that does not require assimilation and respects difference.

The Night Watchman illustrates the sign of resistance in action within the realm of narrative that attempts to disrupt the symbolic authority and cognitive normativity. Erdrich is creating a neurodivergent narrative that prefigures Indigenous relationality and ethical interaction through the use of collective voice, repetition and affective intensity. Meaning is created through experiencing commonality as opposed to elucidatory presentations, which makes storytelling a bridging of cultures based on mindfulness and empathy. The next paragraph shifts to The Sentence (2021) where haunting, temporality discontinuity, and interior voices are also utilized to further the Erdrich-developed idea of neurodivergent consciousness and intercultural communication.

6. HAUNTING, TEMPORALITY, NEURODIVERGENT CONSCIOUSNESS IN *THE SENTENCE* (2021)

The Sentence (2021) takes place after the protagonist experiences personal tragedy, societal turmoil, and even historical trauma, and the bookstore set in the story of the city of Minneapolis is haunted by the spirit of an old client. On the surface, the novel seems to be indulging the tropes of ghost fiction. However, Erdrich warps these expectations very soon when she introduces haunting not as a supernatural event but as a natural state of the modern life with grief, colonial past, racial violence, and unresolved memory. Haunting in *The Sentence* serves as thematic issue as well as a plot. The ghost does not require explanation or solution, it is just there and comes into the lives interrupting normal lives. Such rejection of narrative closure is in line with neurodivergent forms of experience, where the memory, affect, and perception are not shaped by linear temporal structures. The novel in this way sets a challenge on the reader to re-examine the manner in which stories embody time, consciousness and meaning. In psychoanalytic terms, haunting is the example of the semiotic breaking into the symbolic. The spectral presence is not a phenomenon that can be contained by the rational discourse but rather comes out as a result of affect, redundancy, and unease with a physical form. The theory by Kristeva offers an important perspective on the functioning of such disruptions that do not constitute narrative failure but rather important articulations of lived experience (Kristeva, 1984).

6.1 Fractured Temporality, Non-Linear Experience

The disjointed time structure is one of the characteristics of *The Sentence*. The story is narrated both in the past and the present, subjective recollection and the history of nations, and in most cases, transitions are not obvious. The processes of grief, the COVID-19 pandemic, and racial violence simultaneously interact in ways that cannot be predicted, creating a temporal landscape where simultaneous, not sequential, patterns are created.

This broken time is a reflection of neurodivergent time, in which the past can be made to creep into the present with viscerality. In a Kristevan sense, this kind of time break is an indication of the existence of the semiotic which does not follow the chronological sequence. Memoirs lose narrative and become marching and moving. Erdrich does not arrange these experiences

into a chronological order against the symbolic imperative of narrative mastery. Rather, the novel welcomes the readers to live in a time mode influenced by emotional appeal and a sense of moral urgency. The continued existence of unresolved grief and historical trauma highlight the ineffectiveness of the linear narrative models to describe the experiences of the Indigenous and marginalized people.

6.2 The Ghost as Semiotic Figure

The ghost in *The Sentence* serves as a semiotic character that upsets the symbolic order. It does not talk, it is present, it repeats itself, and it is full of emotion. The ghost refuses to be explained in detail and that is how the trauma and loss elude the storytelling method. Semiotic by Kristeva is preverbal drive and affective rhythms disrupting structured language. The ghost represents this break as it comes out of the blue and causes visceral responses instead of logical interpretation. These encounters preempted response to interpretive intelligibility, which concurred with neurodivergent ways of meaning-making that emphasize affect and sensation. Notably, the ghost has not been placed as an object to be casted out or addressed. Its continuity requires morality instead of a closure to the stories. This stance redefines haunting as a relationship state as opposed to a problematic situation to be addressed, which supports the use of storytelling as an ethical domain.

6.3 Interior Voice and Neurodivergent Consciousness

A lot of *The Sentence* takes place in the form of interior monologue, reflection and associative thought. The consciousness of the narrator is flowing freely between observation, memory and emotional reaction, and is not always hierarchically structured. This pathological interiority defies the conventions of psychological integrity. In neurodivergent terms, the process of thinking in the narrator is characterized by the cognitive processes that place emphasis on connection rather than on linear progression. The echoes and repetitions of ideas, the overlapping of emotional states, and the emergence of meaning through accretion and not resolution all take place. The semiotic offered by Kristeva offers the means of interpreting these patterns as expressions instead of turbulent.

The language use in the novel tends to preempt rhythm and tone, rather than clarity of information. Sentences remain in the emotional texture, and, as a consequence, the readers can feel the emotional condition of the narrator. This style broadens story accessibility by providing more points of entry into the meaning, especially to those readers sensitive to sensory and emotional indications.

6.4 Aboriginal Memory and Group Haunting

Haunting in *The Sentence* does not only focus on personal mourning but also includes the collective memory of the Indians. The novel also points all the time to the histories of displacement, violence, and erasure that have not been resolved in the mainstream culture. These histories are yielded not in an expository manner but in the moody sub-currents, in the interruptions of the story. Kristeva framework can be used to interpret such moments as semiotic outbursts that cannot pacify the symbolic forgetting of Indigenous suffering. Memory is functioning in relation where personal loss is linked to the collective trauma. This relational methodology is in line with epistemologies of the Indigenous that conform to neurodivergent narrative practices that are not compartmentalized. By encompassing the Indigenous memory in a modern city, Erdrich emphasizes the existence of the historical trauma in the present. Haunting is a form of cross-cultural communication which requires some recognition but not assimilation to welcome the readers to participate ethically in unresolved pasts.

7. SENSORY NARRATIVE, ECOLOGICAL RELATIONALITY AND NEURODIVERGENT ATTENTION IN *THE MIGHTY RED* (2024)

7.1 Narrative Orientation and Modernizing Society

The Mighty Red (2024) represents a major evolution of Louise Erdrich in recent fiction, which stretches her experimentation with narrative into blatantly environmental and ecological issues. Whereas the previous novels predict political opposition and historic haunting, **The Mighty Red** places human experience at the delicate ecological systems with their emphasis on interdependence, vulnerability, and responsibility. The novel does not subscribe to any apocalyptic rhetoric, but rather takes a more sensory, affective narrative mode which puts relational awareness over solution-oriented discourse.

This narrative mode is closely related to neurodivergent ways of attention that focus more on protracted sensory attention and affective receptiveness than on abstraction or on instrumental reasoning. Instead of exposing environmental crisis as an issue to be clarified or remedied, Erdrich makes it an experience that is experienced in bodies, landscapes, and daily experiences.

Meaning is created in a slow way, and it is created in repetition, atmosphere, and emotional resonance, which defies dominant naturalistic paradigms that emphasize urgency, clarity and linearity. The Mighty Red is filled with semiotic energy in a Kristevan view. There is also sensory detail, rhythm and affect that keeps interfering with symbolic forms to create a narrative which conveys ecological urgency without reducing complexity to didacticism. This equilibrium is the key to the moral power of this novel.

7.2 Intensity of Sensories and Semiotic Expression

The heightened sense language is one of the characteristic features of The Mighty Red. Erdrich hangs around textures, colors, sounds, and sensations of the body, letting the physical world sheer relentlessly on the story. These sensory canals are not just ornamental to the narrative, they are themselves major origins of meaning-making.

According to Kristeva, these instances represent the semiotic aspect of language in which rhythm and affect come first before the grasp of the concept. The symbolic essence of the need to be abstract is interrupted by the sensorial intensity, and meaning is placed in the embodied experience (Kristeva, 1984). To neurodivergent readers, such a focus on sensual description may offer them a way to enter the story and experience it via perception and emotion instead of analytical interpretation.

The novel comes back again and again to the pictures of land, weather, and non-human life not as the backdrop but as full-fledged members of the narrative. The repetitions form rhythmic figures which maintain affective attention. The meaning is built by immersion in the senses and this mode of reading where attentiveness and presence are given importance is reinforced.

7.3 Neurodivergent Attention and Ecological Awareness

Neurodivergent storytelling has often defied prevailing paradigms of attention, in which efficiency, concentration, and productivity are put to the forefront. Rather, it prefigures other modes of attentions, which are intensive, dwelling, and associative thought. The Mighty Red is an example of this alternative attentional ethic in that it does not embrace narrative acceleration and resolution.

The novel often interrupts and takes care of minor details and seemingly minor events. These narrative stops are defiant of the urgency logic of crisis narratives, but they develop prolonged interest in the ecological interdependence. According to neurodivergent views, attentional practices assert the cognitive difference as an asset, and not a weakness.

There are ethical implications of this mode of attention. Erdrich provokes readers to perceive more slowly and pay attention to relationship in detail as she opposes extractive modes of perception which are reflective of ecological exploitation. Form of narrative therefore becomes an ethical intervention, which sets forth forms of perception that recognize interconnectedness and vulnerability.

7.4 Indigenous Epistemology and Relational Ecology

Relationality between human beings and non-human beings, as well as, land, has always been central to indigenous epistemologies. Knowledge is perceived as a situated, embodied and ethical knowledge as opposed to an abstract and universal one. The Mighty Red is closely connected with these traditions as it views the ecological crisis as the violation of relationships and not as a singular process.

This relational worldview is present in the narrative structure of the novel. Permitting non-anthropocentric hierarchy, human stories are told in non-human rhythms. Meaning is created in a relationship, not a subjugation, so indigenous storytelling can be aligned with the neurodivergent narrative practices that do not focus on a particular object and abide by a linear cause-and-effect relationship.

These relational dynamics can be explained in terms of the semiotic framework of Kristeva without symbolizing them. The emotional power of ecological loss and responsibility is expressed in the sense of immersion as opposed to didactic exposition which allows cross cultural communication and acknowledgment of difference.

7.5 Synthesis and Transition

The Mighty Red transposes into the current environmental issues the neurodivergent narrative practice of Erdrich through sensory intensity, alternative attentional modes, and relational ecological ethics. The semiotic disruptions allow the novel to convey urgency without complex or exclusivity. The next part summarizes the findings of the three novels to analyze the way

in which neurodivergent storytelling of Erdrich is used as an ethical act of cross-cultural communication, anticipating listening, empathy, and mutual vulnerability.

8. NARRATIVE ETHICS AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

8.1 Synthesis and Transition

The process of cross-cultural communication has generally been theorized in terms of translation: the act of transfer of meaning among cultural constructs. Even though translation may lead to a more meaningful comprehension, it also includes a danger of flatteness, the attempt to impose marginalized experiences into a predominant set of interpretive practices. Such literary narratives, especially those that are informed by Indigenous epistemologies and neurodivergent methods of expression, oppose this model by anticipating communication as an ethical encounter and relationship over a transfer of information. The recent fiction by Louise Erdrich does not conform to assimilationist models of communication by not fully explaining or solving the cultural difference. Her accounts do not translate the experience of Indigenous into the dominant symbolic forms but encourage the reader to participate by their affect, rhythm, and relational care. This is a communication style that follows the ethical models of communication that promotes listening, openness, and humility over mastery (Levinas, 1969). Neurodivergently, communication is not based only on the clarity of linguistic words and linear reasoning. Meaning can be created in the form of emotional resonance, repetition and embodied presence. The storytelling by Erdrich, therefore, reinvests the cross-cultural communication as a participative process that allows cognitive and cultural diversity.

8.2 Reading: Ethical Listening

One of the key ethical requirements that Erdrich makes in her neurodivergent stories is attentive listening. In The Night Watchman, The Sentence and The Mighty Red, the readers are called to slow down, accept ambiguity and wait with unresolved tension. The narration of meaning emerges slowly and is frequently achieved through is affective accretion as opposed to explanatory closure. This interaction form conflicts with traditional academic reading where emphasis is laid on interpretation, categorization and resolution. Rather, the fiction by Erdrich promotes a form of ethics of reception based on patience and vulnerability. This is a strategy that is close to the concept of Kristeva about the semiotic as something disruptive to the symbolic order without eliminating it (Kristeva, 1984). Listening in this case will be an ethical behavior which reflects cross-cultural responsibility. The readers should be aware of the boundaries of their knowledge and they should not be tempted to make the difference tame. Neurodivergent narration therefore develops modes of ethical response that are especially appropriate when confronting cultural otherness.

8.3 What makes neurodivergence a matter of ethics?

Because of the varied impacts of neurodivergence, the object of ethics is often absent from discourse about it. The object of ethics does not habitually enter into discussions of neurodivergence due to diverse effects it can produce.

Neurodivergent stories do not seek to be subdued easily. The lack of interpretive certainty is caused by fragmentation, repetition, and non-linear temporality which forces readers to surrender to the rule. This opposition is ethical, especially when it comes to cross-cultural issues, where dominant groups traditionally used to exercise domination over the marginalized narratives. The example of this ethics of non-mastery is seen in the fiction of Erdrich. Her stories do not make the readers mere outsiders interpreting the lives of Indigenous people but rather participants of a relationship process that requires humility. The denial of the narrative closure in The Sentence, the communal voice of The Night Watchman and the immersion of the senses in The Mighty Red are all questions that demand the reader to interact without overruling. This ethical position has a theoretical basis given by Kristeva semiotic. The semiotic of affects and rhythm interrupts the symbolic impulse of control because it favors affect and rhythm over definite meaning. By so doing, it opens narrative to types of communication that respect the difference, as opposed to incorporating it.

8.4 Relational Ethics and Indigenous Storytelling

Storytelling traditions of indigenous people are based on ethics of relationships that is based on accountability to a community, land, and memory. Knowledge is not removed out of context into being abstract but rather entrenched in lived relations. Erdrich uses these traditions in her storytelling through foregrounding the collective experience, intergenerational memory, and accountability in relation. The given ethical commitments can be closely attributed to the practice of neurodivergent storytelling that concentrates on connection rather than coherence. Participation and paying attention to things instead of explaining gives rise to meaning. In this view, cross-cultural communication is not the accomplishment of agreeableness but rather maintenance

of respectful relationships in the presence of the difference. Erdrich provides an example of non-appropriative and non-misrepresentative storytelling by combining Indigenous narrative ethics with neurodivergent ways of expressing them. Her fictions do not challenge readers to get the full spectrum of the experience of the Indigenous but to keep morally involved with it.

8.5 Narrative as Cultural Intermediary

In her recent novels, Erdrich continues to recreate narrative as a cultural bridge that links the worlds of divergent world views without eliminating the difference. Neurodivergent storytelling is an important aspect of this process as it increases the modes of meaning communication and reception. The narratives presented by Erdrich allow cross-cultural interaction which is both inclusive and ethically based by allowing sensory, affective, and relational types of expression. Relationship between the semiotic and the symbolic makes certain that communication is possible and is not subject to reductionist clarity. Such a narrative model contradicts the mainstream literary and cultural paradigms according to which understanding is control. It asserts narrative as an encounter space instead in which the otherness is perpetuated and not resolved.

8.6 Synthesis and Transition

This part has claimed that the neurodivergent storytelling of Erdrich is an ethical practice of cross-cultural communication based on listening, non-mastery, and vulnerability. Her fiction is a strong alternative to assimilationist models of understanding by combining psychoanalytic theory with Indigenous narrative ethics. In the final part, the author cogitates about the bigger picture of this strategy to the study of literature and cultural dialogue, highlighting the importance of neurodivergent narrative as a source of inclusive and ethical communication in the modern setting.

9. CONCLUSION

This paper has provided an argument that the new fiction work of Louise Erdrich can serve as the example of neurodivergent storytelling that can be used in the form of an effective and ethical cross-cultural communication. Based on the psychoanalytic approach to the semiotic and the symbolic as proposed by Julia Kristeva, the analysis has revealed how the narratives by Erdrich can say more than language as it offers affect, embodiment, and relational meaning to be close to linguistic coherence. *The Night Watchman*, *The Sentence*, and *The Mighty Red* with their non-linear structure, repetition and sensory intensity and collective voice oppose mainstream cognitive and narrative conventions without being less communicative. Instead of making difference a problem to be translated or solved, Erdrich presents her stories in a way that allows ambiguity and emotional intensity to persist as the preconditions of the ethical engagement. Semiotic disturbances, or manifested by haunting, broken temporality, and immersive sensory experience, encourage readers to listen to the text carefully, live with ambiguity, and abandon interpretative control. These narrative imperatives reconcile neurodivergent forms of perception with Indigenous storytelling in which relationality, shared memory and accountability are prioritized alongside linear explanation.

Erdrich recreates the role of the cross-cultural communication by placing the narrative within as a place of vulnerability and attention and therefore, the communication process and location as a continuous process of ethics, and not a final act of being understood. Accessibility does not mean simplification and coherence does not necessitate coming together of cognitions, evidence of which can be found in her fiction. Rather, meaning is created through affective resonance, embodied attention and enduring relational presence.

This article adds to wider discussions on inclusive forms of narrative in literary criticism, disability studies and Indigenous criticism, in terms of folding neurodivergent storytelling as a bridge between cultures. The work of Erdrich ends up attesting to the ability of narrative to accommodate difference, without necessarily annihilating, providing examples of communication desperately required in a world that is growing more and more plural and precarious.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. S. Ramaraju: Conceptualization, literature review, textual investigation, formal analysis, methodology, and writing – original draft preparation.

Dr. C. Vairavan: Supervision, conceptual validation, methodological guidance, critical review and editing, and project administration.

Dr. R. Shalini: Literature review, interpretation of literary texts, critical analysis, and manuscript review and editing.

Dr. V. Saravanan: Theoretical interpretation, validation of literary analysis, critical review, and manuscript editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical approval was not required for this study as it involves qualitative literary and philosophical analysis of published texts and does not involve human or animal subjects.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new empirical datasets were generated during the study. All analyzed literary texts and secondary sources are publicly available through referenced publications.

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