

Veil the Faith in Tribal Visions: Religion and Belief Conflicts in Louise Erdrich's
Love Medicine and Tracks

信仰隱藏於部族靈視中：露意絲·鄂翠琪「愛情靈藥」及「蹤跡」中的宗教
及信仰衝突

Chang, Yueh-Chen

Abstract

The encroachment of Catholicism on the North American continent has been deemed to be the main culprit that weakens and undermines the traditional beliefs and cultures of Native Americans. The impact that Catholicism exerts on the Chippewa community and the cultural tension derived from the conflicting belief systems between Catholicism and Chippewa traditional spiritual beliefs constitute the central themes of Louise Erdrich's works. This essay draws on Erdrich's novels, *Love Medicine: New and Expanded Version* (1993), and *Tracks* (1988) to analyze the way in which bicultural, mixed-blood Erdrich depicts the spiritual malady and psychological illness of her characters in the face of belief conflicts. It is intended to discover how her characters make a religious choice in order to survive well. Detailed textual analysis demonstrates Erdrich's skepticism and ambivalence towards tribal belief and Catholicism. It shows, on the one hand, that to some Chippewas, mixed-blood Chippewas in particular, religious proselytism is merely a strategy adopted to repress their sense of identity confusion, ensuring their prosperity and pride in a mainstream society. Underlying this spiritual confusion and anxiety lies a wish to return to the reservation to seek spiritual strength. On the other hand, it also argues that Erdrich's characters, for the sake of surviving economic pauperism and cultural/religious colonialism, veil their real faith either in the tenets of traditional tribal vision or traditional trickstering humor. It contends that Erdrich transforms the traditional trickster narrative to underline the belief that only in their reliance on old-time cultures and humor can the Chippewas find the strength to counteract religious assimilationism and cultural genocide, asserting their spiritual sovereignty and freedom.

Key words : Belief conflict; Religious proselytism; Catholicism; Tribal vision
tricksterism

中文摘要

西方天主教隨美洲白人殖民統治進入原住民的生活，動搖其傳統文化與信仰。美國奇帕瓦族小說家露意絲·顎翠琪在其小說中持續呈現天主教信仰對其族人生活及命運所造成的衝擊與影響以及因信仰衝突所造成的文化緊張關係。本論文選取其四部曲小說中的兩部，《愛情靈藥》及《蹤跡》，探討具雙文化，混血血統身分的露意絲·顎翠琪如何深入其部族人物內在心理，探索在殖民式的天主教文化及傳統信仰衝突中，部族人物導向何種信仰的選擇，尋得安身立命之道。文本的分析揭示露意絲·顎翠琪對傳統信仰及天主教的信仰的矛盾情懷。論文中一方面指陳對奇帕瓦部族社群而言，所謂的宗教的融合僅止於表象，事實上，對某些具白人血統的奇帕瓦部族人而言，改信天主教的行為只是隱藏及壓抑其認同及身份焦慮，尋求在主流社會的定位與尊榮，然在其焦慮的背後則是對部族傳統信仰的眷戀與渴望。他方面論證露意絲·顎翠琪如何挪用其部族之嘻笑逗趣之搗蛋鬼式變形傳統，呈現奇帕瓦族人將其真正的部族靈視及信仰置於捉狹式的幽默傳統中，期以在經濟困厄，信仰文化衝突的被殖民情境中，抗拒宗教同化及文化滅絕之威脅，尋求心靈的自主。

關鍵字：信仰衝突；宗教改信；天主教；部族靈視；搗蛋鬼式變形傳統