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*Griever: An American Monkey King in China* published in 1987 is dedicated to "Mixed Bloods and Compassionate Tricksters." In this novel Gerald Vizenor has employed the topos of the native American trickster to function as a sign of the harmony that exists in the native American system of meaning and belief. *Griever* is a search for meaning through a reality that literally is meaningless. It centres upon Griever, a trickster who has knowledge of culture and consciousness and who strives to balance the energies of good and evil in the world. He is his own form and content and can transcend temporal and spatial repressions. Vizenor situates Griever in a postmodern context. Griever moves in a world, which is not circumscribed by human clock-time with its now-points. Griever's essence, as with other tricksters in native American mythology is predicated upon metaphor. As such he signifies, in stories about people, that the past and the present have the same rhythm.

*Griever* is an infusion of mythic accounts, historical and personal stories and experiences from several cultural sources. Vizenor holds the view that

the landscape of tribal memories are heard, read and remembered as personal and new ceremonial stories.
The natural world is created in personal stories; the healers heard their elusive mythic union with birds and animals in personal narratives [...]. Some personal visions and stories have the power to liberate and heal. ("Critical Metaphors of the Ghost Dance" 227).

Gerald Vizenor's search for a cure for the evils of the modern world leads him to parallel trickster traditions in world literature besides his own Anishinaabe trickster narratives. In Griever in addition to the Anishinaabe tricksters, the Chinese Mind Monkey, Sun Wu-K'ung, the Afro-American tricksters Esu-Elegbra, and Signifying Monkey, and Indian Buddhist saints - the Bodhisattvas - occupy various situational spaces to signify the author's antipathy towards finitude and closure. The novel lends a positive gesture towards healing the ruptures caused by the destructive value systems of the Chinese capitalistic society. Inspite of its censure of authoritarian tyranny and the excesses of capitalism, the novel is an attempt to convey the essence of the Ojibwa and Chinese cultural legacies.

Griever defamiliarizes the familiar and thereby projects the quality of postmodern contradiction. The novel reflects the postmodern condition in its efforts to represent the multiplicity of human existence using a much wider range of discourse than the approved, scientific, textual, empirical approach.
Griever, like many postmodern ethnic texts is a 'dialogic' novel to use a Bakhtinian term, as it has other voices to the trickster tales. It is a 'polyphonic' novel containing deep and complex layers of experiences. The focus of the novel is on the endeavours of a teacher from the White Earth reservation to save China from impotency and degeneration. The redeemer in the novel considers himself to be the incarnation of the Chinese trickster figure, the Mind Monkey and assumes a trickster-like stance as he attempts to subvert the socialist system in China. As a spectator and an actor, the trickster in Griever is half-human and half-simian. Vizenor blends in his protagonist the characteristics of the compassionate and intellectual native American trickster with the heroism, sharp perceptiveness and rhetoric talent of the Chinese and Afro-American trickster monkeys. The experiences of the protagonist in the novel are a discourse in dialogue with other utterances made in the native American, Chinese and Afro-American trickster traditions. These narrative discourses act as a 'meta-language,' controlling, interpreting and evaluating the other discourses evolved in the novel. Griever has an intertextual fictional frame as the oral narratives of the native Americans. There is in Griever, as Vincent Leith points out while discussing intertextuality, an "infiltration by prior concepts, figures, codes, unconscious practices, conventions and texts" (287). Along with its 'double voiced' quality, it also displays a variegated use of stylization including the picaresque, the grotesque, the gothic and the
carnivalesque. The novel is highly structured and carries the essence of
carnival in its aspects of ambivalence, change, death-rebirth and
destructive creative pattern. Rabelais's erotic and culinary grotesque as
seen in the bawdy episodes and the pantagruelian meal at Maxims
carnival (204-205), the Gothic elements represented by the blind
woman Hua Lian and the shrouded woman Kangmei and the use of
idiosyncratic verbal inventions like" transportation was limousinized,
food was banquetized, clothes were westernized and the nation was
pavilionized' (175) are examples of stylization in the novel. The novel
takes on the character of an adventure story while also embodying
trickster resistance. It is based on the protagonist's quest for ancient
manuscripts. Its intertextuality emerges through its references to the
Chinese classic, The Journey to the West translated by Anthony C. Yu,
and Octavio Paz's The Monkey Grammarian. The protagonist, Griever de
Hocus, like The Journey's pilgrims, travels west to find the original
manuscripts of his tradition and is inspired by the trials and
tribulations of the Monkey King who attains Buddhahood and literary
immortality while attempting to procure the Buddhist scriptures.
Octavio Paz's The Monkey Grammarian from which Vizenor has quoted
in his epigraph, refers to the Monkey Hanuman, a trickster in Hindu
mythology, who was 'the nineth author of grammar' and who could
"jump in one bound from India to Ceylon, move the Himalayas, and
take hold of the clouds" (Regal-Cellarad, "Vizenor's Giever: A
Like Hanuman, Vizenor's hero Griever crosses the ocean and engages in the act of redeeming the Chinese people.

Vizenor has employed the revisionary techniques of parody and pastiche in *Griever* by connecting the protagonist with the tricksters of various other traditions. Griever's conscious use of language brings him close to Esu Elegbra and the Signifying Monkey. Esu-Elegbra is a trickster and a messenger of the Gods who figures prominently in the mythologies of Yoruba culture and the Signifying Monkey is a trickster in the Afro-American tradition who acts as the trope of tropes. Both are trickster figures who "serve in their respective traditions as points of conscious articulation of language tradition aware of themselves as tradition, complete with a history, pattern of development and revision and internal principles of patterning and organisation" (Gates xx-xxi).

In *Griever*, as in the myths of Esu-Elegbra and the Signifying Monkey, is registered certain principles of formal language use and its interpretation. The novel is a meta-discourse that carries reference to and representation of trickster reality through self-reflexiveness. What Louis Gates has observed about Esu Elegbra is applicable to Griever. Like the African trickster, Griever is "the element of displacement and deferral as well as its sign" (Gates 42). Like Esu, Griever, the protagonist acts as "the guardian of the cross roads, master of style and
of stylus, the phallic god of generation and fecundity, master of that elusive mystical barrier that separates the divine world from the profane" (Gates 6). Like Esu and Signifying Monkey, Griever travels through space and time and acts as a mediator. Like them, his mediations are tricks. Griever connects truth with understanding and the sacred with the profane like these tricksters. His qualities include "individuality, satire, parody, irony, magic, indeterminacy, open endedness, ambiguity, sexuality, chance, uncertainty, description and reconciliation" (Gates 6).

The linguistic world of Griever is not unified, singular and closed, instead it comprises a multiplicity of tongues, mutually animating each other. The metatext of the trickster tradition interacts with the real text of Griever's experiences in China. He, like the Signifying Monkey, "dwell at the margins of discourse, ever punning, ever troping, ever embodying the ambiguities of language" (Gates 527).

Griever exemplifies Arnold Krupat's statement that "Indian Literature presents itself exclusively in the form of oral performances, not textual objects, no matter how scrupulous a transcription may be it is inevitably a declension from the narrative as act" ("An Approach to Native American Texts" 117). It is the dynamic reality of anishinabe experience that is reflected in Griever. It exhibits tribal consciousness based on wholeness wherein physical, social and psychological events
are unified through connecting structures based on tribal ritual tradition. It is an oral discourse structured rhetorically and containing the double voices of the oral and the written along with the double-voiced discourse relating to Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of narrative. The story opens and closes in a dialogic mode with letters to China Browne.

The theme of transformation common in native American mythology is central to the novel. The protagonist's transformation into a monkey denotes his trickster capacity for creative metamorphosis. "Being human and simian, he can be considered as both the Monk Tripitaka and his Monkey Sun Wuk'ung, who underwent seventy four transformations" (Rigal-Cellard, "Vizenor's Grieaver: A Postmodern Little Red Book of Cocks, Tricksters and Colonists" 332).

Unlike the achromatic and ahistoric Indian tribal narratives, Grieaver functions within the frame of specific chronology and history. Space in the novel contains past and present fused together in meaningful sequence; time is related to quotidian reality, and life is presented in the physical geographical space of modern China.

Grieaver de Hocus, the protagonist of the novel is born of a brief encounter between his Indian mother and a caravan clown. He is not an ordinary teacher from the White Earth reservation, instead he is an 'expressive' and 'speaking' being inexhaustible in his attempts to create meaning and signification (Todorov 24). Instead of adopting the
metamorphosis of a Coyote or a Hare, the traditional *anishinabe* trickster, he accepts the identity of a Stone Monkey, the traditional Chinese trickster figure and engages in an eternal quest for sacred knowledge. According to the Chinese oral narrative, the Chinese Monkey trickster was born from a huge stone egg fertilized by the wind on Flower Fruit Mountain. He became adept at magic arts and learnt the skills of flying through air and changing his shape at will. At a great feast given in his honour for slaying a monster, he drank too much and caused havoc. While he was sleeping, the servants of the king of Hell captured him and got him chained in the infernal regions as a punishment for his disruptive activities. Breaking his bonds, he stole the register of judgements and deleted his own name and the names of all monkeys from it. When the Lord of Heaven made him Grand Overseer of the Heavenly Stables to keep him quiet, he broke up Heaven and withdrew to Mount Hua-Kua. He proclaimed himself Governor of Heaven and Great Saint. The Heavenly Host made him the chief of the heavenly Peach Garden on his assurance that he would abide by the divine laws. But wild with anger at not being invited to the Peach Festival, he ate all the food prepared for the feast and stole the pills of immortality. While he was in Mount Hua-Kua, he was captured and brought before the Jade Emperor who condemned him to death, a punishment that could not be meted out to him because of the peaches and pills. When the Stone Monkey threatened to destroy Heaven, the
Jade Emperor desperately sent for the Buddha. On the Buddha's query as to why he wanted to possess Heaven, the Monkey responded by stating that he was immortal, invulnerable, adept at transforming himself in seventy two different ways and hence qualified to govern Heaven. The Buddha agreed that if he could jump out of his (Buddha's) palm, he was surely entitled to rule Heaven. So the Monkey leaped into the air and sprang across Heaven to the farthest confines of the earth which finally turned out to be the base of one of the Buddha's fingers. The Buddha created a magic mountain and shut him within it and he would have remained there for ever had the Bodhisatva Kuanyin not obtained his release. He was asked to accompany Thangseng on his great pilgrimage to the western paradise to fetch the authentic version of the Buddha's teachings. Thangseng had fitted on the Monkey a helmet which contracted upon his skull when he was wayward and wanton. As the Monkey acquired enlightenment and accomplished his task the helmet disappeared of its own accord (Christie 126).

Throughout the novel, Griever exhibits the idiosyncrasies of the Stone Monkey. He is 'a mind monkey" (24) and a 'natural clown' carrying a 'holster' to 'shoot clocks' (25). He imagines that just like the Stone Monkey, he is also born from a stone on Flower Fruit Mountain and that his fate is inextricably twined with that of the Stone Monkey – "He became a mind monkey and chewed clouds and moved incredible
distances between deep inhalations. One morning in his dream he became the master of monkey, he talked backward, and he disturbed common manners in the world" (128). He is "a mixedblood tribal trickster, a close relative of the old mind monkey, he holds cold reason on lunge line while he imagines the world with colored pens, he thinks backward, stops time like a shaman, and reverses intersections, interior landscape [. . .] Griever discovers events, an active opera and audience all at once on rough paper" (34). He, like the trickster Monkey disturbs the rigidities of an established culture. He seeks to liberate cultures from what Louis Owens calls, "spatial and temporal repression" ("Ecstatic Strategies" 24). His subversive actions endorse Vizenor's desire to be an 'upsetter' rather than a mediator and a balancer (Vizenor, "An Interview with Gerald Vizenor" 42).

Like his creator Vizenor, Griever 'upsets' the cultural structures and challenges the Establishment in China. In the course of the novel Griever adopts for himself the name of the Monkey trickster Sun Wu-k'ung. 'Wu-kung' is the religious name given to the Monkey King in Chinese folklore when he goes in search of enlightenment and immortality. The name has been translated as "Awake-to-vacuity" (Yu). Anthony Yu notes that this name recalls the Buddhist concepts which point to the emptiness, the vacuity, and the unreality of all things and all physical phenomena" (Yu 38). Griever, like the traditional trickster of
Chinese mythology recreates and renews reality often through outright revolt and sometimes through clever defiance and sly indiscretion. Parody in the novel questions notions of the real and the authentic. Deriving strength from his cultural resources and through *anishinabe* trickster power, Griever resists the corrupt social and political systems in China and empowers human relations. He moves back "over culture lines, a shaman over the veils and hollow beams, down the stairs in ritual time, down to the meadows where animals and trees heal in the same language" (32). Even as a child it is said that Griever understood reality through perforations and cracks. He "remembers uncommon landscapes, the cleaves and rutted patterns from his childhood. His memories are bundled and marked with emblems and he imagines stories about other people from their scars, prints, carved hearts, crude crosses gashed on trees, new cultures scored on desks and public corridors, and from natural wrinkles, faults on faces and the earth" (27). Griever creates his own reality. In his drawings the past, the future, life and death lose their reality. In the novel in the incident where the butcher kills the chickens, Griever resurrects them on a paper and even sets them free. Vizenor states in *Griever*: "Griever opened his holster, drew the scroll, and with three colored pens he resurrected the dead chickens. The cockerel strutted across the rough paper with hairless humans bound to his shanks" (34). Like the Monkey trickster whose transformative powers energize him, he is determined "to mind the
attention of the world" (92). His power and "the wild pitch of the mind monkey" endow the people whom he encounters with vitality. Like that of the trickster, Grievers's beneficence results from the breaking of rules and the violating of taboos. He interferes in the established system and through his acts of interference teaches humanity that that which is socially peripheral is ultimately the central and the real.

Grievers represents an archetypal, psychic structure of extreme antiquity. He is a refined trickster, a person fond of jokes, a shape shifter, half-animal and half-divine. But he is much humanized and made more vulnerable than the traditional trickster. His flight is more reminiscent of the Monkey King's in Journey to the West than that of naanabozho. In his act of signifying the immediate reality of modern China, he is like the Signifying Monkey of the Afro-American literature. This plurality of trickster transformation denotes one form of his power.

In Grievers there are frequent references to Chinese opera and Chinese art. Chinese opera is an analogue of native American storytelling. Mackerras notes, "Until the communists took over, the opera was a staple of the major religious festivals, held each summer at temples throughout China" (94). In Grievers "Chicken liberation was better understood as a comic opera. The audience was drawn to the trickster and his imaginative acts" (40). Vizenor explains in an
interview how he was fascinated by the Chinese Monkey King Opera while he was working as a teacher in China. He says:

in the fall, a month into teaching over there, I was invited to see a production of some of the scenes from the Monkey King opera. That experience changed everything for me. The Theatre was overflowing with Chinese, of course, and at first I was overwhelmed by the audience – not simply because the place was so jammed but because the audience was dynamic, so completely engaged in the production even though there's no applause. I'm sure everyone in the audience must have changed seats at least twice . . . people would go out to the lobby to gossip, come back in when their favorite scene was about to be performed, and then rush right up to the stage. Then they'd leave again, and nobody would applaud. At first I was distracted by this rich and powerful dynamic between what was happening on the stage and the audience – and also by the smell of garlic and all these other good things. Of course, what's going on is also revolutionary, but not in this case revisionist or social realism, the way most theatrical
productions were in China. In other words, this Monkey King material hadn't been converted to serve the state. The revolutionary state accepted this not as bourgeois spiritual pollution, but as folk culture original literature that represented the Chinese consciousness. They accepted it for what it was because it was in their soul—and the soul in this case was not dangerous to the communist party. This was on-the-street stuff, a bit like puppet theatre, not an elitist—Communist Party performance. So there it is. This probably sounds naïve on my part, but it's true. And these wonderful distractions with the audience—I started paying attention to the play, and of course it was only then that I began to recognize all the stuff I had read about the Monkey King. Then, in one of those occasional strokes of insight you get, I suddenly saw the trickster figure. When I saw this stuff performed in this other context, there it was, suddenly alive, and I was thrilled. I knew immediately that I had a book. I didn't know what it was going to be exactly, but I knew I had a book somewhere. When I got back, I still didn't have a book, although I did have a
powerful theme – the idea that the only figure in a story who could confront the oppressive bureaucracy and contradiction existing in the People's Republic of China would have to be a mind monkey or trickster. The trickster Griever bashed at habits and rules in an established historical context. (Vizenor, "Head Water"

Vizenor is drawn towards the Chinese drama because it is 'non-representational.' In the epigraph to Griever Vizenor quotes the observations made by James. J.Y. Liu on Chinese drama:

Chinese drama is largely nonrepresentational or non mimetic, its main purpose is expression of emotion and thought, rather than representation or imitation of life. In other words, it does not seek to create an illusion of reality, but rather seeks to express human experience in terms of imaginary characters and situation

One of the characters, Wu Chou, a former opera actor enlightens the people around him like the elders in the anishinabe community through his "theatrical gestures" (22). And towards the end of the novel, as Griever and Kangmei, another trickster character in the novel, take flight to Macoa, they become "part of some new airborne monkey opera" (234).
Like Chinese opera, Chinese art too holds an assumption allied to native American thinking. Simon Leys observes:

While western artists applied their ingenuity to deserve the perception of the spectator, presenting him with skilful fiction, for the Chinese painter, the measure of success was determined not by his ability to fake reality, but by his capacity to summon reality. The supreme quality of a painting did not depend on its illusionist power but on its efficient power, ultimately painting achieved an actual grasp over reality, exerting a kind of operative power. (21)

Griever is a reflection of the Bakhtinian concept that "every utterance is related to the previous utterance" (Todorov 48). The protagonist "receives the word by the other's voice and it remains filled with that voice. He intervenes in his own context from another context, already penetrated by the other's intentions. His own intention finds a word already lived in" (Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics 131). Culture, for Griever, consists in "the discourses retained by collective memory, discourses in relation to which every uttering subject must situate himself or herself" (Todorov x).
Griever presents a cultural phenomenon through the diachronic development of self-consciousness by means of myths. It is a challenge to the traditional novelistic mimesis. Here the author cedes the fictional landscape to the reader's mind through which the reader is made a witness to the novel's self-analysing development. Vizenor's deep interest in theories of myth and his awareness that dreams are crucial to Indian aesthetics have led him to introduce certain dream sequences in the novel. The boundaries between art and life, dream and waking, physical and mental reality are often indistinguishable in Griever. Dreams and his lived-experiences form a coherent unity as Griever writes to China Browne "China, there were these incredible episodes in the dream that seemed to have something to do with my being here, now in the present" (16). "Voices" come to Griever in "dreams." In his dream "the plane was transformed into a mansion, then a mountain and passengers became bears" (14). Through the protagonist, Vizenor stresses the fact that tribal people imagine their social pattern and places on the earth and exist in mythic time. Griever states in the novel that imagination "is what burns in humans" and that "we are luminous when we dream" (32). Tribal memories and dreams are the only real world for them, "all the rest is bad television" (28). It is Griever's practice to turn the mattress over and loosen the sheet before he goes to sleep to protect his dreams as is customary in his community.
Griever finds out things through dreams and visions. He asserts "we are not methods to be discovered, we are not freeze . . .. We remember dreams" (32). He somersaults through time and space and achieves through dreams the knowledge of the Monkey King, the bear women who saved the first silk cultures from evil and the shaman, the stone man whose descendents became healers in tribal cultures around the world. His knowledge, that culture is recorded and transmitted in the imagination and that the "imagination is the real world" (28), "a dance to discover interior landscapes" (200), takes him to the land of bears and shamans. Even though Bears are not a Chinese motif, they guide the trickster's visions in Griever. Shitou, the stone shaman in the novel while breaking stones "tells stories about bears and the old stone cultures that came down from the mountain and settled near the sea"(72). Griever in his dream, is drawn to a bright light which later turns out to be a bear, a shaman. Griever writes to China Browne that the bear that appeared in his dream led him
to the kingdom of Khotan where she showed me several bear shamans on a mural from the silk cultures. One fire bear wore a black opal ring surrounded with faceted azure-blue stones. She told me that bears mined blue jade and the rare lapis lazuli at secret places and traded the stones on the silk
roads. The bear wore a small blue rabbit on a chain around her neck... I could feel her heat, smelled wet hair behind me, and then the bear touched me on the shoulders with her paws. The bear led me into another mansion buried on the desert. She was silent when we passed mountain scenes, stone people and wild fires on murals, bears with monkeys on their shoulders, monkeys with bats and lotus flowers embroidered on the back of their coats, and at the end of the wide murals there was an old man with butterflies on his hands... The Shaman told me that the mountain bear women saved the first silk cultures from evil... At the end of the murals, behind a wide door, there were baskets filled with bear bones and blue stones, and thousands of manuscripts, histories of Shaman bear cultures from the mountains that surrounded the deserts. She pushed me into the room, closer to the bones, and told me to choose one birchbark manuscript to take with me. Outside, she opened the scroll and held me to the secrets. (189)

Vizenor links the bears with the Monkey by having Griever, the Monkey King reach out for the bear on his balcony in order 'to be the bear' (16).
In his dreams, he is informed that the bears mined blue Jades and traded the stones on the silk roads. He is even asked to take a birch bark scroll that contains the stories including the past and the present history of China and the Mind Monkey, the Chinese trickster. This vision contains all the mythic elements that give coherence to the novel: the blue stones and the black opal ring that Griever sees later in the novel, the bones which finally turn out to be those of the unwanted children killed in the pond and the shaman whom he sees along with the opal and the manuscript and the old man with butterflies on his hands who turns out to be Wu Chou. The dreams in which he relives some of the Mind Monkeys adventures, stimulate him. From one of the dreams he comes to know about the birth of the Stone Monkey. The Mind Monkey that he saw in his dream subdued the dragons, started fires with little words in conversation, stole the sacred peaches from the Grand Festival of Immortal Peaches and earned immortality. Stimulated by the dream, Griever consciously structures his behaviour after the Sun Trickster, the Mind Monkey and allows his face to be painted like a Monkey king as he appears in the Chinese opera by Wu Chou, another trickster figure in the novel and becomes "a mind monkey with a new mask, a tribal conversion in wild histories" (140).

Reality and dream become indistinguishable in *Griever* when a mute child follows the trickster through the crowd from the train station.
to the guest house. "His dark face appeared in mirrors, reflected in windows, bounced from light to water, and paused at critical intersections. No matter where the trickster turned, the child was there." From Griever's leather holster he, "selected red and blue pencils and continued to draw on the concrete outside window. He colored the mask and outlined the bones in blue." Even the mosquitoes entered from the real world to the dream world as

hundreds of mosquitoes circled our heads and bodies, but none landed on me until I turned from the child . . . We were both mute on either side of the screen . . . we seemed to move at the same time, wavered together through the screen, and then it happened. There was a pale blue light around his head and chest, and then, much to my surprise, he grew taller right there in place . . .. The telephone rang and shattered the silence. The blue light burst from his head and shot from his face and arms through the screen, right through me to the telephone, like lightning to a streamer. When the light passed through me, I became the child, we became each other, and then we raised the receiver to our ear. (59)

All the dream sequences in the novel suggest that dreams often come to the trickster's aid to assist him in his understanding of reality.
Griever's power emerges from his liminal existence. Marginalised as he is as a mixedblood and an outsider, he occupies the spaces between different ethnic groups. He effaces all spatial boundaries and lives beyond all bounded communities. He shuns a clearly defined social status and is associated with market places and cross roads. He lives in between two races and two worlds, belonging to neither and yet to both, which endows him with a superior power of evaluation. Like the trickster in the *anishinabe* tradition, Griever defies the final definition of time, place and character. From his reversals and transgressions come creativity and liberation. But he does not hold himself within the frame of the trickster as defined by anthropologists, for, anthropology, according to Vizenor, is an invention and an extension of the cultural colonialism of western expansion (Vizenor, "Gerald Vizenor" 157). Griever says

we are luminous when we dream . . . Imagination is what burns in humans. We are not methods to be discovered, we are not freeze, dried methodologies we remember dreams, never data, at the world end. (332)

Griever understands "the sudden reversals in time and memories" (32) and remains open-ended to what Vizenor calls "narrative chance." He "bears the uncommon comic touch of a trickster, that elusive and postmodern human conversation heard over the winter in tribal stories"
(Vizenor, "Critical Metaphors of the Ghost Dance" 228). He is a storyteller who brings together the oppositional forces of the mythic and the real life. In Griever, "Griever raised his arms like a simian and leaped over the wooden animals that grazed on various romantic and classical backgrounds. He brushed the painted curtains and moved a river, two panda bears and a dark pagoda wavered on a mountain" (138). Griever’s actions are characterized by the reverse behaviour of the trickster clowns who acquire their magical powers through the violation of taboos. Through "backward speech" and "backward walk" Griever initiates in the Chinese community a spiritual awakening. The Monkey King, in the novel undergoes experiences of 'survivance' when the Chinese society turns against him and expresses the fundamental contradiction in human existence, namely the contradiction between individual and society. Griever is shocked at the injustice done to the prisoners by the Chinese government and is determined to take control of the situation and liberate them at any cost. Like naanabozho, the earth diver of the anishinabe, he gambles with destiny by risking interaction with the overpowering evil forces in the novel and acts as a mediator. He overturns manifest manners and celebrates the values of the tribal visionaries and healers. Like the Signifying Monkey, the 'backward' trickster in the novel travels through space and time and celebrates the metaphors of liberation. He redefines the hegemonic structures of the Chinese capitalist society.
Griever is a picaro whose transgressions against moral and civil codes place him in marginal relationship to Chinese society. He has "an openness to life's multiplicity and paradoxes" and lives "at the edge of society's respectable environs" (Ballinger 21). Griever, like the traditional trickster in native American oral narratives, is of obscure origin and of unclear social status but his origin does not make him marginal. It is through his character and actions that he acquires liminality. His wandering from place to place and his failure to bind himself physically to the established social order and psychically to socialized humanity, make him, in the words of Karl Luckert, an "archaic all person" (7). Griever is "primordial' in his powers and amorality. Levi-Strauss's characterization of the trickster applies to Griever to a certain extent. Like the trickster delineated by Levi-Strauss, he "occupies a position half way between two polar terms and retains something of that duality – namely an ambiguous and equivocal characters" (44).

Instead of being a conventional trickster with gluttony, deception, inordinate sexual appetite and creative or destructive powers, Griever represents a process of becoming. He stands for a 'sign' or a 'holotrope' He acts as a figuration that is "whole, free standing, both signified and signifier." He exemplifies Vizenor's view that "Freedom is a sign and the trickster is a chance and freedom in a comic sign. Comic freedom is a
'doing,' not an essence, not a museum being, not an aesthetic presence. The trickster as a semiotic sign is imagined in narrative voices" (Narrative Chance 9). Griever is a tribal trickster. He is "a liberator and healer in a narrative, a comic sign in communal signification and a discourse with imagination" (Vizenor, Narrative Chance 187). Like Battle Wilson and Wu Chou, the other survivors from the tribal past in the novel, he lives at the margins of the human and the animal, the real and the legendary.

As a ritual based novel Griever's emphasis lies both on the ideological content and the mediating structures of the oral tradition. Vizenor, as a postmodern postformalist, aspires for the synthesis of form and content. The novel is a full and authentic report of human experience. It has 'formal realism' (Narrative Chance 128). The protagonist is tied to an every day reality in a society that requires much purification. Griever's mission is "to balance the world between terminal creeds and humour with unusual manners and ecstatic strategies" (Earthdivers xii). He struggles towards a higher level of unity of a qualitatively different order. Having derived his name from the compulsive practice of 'Griever meditation' that cures" common colds, head aches, heart aches, tired feet and tired blood," he sets on the task of healing humanity from "lonesome white people with no shadows" (56). Griever's disruptive acts are performed with the purpose of
subverting the new social and ceremonial order forced upon the citizens of China by the communist regime. The modes of satire and signifying empower Griever to subvert accepted notions. He 'loosens' the 'seams' of knowledge by shaking the established order through his irreverent humor. He makes us laugh at others, and laughs at himself through self-reflexive humor.

Griever is a teacher who puts up with everything in China except the hypocrisies and pretensions of the Foreign Affairs Bureau. He liberates seventeen hens and a cock from a chicken cut throat in a local market and the cock later becomes his constant companion.

He is the liberator of the slaves and the enemy of the enslavers. He is a 'holosexual' who frees birds and never plucks flowers. Vizenor endorses Griever's power as a culture hero in these words. "Mind Monkey from practiced stories would have done no less than emancipate the birds in free market. Those who liberate, in traditional stories are the healers of the culture" (40).

Regal-Cellard observes, "as for Griever, whose name reveals his propensity for empathy, Vizenor makes a point at the very beginning of the novel, of having the wise warrior clown Wu-Chou assure China Browne that he was "never evil, never, never" (24). Everytime some one is hurt or defeated, Griever buries his rage in panic holes shouting into the earth his affliction or trying 'to protect the people he loves,' 'to
balance the world' " (318). He is the only teacher who is outraged at the news that interceptors from the Soviet Union have shot down a South Korean airline over the sea of Japan. He is disgusted with the way in which the Chinese restaurant floors are covered with spit and bones, the way the wheat is winnowed by being spread on the roads to be run over by trucks, and the cuisine, which includes 'fried puppy and barbecued rat.' Griever rebels at the way Chinese traditionally treat women examples of which are to be seen in the old woman's bound feet, Egas Zhang's drowning of his pregnant daughter and of women giving up their seats to men in the bus. He dislikes China's racism displayed in the treatment of Kangmei and the segregation of Algerian and African students at the Tianjin University.

Griever displaces the meanings of established structures by deferring them through the play of signification. The oppressed aspects of Chinese society like the unhygienic surroundings and the Chinese practice of keeping everything locked and chained are ruptured through Griever's basic mode of expression - direction through indirection. Inspite of the locks and keys, Griever, the Mind Monkey, can with the use of acrobatics substitute "the stars and stripes for ever" for a Chinese patriotic music that is usually broadcast at dawn around the nation. The hypocritical and absurd speech of the Mayor on the improved financial and economic condition and his comment "the
causes of science, culture, education, sports and sanitation are prosperously developing. The people's life has been greatly improved" act as a misnomer in a background where 'the smell of shit was too much" (183). Griever offers an indictment of China's abuse of human rights and shocking conventions like bound feet and mass murders. He attacks the Maoist revolution but more than that he rails at the colonization that has prepared it, the one begun by missionaries followed by the military and the merchants. There is satire even in the name Matteo Ricci given by Griever to his cock. "Ricci was a missionary, an Italian Jesuit. He was taken prisoner right here on the trial of the hare and the hounds. Three hundred eighty four years and seven days ago, to be specific" (52). The cock's name is definitely not a tribute to the missionary, instead it is an attack on missionaries and the western obsession with precise historical periods.

Vizenor, through Griever, recommends the positive values of a bourgeois culture. Griever's meeting with Wu Chou, the warrior clown who used to play Monkey King in the opera house, inspires him to acts of rebellion against the communists, such as liberating a truck full of political prisoners. Griever acts as narrative mediator, intervenes to effect communication between the soldiers and the prisoners and renegotiates the terms of the discourse. His actions in a society in decline are therapeutic. His acts of healing are inspired by a boy in his
personal vision who guides him to restore regenerative power in those around him. The boy gives him an implied warning of the imminent danger by drawing the pictures of a prairie schooner pulled by a small horse, a lake with an island, brick homes surrounded by oversized swines and a man with a round mask with a wide evil smile. The Monkey King and the vision child acquire a singular identity in the novel.

_Griever_ has all the attributes of the carnival like eccentricity, laughter, parody, profanation and doubling. As in the carnivalesque tradition, mirror motif plays a vital role in the novel to show contradiction between the ultimate reality and its representation through fixed structures. Vizenor states "with the mirror I'm working on image, icon, reflection, mask, and only through the mask can we discover anything and may be nothing. It's playing on multiple images, and it is a device to break down the romantic expectation of the real representation" (Breinig 152). Sandie's comment that "Griever needs a mirror" emphasizes the play of mirror in a folklore tradition. Griever's request for a mirror to see his mask is rejected by Wu Chou with the argument that "monkeys are immortals and immortals never appear in mirrors' because "The Monkey King is . . . not a photograph" (140). The tiny mirrors that Shitou wears on his arms and waist testify to his trickster nature.
Mask is another major motif in Vizenor's novel *Griever*. A masked man is one of the drawings Griever makes for a mute child, a child of Chinese peasant folklore who mysteriously grows large before the protagonist's eyes. Griever dreams of a room full of masks including the broken toilet paper mask of his arch enemy, Egas Zhang, director of Foreign Affairs for Zhou Enali University in Tianjin. Other examples of the mask motif in this novel include Griever's having his face painted to look like the Chinese Monkey King, the heavy make-up covering the face of Hua Lian, an old former actress, and the shroud worn by Kangmei. Gingerie, another teacher from the east carries a mask decorated with chicken feathers when she attends the Marxmass carnival. Griever paints his face, neck and ankles black on the day of carnival. And finally when Hester's body is carried to the terrace, the stone man and the trickster cover her with a brocaded cloak, feathered mask, silver shoes and moon cakes.

Griever, like the *anishinabe* culture hero tumbles into a water world in Shuishang water park. This water park, one of the privileged spaces of the novel, "is the atrium in colonial concessions, carved from class reveries" (111). As in the *anishinabe* oral tradition, a mysterious island the 'obo island' emerges from behind the waterpark. Griever concludes his pilgrimage when he discovers Shitou and obo island. 'Obo' is a tribal Chinese term meaning 'Cairn' (164), a place where
shamans gather and dream. 'Obo' is the sacred topos of Griever's China as it harbours all the shaman and tribal survivors Griever encounters either in real life or in visions. It "bears three maiden hair trees, one white willow, four small brick houses, a concrete water ditch, a stone shrine and red banner near the levee, five humans, seventeen sows, three breeder boars, one wide barrow several unnamed shoats and runners and a basket ball court" (164). Obo island represents the regenerative cultural context of the \textit{anishinabe}. Some of the tricksters, who assemble in this island are Wu Chou, Shitou, Hua Lian and Kangmei. These tricksters like Griever, have the abilities to mediate between states of reality. They stimulate him in his acts of mediation. Wu Chou, the warrior clown, who played the role of the Monkey King in the opera 'Havoc of Heaven' initiates Griever into his role as the Monkey King. "Wuchou, which means warrior clown, a name he earned from the classical theatre, was an actor before the revolution. He is remembered for his performances as the Monkey King in the opera \textit{Havoc of Heaven}. When he was too old to tumble as an acrobat, he studied the stories of tricksters and shamans in several countries around the world" (23). Shitou, the stone man who 'breaks stones into laughter' with one hand is removed from the mundane existence of the audience by the stories that he tells about the old stone cultures. Through Shitou, Griever proudly acknowledges his relationship 'to the stone in his own tribal origin stories" (72). In Obo island, Shitou
instructs him on stone-breaking, and exhorts him to dream that the stone is an egg with a bird inside waiting to be released. "Everything breaks even minds and hearts" he asserts without realizing that he is destined to break the hard news of Hester's death to Griever. Hualian whose name means 'picture' or 'painted face' is a blind old lady who has painted her face red and white and who refuses to alter her memories to please the new masters and shadow capitalists. Her blindness is seen as an inner exile, an external prison in a new land. She is favoured with a sixth sense, an acoustic kinesthesia. She can remember total conversation and visual details from several perspectives. She has the ability to mediate between Griever's dreams and the waking world. Kangmei, another trickster character in the novel is the daughter of Battle Wilson by Ega's wife. She has mastered the esoteric art of communicating with Griever. Even when he visits Obo island, Griever's search for truth continues, "Tell me" he asks Kangmei "What did the scroll tell about the future, how can we live for ever?" However, Kangmei does not answer his question, for she has learned from the blind woman in the park that vital energies breed and mature in silence and that 'true words' are 'never spoken' (101). Speaking into the mirror which reverses sound rather than light, she begins by stating the ultimate Buddhist reality, the ultimate answer to all questions, "Nothing." She translates the mute pigeon Yaba Gezis' responses from silence into
sound, but until the bones of the children are found on the night of the Marxmass Carnival "the children in the pond" remain bereft of meaning.

The life of the tricksters on the island testifies to the native American concept that communication implies community. The existence of the tricksters as a community behind the Shuishang park presupposes the fact that language which is essential to human existence is intersubjective and social. In his concept of man as a verbal and social animal, Vizenor is more akin to Bakhtin than Freud. For Vizenor man is not 'id' but the 'other' wherein a man's utterance gets completely signified. As Voloshinov clarifies, "the speaking subject taken from the inside, so to speak, turns out to be wholly the product of social inter relations. The road which links the internal experience (the 'expressible') to its external objectification (the 'utterance) lies entirely in social territory" (107).

Griever is a liberator, but because the Chinese community is slow to act, their response to his call for freedom is feeble. They understand the metaphor in Griever's comment "when a bird gets too big, it breaks the cage"(33). But unfortunately they refuse to act on it. There are several instances of such slow responses in the novel. The first instance of such a response is when Griever frees a nightingale from a cage. Even the bird "held the crown unmoved when the miniature gate opened" (33). It is only when a plume tickles his nose and he sneezes
that the scared bird loses her place and drops through the gate to freedom. China Browne, a writer who comes to China from White Earth reservation in search of Griever is trapped in the wheel of becoming. Though related to Griever, she is obsessed with bound feet and worries about those 'wild moments' when she would lose 'connections with time,' when she would be suspended without a season and severed from the moment. The prisoners on the truck, seven men and one woman are silent when the Monkey king unties their swollen hands. Griever's assurance :"Sun Wu Kong, that is my real name" is dismissed by the prostitute with the comment "Monkey kings are myths for the poor and the oppressed" (154). When Griever proposes an 'ultra light escape' to the coalman who has been piling coal behind the guest house, he reacts negatively with the words "Not tonight." Even Hester Hua Dan with whom Griever is in love refuses to be freed from the tyranny of her father, the evil gambler. Inspite of Griever's soothing words that nobody will take their child in this world, she refuses to take flight with him to the White Earth reservation on the pretext that she has never travelled in a plane before, holding back the real reason for being glued to China - her fear, her resignation to paternal power and her dedication to the nation. Griever's futile attempts to redeem the victims of a sham structured society lead him to the ultimate realization that "no one here will ever be free" (54).
The trickster's encounter with the evil gambler and the conflict between good and evil present in all narrative traditions, manifests in *Griever* in the confrontation between Griever and Egas Zhang. Vizenor creates in *Griever* a world where traditional myths and everyday reality are interwoven in new variations. In his work the mythic process is a part of everyday reality. It is simultaneous with it in ways similar to the vertical chronotope Mikhail Bakhtin envisions in chivalric romance where "one must see . . . this entire world as simultaneous" (*Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* 157). In Vizenor's texts, mythic reality is always in the process of evolving; it is never finished; it is not an absolute. The myth of the gambler used as a direct text, as an indirect text, or as variation on the traditional materials creates the evolving simultaneity of mythic and everyday realities and establishes a test of balance. Even though Vizenor's trickster novels are comic and satiric, the Gambler is there to remind us that the comic text might deconstruct itself at any time through narrative chance to become tragic. Characters who face the gambler must take risks, must submit to narrative chance, however, through variations on tribal rituals, they often restore momentarily, the balance of good and evil. (Barry 21)
The evil forces in the novel are Egas Zhang, who lives in a world of narrow realities and a society that does not respond to Griever's challenges. Griever moves among the political and social figures like the Mayor and Egas and perceives the volatile space where transformational reality takes place. Egas is wile and he "chain smokes and smiles over each word. His cheeks curl, rise and fall, even when he listens, and he punctuates his thin head to the right, the side he favors in conversation" (15). Egas, like the evil gambler in the anishinabe tales, is uneasy at the stolid indifference of the Mind Monkey. Griever finally balances the good and evil in the world of this novel by giving him a strong dose of estrogen under the guise of bear paw powder which would effect upon him the final transformation of a mutant hermaphrodite. Krupat observes that, "Egas Zhang's colonial name is derived from Egas Monitz the father of lobotomy who won the Nobel Prize. Lobotomy emblematizes the brain destroying system. The metaphor is spun out again at the end when Egas kills his grand daughter (the baby Hester bears) named Kuanyin after the bodhisatva who captured the mind monkey in the Journey to the West performing thus the ultimate lobotomy" (New Voices in Native American Literary Criticism 325). The novel ends with the temporary defeat of Egas. Velie states that "the traditional ending in Anishinaabe myth, as well as the tales of other tribes, is for the trickster to win and the gambler to die" ("The Trickster Novel" 127). But the death of Hester Hua Dan states
that the opposing forces of life cannot always be balanced and that even 'a backward walk' towards sacred directions is inadequate to bring harmony when life asserts itself over rituals. *Griever* reminds us that "there is another reality which must be taken into creative account along with the sacred, timeless, cosmic reality: that is the human reality of the paradoxical here and now" (Babcock 148). In his review of *Griever* Dexter Westrum comments,

Even though Griever isn't entirely successful, he is not defeated. As he puts it: "we were lost and asked (the Chinese) to make a map in their heads to tell us where they were so we could find out where we were. They know where they are, but we are in the air" And that is the joy of Vizenor's work. The important thing is not to subdue the people who think they know where they are, but to keep them off balance by not taking them as seriously as they take themselves. Griever will not be overcome by reality, but will stay up in the air away from the foundations, savoring delicious ironies where nothing is sacred. (160)

Since *Griever* is set on the pattern of the oral tradition it includes many of the techniques of oral tradition like satire, hyperbole, invective and bawdiness. It is comic in the same way that the native American
tradition is comic. It has, employed satire to puncture the desires of the people in power. It has, to take a term used by Ishmael Reed, "magic populism" which is "a variation of the usual social realism approach... it takes the side of the poor against the rich, and it takes aim at some of the same targets as the early populist movement, the church, for instance, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, and racism" ("Interview with Melwatkins" 610).

The pre-human flux, the ambiguity and the shifting of human-animal identity, present in native American myths, characterise the world in Griever. Griever, the 'talking animal' inspires the tribal stories and teaches human beings culture. Like an animal, he is often on the move in the dark hours as when he escapes at the crack of dawn or when he goes up the radio tower. Griever mounts things, bounds and leaps and there by violates "the diurnal pattern of expectation" (Babcock 159). Just like the traditional trickster, Griever blurs temporal and spatial distinctions through his monkey transformations.

Griever, like the traditional trickster lives 'interstitially' (Babcock 154). There are many interstices in Griever like the floor and walls. People are associated with cracks and scars. The text recounts an instance of Griever, while as a boy witnessing a white man having sex with a small luminous woman with scarred breast. There are many
synonyms for interstices in the novel like 'narrow seams' 'crack of dawn'
'scars' 'faults on faces and the earth' (27).

Griever transgresses all the social taboos including that connected with sex. Inspite of his identification with Monk Tripitaka and his Monkey Sun Wu-k'ung, Griever's sexual appetite is more than that of these tricksters. Monkey is pure mind activity and the Monk has spent ten lives in abstinence. Unlike these tricksters, Griever exhibits a higher degree of inclination towards sex. He violates the endogamous law and sleeps with Hester Hua Dan. Wu Chou's words to China Browne that Griever is the cock of the town carry sexual suggestions. Griever with his cock perched on his shoulders is an allusion to the trickster who carried the oversized phallus on his back in a box (Radin 19).

Griever is a 'holosexual clown.' The term 'holosexual' indicates "the entire sexual erotic energy of every cell in our bodies, in order not to reduce this rich and complex energy of eroticism and sexuality to the restrictive binaries of gender" (Vizenor, "Chance of Survivance" 26 Aug. 1996).

There is no development as such in Griever's character as he learns nothing that he doesn't already know. There is only the recognition of truth by him with increased intensity. Griever's question to Kangmei, "Tell me now, right now, what is the secret in that
manuscript?” (229) and her answer that it contains a secret recipe for “blue chicken made with mountain blue corn and pressed blue berries” once again endorses Grievers's conviction that truth can not be contained within the frame of words. Regal-Cellard comments that "the derisory revelation the scrolls contain might signify on the one hand, that it is illusory to look for texts that would grant immortality, illusory to seek to return to a mystified past, because one must adapt to survive and to perpetuate ancestral wisdom without refusing the present, and in so doing live on the hinge between two worlds, within and without, to create a new consciousness of existence" (334).

By puncturing facades and stereotypes and by freeing the flow of energy to balance, Grievers, 'the socio-acupuncturist' creates a new island founded upon love and coexistence. Freed from all the masks of fixed cultural identity, he ultimately soars to freedom in avian dreams and acrobatic outrage to be reintegrated into the mythic reality of his tribe. The novel by presenting the marvelous world of the trickster once again reaffirms the trickster's immortality and the power to survive.