

THE SUBVERSIVE FUNCTIONS OF TRICKSTER DISCOURSE IN
ANGELA CARTER'S *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS*, AND SHERMAN
ALEXIE'S *THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO FISTFIGHT IN
HEAVEN AND RESERVATION BLUES*

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ABSTRACT

THE SUBVERSIVE FUNCTIONS OF TRICKSTER DISCOURSE IN ANGELA CARTER'S *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS*, AND SHERMAN ALEXIE'S *THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO FISTFIGHT IN HEAVEN* AND *RESERVATION BLUES*

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This dissertation serves to examine one novel by the English writer Angela Carter and a collection of short stories and a novel by the Native American writer Sherman Alexie with regard to trickster discourse, these texts being Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984), and Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993) and *Reservation Blues* (1995). The study attempts to trace the presence of contradictory, paradoxical and peripheral figures of tricksters and trickster-like liminal figures in the selected texts in order to divulge how the dominant patriarchal and colonial discourses in Carter's and Alexie's texts are challenged and undermined, and how Foucauldian reverse discourses are created from within through the subversive means of trickster discourse. The study aims to make a comparative analysis of the trickster figures in the selected texts and identify their similar as well as different characteristics, roles and functions within two quite different cultures. By analysing sample narratives that use trickster figures (as defined in the thesis) from two distant cultures, this study identifies twentieth-century tricksters in English and North American Native literature as cross-cultural

and cross-gendered figures who, authorized to engage in transgressive acts with immunity due to their outcast status, serve to subvert the dominant discourses on behalf of disenfranchised factions.

Keywords: trickster(s), trickster discourse, disenfranchised factions, Angela Carter, Sherman Alexie.

ÖZ

ANGELA CARTER'IN *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS* VE SHERMAN ALEXIE'NİN *THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO FISTFIGHT IN HEAVEN* İLE *RESERVATION BLUES* ADLI ESERLERİNDE DÜZENBAZ SÖYLEMİN YIKICI İŞLEVLERİ

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Bu tez, Angela Carter'ın *Nights at the Circus* (1984) adlı romanını ve Sherman Alexie'nin *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993) adlı kısa hikayelerden oluşan eseri ile *Reservation Blues* (1995) adlı romanını düzenbaz söylemi açısından incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, seçilen metinlerde, baskın ataerkil ve sömürgeci söylemlere nasıl meydan okunduğunu ve bunların nasıl baltalandığını, ve düzenbaz söylemin yıkıcı araçları aracılığıyla Foucaultçu ters söylemlerin içерiden nasıl yaratıldığını açığa çıkarmak için, doğası gereği çelişkili, paradoksal ve periferik olan düzenbaz ve düzenbaz benzeri figürlerin varlığının izlerini sürer. Bu tez, seçilen metinlerdeki düzenbaz figürlerin karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yapmayı ve bunların oldukça farklı iki kültürdeki benzer ve farklı özelliklerini, rollerini ve işlevlerini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, iki uzak kültürden örnek anlatılar analiz edilerek, düzenbaz figürler toplumdan dışlanmışlıklarını nedeniyle ihlalci eylemlere dokunulmaz bir şekilde girişmeye yetkili olan kültürler arası ve cinsiyetler arası varlıklar olarak tanımlanır

ve haklarından mahrum edilmiş kesimler adına egemen söylemleri yık Maya hizmet eden figürler olarak ele alınır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: düzenbaz(lar), düzenbaz söylemi, ezilen kesimler, Angela Carter, Sherman Alexie.

To My Family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The subversive roles and functions tricksters have played can be seen in the mythologies and narratives of many cultures throughout the world. As contradictory, paradoxical and peripheral figures, the subversive tricksters have served to mock, undermine and defy authority with impunity in a carnivalesque fashion (Grau, 153). Through jokes and stories mingled with laughter, humour and irony in twentieth century literary texts as will be discussed extensively in this study they call the artificial constructions of the dominant discourses into question. According to Harold Scheub, those who are in control of the art of power build an order and establish barriers that cannot be violated. However, trickster figures, Scheub asserts, whether given human or animal forms, breach those barriers and tamper with the sacred. That is, they are able to challenge the long-established order and subvert the authority, acts that leads to chaos. Amid this chaos, Scheub further illustrates, on overturning order and authority, roles change and everything becomes upside down, the powerful becomes powerless while the powerless starts to take possession of power, and right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right. During this stage of reversal, the world is recreated and albeit temporarily, an alternative reality is provided (31). Through violation of taboos, defiance of authority and reversal of familiar structures of the social world, the trickster attempts not only to obliterate the conventional power structures of his or her world but he also continuously reconstructs them, which makes him an embodiment of “both a creative and a destructive force” (Scheub, 32). As liminal figures, tricksters, along with related figures variously known as picaros, rogues, fools, buffoons and jesters have been recreated in the narratives of a great number of cultures. There they not only entertain but also to serve as agents who, through providing an alternative perspective, representationally shatter the politics of power and in so

doing prompt us to see that even beyond the fictional world, realities and identities are artificially constructed.

Trickster figures by definition, as Vecsey suggests, are characterized by their ambiguous, paradoxical and contradictory nature. They are, in other words, both human and animal, both outsiders and insiders, both sacred and profane, both corporal and spiritual. They belong nowhere yet they at the same time belong everywhere (106). As “the lords of in-between” Native American tricksters are constantly “on the road” (Hyde, 17), and as “boundary crosser[s]” they are able to “move between heaven and earth, and between the living and the dead” (Hyde, 18); for Ellis native trickster “personifies marginality” (56); for Turner as they exist in “betwixt and between” they are characterized by being liminal and anti-structure (93). Tricksters are not bound by temporal and spatial limitations but rather they exist beyond time and space. Trickster figures are, therefore, “the timeless energy, the eternally liminal, the ordering and the chaotic.” They also symbolize “the alpha and omega, the yin and the yang, the contradictory, the ambiguous, the unending” as well as being “primordial, now sublime and now debased, neither the one nor the other, but a combination that emerges in strange, quirky, and unpredictable ways” (Scheub, 12). As a result of their ambiguous and contradictory nature, and peripheral status, tricksters are able to question the unquestionable with impunity because for tricksters, as Hynes puts it, “no order is too rooted, no taboo too sacred, no god too high, no profanity too scatological that it cannot be broached or inverted” (37). Through violation of the long-established rules, overthrow of the order, and disruption of the balance, tricksters offer alternative ways and perspectives in and from which to view the world. By combining entertainment and education through humour, laughter and irony tricksters thus appear to be “the bearer of enlightenment” (Hynes, 205). As a result, in narratives they are found, these liminal figures come up with a different order of reality and they provide alternative perspectives.

The selected texts this study argues feature these kinds of subversive trickster figures in an attempt to deconstruct the dominant patriarchal system of the 19th century England in Carter's novel and the white dominant discourse in Alexie's texts. Angela Carter, who was significantly interested in that most trickster – full of genres, fairy stories, is known as a subversive writer. In her nine novels and numerous short stories, she blurs the lines between literary genres, deconstructs conventional social, cultural and political practices and demythologises archetypal female figures. As Salman Rushdie puts it, "Carter's other country is the fairground, the world of the gimcrack showman, the hypnotist, the trickster, the puppeteer" (xi). As argued in this study, in *Nights at the Circus* she embarks on challenging and undermining the repressive dominant discourses through liminal figures like Fevvers the trickster, clowns and a shaman in the wilderness of Siberia. As a feminist writer, Carter attempts not only to deconstruct the gender politics of the dominant patriarchal discourse but also to create reverse discourses from within. In this endeavour, she employs the subversive means of and often related to trickster discourse, such as the carnivalesque laughter, satire, irony, and humour, which function as weapons "for challenging linguistic and social phallocentrism" (Leveen, 42). This novel enacts Helen Cixous' earlier call to: "It is time to liberate the New Woman from the Old without delay, by going out ahead of what the New Woman will be, as an arrow quits the bow with a movement that gathers and separates the vibrations musically, in order to be more than herself" (878). A representative of this twentieth century New Woman, Fevvers, this study argues, transgresses the established rules with immunity as a female trickster figure who manifests such typical trickster characteristics as being a both/and creature, merging the opposites and existing both in and out of temporal and spatial dimensions. As a radically free trickster figure, Fevvers neither belongs to any groups nor conforms to their values and norms. But rather, she infringes the restrictions of both enfranchised and disenfranchised groups and challenges to all those who attempt to fit her into 'feminist' constraints. In Carter's novel, as will be discussed extensively in due course, the paradigms of dominant discourses are undermined and alternative perspectives are offered albeit temporarily through anti-establishment liminal

figures like Fevvers as a trickster, a shaman in the wilderness and the clowns at Captain Kearney's circus of the Grand Imperial Tour. Carter's novel thus thematises the very core of this thesis, which is the 'disruptive, subversive potential' (Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge*, 39) of trickster figures and discourse as used in fiction by different disempowered peripheral figures in vastly different texts, places and times.

Alexie, likewise, in both selected texts deals with the problems and injustices and atrocities native people are exposed to on Spokane Indian Reservation through subversive trickster figure Thomas Builds-the-Fire and the subversive means of trickster discourse. The Spokane Indian Reservation in Alexie's texts is a symbolic representation of those disenfranchised groups of all the various and different Native American peoples who were forced to separate from their lands, customs and languages as a result of European colonization that has been going on for more than five hundred years. As the narrator in Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* puts it: "We Indians have LOST EVERYTHING. We lost our native land, we lost our languages, we lost our songs and dances. We lost each other. We only know how to lose and be lost" (112, emphasis original). However, in the selected texts of Sherman Alexie as we will see in due course, the discontents of disenfranchised Native Americans as well as the discriminations and injustices imposed on them by dominant discourses are made visible by native trickster figures who, as culture heroes and saviours, create reverse discourses in which Native American communal identity is preserved and their rights over their lands are restored. In his novels, Alexie, like many other so-called Native Americans, prefers the term 'Indian' to refer to the native communities, even though others like Vizenor balk against the term, in which they note the absence of native presence in the term, which was coined by the first Europeans on so-called American lands. According to Vizenor, while the Indian stands for the absence, the native is the presence and thus in many narratives and motion pictures, the Indian has no connection with any kind of reality because "the indian [sic] is pure simulacrum" (*Fugitive Poses*, 148). Others, however, object to the terms 'native'

and ‘American’, which are perceived as paternalistically essentialist and as lumping together all the different peoples of the huge continent, indiscriminately in the first case, and using the colonizer’s appellation of the land in the second case. There is no consensus on these terms, but writing by and about themselves, most people of the First Nations on the continent (as they are referred to, uncontroversially, in Canada) prefer to be called Indian or, better, by the name of their people (Alexie himself is Spokane). However, as this dissertation serves to deconstruct the misrepresentations and stereotypes attributed to these people by their colonizers, and in spite of the people themselves noting that both terms were created by white journalists attempting political correctness (in the late 1960s and in the 1990s, respectively), the expressions ‘Native American’ or ‘Indigenous people’ will be used unless other terms are used otherwise in original texts.

In both *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and *Reservation Blues* Sherman Alexie addresses the issues of discriminations and atrocities against Indigenous people as well as the losses they have suffered as a result of European colonialism through the trickster figure, Thomas Builds-the-Fire, who, like all trickster figures, resists being categorized into the dominant discourse’s binary oppositions due to his contradictory, ambiguous and paradoxical nature, and thus is able offer a counter history that takes an anti-establishment perspective. In both texts, the dreams, visions, songs and stories of Thomas Builds-the-Fire, aim “to reveal injustice, protect self-esteem, heal wounds, and foster bonds” (Coulombe, 116). The twenty-four interconnected stories in *The Lone Ranger*, are drenched in poverty and helplessness as well as other stereotypical characteristics attributed to Native Americans such as drunkenness and violence. However, through the subversive functions of trickster discourse, Alexie challenges the dominant ideology of Western colonialism by revealing colonial hegemony to be the main cause of Native American problems. Trickster discourse, therefore, in Sherman’s stories helps build “a dialogue outside of the dominant discourse to address the very real problems facing Indians on and off the reservation” (Roush, 26).

Using the deconstructive forces inherent in all trickster stories, Sherman Alexie attempts to deconstruct the white dominant discourses and offers humour, laughter and irony as a weapon to respond to colonialism and colonial history. Therefore, for Alexie humour becomes “an imaginative strategy that both transcends and deconstructs, and thus survives, pain” (Moore, 229). By undermining the stereotypical characterization of Native Americans that the white population has disseminated such as alcoholism, drug abuse, violence and poverty, Alexie reinvents history through the subversive means of trickster discourse. Trickster discourse in Alexie’s texts “unsettles the conventional ways of thinking and compels re-evaluation and growth, ultimately allowing Indian characters to connect to their heritage in new ways and forcing non-native readers to reconsider simplistic generalizations” (Coulombe, 12). Trickster discourse in both *The Lone Ranger* and *Reservation Blues*, as will be shown, clearly serves as a political tool used to mock and undermine hegemonic power. The trickster does this by rebelling against authority and subverting and transforming relations of power.

1.1 The Aim and Scope of the Study

A great deal of research has been carried out on the nature and function of cultural and mythological trickster figures as it will be discussed in the next chapter. However, a lack of research on tricksters in contemporary literary texts as well as a lack of research on female trickster figures is what has motivated this thesis’ investigations into trickster discourse in late twentieth century Native American and Western literature. Trickster figures have traditionally been identified with male characters. As Tannen suggests, although female trickster figures have existed as archetypes since pre-historic times, they were never called tricksters and thus were excluded from the domain of tricksters up until the postmodern times when they could be named tricksters as “[p]ostmodern in its whimsy, humor is at the center of its fusion of the Trickster and the feminine. Embodiment is in the female form, transformation of the culture is her game, and Trickster is her name” (Preface, xiii). According to Tannen, the postmodern female trickster can be distinguished

from the traditional one in some important respects. The most important characteristic that sets the postmodern female trickster apart is “the postmodern embodiment of the archetypal Trickster energy in a female body with psychological authority, physical agency, and bodily autonomy.” Another important difference is how the postmodern female trickster employs irony and humor “as strategic subversive and transformative devices aimed at revolution not just revolt.” The last difference can be found in the the postmodern female trickster’s psychological and cultural revolution which occurs as a result of “the construction of an identity which refuses to be a victim.” These differences between the traditional and postmodern views of the trickster, according to Tannen, result directly from “the imagination of women imagining and sharing with other women images of women with authority, agency and autonomy” (6-7).

As we shall see in due course, we come across female trickster figures although they are not called tricksters from various cultures albeit not as common as male ones like the female Folly of Erasmus and Schcherazade, the narrator of *One Thousand and One Nights*, who stands for “the prototype of the specific female trickster figure” (Landay, 2). Marilyn Jurich explores the existence of female tricksters or rather what she calls “trickstars” (xiii) in myths, folk tales and legends and she identifies Scheherazade as an example of a trickstar. Women are marginalized because of their gender and thus the trickstars, Jurich observes, are double marginalized figures. Yet, the trickstar turns her marginality into her advantage by deliberately being impudent and lewd; she defies the social rules to enliven society; arouses humour so as to “flaunt hubris and recreate the social fabric” (34). Jurich divides trickster/trickstar types into four: “Diverting or Amusing” such as joker, simpleton, jester and wise fool; “Morally Debatable or Ambiguous; Reprehensible” such as devourer or demon, betrayer, seducer and thief; “Situational or Strategic/Method Creates the Momentum” such as conjurer, facilitator, translator; and “Beneficial and Improving” such as unveiler or truth teller, challenger, rebel and transformer (199-200).

Contemporary women writers have incorporated trickster figures into their works in order to undermine the patriarchal discourses. In *Writing Tricksters*, Jeanne Rosier Smith traces the presence of trickster figures in the works of contemporary American women writers such as Maxine Kingston, Toni Morrison, and Louise Erdrich. In her book, Smith questions why in some of America's most important contemporary female writers' works, especially in the works of women of colour, tricksters such as the Signifying Monkey, Coyote, Br'er Rabbit, Nanabozho, the Signifying Monkey and Monkey King abound. According to Smith, tricksters provide contemporary American women writers of colour who have historically been disenfranchised due to their sex and race with compelling methods to shatter both the patriarchal discourse with feminist aims and the racial stereotypes with a cultural concern (2). In her analysis of narrative form in the works of contemporary American female writers, Smith argues that the multiple voices, disruptions and spaces in the narratives of Kingston, Morrison and Erdrich can best be interpreted by what she calls a "trickster aesthetics" which overturns both ethnocentric and phallocentric interpretations (11). Smith compares the perception of the trickster, who, as an amoral and lewd figure, merges opposites, in the minds of Western and non-Western communities. As Western mind tends to distinguish honesty from deception, goodness from evil, it comes to have an unfavourable image of tricksters as unreliable, self-centred and fraudulent figures. On the other hand, the trickster figure in some non-Western societies like Native Americans and Africans is regarded as a sacred, communal and fundamental figure albeit marginal and irreverent (8). It is known that the Western mind is based on binary oppositions and it is averse to disorder and chaos out of which the trickster creates order and refashions the world. However, cross-gendered trickster figures, as this research through selection of texts from different places and cultures explores, challenge the dominant discourses and create reverse discourses from within through some subversive means as will be discussed extensively in the next chapter.

This comparative study of trickster figures in Alexie's and Carter's texts should examine the literary existence of the trickster as a cross-cultural figure which can

be found across cultures in their literatures in both male and female forms and explore how, in contemporary times, tricksters not only deconstruct the dominant discourses but they also attempt to create Foucauldian reverse discourses from within, as it will be discussed in the next chapter. The study, hence, serves to trace the evolution of the trickster whose spirit we can find in carnivals and in other peripheral literary figures like fools, rogues, jesters, buffoons and picaros, and to reveal how this archetypal figure is used in contemporary literary texts in order to challenge and deconstruct the dominant discourses on behalf of disenfranchised groups.

In this dissertation, therefore, Angela Carter's postmodern work *Nights at the Circus* and Sherman Alexie's postmodern works *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and *Reservation Blues* are analysed in terms of the political deconstructions effected by trickster discourse. The dissertation serves to explore how these literary works show existing socio-political systems, maintained by the dominant discourses, being challenged and undermined by disenfranchised groups through the means of trickster's characteristically subversive use of carnivalesque laughter, humour, satire, irony, disguise, deceit, and storytelling. Central to this study are, thus, the outrageous transgressions of trickster figures and how they are used in attempts to challenge and deconstruct the dominant patriarchal and colonial discourses in Carter's and Alexie's texts respectively. The disenfranchised groups represented by liminal literary figures in these texts come from very different contexts and times; they are women performers in a temporally liminal England of 1899 (it is set at 'the cusp of the modern age', as it states (Carter, 314), and ends as "midnight, that moveable feast" (348) coincides with the consummation of love between the female trickster, and the male with the traditional trickster's name – Jack) in Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and Native Americans of the present day USA in the texts of Alexie. This study shows that the political potential of trickster and trickster-like discourse to subvert the established order and at the same time offer alternative perspectives to have always existed, and shows how postmodern literary forms and ideas allow this potential to be fully explored.

Chapter II will discuss trickster discourse in detail and outline its features so as to present a theoretical framework for the detailed analysis of the selected texts. The chapter will trace the presence of trickster figures in cultural practices and literary texts in vastly different times and places and point out the similarities as well as differences between the roles and functions of Native American and European trickster figures. The chapter will then move on to discuss the subversive means of trickster discourse and present the main theories of humour and the use of satire, irony, and laughter so as to reveal how they might be employed in trickster discourse in order to undermine the dominant discourses. As trickster discourse endeavours to deconstruct the established order in a humorous manner, Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque will also be extensively discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter III, Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus*, which appears to be a discourse of the marginalized, the liminal and the unrecognizable who shift shape and abilities and so-called 'reality', will be analysed within the context of trickster and clowning discourse. It will focus on the trickster characteristics Fevvers manifests to undermine the dominant patriarchal discourse of 19th century England, pointing out the common characteristics of tricksters and clowns and other marginalized figures who in creating reverse discourses from within deconstruct dominant discourses. In addition to the clowns who can "symbolically straddle a dangerous line between the permitted and the forbidden, the moral and the immoral, the legal and the illegal, and the profane and the sacred" (*The Semiotics*, 180), it is argued that Fevvers, with her trickster characteristics, subverts the patriarchal hierarchy and in return creates the twentieth century New Woman, and the New Man out of Walser by bringing about a transformation in him in "a spirit of female triumphalism" (Bell, 279).

The subsequent complementary Chapters IV and V will analyse Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and *Reservation Blues* respectively in order to disclose the characteristics that these stories' Native American tricksters manifest and the central roles they play as centrifugal forces in the restoration of native rights

over their lands and the preservation of native communal identity which is closely tied with the land through constructing reverse discourses. In both chapters, it will be argued that Thomas Builds-the-Fire, the trickster figure that appears in both volumes, creates reverse discourses as a means of resistance to challenge and undermine the stereotypes and misrepresentations attributed to native groups by the dominant discourses through the subversive acts of storytelling, songs, visions, dreams, imagination, dancing, irony, humour and satire.

The conclusion draws together the findings of these three analytical chapters, identifies the original findings of the thesis, and identifies future areas of study that are indicated by the results of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

TRICKSTER DISCOURSE

Tricksters are universal figures and their presence can be found in the ancient artistic forms of mythologies, tales, fables, fairy tales and folklore of a wide range of cultures. They have existed in different forms, shapes and under different names from the ancient until our contemporary times. While in some cultures they are identified with profaneness in the forms of clowns, rogues and buffoons, in others they are associated with divinity like in the case of Hermes and Loki. Still, in some others, we encounter them in animal forms such as coyotes and ravens. However, regardless of in which time, place and form they have existed, tricksters are singled out by their marginal, liminal and peripheral status which enables them to challenge and undermine the common practices, values and norms of the dominant cultures from within. Due to their contradictory and paradoxical nature, tricksters have resisted a clear-cut definition and their elusive nature has led many scholars from different fields of anthropology, religious or literary studies to come up with different interpretations of them.

A number of scholars like Carl Jung, Paul Radin and Karl Kerenyi saw the trickster figure as an archetype and thus in their studies they narrowed the role tricksters play down to a mythological character. Jung equated the trickster figure with the inferior features in the characters (that is to say, psychological make-up) of individuals. According to Jung, the trickster figure is characterized by “an archetypal psychic structure and extreme antiquity” and he is manifested as “a psyche that has hardly left the animal level” (165). Jung construes the trickster as “a collective shadow figure” (177) and emphasizes unconsciousness to be his most important feature. On one hand, Jung maintains, the trickster as the “forerunner of the savior,” incorporates the characteristics of divinity, humanity and bestiality all together. He

is, therefore, a both/and creature: superhuman and subhuman, divine and bestial at the same time. So unconscious of himself is he that he lacks a unified body and thus even his hands are in fight with each other. On the other hand, as Jung highlights, the trickster is more foolish than the animal and cannot help but get into perpetual and nonsensical distressing situations. The trickster is thus, as “a primitive ‘cosmic’ being of divine animal nature,” both superior and inferior to man: superior as a result of his superhuman features and inferior due to his lack of consciousness and reason (170). Jung suggests that the civilized man has lost sight of the trickster and only recalls him in a figurative and metaphorical way when, out of awkwardness, he believes that it is fate that tricks and beguiles him. Man does not even doubt about his hidden and deep shadow. However, this shadow manifests itself the moment people come together which leads to the submersion of the individual. This, in turn, might lead to the personification and incarnation of that shadow (173). The trickster, from this point of view, is an archetype, and might be an embodiment of the collective unconscious of a certain group of people in certain circumstances. According to Jung, the trickster, as an archetype of a community’s collective unconscious, has functioned as a kind of entertainment up to modern times in the carnival figures of the clown and Pulcinella (170).

Paul Radin examined the Native American trickster's evolution through the Winnebago cycle of tales¹ and identified the trickster as an archetype. He observed the ambiguity and contrariness in trickster's nature and in his definition of the trickster Radin points out this contrast when he defines him as a figure who appears to be,

at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself. He wills nothing consciously. At all times he is constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control. He knows neither good nor evil yet

¹ This cycle of tales which is a compilation of stories featuring trickster figures belongs to Winnebago, a native tribe of Nebraska and Paul Radin in his book presents one example of Native American trickster myths taken from the Winnebago cycle of tales.

he is responsible for both. He possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being (ix).

Radin analysed the trickster figure from an anthropological perspective and pointed out the figure's lack of a "well-defined and fixed form" and its frequently being identified with certain animals like the hare, coyote, spider and raven (ix-x). Karl Kérenyi likewise pointed out the role and function of trickster figures in myths and archaic societies. Being "phallic," "voracious," "sly", and "stupid" tricksters, for Kérenyi, are "the spirit of disorder" and "the enemy of boundaries." Kérenyi maintains that life requires disorder and this disorder is symbolized by the trickster. As a result, not only the trickster but also the tales about tricksters aim to incorporate disorder into order to create a whole and make possible a sense of what is prohibited within the bounds of what is permitted (185).

Unlike Jung, Radin and Kerenyi who approach trickster figures as archetypes and find their origins in mythologies and archaic societies, researchers of religious studies such as William G. Doty and William J. Haynes; scholars of semantics such as Laura Makarius and Mac Linscott Ricketts; and scholars researching tricksters in various fields like Robert D. Pelton have focused on cultural manifestations of tricksters in a wide range of cultures in their studies. In the article entitled "West African Tricksters: Web of Purpose, Dance of Delight" Robert D. Pelton examines West African tricksters of Ashanti, Fon, Yoruba and Dogon and rejects the idea that the trickster is an archetypal concept. Rather, for him the trickster's role is "a symbolic pattern" which encompasses plenty of individual figures. The movement of the trickster between orders of beings, Pelton suggests, serves to construct "a human world that is sacred both as something given and as process, as social enterprise and divine gift" (123). In their article entitled, "Historical Overview of Theoretical Issues: The Problem of the Trickster," Doty and Hynes likewise raise a voice against the simplistic category of defining the tricksters as "inferior, as merely potential, or at most a merely transitional figure" (22) and instead they offer an analysis of the trickster figure which "[allows] both for flexibility with which to

confront polarities, dualities and multiple manifestations and for complexity with which to grapple with the ambiguity, border occupying, paradox, marginality, peripherality, liminality, and inversion portrayed by various trickster figures” (25). In another article “Introducing the Fascinating and Perplexing Trickster Figure” they recognize the difficulty in defining the complex figure of a trickster. Doty and Hynes, nevertheless, come to the conclusion that “plurality, plurivocity, and ambiguity are essential to the Trickster Gestalt” (9), because as cross-cultural figures with a paradoxical and contradictory nature, tricksters resist identification with any single set of characteristics. Tricksters might be embodied in different forms and with different features in each individual culture. However, although the traits tricksters manifest might change depending on the culture they are found in, some common traits may be identified. Hynes, in “Mapping the Characteristics of Mythic Tricksters” comes up with the six most typical characteristics of tricksters, which he names as having a: “fundamentally ambiguous and anomalous personality,” and being a “deceiver/trick player,” a “shape-shifter,” a “situation invertor,” a “messenger/imitator of the gods” and a “sacred/lewd bricoleur” (34). In “A Tolerated Margin of Mess” Barbara Babcock-Abrahams comes up with a more detailed identification trickster figures across cultures. She claims that they:

1. exhibit an independence from and an ignoring of temporal and spatial boundaries;
2. tend to inhabit crossroads, open public places (especially the marketplace), doorways, and thresholds. In one way or another they are usually situated between the social cosmos and the other world or chaos;
3. are frequently involved in scatological and coprophagous episodes which may be creative, destructive, or simply amusing;
4. may, similarly, in their deeds and character, partake of the attributes of Trickster-Transformer-Culture Hero;
5. frequently exhibit some mental and/or physical abnormality, especially exaggerated sexual characteristics;
6. have an enormous libido without procreative outcome;
7. have an ability to disperse and to disguise themselves and a tendency to be multiformal and ambiguous, single or multiple;
8. often have a two-fold physical nature and/or a "double" and are associated with mirrors. Most noticeably, the trickster tends to be of uncertain sexual status;
9. follow the "principle of motley" in dress;

10. are often indeterminant (in physical stature) and may be portrayed as both young and old, as perpetually young or perpetually age;
11. exhibit an human/animal dualism and may appear as a human with animal characteristics or vice versa; (even in those tales where the trickster is explicitly identified as an animal, he is anthropomorphically described and referred to in personal pronouns);
12. are generally amoral and asocial - aggressive, vindictive, vain defiant of authority, etc.;
13. despite their endless propensity to copulate, find their most abiding form of relationship with the feminine in a mother/grandmother bond;
14. in keeping with their creative/destructive dualism, tricksters tend to be ambiguously situated between life and death, and good and evil, as is summed up in the combined black and white symbolism frequently associated with them;
15. are often ascribed to roles (i.e., other than tricky behavior) which an individual normally has privileged freedom from some of the demands of the social code;
16. in all their behavior, tend to express a concomitant breakdown of the distinction between reality and reflection. (159-60)

Laura Makarius in “The Myth of the Trickster: The Necessary Breaker of Taboos” highlights similar contradictions inherent in trickster figures. The trickster, she states, takes on the role of a demiurge and transforms nature. On one hand, he is a creator; on the other hand, he is a clown and thus he is not taken seriously as he is degraded and humiliated as a result of his outrageous ventures. On one hand, he is the one to provide humankind with the arts and tools and bring medicine to cure them; on the other hand, he plays outrageous tricks on humans with a heavy cost to them as well as being responsible for bringing death to the world. Therefore, while the trickster is “admired, loved, [and] venerated for his merits and virtues, he is represented as thievish, deceitful, parricidal, incestuous, and cannibalistic” (67). Makarius further draws attention to the role of the trickster as a violator of taboos. Regardless of the culture he belongs to, the trickster cannot help but commit atrocious and brazen transgressions as “he incarnates lack of discipline, disobedience, and rebellion, while defying simultaneously the rules of the society and those of the Superior Beings” (82). A similar point is made by Christopher Vecsey who further illustrates the paradoxical nature of trickster who appears to be human and divine; person and animal; creative and destructive at the same time.

The tales, myths and legends regarding the tricksters have different functions. They might serve as a form of entertainment, education or humorous defiance against authority. The trickster, Vecsey suggests, violates the norms of a society, yet he helps redefine such norms; he does not act responsibly, yet he teaches what responsibility is; he disobeys, yet he educates; he casts doubt on ‘realities,’ yet he draws attention to what those realities are at the same time. Therefore, as a vagrant, intruder and erratic deceiver, the trickster opens what truth means to question (106). The trickster, writes Simon Weaver, is a “broker of anti-structure” and “trickster discourse is that which can affect the social through unorthodox and possibly subversive means” (480). Through disguise, tricks, illusion and deceit tricksters mock the high and sacred, violate taboos, breach barriers, subvert authority, and undermine the established order.

In trickster stories, the philosophical, aesthetic, poetic and magical elements are brought into play as trickster figures have quite different roles and functions. However, as this study examines the trickster’s subversion in social and political aspects in the selected texts, it will discuss Foucauldian reverse discourses trickster figures create within the dominant patriarchal and colonial discourses. Within a society, as Foucault has defined them, “discourses” emerge and develop over the course of time and they eventually turn into institutionalized forms of speech, writing and behaviour. Foucault defines discourse “as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation” (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 121); and by statements means implicit, as well as explicitly and directly vocalised statements. These discourses help produce power, knowledge and meaning which subsequently regulate the relations between people, and the institutions and structures within a society. The way reality and truth are perceived by the members of the society is determined by such discourses. Discourses draw boundaries and impose constraints and restrictions over what can or cannot be uttered in social, political or economic interactions. Therefore, they obscure the process of how knowledge and meaning are constructed and whose interests they serve. However, discourses come with contradictions. As Foucault puts forward: “Discourse is the

path from one contradiction to another: if it gives rise to those that can be seen, it is because it obeys that which it hides. To analyse discourse is to hide and reveal contradictions; it is to show the play that they set up within; it is to manifest how it can express them, embody them, or give them a temporary appearance” (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 168-69). We exist in a world of discourses but only some of these discourses become associated with socially and politically dominating forces, and these are what Foucault calls dominant or dominating discourses. Disenfranchised and marginalized factions, in their own discourses, attempt to deconstruct dominant discourses from within by making use of the inherent contradictions that discourses have. These contradictions within discourses make it possible to create what Foucault calls “reverse discourse[s]” (*The History of Sexuality*, 101), and to deconstruct discourses from within: “The manifest discourse [...] is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this ‘not said’ is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said” (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 28). Disenfranchised and marginalized factions attempt to counter dominant discourses from within by constructing such reverse discourses which enable them to be able to resist the restrictions and constraints of the established order. One of such reverse discourses is the trickster discourse which implies resistance against the commodification and objectification of disenfranchised groups by dominant discourses. As this dissertation argues, this subversive trickster discourse is incorporated in the selected texts as a means of undermining the dominant discourses and creating reverse discourses from within. Those subversive cross-cultural trickster figures, as has been discussed above, share quite a lot of similar characteristics, yet their roles and functions might vary depending on the culture they are found in.

2.1 Typology of European Trickster Figures

In European literary, cultural and mythological texts, as elsewhere, we come across trickster figures in divine, human and animal forms. Such trickster figures in the European traditions share quite a lot of characteristics with those of Native

American ones although in some social, cultural and ontological aspects they differ from them. However, they both serve to ridicule the sacred, defy authority and relativize the truth.

In the European traditions, tricksters as culture heroes appear in divine forms rather than in animal forms of coyote and raven in Native American myths and tales. Prometheus, one of the most important divine tricksters in Greek mythology, is known to have created mankind and given him fire and therefore civilization by defying the gods. Sohona Manzoor briefly explores the representations of Prometheus in Western literatures of over two thousand years from Aeschylus to Shelley. According to her, while in Aeschylus there are signs of a rapprochement between Prometheus and Zeus out of Aeschylus' veneration for the gods, in Shelley, the chained and anguished, comes to represent the "afflicted humanity" and as a result, he evolves into "a hero of humanistic, liberal, and suffering man" (64). The myth of Prometheus today may still stand for humankind's freedom against authorial oppressive discourses, as Manzoor argues. In Nordic mythology, we encounter Loki, another important divine trickster who, like Prometheus and like Coyote of Native American myths, acts as a creator. Harbouring contradictions in his nature like Native American tricksters, Loki is believed to have created humans yet as a trickster he is renowned for his mischief and deception as well as being a master of disguise who could change his shape and sex. Most important of all, as a subversive trickster, he was a master of words and a truth teller.

In Native American myths trickster acts as a mediator between life and death. He also contacts the gods and endows humans with the essential objects and skills. In Greek mythology similarly, we see Hermes who, as a messenger god, was regarded as a mediator between the gods. Besides being a messenger of gods, Hermes is also known to be the guardian of heralds, thieves, travellers and merchants: those who inhabit at the crossroads and are constantly on the move from one place to another. William G. Doty demonstrates six qualities of Hermes as a trickster: "his marginality and paradoxical qualities; his erotic and relational aspects; his functions

as a creator and restorer; his deceitful thievery; his comedy and wit; and the role ascribed to him in hermeneutics, the art of interpretation whose name is said to be derived from his” (46). Jesus of Nazareth appears to be another significant trickster who acts as a mediator, messenger and transformer and who, as Marion Grau observes, combines the opposites, narrates allegorical stories, baffles, protests and transforms as a divine mediator and messenger. As a liminal figure, Jesus performs metamorphoses and acts as a holy fool who epitomizes and connects the paradoxes of flesh and divinity (6).

Trickster figures in the form of animals are not limited to Native American cultures. In the fairy tales and folk tales of the European culture, we also come across a great number of animal trickster figures. However, whereas in some Native American myths and tales, tricksters in the form of animals are attributed great powers and roles such as creating and/or transforming the world and acting as culture heroes, in European tales, witty and cunning animal tricksters resort to deceipts and disguise in order to save themselves from more powerful creatures or they scheme plans to gratify their own desires and pleasures. Fox appears to be one of the most popular trickster animals ubiquitous in a lot of European folk and fairy tales. In those tales, the fox, a less powerful animal, uses the disguise of innocence and schemes plans in order to survive against a more powerful creature like a voracious wolf or a lion whom he eventually outwits and subsequently, runs away to safety. Besides foxes, other common sly animal tricksters include cats and rabbits in the European tradition.

In Jack Zipes's translation of *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* we find a fairy tale called “Puss in Boots,” in which a tom cat acts as a witty trickster and manages to make his poor master a King. Different versions of this cross-cultural fairy tale have been told. We can trace this fairy tale to the 17th century France where it was written down by Charles Perrault. Even before the 17th century, we come across this tale in Italy in the 16th century. In Italy, the fairy tale is known as Cagliuso and it was collected by Giambattista Basile. In Grimm

Brother's version of the fairy tale, after a miller dies, his three sons get their share of the inheritance. While the oldest son gets the mill and the middle one the donkey, only a cat falls to the share of the younger one. While the youngest son is lamenting his misfortune as the most he can make of his inheritance is to produce a couple of gloves out of the cat's fur, the cat starts to talk and tries to convince his master not to kill him for a pair of gloves but to bring him a pair of boots so that he can go out and help him. After scheming some tricky plans, the cat eventually manages to make the poor miller's son a king who, in turn, makes the cunning cat the prime minister (110-14). The trickster cat thus avoids death through his wits and secures himself a proper status.

The tales which feature witty and cunning tricksters, however, are not limited to animals in the European tradition of fairy and folk tales. *Jack and the Beanstalk*, one of the most important trickster stories of British and Cornish tradition of 'Jack tales,' has been told in various versions. In Joseph Jacobs' version, we encounter the trickster Jack who uses innocence as a disguise to steal. Jack, in Jacob's version, exchanges the weaned cow with some magic beans which his mother, out of exasperation for Jack's foolery, throws out of the window only to grow into a massive beanstalk reaching the skies like a ladder the following day. Jack climbs up the beanstalk until he reaches a road over the clouds which leads to a giant ogre's house from which he manages to steal first a bag of gold, then the hen with golden eggs and finally the golden harp without being caught by the ogre whom he outwits and he eventually ends up marrying a princess and leading a rich and happy life (53-58). Cunning female trickster figures are also encountered in the European tradition. In "Clever Gretel" a fairy tale in *Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, we find a female trickster who outwits her master. Gretel, a witty self-delighted cook, devours the fowls she has cooked for her master's guest and in order to get away with her misdeed, she tells the guest, who witnesses her master's sharpening the knife, to flee immediately otherwise her master is planning to cut his both ears; she at the same time tells her master that his guest has run away stealing both chickens. In the hope of retrieving at least one chicken, the master starts chasing the guest

with the knife in his hand by crying out “Just one, just one.” Yet, as the guest thinks the master means to cut one of his ears, he runs as fast as he can to save both of his ears (186-9).

Although on a superficial reading folk and fairy tales seem to carry a moralizing message, in a deeper reading, we come to realize that tricksters in such folk and fairy tales whether in the form of male, female or animal serve to violate the social rules by engaging in transgressive acts. Cristina Bacchilega explores the significance of “rule-breaking behaviour and playful verbal deception” (29) of female trickster protagonists in *Grimm’s Fairy Tales* and argues that Gretel along with other female tricksters “exceed the limits that are socially, narratively, and rhetorically set for them” (28). The transgressive behaviour of Gretel, Bacchilega argues, functions “as a transgressive decoder of the heteronormative patriarchal symbolic order” (30). Trickster figures in many folk and fairy tales, therefore, engage in transgressive acts in order to deconstruct the social order and provide alternative ways of seeing. As Turner and Greenhill suggest:

The fairy-tale surface story may be moralistic, socially restrictive, and gender/sexuality normative, but the fairy tale’s deep structure, represented by the realm of enchantment, is antimoralistic, agency oriented, and gender/sexuality expressive in terms that challenge normativity. [...] Transcending the normal [...] opens possibilities for raising above sociocultural expectations (6).

In fantastic literature of folk tales, fairy tales, myths and legends, which according to Rosemary Jackson is the literature of subversion, “[g]ender differences of male and of female are subverted and generic distinctions between animal, vegetable and mineral are blurred in fantasy’s attempt to ‘turn over’ ‘normal’ perceptions and undermine ‘realistic’ ways of seeing” (28). In accordance with this purpose, Angela Carter, an editor of four books of fairy tales, uses a great deal of mythological and fairy images in her novels to deconstruct the archetypal and cultural constructs related with the female body. According to Carter, “all myths are products of the human mind and reflect only aspects of material human practice” (“Notes From the

Frontline,” 27). Carter’s enchantment with fairy tales and her view of myths originating from human mind allow her to reverse the social, political and cultural constructs in her novels as she, in her own words, is “in the demythologising business” (“Notes From the Frontline,” 27).

In Native American tradition, tricksters tread over the boundaries of the sacred and profane by engaging in defiant and sacrilegious behaviours. As peripheral figures, they explore the edges, blur the distinctions between binary oppositions, function as mediators, upset the balance and harmony, reverse the roles and then offer glimpses of a new order. This function of trickster figures can also be found in the European tradition, which can be traced back to Roman pagan celebrations of Kalends, held for New Year; and Saturnalia, held to honour god Saturn. During these celebrations the order and law were suspended temporarily, the roles of servants and masters were reversed, and a mock-king reigned. Such pagan celebrations evolved into the medieval Christmas tradition of clerical Saturnalia celebrations which were held in churches. During these celebrations “mighty persons were humbled, sacred things profaned, laws relaxed and ethical ideas reversed, under the leadership of a Patriarch, Pope, or Bishop of Fools” (Welsford, 199). We can also find the traces of such pagan carnivalesque celebrations in the Lord of Misrule who was in charge of holding the twelve days of Christmas celebrations as a mock-king in medieval ages, and in the Feast of Fools, a medieval and Renaissance celebration held by clergy mostly in France. This celebration, which was held at churches and cathedrals, was presided by the Bishop of Fools. During this celebration, the roles and hierarchy of lower and higher clergy were reversed, clothes were worn inside out, lots of obscenities and profanities were performed, a mock Archbishop or Pope was elected and the rituals and holy songs of the Church were parodied. However, while in European pagan and Christian tradition this reversal of roles and overthrow of all hierarchies were only limited to temporarily held celebrations, in Native American context they served a more important function. In many native cultures, tricksters and clowns were an intrinsic part of their religious ceremonies which included humour and laughter caused by

sacred clowns. As Lucile Charles observes, we find clown societies among Native American communities. Those clowns, who were believed to have a role in the fertility of nature, animals and men, entertained their audiences with their dances and lewd and ludicrous wit; on the other hand, they were highly feared due to the supernatural powers especially the masked clowns were believed to have (30). Analysing the presence of clowns in diverse native cultures, Charles concludes that the function of the clown appears to be “a high priest of the psychological ritual re-inducting the earthy, neglected functions” (34).

In the European tradition of folly especially during Renaissance we find the like of Native American trickster who functions as a very important literary figure that oscillates between opposite poles of sublimity and profanity; everything and nothing. As we can see in Erasmus’s *The Praise of Folly*, the Renaissance mind saw folly as an allegorical figure with an attempt to satirise the flaws, misdoings and hypocrisy of people and institutions. Erasmus’s *The Praise of Folly* is narrated by the Folly herself who praises her virtues and qualities. She celebrates mankind’s flaws and corporeality and asserts that it is her that brings pleasure and delight into life. According to her, it is better to be a fool than a wise man and unlike those who are engaged in science and philosophy which lead to unhappiness, fools are the merriest people in the world. She claims that Folly is the one from whom the declaration of truth comes: “Again, take notice of this no contemptible blessing which Nature has given fools, that they are the only plain, honest men and such as speak truth. And what is more commendable than truth?” (58). At a time when the medieval values were weakening and collapsing, making way for Renaissance humanism, the folly emerged as the spokesman of this new age. As the symbolic figure of this new age, Erasmus’s Folly not only makes a critique of society, folly of mankind and his flawed wisdom but she also sees into the essence and the nature of things. In addition to folly, we find the like of Native American trickster under different forms and names like clowns, buffoons, jesters, picaros and rogues in the Western culture and in its literary productions who, as wise fools, are able to see

deeper and diverse versions of truth and mention the unmentionable with immunity due to their outcast status as peripheral figures.

In Shakespearean plays, fools, who are characterized by being superior in mind but inferior in status, are ubiquitous in both tragic and comic forms. Like Erasmus's folly, Shakespearean fools are distinguished from traditional fools who provoke laughter without being sophisticated. The artificial sage fools of Shakespeare have consciousness over the essence of things and they are able to see human pretence and hypocrisy. Like Native American trickster figures, Shakespearean fools exist as liminal figures and wield power through language. In *Shakespeare's Folly*, Sam Gilchrist Hall, attempts to contextualize Shakespearean philosophy of folly within the European humanist thought. In Shakespearean drama, Hall argues, it is through the discourse of the folly's critique of the dominant modes of reason that we come to see the philosophical discourse of Shakespeare, which is to provide different ways of interpretation through exuberant irony, wordplay and paradoxes as opposed to the dogmatic and serious philosophy (28). In that regard, Shakespeare, according to Hall, belongs to the intellectual strand of Western philosophy promoted by the works of Socrates, Montaigne, Nietzsche, Foucault and Adorno who in one way or another question the fallacy of considering oneself sane and wise. Instead, they appraise the paradoxical wisdom of folly which suggests "the possibility of the impossible" (69). What this body of intellectuals have in common, Hall suggests, is a kind of Negative Capability, according to which the condition of being in uncertainty is philosophically valid unlike the dogmatic insistence on the universal certainty of one's identities, systems or categories which is intellectually indefensible and irrational (41). We find the first use of Negative Capability by Keats in a letter he sent to his brothers George and Thomas in which Keats emphasizes that in Shakespeare we find enormous moments of Negative Capability and defines it as "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (942-3). In Shakespearean plays, fools and court jesters function as important liminal figures to create the moments of Negative Capability by holding a mirror to life, questioning the order

of things and making us notice the differences between the essence and appearance of things and humans.

We see the role and function of such typical western wise fools in the king-fool dichotomy of *King Lear*, in which the role of the King and the Fool are reversed as the King becomes the fool and the fool becomes the source of wisdom. As a result of his peripheral status, the fool becomes exempt from punishment and thus the straightforward declaration of truth comes from the fool:

Lear Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool All thy other titles thou hast given away. That thou wast born with.

(*King Lear* 1.4. 137-9)

Lear's Fool, as Enid Welsford emphasizes, is a sage fool who sees and speaks up the truth as an 'all-licensed' critic but he is more than the fools in the Shakespearean comedies because unlike Feste and Touchstone who act as the spokesman of sanity and arouse a good laughter as fools, Lear's Fool by offering his coxcomb to his superiors, goes beyond sparking laughter: he incites a question into what a human is and what madness means. Lear's Fool, therefore, plays a prominent role to confront the tragic aspect of human life which revolves around the clash between good and evil, wisdom and folly and the desperate plead for justice to the deaf Heavens just like in a morality play. Yet, whereas we have answers in morality plays, in *King Lear* questions are provoked and ambiguities are aroused over the nature and destiny of goodness (257). Through use of sarcasm and irony, the Fool holds a mirror to the King's mistakes and as a result the King is reduced to nothingness by the Fool: "... Now thou art an O without a / figure. I am better than thou art now. I am a Fool, thou art / nothing. ..." (*King Lear* 1.4. 174-6). It is only when the King goes into madness and becomes the fool himself is he able to see and speak the truth: "When we are born, we cry that we are come / To this great stage of fools" (*King Lear* 4.6. 180-1).

We also see the Western tradition of the wise fool who functions as an ‘all-licensed’ critic with immunity due to his liminal status in Feste, the fool of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. Like Lear’s Fool, Feste appears to be an astute observer, to have great insight into the nature of things as well as being very good at playing with words. When Feste says “... words are very rascals, since / bonds disgraced them” (*Twelfth Night* 3.1. 16-7), we understand that he does not trust the words others utter as he is aware that people are disguised behind masks and thus it is Feste the clown who is not deceived by the appearance or speech of others. As a wise fool, Feste is able to notice the futility of Olivia’s mourning and the superficiality and folly in Duke Orsino. Even though he is inferior to them in his social status, he is superior in mind and he manifests this superiority through language which functions as a weapon for trickster-like liminal figures, and thus as a master of language he claims to be Olivia’s “corrupter of words” rather than her fool (*Twelfth Night* 3.1. 30). As Harold C. Goddard puts it: “The main function of a clown is to juggle with words until everything, often including the truth, is upside down and inside out” (301), and it is Feste who reverses the order of things by his wits and wordplays.

We find the same trickster spirit in the court clown of *As You Like It*, Touchstone; and in Sir Falstaff of *Henry IV*, Part I, who act as ‘all-licensed’ critics. Being characterized by his wits, wisdom and humour, Touchstone, like Lear’s Fool and Feste, appears to be a wise and intellectual fool with great insight into the essence of things and into the merit of folly: “Why, thou say’st well. I do now remember a saying: / 'The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.” (*As You Like It* 5.1. 26-8). Like Feste, Touchstone is conscious of being a fool and can notice superficiality and folly in people of high position: “The more pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise / men do foolishly” (*As You Like It* 1.2. 68-9). According to Hermann Ulrici, Touchstone belongs to the old English clown tradition with the jingling cap and bells and a conscious fool who is and aspires to remain a fool with his deep insight into the faults and flaws of humankind (58). In a trickster-like manner, Touchstone reverses what is being uttered in a

sarcastic and humorous way and thus he acts, as Robert H. Bell points out, as “the laureate of relativity” who creates and thrives on ambiguity (24).

Falstaff, on the other hand, differs from Lear’s Fool, Feste and Touchstone in terms of his social background and status. However, in *Henry IV*, Part I he appears with a lot of trickster-like characteristics. Like trickster figures, Falstaff, as Robert H. Bell states, creates sublimity and travels between the real and fantastic, sublime and profane. For Falstaff, nothing is spared without being violated whether it be the sacred, authentic, reliable, honour, love and so on. He pushes the limits of foolery to the degree of “seeing matter in terms of spirit and spirit in terms of matter” (19-20). Leading an inappropriate lifestyle that is not expected from a knight, Falstaff organizes the court in the tavern and he takes great pleasure in mocking, mimicking and parodying men of higher positions like the King and dominant institutions like the monarchy. Similar to trickster figures, where Falstaff lives, disorder and chaos rule as he lives “out of all order, out of all / compass” (*Henry IV, Part I* 3.3. 19-20). Robert H. Bell defines Falstaff as “Shakespeare’s foolosopher King” because he possesses not only the characteristics of material fools like Touchstone and is engaged in physical and bodily pleasures but also those of holy Fools with profound sublimity and “inexplicable touch of infinity” (35). Likewise, Harold Bloom sees the immortal Falstaff as a comic philosopher and regards him as Socrates of Eastcheap where he is a teacher of delight, bliss and freedom in addition to being superior to all other comedians in wisdom and wit. According to Bloom, the quintessence of Fallstaffian philosophy is “*do not moralize.*” His only vulnerability is to love Prince Hal, who eventually causes his destruction at the end of *Henry IV*, Part 2 (“Introduction,” xii) Harold C. Goddard, similarly, sees the superiority of imagination to fact and man’s eventual defeat of Fate in Falstaff. According to Goddard, Falstaff lives life to the full and thus in his world there is no boredom but gaiety and charming life, as a result, it is thanks to him that life becomes worth living (179-80).

Although Falstaff manifests quite a lot of trickster characteristics such as causing the reversal of roles and overthrow of hierarchies in a carnivalesque manner, he does not belong to the strand of European trickster figures of clowns, fools, jesters and picaros who obtain their liminal and peripheral status as a result of their poor background and low social status. Native American and European trickster figures obviously share a lot in common when they engage in transgressive acts and come up with alternative ways of perception and truth as marginal figures. However, while in the European tradition, tricksters by and large come from lower classes or disgraceful backgrounds which compels them to survive in a hostile world through their wits, in Native American tradition tricksters appear to gain their trickster status regardless of their origin or background. Tricksters in Native American perspective thus, as Franchot Ballinger points out, attain their marginal status by rejecting being defined and classified in “both” or “either/or” terms and thus they cannot get out of the periphery (32). In European trickster tradition, by contrast, such peripheral figures appear as a result of their low social status and disreputable backgrounds and they target the hypocrisy and corruptness of their society and authorial figures as we see in the tradition of the picaresque novel in which the picaro who comes from the lower class engages in thievery, cheating and lying in order to survive in a hypocritical and corrupted world.

As Babcock-Abrams emphasizes, the episodic style of the picaresque novel is characterized by being peripatetic as the picaro is “fleeing from, looking for, or passing through” some social inhibitions. As a result of his tricks through which he negates and violates the social norms, the picaro appears to be condemned to “contingency and unpredictability” (159). Harry Sieber outlines the evolution of the picaro in three phases: First, the picaro appeared as the discreditable child of prostitutes and thieves. His parents were the descendants of “*conversos*”, converts with questionable roots. He was suffering from poverty and hunger and thus he was compelled to leave home at an early age and to serve himself in the outside world where he encountered wealthy and honourable people. His acquisition of the concepts of right and wrong was shaped by his experiences in the world and were

defined with regards to his profit. Subsequently, all these features of the picaro were modified. This time, the narrator was not a rogue but an adventurer. He descended from more honourable parents and his engagement in crime meant to uncover the fraud and corruption of those he met up. Being repentant of his malicious deeds in the end, he was ready to die. Finally, the Spanish tradition of picaresque novel bore more resemblance to the earliest picaro yet this time he was transformed into a self-conscious clown (113). There are, as Ballinger observes, quite a lot of parallels between the picaro and Native American trickster as they are both heroes of episodically narrated adventurous stories; they both appear to be ambiguous figures; both have satirical aims; and their engagement in transgressive acts against civil and moral codes puts them in socially marginal positions. On the other hand, there are some cultural, social and ontological differences that set these two figures apart as in trickster we find an idiosyncratic dramatization of Native American perspective towards life and thus Native American trickster offers “an openness to life’s multiplicity and paradoxes largely missing in the modern Euro-American moral tradition” (21).

We also find the same subversive role and function of European trickster tradition in Zanni (the servants) of Commedia dell’arte which originated in the middle of the sixteenth century in Italy. Commedia dell’arte which was performed in the form of an improvised comedy in the marketplace was made up of a number of stock characters some of whom wore masks. Just like in the carnival, the masked type was stripped of his real identity and assumed another persona and thus he was immune from his transgressive actions. Zanni, who spoke in a loud and coarse voice as his type came from Venetian market porter, was characterized by being insatiable, unmannerly and bearish. Existing at the lowest order of the hierarchy, Zanni was the “regrettable eternal unfortunate” and “the dispossessed eternal immigrant worker” who “suffers from the spasms of an ancestral hunger” (Forti-Lewis, 148). Despite their cultural, social and ontological differences, the actions and tricks performed by Zanni, called Lazzi, are reminiscent of the trickster’s actions as, like tricksters, Zanni was “intolerant of discipline and authority”

(Rudlin, 71). Commedia dell'arte included two Zanni: Brighella and Arlecchino (Harlequin). The first Zanni, Brighella is best known for his intrigues, deceits, and confusions. Being sly and foxy, he finds a solution in every difficult situation. He was, like tricksters, “amoral rather than evil” (Rudlin, 87). As a master trickster, Brighella was engaged in thievery and indulged in pleasure at the tavern. He was respected not because he was liked but mostly because he was feared. The second Zanni called Arlecchino, on the other hand, was more naïve and comic than Brighella. As Forti-Lewis highlights, Arlecchino lived in a world without morality yet unlike Brighella, he was never engaged in malice (149).

Commedia dell'arte contributed to the emergence of one of the most popular versions of trickster-like figures in English puppet tradition, known as Punch and Judy. Punch is thought to have originated from Pulcinella of the commedia dell'arte. Pulcinella is famous for having dualistic traits: He either pretends to be foolish as a wise character or he is a fool but pretends to be wise. Punch and his wife Judy were quite popular in Victorian era. In a typical plot, Punch throws his child through the window out of exasperation, beats his wife with a slapstick, is bitten on the nose by his dog, and as a result he is obliged to run away from authority to evade from being arrested and executed. Each time he comes across a figure of authority, he manages to escape through trickery or violence until he finally confronts with the devil whom he manages to defeat. Punch is famous as a literary figure for insubordination to authority and when he first appeared, he acted as “a satirist and social critic” (Regan, 365).

2.2 Typology of Native American Trickster Figures

As Barbara Babcock-Abrahams emphasizes, in literature the heroes are often characterized by their deviation from the orders, rules and norms the society has established. Therefore, in myths, plays or stories, people revere, denounce or laugh with and at such deviants. As some myths revolve around the areas between categories of humane and bestial, natural and cultural, they are exemplified by

tricksters and their tales who are able to inhabit interstitial areas, and play with the social and cultural order of things and manage to evade from it (147-8). The picaro, rogue, fool, buffoon and trickster are some examples of those literary characters who shatter the structure of the established order and can get away from it as a result of their outcast status as marginal figures. In literary texts, myths, folk and fairy tales of hundreds of Native American peoples, tricksters have appeared in human, animal and divine forms.

In Native American mythology, the most well-known tricksters appear to be animals such as coyote and raven which are known for being capable of exploring and adapting to new terrains. Lévi-Strauss questions the problematic figure of the trickster in North American mythology and asks: "Why is it that throughout North America his role is assigned practically everywhere to either coyote or raven?" (224). He finds the answer to this question in the opposite terms of Life and Death. According to Strauss, while Life is in the first triad connected with agriculture and in the second with herbivorous animals, Death is associated first with warfare and then with beasts of prey. The contrast between these concepts require a mediating category and it is hunting that acts as a mediator between agriculture and warfare. Hunting is associated with carrion-eating animals: the coyote and raven. Strauss formulates his argument as such: carrion eating animals are akin both to beasts of prey as they consume animal food and to herbivorous animals because they do not kill what they eat (224). Just like carrion-eating animals of the coyote and raven, the trickster is, according to Levi Strauss, "a mediator" (226) and it is no wonder that many myths involve the actions of tricksters as the purpose of myths is to make a synthesis of contradictions. And it is those carrion-eating animals which stand between Life and Death that merge those contradictions as mediators (229). Coyote, therefore, has remained one of the oldest Native American trickster figures in both literary and cultural genres as "[p]rimal scatologist and scandalous omnivore, sacred progenitor and witness to creation, serial corpse and mythomaniachal traveling id" (Rosenberg, 155). As Erdoes and Ortiz, in *American Indian Trickster Tales*, put it:

Coyote, part human and part animal, taking whichever shape he pleases, combines in his nature the sacredness and sinfulness, grand gestures and pettiness, strength and weakness, joy and misery, heroism and cowardice that together form the human character. [...] As a culture hero, Old Man Coyote makes the earth, animals, and humans. [...] As trickster, he is greedy, gluttonous, and thieving. (2)

The trickster figures in North American mythology can be divided into seven distinct types according to Michael Carroll. For the tribes dwelling alongside the west of Mississippi, the trickster is the Coyote; in the Northeast regions the trickster is known as Nanabush; it is the Raven in the Pacific Northwest; for tribes in the Southeast it is the Rabbit; among the Siouan people it is either the Hare or the Spider called Iktomi, also known as Wakdjunkaga, Ishtinike and Inktonmi by different Siouan tribes; in the western Plains he appears as Napi also called Nihanca, Wiho and Nihaat by various tribes dwelling on the Plateau (107-8). In whatever forms or names they appear, trickster figures serve important roles and functions in Native American communities.

The trickster for many Native American communities plays an important role in the creation stories. In a Crow creation tale called “Old Man Coyote Makes the World,” we find in Erdoes and Ortiz’s *American Indian Myths and Legends*, the divine power of a Creator is attributed to a trickster. In the tale, Old Man Coyote, while walking alone one day, sees nothing but water everywhere. Feeling bored of loneliness, he spots two ducks which tell him there may exist something else below the water, and one duck dives deep a few times to bring a root and a little soft earth from below the water, out of which Old Man Coyote makes grasses, plants, trees and all kinds of food. He goes on creating hills, mountains, ponds, rivers, springs and fresh water to drink. Old Man Coyote, in order to avoid loneliness, “took up a handful of mud, and out of it made people.” He then created women and animals in both male and female forms, gave weapons to humans to protect themselves, gave them different languages and divided them into tribes as a result of which wars, horse stealing and singing of honouring songs appeared. (88-93). Coyote, a

paradoxical and ambivalent character, assumes the role of the Creator for the Pomo people, a native tribe of California, as well. According to the myth, as Mircea Eliade has noted, the world is created by Coyote by accident. After creating the world by accident and then men from specks of down, Coyote is denied food and ridiculed by men, some of whom he turns into animals. Despite possessing a paramount position as a Creator, the trickster in a great number of Native American tales behaves as a liminal figure who entertains people (155-6). As will be emphasized later in this chapter, unlike the western trickster figure, the trickster from the Native American perspective does not gain his trickster status from his low social status or disreputable background and thus he possesses a central role in spite of his peripheral status.

In his discussion of Native American myths and folk tales, Franz Boas has observed that the theory of the creation of the earth as existing in the mind of a Creator beforehand and then materializing as an objective reality out of the Creator's will is an unfamiliar concept to a Native American mind. But rather, according to many Native American communities, everything including the inventions, rituals and ceremonies have pre-existed somewhere in an objective mode and they were only transformed into their present state by a superior being (390). In a great number of Native American tales it appears to be the trickster figure who takes on the role of a transformer through whose acts the land, mountains, lakes, rivers and oceans were put in order; the earth was transformed to be a habitable place; and animals and humans have gained their current shapes. As Ricketts in "The North American Indian Trickster" has noted, the trickster creates order out of the chaos of the myth times by transforming the things into their present forms and establishing laws and norms applicable to all times (341).

In addition to preparing the world for humans as a transformer, the trickster figure acts as a culture hero in many Native American tales and myths as he is believed to have introduced fire, hunting, agriculture and food to mankind and also granted them the skills they need to survive on earth. In a tale called "Coyote Takes Water

From the Frog People,” the “trickster-transformer-culture hero (or trickster-fixer, for short)” (327), as Ricketts calls him, is accredited with providing water to mankind through his tricky methods. In the tale, while hunting, Coyote comes across a dead deer one of whose rib bones looks like a big dentalia shell. Coyote goes to the frog people who are in possession of all the water on earth and who, in exchange for the shell, agree to let Coyote drink as much water as he likes. The water is behind a large dam and Coyote puts his head down under water a few times as he claims to be very thirsty. The frog people start to suspect of Coyote who all the time his head is under water is digging out under the dam which eventually causes its collapse and lets water flow into the valley as a result of which waterfalls, creeks and rivers are formed. Thanks to Coyote, anyone can now go to the river and take some water without the consent of the frog people (*American Indian Myths and Legends*, 355-6).

Despite his prominent role as “the creative transformer of the world and the heroic bringer of culture” (Ricketts, 327), the trickster still remains a selfish buffoon in some native stories. That is, he introduces mankind lots of essential objects and skills not out of good heartedness but rather to satisfy his own desires and pleasures. In those tales, he remains selfish, as Michael Carroll observes, since most of his actions serve to gratify his own lechery and gluttony; and he remains a buffoon because his tricky endeavours to please his gargantuan desires frequently backlash and make him look foolish (106). In most of Raven stories, as Franz Boas observes, we either see the greed of Raven who is after as much food as he can effortlessly get or we encounter the Raven in erotic acts: to get hold of girls or his friends’ wives. As a result of such endeavours, he is usually punished by those afflicted with his deceits and tricks (395). In an Athapascan tale called “The Raven” we encounter a scheming raven trickster who disguises as a rich man and visits an old couple who intends to marry off their daughter to a wealthy man. Although he succeeds in leaving the camp with the girl through his deceits, his tricky schemes eventually come to light and as a punishment his beak is taken away from him. However, after

scheming another plan, the raven is able to regain his beak and flies away pleased with his success (*American Indian Myths and Legends*, 344-6).

Native American tricksters are thus characterized by their contradictory roles. On one hand, the Native American trickster acts as a creator, a transformer, a culture hero and a mediator to contact the sacred and the supreme beings. On the other hand, he engages in transgressive acts of mocking and parodying the sacred, violating the rules and breaking taboos. In this process of turning the sacred into the profane, he employs humour and laughter as a weapon. He laughs at the sacred as well as his own blunders and thus he teaches but also delights in many native stories and tales. As Angi Buettner observes, trickster tales are usually found on serious occasions where they incite laughter and that is why, in quite a lot of cultural and mythical stories, the sacred tales of creation of the world are followed by alternative trickster tales which undermine their ritualized solemnity and instead construct “the unofficial dirty and physical worlds we live in” and they counteract the creation stories of gods with those of “the chaotic and cosmic acts of the trickster.” The origin of laughter is astonishingly related with those tales of origin which suggests a close connection between creation and laughter which either precedes, accompanies or succeeds creation of the world or bringing cultural goods like language (119-20).

Despite their peripheral status, native tricksters play a fundamental role in preserving the Native American identity and liberating them from the yoke of the white man. As we see in “Coyote and Wasichu” a tale of Brule Sioux, a native people of South Dakota, a devious white man is outsmarted by a trickster. In this tale, a white trader man is renowned for being the best cheater. This wasichu² brags about cheating all of the natives around him. One day he is told that somebody could outcheat him wherever and whenever he wants. He, in turn, challenges the Coyote to see if he will outsmart him but Coyote rejects the offer on the ground of

² It is a term used by Native Americans to refer to people of European descent.

not having his cheating medicine with him but then agrees to accept the offer on one condition: only if the *wasichu* lends him his horse and also his clothes so that the horse may take Coyote as his owner. Accepting the offer and watching Coyote riding off with his horse and clothes, “this *wasichu* stood there bare-assed” (*American Indian Myths and Legends*, 342). According to the Sac Indians, after Wisaka, their trickster culture hero, made the world habitable and taught them all the customs and skills they need to live in the world, he retreated to the North. He is expected to return one day to free Native Americans from the rule of the white man (Briggs, 97).

In modern Western and Native American literatures these marginalized peripheral figures may even be protagonists and function to challenge and deconstruct the dominant discourses from within and to be an epitome of multiplicity, plurality, multivocality, polyvalence and ambiguity as centrifugal forces. In contemporary Native American literature, trickster figures mostly appear in human forms and by asserting communal values and norms, they contribute to the preservation of Native American communal culture and identity which is inseparable from the land. As they are not confined within the spatial and temporal limitations and they cannot be pinned down due to their paradoxical and contradictory nature, native tricksters in literary texts contribute to postmodern literature as they serve to relativize the truth and deconstruct the rules and values of dominant discourses. As Franchot Ballinger observes, Native American trickster’s most important contribution to mankind is the “vision, of the world and self.” The trickster helps fashion both the world and our perception by revealing the trickiness of reality and by showing how our perceptions mislead us easily (35).

2.3 Subversive Means of Trickster Discourse

2.3.1 Humour

Humour of the trickster discourse acts as an agent that empowers underprivileged groups to confront the repressive and ideological apparatuses of the dominant discourses. In trickster discourse, humour not only sheds light on the inequitable structure of the dominant discourses but it also enables disenfranchised groups to undermine and deconstruct hegemonic power. Humour, in that regard, might act as a liberating power on behalf of such groups. This subversive humour of the trickster discourse allows people to “view the world from a perspective that is amusing and comical rather than serious or sad” (Gordon, 3). However, the comical perspective towards life that this kind of humour offers is not just for the sake of amusement but rather it serves to challenge the status quo, erode its values and instead emphasize alternative ways of interpreting the order of things. This kind of humour, as Peter Berger emphasizes, “transcends the reality of ordinary, everyday existence; it posits, however temporarily, a different reality in which the assumptions and rules of ordinary life are suspended” (205). Such humour, Berger continues, “relativizes the paramount reality” and as a result, all of a sudden “the familiar is seen in a new light, becomes strangely unfamiliar” (207). And the trickster discourse employs this subversive function of humour that relativizes the truth and emphasizes the multiplicity of interpretations as opposed to the unitary, single perspective of dominant discourses. However, it should be borne in mind that the meaning and function of humour is polysemic and thus it defies a precise definition. What humour serves and how it functions depends on the context it is used in. Therefore, different approaches to humour have been suggested and we shall briefly look at the most common theories of humour developed throughout ages which as Morreall notes, can be divided into three: “where humour is derived from a sensation of superiority over what is laughed at; where humour derives from a sensation of psychological relief; where humour derives from the perception of incongruity in what is laughed at” (94).

The superiority theory of humour as its name suggests puts emphasis on establishing one's superiority over the target of humour. According to this theory, the function of humour is to take delight in the misfortunes and vices of those that are inferior to us. Summarizing this theory, Hobbes noted: "Sudden glory, is the passion which maketh those Grimaces called LAUGHTER; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleaseth them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves" (125, emphasis original). According to this theory, people derive pleasure through laughter when they discover their superiority over others and thus laughter is an expression of triumph over the shortcomings of the less powerful in any kind of social and political context.

Both Plato and Aristotle treated humour as a means to deride the follies and shortcomings of others. In the dialogue *Philebus*, Plato claims that "when we laugh at the ridiculous aspects of our friends, the admixture of pleasure in our malice produces a mixture of pleasure and distress" because "malice [is] a form of distress; but laughter is enjoyable, and on these occasions both occur simultaneously" (50). Aristotle holds a similar attitude to humour and he maintains, "comedy represents the worst type of people; worse, however, not in the sense that it embraces any and every kind of badness, but in the sense that the ridiculous is a species of ugliness or badness" (*Poetics*, 63). This theory of humour suggests degradation of an individual or a particular group of people for the purpose of exalting oneself as it serves to "create comic laughter" which "belittles, humiliates or debunks" an individual or a certain group of people (Berger, 51).

As this dissertation aims to address the subversive humour of the subaltern employed in trickster discourse to undermine and deconstruct the dominant discourses, the superiority theory of humour lies outside the scope of this dissertation. Therefore, unlike the humour of the trickster discourse, this theory of humour might be denominated as the laughter of the authority since it targets those regarded inferior in some way. In a social and political context, therefore, this type

of humour appears to originate from a position of authority which consolidates its dominance through laughter while, at the same time, contributing to silencing the disenfranchised individuals.

The second theory, called the relief theory of humour, maintains that laughter is caused by the release of suppressed psychological, intellectual or sexual desires. The obligations and constraints of social circumstances cause people to be overflowed with nervous energy and according to this theory of humour, people are discharged of this energy through laughter. Freud, one of the leading advocates of this theory of humour, proposes that humour functions as a defence mechanism as it serves to transform discontentment into contentment (*Jokes*, 289). Freud divides jokes into two categories: tendentious (hostile) and nontendentious (innocent or trivial) jokes. According to Freud, unlike nontendentious jokes, tendentious jokes are not “aim[s] in [themselves]” (*Jokes*, 117) and they enable us to protest and defy oppressive structures. A tendentious joke, Freud maintains, provides us the opportunity to manipulate something absurd we find in our adversaries as this kind of joke is exempt from restrictions and thus enables us to bring up this absurdity in a conscious and forthright manner (*Jokes*, 125-26). As the trickster discourse emphasizes the deconstruction of the established order through humour, trickster figures and their kinsfolk like clowns, buffoons, picaros, fools and jesters who might speak up for the subaltern and disclose the forbidden in a humorous manner employ tendentious jokes to confront those in control of authority. According to this theory, laughter allows individuals to subconsciously overcome inhibitions and it offers a way out for the suppressed feelings and opinions. Accordingly, in a number of texts produced by or advocating the recognition of subaltern groups, humour has been employed as a powerful weapon to undermine the established order and to defend these groups against inequitable social and political structures.

Freud holds the view that laughter is a possible gateway to the unconscious and it brings the suppressed and silenced feelings and thoughts to the surface. Humour, therefore, helps actualize the liberation of the mind from social and political

inhibitions. In other words, Freud's assertion is that humour allows us to confront our suppressed thoughts and emotions that we would otherwise disregard or restrain. Hence, he suggests that "humour is not resigned; it is rebellious. It signifies not only the triumph of the ego but also of the pleasure principle, which is able to assert itself against the unkindness of the real circumstances" ("Humour," 163). In the trickster discourse, likewise, the disempowered subject(s) in social and political circumstances are unable to stand up to the dominant discourses in a straightforward manner. Instead, they might employ humour as a means of resistance against both internal and external restrictions. Humour, in that sense, evades taboos and prohibitions which in turn serves to liberate those who employ it.

According to the last theory called the incongruity theory of humour, laughter results from the apprehension of incongruity. As Noel Carroll states, the comic, according to this theory, arises from a "deviation from some presupposed norm that is to say, an anomaly or an incongruity relative to some framework governing the ways in which we think the world is or should be" (51). What causes people to laugh, this theory suggests, is "an element of surprise, as words and situations violate expectancies" (Hill, 96). Originally, the incongruity theory was "a theory of wit rather than humour" (Billig, 62) and it referred to the fact that "two different ideas would be suddenly connected with comic effect" (Billig, 64). Hutcheson further highlights this point by suggesting that people are usually "moved to laughter by an overstraining of wit, by bringing resemblances from subjects of a quite different kind from the subject to which they are compared" (19). This theory acknowledges that humour is evoked by the violation of a norm. Therefore, unlike the superiority theory which emphasizes the superiority of the subject over the target in order to generate humour, incongruity theory of humour contends that humour results from noticing that people are speaking or acting in unexpected ways.

It should also be noted that incongruity is also a significant part of irony and therefore, as Noel Carroll suggests, "irony too can serve up comic humour, because

it traffics in contradiction, saying one thing while meaning its opposite” (59). Therefore, by relativizing and challenging power, both humour and irony “induce self-recognition to liberate us from our prison of self-content” (Berger, 41). The irony employed in Trickster Discourse enables the disenfranchised groups to triumph albeit temporarily in their confrontation with the dominant discourses and therefore, thanks to irony, as Hutcheon suggests, “the marginalized can be heard by the center, and yet keep its critical distance and thus unbalance and undermine” (*Irony’s Edge*, 30).

2.3.2 Satire

The functions and purposes of satire have been debated since classical times and different theories have been put forward to explain what it might serve when it is employed in a work of literature, art or just for entertainment. Satire, as Gilbert Highet states, can be divided into three groups: monologues, parody and narratives. In monologues, the satirist who speaks himself or behind a mask addresses the audience or readers directly. The satirist, in monologues, presents his opinion about the problem, gives examples to support his view and tries to dictate his view to the public (13). Two of the most important types of this kind of satire are Horatian and Juvenalian satires. In Horatian satire, as stated by Gilbert, the satirist criticizes some social vice and human failings in a gentle and lighthearted humour. Juvenalian satire, on the other hand, attacks the social structure, power, decadence and corruption with outrage, ridicule and scorn. Whereas in Horatian satire, the satirist aims to juxtapose the truth with a smile in order to heal the vice and failings he witnesses, in Juvenalian satire, the satirist despises people, detests mankind and unlike Horatian satire, whose target is to cure, he aims to “wound, punish and destroy” (235). In addition to Horatian and Juvenalian satires, another common form of satire is Menippean satire. Menippean satire attempts to satirise the opinions and mental attitudes of people rather than individuals themselves. As they target the mental attitudes of people, “[t]he Menippean satirist, dealing with intellectual themes and attitudes, shows his exuberance in intellectual ways, by

piling up an enormous mass of erudition about his theme or in overwhelming his pedantic targets with an avalanche of their own jargon" (Frye, 311). Menippean satire has contributed a great deal to trickster discourse and therefore, it will be explored in more depth in due course.

The second group of satire is parody in which the satirist takes an original work and makes it "look ridiculous, by infusing it with incongruous ideas, or exaggerating its aesthetic devices; or he makes the ideas look foolish by putting them into an inappropriate form; or both" (Highet, 13). However, it is important to note that parody is not mere imitation or distortion but rather, as Hutcheon suggests, it is "a form of imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion, not always at the expense of the parodied text" (*A Theory of Parody*, 6). According to Freud, parody as well as caricature and travesty "are directed against people and objects which lay claim to authority and respect, which are in some sense sublime" (*Jokes*, 246). Simon Dentith, on the other hand, defines parody as "any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice" (9).

According to Linda Hutcheon, however, parody is not a form of satire but it is usually confused with satire because of the fact that the two modes are often used together. Calling parody a form of satire as many theorists have done, Hutcheon suggests, is too simplistic, and also erroneous in giving parody a social function. While the target of parody is 'intramural', that of satire is social, and moral, that is, 'extramural.' For her, unlike parody, satire holds the vices and follies of mankind to mockery but for the aim of correction (43). Therefore, for Hutcheon, while parody can be defined as an "alleged representation, usually comic, of a literary text or other artistic object - i.e. a representation of a "modelled reality," which is itself already a particular representation of an original "reality" (49), satire can be defined as a "critical representation, always comic and often caricatural, of "non-modelled reality," i.e. of the real objects (their reality may be mythical or hypothetical) which the receiver reconstructs as the referents of the message" (49).

The final group of satire according to Gilbert Highet is narrative, the most common type of satire, in which the satirist does not generally appear, like in the case of non-parodic fictions or drama. In this form of satire, Highet suggests, the story “is not the end: it is the means” although the author most of the time hides this fact and pretends to be telling the real events in their chronological order (148).

The texts that will be analysed in this dissertation are politically oriented and thus they target the politics of power. The trickster figures incorporated in the selected texts make use of satire to struggle against dominant discourses by revealing the contradictions within those discourses in line with Foucauldian arguments. They reveal injustices, abuses, discrimination and oppression such discourses impose on the disenfranchised groups. A fundamental purpose of satire used in the selected texts is, therefore, to undermine the authority of the target and as a result, bring about a transformation in the order of things that target has constructed. Satire, employed by trickster figures in the selected texts, “is a genre of literature whose goal is not only to point out a social vice but to make it clear that this vice is intolerable” (Draitser, xxi). Therefore, when it is employed by disenfranchised groups, satire might become an influential weapon to disclose the injustices and atrocities committed against them. In that case, satire along with other means of Trickster Discourse appears to be one of the weak’s most powerful tools to deconstruct the prevailing ideology and point out its inequitable structure on behalf of those subjugated by it. According to Gilbert Highet, the most important reason that propels writers to write satires, which also forms the basis of this dissertation, is the fact that the satirist, as a member of the disenfranchised group, has been exposed to contempt, scorn or social injustice and thus he/she regards the world as “a permanent structure of injustice” (8). Through his/her particular mode of humour and this particular constructed stance, the satirist attacks the dominant discourse in a humorous manner and reveals the overall social and political structure as unjust, on behalf of their entire subordinated group. The selected texts in this dissertation employ not only satire but also irony for this purpose. Therefore, it is important to point out the distinctions between the two.

2.3.3 Irony

In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye asserts that “an object of attack” is prerequisite for satire. Besides, what is essential in satire, according to Frye, is “wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd” (224). A writer who intends to employ satire in his/her text uses a wide range of techniques of satire such as “irony, paradox, antithesis, parody, colloquialism, anticlimax, topicality, obscenity, violence, vividness, exaggeration” (Highet, 18). Although satire generally makes use of irony as its material, the differences between them needs to be put down. According to Northrop Frye:

The chief distinction between irony and satire is that satire is militant irony: its moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured. Sheer invective or name-calling (“flything”) is satire in which there is relatively little irony: on the other hand, whenever a reader is not sure what the author's attitude is or what his own is supposed to be, we have irony with relatively little satire. (223)

Unlike satire, which, as a moral agent, aims at combining laughter and disdain for the purpose of correction, irony functions through ambiguity. Through such ambiguity, irony, as Hutcheon suggests, “irritate(s)” but “it can also mock, attack, ridicule; it can exclude, embarrass and humiliate” (*Irony's Edge*, 14). Irony might be used against disenfranchised people to “reinforce authority” as well as for “oppositional and subversive ends” (28). “Irony's edge” thus according to Hutcheon, functions “to ingratiate, and to intimidate, to underline and to undermine; it brings people together and drives them apart” (53). This duality inherent in irony might allow the subaltern to speak up against the dominant discourses and challenge the constructs of such discourses. Therefore, as Hutcheon highlights, “irony has been seen as a serious play as both a rhetorical strategy and a political method that deconstructs and decenters patriarchal discourses. Operating almost as a form of guerilla warfare, irony is said to work to change how people interpret” (30).

The selected texts in this dissertation employ postmodern irony in order to deconstruct dominant discourses. In postmodern irony, as D. C. Muecke suggests: “The old definition of irony - saying one thing and giving to understand the contrary - is superseded; irony is saying something in a way that activates not one but an endless series of subversive interpretations” (31). Postmodern irony allows the marginalized groups to exploit and subvert the dominant discourses, yet, as Hutcheon observes, it does not aim to bring “the margin into a center” because “[p]ostmodern difference is always plural and provisional” (*A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 63). It is well known that postmodern theory emphasizes the lack of an absolute truth but rather the relativity and multiplicity of meaning and interpretation. Postmodern theory challenges and questions the grand narratives constructed by dominant discourses and points out the artificiality of such constructs. As Hutcheon puts forward: “Postmodern discourses both install and then contest our traditional guarantees of knowledge, by revealing their gaps or circularities. They suggest no privileged access to reality. The real exists (and existed) but our understanding of it is always conditioned by discourses, by our different ways of talking about it” (*A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 157). The use of postmodern irony in selected texts, likewise, calls the artificial constructs of dominant discourses into question and invites the readers to get to see the tyranny, discrimination, injustice and atrocities those discourses have imposed on the marginalized groups. However, while doing so, it does not seek to replace the perspectives of those discourses with those of the periphery but rather it points out the multiplicity and provisionality of perspectives.

2.3.4 Laughter

The comic, according to Peter L. Berger, produces “distinctive, objective perceptions of reality” and allows us to gain insights about a society. Therefore, Berger maintains, the comic can be treated “as a sort of popular sociology” (70), for it “invades and subverts the taken-for-granted structures of social life” and “reveals their incongruities and their fundamental vulnerability” (91). The comic,

Berger further illustrates, may therefore function as a form of resistance against dominant discourses as a result of which “the familiar is seen in a new light, [and] becomes strangely unfamiliar” (207).

In *Laughter*, Henry Bergson sets out three fundamental observations which indicate the field in which the comic and laughter are to be found. The first observation is that laughter is human. We laugh principally at humans even though we also laugh at animals as long as they display human qualities. Bergson’s second observation suggests that what accompanies laughter is “*an absence of feeling*”. When we laugh, goes on Bergson, “we must, for the moment, put our affection out of court and impose silence upon our pity” (4). In this regard, Bergson depicts laughter as a temporary release from the ordinary requirements of social behaviour. Bergson’s third observation emphasizes that laughter is a socially shared act because feeling isolated from others, one can hardly be appreciative of the comic. Therefore, an echo is required for laughter to emerge (5).

According to Bergson, laughter does not seek to relieve individuals from the burdens of social life but instead it serves to inhibit the sort of excessive demeanours that violate social rules and Bergson thus suggests that “rigidity is the comic, and laughter is its corrective” (21). Each society, Bergson points out, comes up with various kinds of disciplinary methods in order to protect the rigidity of its structures, and laughter functions as a means in order to safeguard the social order and therefore, “rather humiliating for the one against whom it is directed, laughter is, really and truly, a kind of social "ragging""(135), and “in laughter” which may function as a social corrective “we always find an unavowed intention to humiliate, and consequently to correct our neighbour, if not in his will, at least in his deed” (136). Bergson’s definition of laughter reminds us of the superiority theory of humour which regards laughter as a means to mock those who are inferior to us and revel in their imperfections.

Laughter, according to Bergson, cannot be altruistic or non-discriminatory. As Bergson points out the socially corrective function of laughter, laughter, for him, aims at the humiliation of the individual who is the target of laughter. In that regard, society takes revenge from those who have violated its rules and thus consolidates its power through laughter. Laughter would be unable to achieve that objective if it bore any traces of compassion and gentleness (197). There is obviously some truth in Bergson's definition of laughter as long as it draws attention to the social function of laughter and thus stresses its place and utility in a social context. For Bergson, society expects individuals to have "the greatest possible degree of elasticity and sociability" and when it encounters an individual who behaves with "a certain rigidity of mind, body and character" (21), it uses laughter to soften such rigidity. Laughter thus acts as a social corrective against an individual who has breached the rules and unsettled the established order. Just like in the superiority theory of humour, the function of laughter for Bergson is to correct the behaviour of nonconformists and reintegrate them into society. However, what Bergson fails to appreciate is the power of laughter that can shatter the established order on behalf of the disenfranchised groups who, within the humorous moment, can unravel the gaps and inconsistencies in the discourses of that order because "by laughing at power, we expose its contingency, we realize that what appeared to be fixed and oppressive is in fact the emperor's new clothes, and just the sort of thing that should be mocked and ridiculed" (Critchley, 11). The power of laughter used against dominant discourses especially when it is employed by disenfranchised groups thus serves to undermine their rules, norms and values by creating Foucauldian reverse discourses from within.

2.3.5 Carnivalesque Laughter

Mikhail Bakhtin, analysed the vulgar laughter of the carnival, treating it as an act of riotous subversion. His study of carnival in Rabelais's texts explores how, in the medieval ages, the values, norms and taboos of the traditional world were brought into question through the laughter of the carnival. In other words, during the

enactments of these temporary festivals, authority was undermined, order was subverted and thus almost no taboos and hierarchies were left inviolate. Carnival, according to Bakhtin, “celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierachal rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was” therefore, “the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed” (*Rabelais and His World*, 10). Laughter in Trickster Discourse has a similar function. It aligns with the marginalized factions and aims at their liberation albeit temporarily from the established order within the humorous moment. The way Bakhtin treats laughter that springs forth during the carnival is, therefore, particularly significant within the scope of this research. Analysing laughter that materializes during carnivals, Bakhtin states:

It is, first of all, a festive laughter. Therefore, it is not an individual reaction to some isolated “comic” event. Carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people. Second, it is universal in scope: it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival’s participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent: It is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival. (*Rabelais*, 11-12)

Similarly, laughter in trickster discourse attempts to deconstruct the established order and instead offer different perspectives about how the order of things could be reconstructed. Laughter in medieval carnivals, argues Bakhtin, “builds its own world versus the official world, its own church versus the official church, its own state versus the official state. Laughter celebrates its masses, professes its faith, celebrates marriages and funerals, writes its epitaphs, elects kings and bishops. Even the smallest medieval parody is always built as part of a whole comic world” (88). Through such carnivalesque laughter those at the bottom of the hierarchy could mock and even deride religious and official institutions and thus undermine the dominant discourses with immunity. Therefore, authorial figures, official institutions, religious practices and taboos could all be mocked by the masses during carnivals. Robert Wilson highlights the democratizing aspect of those

carnivals in which the silenced groups took part and created a realm as opposed to the sovereignty of the clerical and political discourses (78). Such disenfranchised masses could reverse the hierarchies and subvert and relativize the rigid constructs of the established order through the subversive laughter of the carnivals. Laughter, therefore Bakhtin asserts,

is essentially not an external but an interior form of truth; it cannot be transformed into seriousness without destroying and distorting the very contents of the truth which it unveils. Laughter liberates not only from external censorship but first of all from the great interior censor; it liberates from the fear that developed in man during thousands of years: fear of the sacred, of prohibitions, of the past, of power. It unveils the material bodily principle in its true meaning. Laughter opened men's eyes on that which is new, on the future. This is why it not only permitted the expression of an antifeudal, popular truth; it helped to uncover this truth and to give it an internal form. And this form was achieved and defended during thousands of years in its very depths and in its popular-festive images. Laughter showed the world anew in its gayest and most sober aspects. Its external privileges are intimately linked with interior forces; they are a recognition of the rights of those forces. This is why laughter could never become an instrument to oppress and blind the people. It always remained a free weapon in their hands. (*Rabelais*, 94)

Here Bakhtin's emphasis on the evasion of interior censor through laughter reminds us of Freudian approach to laughter as a defence mechanism. As has been discussed previously, laughter, according to Freud, helps people not only overcome inhibitions and restraints but discharge suppressed thoughts and feelings as well. From this perspective, the fear of divinity and authority that has been buried in man is overcome through laughter. Laughter also helps free people from the authoritative discourses. Therefore, the joyous moments created through laughter in medieval carnivals allowed the participants to see the world around them in a different light which highlighted the presence of a logic different from the one which dictated the official order of the dominant discourse. According to this official order, everything was structured around a hierarchy in which God, law and authority were superordinate and everything that was considered holy and noble was given precedence. Nonetheless, during the span of those carnivals, everything

was reversed: the superior became the inferior; the grotesque body rather than the sublime soul was given priority; the King became the clown and mocked by the masses and the clown became the King. In this process of uncrowning the King, mockery of the sacred and violation of taboos, the carnival appeared to symbolize the demise of the old world as well as the overthrow of social hierarchy. During these carnivals, the established rules, law and order were suspended temporarily, and thus participants could mock and reverse all hierarchies through laughter which has the power to “let us view the folly of the world by affording us the glimpse of another world, by offering … a signal of transcendence” (Critchley, 17). Even if those carnivals do not exist or are not as common in our contemporary times, we see such deconstruction of dominant discourses in a carnivalesque manner through trickster figures in literary texts.

2.3.6 Carnival and Trickster

The presence of trickster(s) in the selected texts of Alexie and Carter is reminiscent of what Bakhtin calls “dialogized heteroglossia” (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 372) to define novels especially those of Dostoyevsky in which multiple points of view are in conflict with each other. In Bakhtin’s theory of the novel, diverse languages of the speeches of the characters, narrative voices and diverse point of view in a text especially in novels challenge a single perspective or standpoint. According to Bakhtin, unlike the main divisions of poetic genres whose origins were influenced by “the unifying, centralizing, centripetal forces of verbal – ideological life,” the origins of the novel and some other prose genres akin to novels can be traced to the “decentralizing, centrifugal forces.” While poetry’s function, Bakhtin suggests, was to undertake the duty of serving the centralized national, cultural and political ideology in the higher official sphere, on the lower spheres, at the spectacles of buffoons and during local fairs, diverse points of view which were in clash with each other came into being through “the heteroglossia of the clown.” (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 272-3). The presence of such centrifugal forces as tricksters, clowns, fools, picaros, rogues and buffoons in literary texts constructs a heteroglot world

which in turn decentralizes the established order by parodying the official language, the sacred and the taboos.

In his theory of language, Bakhtin rests on Saussurean notions of structural linguistics according to which the linguistic sign is characterized by being arbitrary, non-referential and differential. Saussure argues that signs have meanings not on their own but rather in their relation with other signs within a linguistic system. Therefore, the meaning of a sign depends on its similarity or difference from other signs. As Saussure puts it: “[I]n language there are only differences *without positive terms*. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system” (120). Bakhtin applies Saussurean theory of language to the social contexts where utterances and words are materialized. Bakhtin emphasizes that the meaning in the arbitrary, non-referential and differential linguistic sign comes into being as a result of its being uttered in specific social contexts. Language, therefore, Bakhtin insists, is not an autonomous structure but rather it is interrelated with the preceding references, utterances and allusions: “The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes ‘one’s own’ when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention” (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 293).

Bakhtin, in *The Dialogic Imagination*, analyses the history and nature of literary forms such as the novel and the epic and their relation with language. All linguistic signs uttered within a specific social context are built on what has been said before and therefore all utterances owe their existence to their relation with the previous utterances which means they are dialogic. Dialogism, the interrelations between discourses, is therefore, an important element of language. According to Bakhtin, unlike epic which is monologic, the novel is dialogic and so in the novel we come across multiple voices and points of view which are in interaction with each other. In the novel, Bakhtin argues, diverse forms of speech and language of characters,

narrators and authors constitute a heteroglot world. The incorporation of heteroglossia, “*another’s speech in another’s language*” into the novel forms a kind of “*double voiced discourse*”. Double meanings, expressions and voices in this discourse are dialogically interrelated and therefore “double voiced discourse is always internally dialogized” as can be found in a “comic, ironic or parodic discourse” (324). The interacting languages of heteroglossia in the novel serves to decentralize a unitary perspective or point of view.

What distinguishes the novel as a genre from other literary forms, Bakhtin argues, is the multiple voices and heteroglossia that penetrate into the novel and create a structured artistic system through their organization within the novel (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 300). Each character, narrator or author comes with their own language and discourse within the novel and as a result, heteroglossia that enters a novel serves to “wash over a culture’s awareness of itself and its language, penetrate to its core, relativize the primary language system underlying its ideology and literature and deprive it of its naïve absence of conflict” (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 368). In the rogue, the fool and the clown, Bakhtin argues, we find the antithesis of the conventionality, high patos and seriousness. Through the deception of the rogue, the stupidity of the fool and the clown’s distortion of conventionality, we come to find the alternative of what is deemed high in an official sphere. In the novel, the clown as one of the oldest artistic kinds of human discourse distorts high languages and instead utters repugnant languages with impunity due to his privilege as a liminal figure; the rogue makes a parody of high languages through his humorous deception; and the fool is naively not able to comprehend them. All three of them, Bakhtin suggests, constructed heteroglossia in the earliest form of the novel and they also materialize in modern times. Such forms of dialogic categories embodied in the figures of the clown, the rogue and the fool determine their relation with heteroglossia in the novel genre. (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 404-5). To these what Bakhtin calls centrifugal forces of the clown, the rogue and the fool, we might as well add the trickster whose presence as a liminal figure serves to decentralize the single, unitary point of view in literary texts. In that regard, trickster discourse, with

its emphasis on multiplicity, plurality and heterogeneousness, contributes to postmodern theory.

In *Problem's of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin discusses a new way of artistic writing which he claims was brought about by Dostoyevsky: the polyphonic novel. Bakhtin finds in Dostoyevsky's novels, “[a] plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices.” In Dostoyevsky's novels, according to Bakhtin, instead of multiple characters in a unitary objective world we find a multiplicity of consciousnesses with their own discourses and Dostoyevsky's heroes are not bound by authorial discourse but rather by their own signifying discourse (6-7). In the polyphonic novel, therefore, a plurality of individual voices and a diversity of points of view interact with each other with their own consciousness and thus the polyphonic novel resists being merged into a single authorial and objective voice. Like in the carnival, the polyphonic novel suggests a dialogic world where each character's speech is both double voiced and heteroglot which decentralize a single worldview.

Kristeva in “Word, Dialogue and Novel,” elaborates on Bakhtinian concepts of heteglossia, dialogism and carnivalesque. To Bakhtin, as has been discussed above, a text exists within its social and historical context and Kristeva further illustrates this point by arguing that “each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read.” Referring to Bakhtin, Kristeva maintains that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (37). Kristeva comes to see a text as an intertext “which is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (“The Bounded Text,” 36). From this point of view, the Romantic conception of authorship which sees the production of literary texts as solitary, unique, omnipotent and autonomous is undermined because it emphasizes that a text is made up of allusions and references to pre-existing texts, and cultural, social and historical discourses.

According to Kristeva, the coexistence of opposites in a text means that it is dialogic and like Bakhtin she finds the origin of this dialogic tradition in the Menippean satire and carnival where a heteroglot and polyphonic world exists. Carnivalesque discourse according to Kristeva “breaks through the laws of a language censored by grammar and semantics, and at the same time, is a social and political protest” (“Word, Dialogue and Novel,” 36). As carnivalesque discourse “*exists only in and through relationship*,” it is the place where “two texts meet, contradict and relativize each other” (“Word, Dialogue and Novel,” 48). Similarly, Menippean discourse which developed from Socratic dialogue, Kristeva maintains, is characterized by being “*serious*” in which we find both the comic and tragic elements. In Menippean discourse, speech is liberated from historical restraints. Brothels, taverns, prisons and thieves’ dens are some of the places where adventures take place as well as during sacred worship or erotic orgies. In Menippean discourse, which is characterized by sudden transitions from low to high, fall to rise; and by contrasts of free and enslaved wise men, honorable courtesans and generous outlaws, we find violation of the sacred and attack on morality through an eccentric and scandalous use of language which appears to have an inclination to be ‘double’ (52-53).

Kristeva divides discourses into two: monological and dialogical. While monological discourse such as the epic, historical and scientific discourse is prohibited or censored to initiate a dialogue with itself as it is bound to the rule One or God (what Derrida calls ‘transcendental signified’), dialogical discourse which exists in the carnivalesque, Menippean satire and polyphonic novel evades censorship and prohibitions as it “constructs itself through a process of deconstructive genesis” (“Word, Dialogue and Novel,” 47). The presence of centrifugal forces like tricksters, clowns and fools in literary texts likewise defies monological interpretation and instead offers a dialogic meaning. Such peripheral figures reject the either/or limitations of binary oppositions and therefore they are characterized by multivocality, polyvalence, plurality and ambiguity. Hence, they offer multifaceted points of view in a literary text. We find such subversive trickster

figures in mythologies, folklore and literary texts of a wide range of both archaic and modern cultures. Wherever they are present they destroy the single, unitary perspective and undermine the dominant discourses from within.

CHAPTER 3

ANGELA CARTER'S *NIGHTS AT THE CIRCUS*

This chapter explores Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* within the context of trickster discourse. It analyses the text in terms of tricksters as well as other Bakhtinian centrifugal forces like the clowns and the shaman and accordingly discloses how the trickster discourse contributes to the postmodern humour and irony which subsequently lead to the deconstruction of patriarchal discourse. It treats Fevvers, the protagonist of the text, as a trickster figure, and emphasizes the relation between the trickster characteristics Fevvers bears and postmodern literature which "questions centralized, totalized, hierarchized, closed systems." (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 41)

Nights at the Circus is made up of three parts: London, Petersburg and Siberia as well as an Envoi, the concluding words. In the first part of the novel, Fevvers is interviewed by Jack Walser, a sceptical American journalist, in her dressing room in London where she narrates her life story. In the second part, we find Fevvers and Walser with Colonel Kearney's circus in Petersburg set to travel to Japan by train via Siberia. In this section, we also come across the carnivalesque aspects of the clowns' act. In the final part of the novel, we see a band of outlaws attacking the train and taking Fevvers and Lizzie as prisoners, and Walser, who is pulled out of the train wreckage with amnesia, running off into the wilderness where he meets the shaman. Such shifts in time and place, as Rachel Carroll notes, clearly demonstrate that there is "a double dynamic" in *Nights at the Circus*,

a return to origin, to the past, the archaic, the primitive, and a projection into the future. This departure from the past is signified by motifs of passage; the picturesque narrative is transported through space by means of the railway, while it traverses time and history by means of memory. Tableaux scenes of

the past, unmoored from their lodgings and set adrift in time, announce a sense of historical transition. The destination of unfolding time is made the subject of magical intervention; discontinuities and anachronisms disrupt the logic and time and history. Both the obsolescence of the past and the assumed course of the future are called into question. (189)

Nights at the Circus is set in 1899, at the very intersection of the old and new century which marked drastic changes in almost every single part of social, economic and political life. One of the major revolutions took place in the role of women who held marginalized positions in the Victorian society when “femininity became a spectacle” (Pykett, 138). In Victorian society, women were constantly objectified and commodified under the male gaze. It was also a time when there were hot debates on the issue of woman suffrage and whether women had a different nature than men. In the 19th century, as Lyn Pykett suggests, women were categorized into the concepts of proper and improper feminine. The proper feminine was characterized by “the domestic ideal, or the angel in the house; the madonna; the keeper of the domestic temple; asexuality; passionlessness; innocence; self-abnegation; commitment to duty; self-sacrifice; the lack of a legal identity; dependence; slave; victim.” The improper feminine, on the other hand, referred to women who were characterized by being “a demon or wild animal; a whore; a subversive threat to the family; threateningly sexual; pervaded by feeling; knowing; self-assertive; desiring and actively pleasure-seeking; pursuing self-fulfilment and self-identity; independent; enslaver; and victimiser or predator” (16). This patriarchal discourse, which is still perpetuated in our contemporary times albeit in a subtler manner, imprisons woman to the ‘ideals’ of improper feminine and thus silences her. As a result, the woman is condemned to serve as “a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning” (Mulvey, 15). Woman is turned into a passive subject as opposed to the active male within patriarchal discourse. Hence, as John Berger notes,

[...] *men act and women appear* (emphasis original). Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between and men and women but also the relations of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. (47)

The phallocentric world of the patriarchal discourse confines woman to a domestic life of conventionality where she is silenced and subordinated as a result of the artificial constructs attributed to her gender. As Gilbert and Gubar suggest, “a life of feminine submission, of “contemplative purity,” is a life of silence, a life that has no pen and no story, while a life of female rebellion, of “significant action,” is a life that must be silenced, a life whose monstrous pen tells a terrible story” (36).

In an attempt to challenge and undermine the patriarchal discourse which has constructed and perpetuated gender inequality, Carter, in *Nights at the Circus*, constructs an alternative realm through trickster discourse. Blurring the line between fact and fiction, Carter ingeniously manages to establish a turn-of-the-century realm, which is reminiscent of Bakhtinian carnivalesque, where women who were still discriminated against by the continuing ideologies of the Victorian Age were still campaigning to be conferred rights such as voting. Through Fevvers’ trickster qualities, Carter embarks on annihilating the long-established phallocentric order and instead conceive the New Man and the New Woman liberated from the traditional roles imposed by the dominant discourses in a carnivalesque manner. The carnivals, Bakhtin reminds us, “offered a completely different, nonofficial, extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations; they built a second world and a second life outside officialdom, a world in which all medieval people participated more or less, in which they lived during a given time of the year” (*Rabelais*, 6). Carter’s novel, likewise, casts doubts on the artificial constructs of gender created by the dominant patriarchal discourses and instead comes up with a different order of things through subversive means of trickster discourse such as postmodern irony, humour, laughter, disguise and deceit. Carter’s attempt to create the New Woman reminds

us of the New woman writings of the 1890s. As Lyn Pykett elaborates, both the women's sensation novel of the 1860s and the New Woman writing of the 1890s attempted to explore the contradictions in the feminine view of the dominant patriarchal discourse by focusing on individual women's 'actual' experience and their idealized perceptions of being angelic and domestic creatures. They debated on 'the Woman Question' and challenged the Patriarchal discourse's definition of woman and gender, her domestic and social role (6). The heroines in these novels were characterized by their transgressive nature who "transgressed, rebelled against, or were deformed by constricting social pressures" and they "challenged and problematised definitions of the feminine or of 'woman'" (9-10). Similarly, as an unconventional woman, Fevvers, in *Nights at the Circus*, transgresses the social norms and defies the patriarchal stereotypes attributed to femininity as a trickster figure who cannot be confined to the phallocentric definitions of femininity due to her nature which resists being defined in either/or terms.

Trickster discourse has contributed to postmodern thought with its emphasis on ambiguity, plurality, multivocality and polyvalence as opposed to the unitary, single perspective of dominant discourses. Postmodern literature, as it is well-known, questions the grand narratives and discourses and treats them as human constructs. It, therefore, subverts the unitary perspective of the established order and instead celebrates multiplicity, relativity and differences which helps open up a space for what Hutcheon calls "the ex-centric, the off center" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 41), the ones who stand on the margins of society and are discriminated due to their ethnicity, gender, race and so on. In postmodern texts, therefore, authors who give a voice to the disempowered and silenced groups are able to undermine the established truths and dominant discourses from within. As Foucault reminds us, discourse might be an apparatus and force of power yet it might also function as a deterrent, an impediment, a site for resistance: "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (*The History of Sexuality*, 101). Similarly, Carter attempts to undermine the patriarchal discourse from within

through a centrifugal female trickster figure who violates the conventional patterns of femininity, calls the disenfranchisement of the female into question and creates reverse discourses in which woman is empowered to speak up against the phallocentric order. In doing so, Fevvers, as a trickster figure, employs female humour and irony from a postmodern perspective in order to decentre and deconstruct the power and hegemony of patriarchal discourse.

As it is well known, the values, practices and norms of dominant discourses are communicated to mankind through language. Language, therefore, plays a tremendous role in determining and regulating the order of the things in a community. As the normal and abnormal in human interactions are contextualized through language, the dominant ideologies consolidate their authority and power over a certain group of people through their control of the language. Artificial identities of gender and sexuality have, therefore, been constructed and consolidated by the patriarchal discourses through their power and control over the use of language. In this respect, language, as Carter suggests, “is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation” (“Notes From the Frontline,” 30). In order to undermine the pillars of the dominant discourses, it is, therefore, of utmost importance to thrust away from the standard use of the language of the dominant discourse and reject its discriminatory binary oppositions which render the marginalized subjects defenceless and vulnerable to the injustice and discrimination they are exposed to. As Nancy A. Walker observes, the power of language to exploit and undermine the control of authority is recognized by the contemporary female author who is fully aware that she needs to manipulate the language of dominant discourse if she is to be successful in the deconstruction of the cultural myths regarding women (8). In an attempt to challenge and subvert the artificial constructs attributed to the femininity by the phallocentric ideology, *Nights at the Circus* engages in a dialogic relationship with the language of the patriarchal discourse. Therefore, in the novel, Fevvers’ resistance against being commodified and commercialized by the patriarchal discourse is characterized by her ironic and non-standard direct speech through

which she, as a trickster, takes control of her own story and manipulates words which enables her to assume the position of authority. As Jeanne Rosier Smith observes: “The trickster’s medium is words. A parodist, joker, liar, con-artist, and storyteller, the trickster fabricates believable illusions with words – and thus becomes author and embodiment of a fluid, flexible and, politically radical narrative form” (11). As a master of words, Fevvers confronts patriarchal discourse’s objectification and categorization of the female in a forthright manner: “What is marriage but prostitution to one man instead of many? No different! D’ you think a decent whore’d be proud to marry you, young man?” (*Nights at the Circus*, 21). Being aware of the fact that the symbolic order of language artificially constructs our identities, Fevvers challenges the patriarchal institutions and values and she acquires liberation through the act of narration.

The confinement and disempowerment of the female are to a large extent caused by the institutionalized phallocentric patterns of thoughts regarding marriage, gender and sexuality. Attempting to degrade the prevailing values and norms of the patriarchal discourse, Fevvers prompts Walser to see such artificially constructed concepts and identities from a different perspective. Hence, Fevvers depicts the brothel, in front of which she claims to have been put in a basket, as a free zone of a female world where women are able to achieve freedom. Being comprised of women including the dog who guarded it, Madame Nelson’s house, Fevvers maintains, was a place free from violence and anger (*Nights at the Circus*, 42). Fevvers thus attempts to construct a reverse discourse from within by controlling the language which “represents power, and for the essentially powerless person, acquiring and using language is a step towards understanding both self and power” (Walker, 10).

In the mid-19th century onwards, as Lyn Pykett suggests, the dilemmas and contradictions in the long-established institution of conventional marriage and bourgeois femininity started to become more and more apparent. Marriage then functioned as a shelter from female sexuality yet at the same time it was threatened

by it due to the “Social Evil of prostitution.” The trend to view contemporary marriage as a form of prostitution at that time helped undermine the patriarchal discourses of proper femininity and the institution of marriage. Those who defined the feminine from the viewpoint of a lack of sexual desire came to regard both marriage and prostitution as institutions which “involved a similar joyless and/or shameful exchange of sex for money or financial security” (65). Through a comparison of prostitution and marriage, the identification of prostitutes as decent, the depiction of the brothel as a female free zone, and the label attributed to her “the Virgin Whore” (*Nights at the Circus*, 61), Fevvers challenges the conventional definition of gender and the patriarchal values like conventional marriage in an attempt to deconstruct the dominant patriarchal discourse from within through the very language it has constructed. As Helene Cixous emphasizes:

If woman has always functioned "within" the discourse of man, a signifier that has always referred back to the opposite signifier which annihilates its specific energy and diminishes or stifles its very different sounds, it is time for her to dislocate this "within," to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of. And you'll see with what ease she will spring forth from that "within"-the "within" where once she so drowsily crouched-to overflow at the lips she will cover the foam. (887)

In this endeavour to create Foucauldian reverse discourses from within the patriarchal discourse, Fevvers employs the subversive means of trickster discourse in order to shatter the phallocentric order. The employment of one of the most important of those elements, irony, enables Fevvers to offer both Walser and the readers a glimpse of alternative perspectives and alternative order of things just as trickster figures do. Irony is an important device to deconstruct the dominant discourses from within because it reveals “a knowingness about how reality is ideologically constructed” (Nicol, 13). The ironist, according to Colebrook, is a member of the existing values and discourses and she also has the potential to question by whom those values are constructed and if they have any legitimacy. Being “provocative, disruptive” and “hierarchical,” irony, Colebrook insists,

enables the ironist to be detached from the rest of the community and gain a different perspective thanks to which she can challenge the established values and instead come up with alternative ways of life (120).

As outlined in the Introduction, tricksters are characterized by their ambiguous, paradoxical and contradictory nature. The paradoxical qualities of tricksters evade binary oppositions and thus they do not allow us to situate them in a predetermined context dictated through the mediums of the dominant discourses such as language and culture. As they are not bound to the rules and order established by the dominant ideologies, tricksters are capable of shattering the very foundations of such dominant ideologies and the principles they are built on. Speaking up for the discontented and silenced groups, tricksters are able to unveil the inequity and injustice those groups are exposed to by virtue of the contrariness present in their nature. The contradictory nature of Fevvers, likewise, as an intermediate trickster figure of half-bird half woman, frees her from the binary oppositions of the dominant discourses which constantly attempt to place her into the traditional role and identity of a female through Walser who as “a kaleidoscope equipped with consciousness” (*Nights at the Circus*, 7), is thrust into ambiguity over who Fevvers is: “is she really a man?” (*Nights at the Circus*, 37).

Walser, an American journalist, is an epitome of the modern Western man whose identity is constructed by the binary opposition of either/or and therefore, he is unable to comprehend the contradictory nature of Fevvers. Unable to grasp a different layer of reality, Walser distrusts the stories Fevvers narrates to him in their interview in Fevvers’ dressing room. His scepticism about Fevvers, the most famous aerialiste of the time, and about her life story of having been hatched out of an egg and having grown wings, prompts him to take part in the circus as a clown in order to uncover the truth regarding Fevvers and her wings. Throughout the novel, Walser struggles to fathom the contrariness of Fevvers’ nature which is beyond the scope of his understanding of the world. However, as a trickster figure, Fevvers plays with the perceptions of both Walser and the readers with the

promotional phrase attributed to her: “Is she fact or is she fiction?” (*Nights at the Circus*, 3). Blurring the line between fact and fiction, Fevvers targets Walser’s artificial interpretation of the order of the things which makes him blind to see an alternative reality. Not only does her contradictory nature allow Fevvers to evade the rules and expectations of her society but it also enables her to see beyond the established order and undermine it from within so as to invent a new world that points out heterogeneity, multiplicity and plurality in meaning, truth and order. In this ordeal, Fevver’s employs the weapons of the trickster discourse such as humour, laughter, satire as well as irony which “deconstructs and decenters patriarchal discourses” (Hutcheon, *Irony’s Edge*, 30).

In addition to their ambiguous and anomalous nature, trickster figures are characterized by being both/and creatures. Unlike the dominant discourse’s categorization of beings or things into binary oppositions of either/or, tricksters have a dual nature. This dualistic nature of trickster figures does not allow us to identify them according to the artificial categories and identities that are constructed by the dominant discourses. This intrinsic duality in their nature enables them to exist beyond artificially constructed identities of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality etc. and thus not to conform to social stereotypes. Like trickster figures, it is inconceivable to identify Fevvers through such stereotypes as she is both a woman and bird, both real and fake. Fevvers is called “Azrael, Azrail, Ashriel, Azriel, Gabriel; dark angel of many names” by Christian Rosencreutz, a gentleman to whom Fevvers is sold by Madame Schreck. Fevvers similar to traditional western literary trickster figures is characterized by her superior wits and greater insight and awareness into the nature of things in spite of her inferior status as a result of her low background. Therefore, unlike Native American trickster figures who appear to have full control over their life and thus cannot be sold or bought by authorial figures, Fevvers cannot resist being sold or exhibited at a museum. However, it is through her superiority in mind that she is able to resist being commodified and commercialized by Rosencreutz who is an embodiment of the dominant patriarchal discourse. Even though he gives impressive speeches in the House about voting

rights for women, he is, in fact, against giving women the right to vote whom he claims are made up of a different soul and material from men. He is terrified of growing old and in order to escape from death and lead an eternal life he intends to unite his body with that of Fevvers, namely with Azrael. As the “[q]ueen of ambiguities, goddess of in-between states, being on the borderline of species, manifestation of Ariorph, Venus, Achamatoth, Sophia” (*Nights at the Circus*, 92), Fevvers cannot be confined within the boundaries of the phallocentric world due to her trickster nature of being a both/and creature and reconciling the opposites as described by Rosencreutz in the text:

Lady of the hub of the celestial wheel, creature half of earth and half of air, virgin, and whore, reconciler of fundament and firmament, reconciler of opposing states through the mediation of your ambivalent body, reconciler of the grand opposites of death and life, you who come to me neither naked nor clothed, wait with me for the hour when it is neither dark nor light, that of dawn before daybreak, when you shall give yourself to me but I shall not possess you. (*Nights at the Circus*, 93)

Trickster figures bring the suffering, anguish and misery of the disenfranchised groups who are exposed to injustice and inequity by the dominant discourses to light. As a trickster figure, Fevvers speaks up for women who are silenced and victimized by the patriarchal discourse. However, patriarchal discourse might reinforce its power over people not only through men but also through women who have internalized its ideology or women who just choose to benefit from its “virtues” at the expense of the rest of the females, which undermines female solidarity. As Gilbert and Gubar state, “female bonding is extraordinarily difficult in patriarchy: women almost inevitably turn against women because the voice of the looking glass sets them against each other” (38). One of such women in the novel is Madame Schreck who, as the owner of the museum where ‘monstrous’ women are exhibited, claims to have “catered for those who were troubled in their ... souls” (*Nights at the Circus*, 63). As a matter of fact, she turned those women who worked at her museum into prisoners and slaves of the male gaze: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between

active/male and passive female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly” (Mulvey, 15). However, through allusions to mythological and fairy images, Carter attempts to demythologise and deconstruct the archetypal and cultural gender roles. The narration of the poignant life stories of disenfranchised and ex-centric ‘monstrous’ women working at Madame Schreck’s Museum by Fevers subverts the archetypal and fairy images they are imprisoned in. Those dispossessed women are defined in a way that transgresses the phallocentric discourse and thus they are not confined within the boundaries of ‘proper femininity’: “Who worked for Madame Schreck, sir? Why, prodigies of nature, such as I. Dear old Fanny Four-Eyes; and the Sleeping Beauty; and the Wiltshire Wonder, who was not three foot high; and Albert/Albertina, who was bipartite, that is to say, half and half and neither of either; and the girl we called Cobwebs” (*Nights at the Circus*, 66). With her “shepherd’s blue” four eyes, Fanny “saw too much of the world altogether” (*Nights at the Circus*, 78), and she rejects to get married and have children but rather she finds solace with other women at the museum. Being “always cheerful” and having “a smile and a joke” (*Nights at the Circus*, 78), she resists being confined within the boundaries of phallocentric view of the proper feminine but rather prefers a female world of liberation. Cobwebs, on the other hand, is a silenced and victimised melancholy woman whose life is summed up in a word, “Patience” (*Nights at the Circus*, 78). Cobwebs cannot be made to laugh even by the trickster-like both/and creature Albert/Albertine who “was a droll one and always full of fun” (*Nights at the Circus*, 79). Moreover, the allusion to the story of the famous princess of the fairy tale, Sleeping Beauty, who is waiting for the kiss to be awakened in the tale serves to demythologise and subvert the phallocentric constructs of gender and stereotypes attributed to femininity. Unlike Sleeping Beauty in the fairy tale, who after waking up by the magical kiss of the prince achieves happiness in the world as a signifier for the male other, in the novel the story of Sleeping Beauty shows the subjugation of the female in the phallocentric world. The daughter of a country curate in the novel, Sleeping Beauty keeps falling asleep for as long as a year until her news reaches Madame Schreck’s ears who, disguising as a philanthropic gentlewoman, takes her under the

pretence of having her examined by the best doctors and taking care of her. Yet, unlike the fairy tale, lying down naked on a marble slab at Madame Schreck's museum, Sleeping Beauty is turned into a prisoner or a slave of the male gaze. Another subjugated fairy-like woman, Wonder whose duty is to manicure Sleeping Beauty, is in the opinion of having fallen from grace conceivably because of the blood of her mother flowing in her veins. Her story of being sold by her mother and her subsequent experiences in the phallocentric world have led her to detest herself and believe that she can never get out of the abyss she is condemned to. However, she rejects being the signifier for the male other in the phallocentric world and thus when asked why she chooses to degrade herself working in this house of shame while she could earn a good living somewhere else, she replies: "I'd rather show myself to one man at a time than to an entire theatre-full of the horrid, nasty, hairy things, and, here, I'm well protected from the dark, foul throng of the world, in which I suffered so much. Amongst the monsters, I am well hidden; who looks for a leaf in a forest?" (*Nights at the Circus*, 72-3).

The oppression and victimization of women is not limited to the London part of the novel but it extends to Petersburg and Siberia parts as well. Little Ivan's baboushka is described as: "All Russia was contained within the thwarted circumscription of her movements; and much of the essence of her abused and withered femaleness. Symbol and woman, or symbolic woman..." (*Nights at the Circus*, 110). Mignon, another victimized woman on Captain Kearney's Grand Imperial Tour, is constantly beaten by her husband, the Ape-Man and abandoned by her lover, the Strong Man to a tiger. Her short memory is the only thing that saves her from despair and misery: "She had the febrile gaiety of being without a past, without a present, yet she existed thus, without memory or history, only because her past was too bleak to think of and her future too terrible to contemplate; she was the broken blossom of the present tense" (*Nights at the Circus*, 162-3). Thanks to the help of Fevvers and Lizzie, an ardent socialist against the subjugation of the female, Mignon finally renounces the victimhood and recreates herself in the lesbian relationship with the Princess. As mentioned above, language is a medium of the

dominant discourses to subjugate the less significant part of binary oppositions and thereby perpetuating their omnipresence. In the case of Fevvers, the language constructed by the dominant discourse is undermined through an ironic use of the language. However, the language of the dominant discourses might also be renounced and replaced by alternative means of the trickster discourse such as music, singing and dancing as Fevvers puts it: “To sing is not to speak … If they hate speech because it divides us from them, to sing is to rob speech of its function and render it divine. Singing is to speech what is dancing is to walking” (*Nights at the Circus*, 179). Music, therefore, functions as an alternative to the language of the dominant discourse and offers different perspectives from the phallocentric language just like in the case of Mignon’s song:

Mignon’s song is *not* a sad song, not poignant, not a plea. There is a grandeur about her questioning. She does not ask you if you know that land of which she sings because she herself is uncertain it exists – she knows, oh! how well she knows it lies somewhere, elsewhere, beyond the absence of the flowers. She states the existence of that land and all she wants to know is, whether you know it, too. (*Nights at the Circus*, 295)

We also see the victimization and subjugation of the female in the panopticon asylum called the House of Correction built by Countess P. who after poisoning her husband with arsenical compound and escaping punishment decides to rehabilitate the women in her fabric. She, as a matter of fact, does not act out of female solidarity but rather serves as another female figure to help perpetuate the omnipresence of the patriarchal discourse. The purpose of the asylum is to rehabilitate “the fallen women” who have murdered or poisoned their husbands. Functioning as an apparatus of the patriarchal discourse, the House of Correction, “a scientific establishment of the study of female criminals” (*Nights at the Circus*, 247), imprisons and thus subjugates women who do not conform to the norms of the patriarchal discourse. The omnipresence of the gaze of the patriarchal discourse continues to haunt the female murderesses in the panopticon asylum through Countess P. whose gaze was constantly on the female criminals. However, as Olga Alexandrovna who murders the carpenter beating her with a hatchet, observes:

“[T]he guards were as much the victims of the places as she” (*Nights at the Circus*, 253). Therefore, Olga’s starting a relationship with Vera Andreyevna, a guard of the House of Correction, triggers an army of female lovers of murderesses and guards to rebel against Countess P. and lock her up in her observatory and run away from the asylum. The marginalized and silenced women are liberated through an act of female bonding and female solidarity which reject the norms and values of the phallocentric order. The novel, therefore, not only exposes the brutalities the patriarchal discourse inflicts on the female but it also offers ways to undermine it through reverse discourses. It is in discourse, according to Foucault, where power and knowledge come together. Hence, discourse is comprised of a number of discontinuous sections without a uniform or stable function. Foucault holds that discourse cannot be divided into two: the accepted and the excluded one or the dominant and the dominated one. Instead, he emphasizes the multiplicity of discursive elements that appear in different strategies. Discourse, Foucault insists, produces and consolidates power yet it also makes it fragile by overturning and exposing it. Likewise, in silence and secrecy there is power, harbouring what it prohibits (*The History of Sexuality*, 100-1). In the novel, in a similar manner, the dominant patriarchal discourse attempts to reinforce its power through institutions like the panopticon asylum yet it also exposes its fragility allowing the disempowered females to undermine it. However, in this process of deconstructing the power of the dominant discourse what should be borne in mind is that in the novel, the dominant discourse is not replaced with the reverse one but rather it offers glimpses of the prospective multiple discourses rather than the single, unitary perspective of the dominant discourse because postmodernist discourses of marginalized groups, as Hutcheon maintains, endeavour to avoid replacing the centre with the margin due to the fact that postmodern difference is characterized by plurality and provisionality (*A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 65).

Besides being both/and, and neither/nor creatures, trickster figures are characterized by their in-between status. In other words, they stand somewhere between death and life, chaos and order, lunacy and sanity as well as belonging to

nowhere but at the same time, belonging to everywhere, existing in time and space but also beyond time and space. To a ‘normal’ mind, trickster figures are unfathomable. Having been constructed by the paradigms of the dominant phallocentric discourse, Walser’s mind, therefore, struggles to see through the paradox in Fevvers’ nature who appears as “a new intermediate sex” (Pykett, 141) in the text:

She would no longer be an extraordinary woman, no more the Greatest Aerialiste in the world but – a freak. Marvellous, indeed, but a marvellous monster, an exemplary being denied the human privilege of flesh and blood, always the object of the observer, never the subject of sympathy, an alien creature forever estranged.

She owes it to herself to remain a woman, he thought. It is her human duty. As a symbolic woman, she has a meaning, as an anomaly none.

As an anomaly, she would become again, as she once had been, an exhibit in a museum of curiosities. But what would she become, if she continued to be a woman? (*Nights at the Circus*, 188)

Fevvers, like trickster figures, extends beyond the temporal and spatial entities and she, thus, cannot be imprisoned within the ‘normal’ of the established order. She is the master of disguise and deception like tricksters who “often employ what are called ‘the weapons of the weak,’ such as speech, rhetoric, strategic dispensation of information, intrigue, and deception” (Grau, 113). In her rebellion against the dominant discourses, she is surrounded by full of enigmas in terms of her background; hatching out of an egg and growing wings as a bird woman. Unlike Native American tricksters who intrinsically belong to the periphery out of which they can never exist, Western trickster figures, as has been discussed in Introduction, attain their trickster status as a result of their low or dishonourable backgrounds. In terms of her background, Fevvers like western trickster figures comes from the lower classes and she is able to overturn the rules and values of the dominant discourses with immunity due to her peripheral status. Trickster figures are mostly found among the marginalized groups of people. However, female tricksters as we see in the case of Fevvers are double marginalized due to their gender and low background. The politics of power disallows disenfranchised

groups to protest and oppose, in a straightforward manner, to the injustices and discriminations they are exposed to by the dominant discourses. Trickster discourse, therefore, attempts to rebel against the established order and undermine it from within through irony, humour, deception and disguise which grant them the immunity to violate the social and political norms and to question the unquestionable. Existing both in and out of the time and place and coalescing the opposite qualities allow tricksters to acquire different perspectives and offer alternative ways of seeing and interpreting the world. Therefore, the main objective of humour in the trickster discourse is not limited to making people laugh but what lies underneath its humour is to bring about changes. As Harold Scheub puts forward:

The trickster is outrageous. Humans move from one state to another but the trickster's is the liminal state, the state of betwixt and between. Trickster is the undifferentiated energy, ungovernable. He may appear tame but in the next instant he shows that he is not. In the trickster and hero, all is change, transformation. Enormous untamed energy is in the process of being controlled, funnelled. He is always reinventing the world, testing boundaries, relearning the possibilities. (6)

Trickster discourse emphasizes the significance of asserting the identity of a marginalized group and the representation of that group out of the scope of the dominant discourses. Those groups speak up against the dominant discourses through trickster figures. Similarly, Carter in *Nights at the Circus* dwells on the importance of liberation of the female by the women themselves. According to Helene Cixous, women writers need to write about themselves in the form of rebellious writing because when the time to be liberated has arrived, this form of writing will embolden them to break away with what has been imposed on them. Writing about themselves, about their bodies, Cixous suggests, will help women writers liberate themselves individually. As a matter of fact, as women's bodies have been taken from them, writing about their own bodies will make them regain it. Thus, censoring the body, for female writers, means silencing them by leaving

them speechless. In order to be a good fighter, a woman must possess her own body which otherwise would reduce her to the status of the servant and thus the shadow of her owner, that is, the man. The false woman that is keeping the alive one from living must be killed. Besides saving them individually, writing about their own bodies, Cixous suggests, will help women to be able to speak up, an act which will make her a part of history which has been marked by “her suppression.” Writing about herself will, therefore, enable the woman to construct the antilogos weapon which will provide her to take matters into her own hands in every single symbolic system as well as political process (Cixous, 880). In order to liberate the female body, Fevvers is described outside of the scope of the phallocentric dominant discourse which constructs and imposes the concept of the ideal manners and appearance of femininity. As Carter emphasizes, Western society puts “considerable pressure on young girls to conform to the cultural standards of conventional aesthetics” which leads them to “sacrifice much for the sake of appearances” (“Fat is Ugly,” 40). However, in line with Bakhtin’s grotesque realism, Fevvers’ body is grotesquely deformed “as a cultural construction in order to reclaim it” which “depicts elements of gender identity as grotesque to reveal their artificiality” (Oliver, 239). Being “a *big girl*” (*Nights at the Circus*, 4) with her “indecorous eyes” and “six inches of false lash” (3), Fevvers defies the conventional aesthetics of the phallocentric idea of femininity. Instead, Fevvers’ manners and appearance remind us of the Bakhtinian grotesque body. Bakhtin emphasizes that celebrating the body and its excesses during the Medieval carnivals led to the concept of the “grotesque body” which “is not separated from the rest of the world” and which “is not a closed, completed unit” but rather “is unfinished, outgrows itself and transgresses its own limits” (*Rabelais*, 26) and “the entire Medieval parody” according to Bakhtin, “is based on the grotesque concept of the body” which “forms the basis of abuses, oaths and curses”(27). Defying the concept of the ideal angelic feminine body, Fevvers who, “looked more like a dray mare than an angel” (9), is characterized by her grotesque body and appetite: “[S]he tucked into this earthiest, coarsest cabbies’ fare with gargantuan enthusiasm. She gorged, she stuffed herself, she spilled gravy on herself, she sucked up peas from the knife; she

had a gullet to match her size and table manners of the Elizabethan variety” (21). Fevvers degrades the phallocentric discourse’s idea of the ‘proper feminine’ in accordance with Bakhtinian concept of grotesque realism in which the sublime, divine, transcendent and glorious are reversed into the debased and vulgarized through laughter as opposed to the medieval literature and high art (*Rabelais*, 20). However, degradation, according to Bakhtin, does not necessarily mean to obliterate its target of the glory, sublimity, transcendence or holiness, but rather to bring them to earth and offer a new beginning because degrading something means to kill and bury it but only to construct something better. In addition to its negative and destructive feature, degradation, therefore, has a regenerating aspect. Grotesque realism is thus “the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving” (21). As a liminal trickster figure, Fevvers, likewise, brings about the degradation and debasement of phallocentric values by exposing the unjust structure and mechanism of the patriarchal discourse. While degrading, she, at the same time, attempts to construct. Fevvers attempts to create a New Man out of Walser whose interpretation of the world has been constructed by the binary oppositions of the dominant discourses:

Oh, but Liz – think of this malleable look. As if a girl could mould him any way she wanted. Surely, he’ll have the decency to give himself to me, when we meet again, not expect the vice versa! Let him hand himself over into my safekeeping, and I will transform him. You said yourself he was unhatched, Lizzie; very well – I’ll sit on him, I’ll hatch him out, I’ll make a new man of him. I’ll make him into the New Man, in fact fitting mate for the New Woman, and onward we’ll march hand in hand into the New Century. (*Nights at the Circus*, 334)

Walser is made to embark on an inner journey in order to reconstruct a new self and identity. In this process of deconstruction of his old self, Walser undergoes various stages where he is able to encounter alternative perspectives to that of the dominant discourse which is based on binary oppositions. To get rid of his old sense of the rational self which is based on the Western idea of binary oppositions, Walser should, first, deconstruct his artificially constructed identity in order to be able to see alternative realities out of the scope of the established order. Only then can he

redefine his identity and self and emerge as the New Man. Walser decides to participate in Captain Kearney's Grand Imperial Tour in order to write the story about Fevvers and disclose the truth about her wings yet what he experiences as a clown in the Grand Imperial Tour and his experiences in the wilderness with the shaman turn out to be an inner journey which prompts him to abandon his old self and instead reconstruct a new identity. As, in an Interview with Susan Bernofsky, Angela Carter states:

Yes, but Jack Walser's profession is a function of the plot as much as anything else. He's primarily an adventurer, and that's how he's become a journalist. He's supposed to rather look like and be based on the young Jack London, who did some terrific journalism in London in the 1900s. The most important thing about him is that he hasn't experienced his experience as experience. He doesn't believe himself to have any inner life at the beginning of the novel. At the end of the novel, of course, he has nothing but inner life. Some people read the whole novel as being dedicated to absolutely and ritually humiliating this nice young man. I don't see it that way at all. What happens to him in the wilderness is that he gets emptied out, he just gets emptied out and filled up with new stuff" (162).

After the train accident, when Walser is taken to the nearby village where he is given shelter, he is looked after by the spiritual leader of the village, the shaman who exists in the world of fantasy and dreams. Having lost his consciousness, Walser looks like being reborn in the forest: "The empty centre of an empty horizon, Walser flutters across the snowy wastes. He is a sentient being, still, but no longer a rational one; indeed, now he is all sensibility, without a grain of sense, and sense impressions alone have the power to shock and to ravish him. In his elevated state, he harkens to the rhythm of the drum" (*Nights at the Circus*, 278). Like Native American people, the shaman and the people in the village among whom Walser dwells live in harmony with nature:

They read the sky to know from which direction wind, snow and the thaw would come. Stars were their compasses. The wilderness that seemed a bundle of blank paper to the ignorant, urban eye was the encyclopedia, packed with information, the consulted everyday for every need, conning the landscape as if it were an instruction manual of universal knowledge of

the ‘Enquire within’ type. They were illiterate only in the literate sense and, as far as the theory and the accumulation of knowledge were concerned, they were pedants. (*Nights at the Circus*, 298-9)

The shaman, like some Native American trickster figures, gets his visions and interpretations through sleeping and dreaming. The Siberian tribespeople have gone through a similar brutality and injustice as Native American people. In the novel, we find out that sterility and firearms were brought to the tribespeople by the Russian fur trader to exterminate their population. Being reborn in nature among tribespeople, Walser comes to realize the historical assimilation process the local people are exposed to: “The words, ‘Christmas Dinner’, reminded him of something most fearful, of some hideous danger; they reminded him of the main course, they reminded him of ... ‘Cock-a-doodle-do!’” (*Nights at the Circus*, 303). In the wilderness, Walser comes across an alternative life and perspective of the surreal and ‘irrational’ as opposed to the ‘rational’ Western one. Through magic realism and blurring the line between fact and fiction, Carter turns Walser, a western rational journalist into a person who is trapped in an irrational life with the shaman who “made no categorical distinction between seeing and believing. It could be said that, for all the peoples of this region, there existed no difference between fact and fiction; instead, a sort of magic realism. Strange fate for a journalist, to find himself in a place where no facts, as such, existed!” (*Nights at the Circus*, 308). As a result, Walser, whose perception of the world was shaped by the traditional phallocentric discourse, comes to possess “an ‘inner life’, a realm of speculation and surmise within himself that was entirely his own” (*Nights at the Circus*, 308-9) after being reborn in the wilderness, a realm out of the scope of the ‘rational’ Western discourse just like the circus.

When Fevvers eventually finds Walser in the wilderness, she realizes that he has done away with his old self and instead has regained a new identity and it is only then that she tells him to take out a pen and paper to start the interview. Fevvers confesses to Walser that they have played a trick on him with Nelson’s clock yet she leaves it up to him to decide whether she is real or fiction. Like trickster figures,

Fevvers plays with Walser's senses through irony, trickery, illusion and deceit only to deconstruct his artificial set of values and mindset constructed through the binary oppositions of the dominant discourse. As a result, Walser has managed to deconstruct his old artificially constructed self and then put it together in a new fashion as a result of his experiences with the circus and with the shaman in the wilderness. This process of losing his old self and identity and then being reborn is reminiscent of Bakhtin's death of the old and birth of the new in carnivalesque. Only after this process of self-discovery as a result of which he acquires an inner life, is he able to call Fevvers with her real name, Sophie. Confessing to have fooled Walser, Fevvers bursts into laughter, a laughter which spirals throughout the world and a laughter which carries the potential to not only destroy but also to create just like the laughter of the carnival which as Bakhtin observes,

[...] is the laughter of all people. Second, it is universal in scope: it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival" (*Rabelais*, 11-12).

Fevvers' laughter that ends the novel, therefore, has a symbolic meaning which is to undermine the patriarchal dominant discourse and instead offer alternative perspectives. In that regard, her laughter is revolutionary just like the laughter in trickster discourse. As Rachel Carroll suggests: "Fevvers is Carter's 'angel of history': facing the devastation of the past, she is projected into the future by the storm of her own laughter" (201). Laughing at power allows the trickster to expose the dominant discourse's artificially constructed values and instead provides novel ways of seeing and interpreting the world. Just as Kristeva, in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, puts it: "Laughter is what lifts inhibitions by breaking through prohibition (symbolized by the Creator) to introduce the aggressive, violent, liberating drive" (224). In the novel, Carter makes use of this subversive function of laughter to deconstruct the phallocentric discourse. According to Helen Cixous:

A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old proper crust, carrier of masculine investments; there's no other way. There's no room for her if she's not a he. If she's a her-she, it's in order to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the "truth" with laughter. (888)

In line with feminist writings, Carter in *Nights at the Circus* attempts to overturn the paradigms of the dominant discourse through anti-establishment liminal figures like Fevvers as a trickster, the shaman in the wilderness and the clowns at Captain Kearney's circus of the Grand Imperial Tour. She attacks the patriarchal discourse through humour and irony yet to reform or refashion it. As Helene Cixous puts it: "[A]s there are no grounds for establishing a discourse, but rather an arid millennial ground to break, what I say has at least two sides and two aims: to break up, to destroy; and to foresee the unforeseeable, to project" (875). It is, therefore, no wonder that Walser undergoes a process of transformation of his self through his interaction with Fevvers who plays with his senses with her trickster qualities. In addition, Walser goes through a number of experiences which make him realize alternative perspectives when he resides with the shaman and Siberian tribespeople, and when he also decides to take part in the circus where he experiences self-humiliation in order to be a clown. In circuses, like in medieval carnivals, the traditional roles are reversed and reverse discourses are created.

The discourse of the circus, according to Bouissac, conveys a subtext with itself in the form of a literary memory and the space of the circus is imbued with symbolism which blocks out the formal zone of functionality and legality by constructing artificial borders and controlling thresholds; and therefore, the circus "transcends distances, differences and borders." The way the body is treated is also an important feature of the circus phantasm. In daily life, bodies are concealed by outfits and confined by social, moral and physical restraints. Yet the circus costume not only "dissocializes" clowns but it also "recontextualizes" them as it is solely made for them (*Circus as Multimodel Discourse*, 164). The circus creates a second realm, like the medieval carnivals, where the order, authority and hierarchies are subverted

and glimpses of alternative albeit temporary perspectives and interpretations are offered. As Bouissac observes:

In its self-presenting discourse and imagery, the circus projects itself as a perfectly functional body politic which reproduces on a smaller scale the orderly system within which it exists without totally coinciding with it. The circus is both inside and outside society. It is characterized as a city within the cities it visits. Its image is one of diversity, cooperation, and hierarchy with its own norms and values. The root metaphors which irrigate the discourse of and on the circus are the family tree, the pyramidal organization, and the body itself. (*Circus as Multimodel Discourse*, 184)

The circus, therefore, enables Walser to discard his identity of a rational western journalist and instead come to possess an alternative life, a second life where the roles are upside down like in a carnival which as Bakhtin emphasizes “is the people’s second life, organized on the basis of laughter” (*Rabelais*, 8). In the circus, therefore, the process of Walser’s turning into the New Man is initiated when he decides to become a clown and dwells among the clowns who as liminal figures share many characteristics with tricksters. As Hutcheon suggests:

The multi-ringed circus becomes the pluralized and paradoxical metaphor for decentered world where there is only ex-centricity. Angela Carter’s *Nights at the Circus* combines this freak–circus framework with contestings of narrative centering: it straddles the border between the imaginary/fantastic (with her winged woman protagonist) and the realistic/historical, between a unified biographically structured plot, and a decentered narration, with its wandering point of view and extensive digressions. (*A Politics of Postmodernism*, 61)

Like tricksters, clowns hold a peripheral position and they exist outside the established order and thus they are condemned to be ignored by the dominant discourses. As a clown, Walser comes to witness the suffering and misery that clowns, who “were lodged among the poorest” (*Nights at the Circus*, 113), have had to endure. As the master clown Buffo the Great puts it: “Despair is the constant companion of the Clown” (*Nights at the Circus*, 137). Clowns are constantly exposed to humiliation while at the same time entertaining others as Buffo the Great

says: “The mirth the clown creates grows in proportion to the humiliation he is forced to endure, … the clown is the very image of Christ. … The despised and rejected, the scapegoat upon whose stooped shoulders is heaped the fury of the mob, the object and yet – yet! Also he is the subject of laughter. For what we are, we have chosen to be” (*Nights at the Circus*, 138). Buffo the Great emphasizes the contrasting nature of clowning: choosing to be a clown out of necessity while having to be the bearers of entertainment and mirth: “The clown may be the source of mirth, but – who shall make the clown laugh?” (*Nights at the Circus*, 140). As the members of the marginalized and disenfranchised groups who are ignored by the established order, the clowns and their living conditions are made visible to Walser:

Clown Alley, the generic name of all lodgings of all clowns, temporarily located in this city in the rotten wooden tenement where damp fell from the walls like dew, was a place where reigned the lugubrious atmosphere of a prison or a madhouse; amongst themselves, the clowns distilled the same kind of mutilated patience one finds amongst inmates of closed institutions, a willed and terrible suspension of being. (*Nights at the Circus*, 134)

However, like trickster figures, clowns do not just exist as the passive and disregarded subjects of the dominant discourses yet they possess the power to ridicule and reverse the values, norms and taboos of the dominant discourses and instead construct reverse discourses from within. Therefore, despite all the misfortunes, hardships, discriminations and injustices inflicted on them, the circus enables the clowns to challenge the status quo and come up with a different order of things. However, unlike Native American tradition in which clowns were regarded sacred and played a central role in religious ceremonies, the clowns in the western tradition are excluded from the public sphere owing to their appearance, that is clothes, masks and makeup, which disguise their identity. It is their outcast status that enables them to be immune to persecution and to have freedom to overturn the hierachal structure through the carnivalesque laughter. As Buffo the Great, the chief clown, puts it: “We possess one privilege, one rare privilege, that makes of our outcast and disregarded state something wonderful, something

precious. We can invent our own faces! We *make* ourselves” (141). What the circus stands for in our modern times, thus, is similar to what the carnival symbolized in the Middle Ages. The “carnival”, as Bakhtin acknowledges, “celebrated the temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierachal rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed” (*Rabelais*, 10). Likewise, despite all the difficulties and despair they have to put up with, clowns, who “symbolically straddle a dangerous line between the permitted and the forbidden, the moral and the immoral, the legal and the illegal, and the profane and the sacred” (Bouissac, *The Semiotics*, 143), are able to shatter the status quo albeit for a temporary period and reveal the injustices against the disenfranchised groups. “One of the main attributes of medieval clowns” as Bakhtin suggests “was precisely the transfer of every high ceremonial gesture or ritual to the material sphere; such was the clown’s role during tournaments, the knight’s initiation, and so forth” (*Rabelais*, 20). Clowning, therefore, carries the potential to liberate subjects from the dominant discourse’s set of values and instead to offer an alternative order of things. That is why, when he wears the mask of a clown, Walser comes to experience a different order of meaning and reality from the one imposed by the dominant discourses:

When Walser first put on his make-up, he looked in the mirror and did not recognize himself. As he contemplated the stranger peering interrogatively back at him out of the glass, he felt the beginnings of a vertiginous sense of freedom that, during all the time he spent with the Colonel, never quite evaporated; until that last moment when they parted company and Walser’s very self, as he had known it, departed from him, he experienced the freedom that lies behind the mask, within dissimulation, the freedom to juggle with being, and, indeed, with the language which is vital to our being, that lies at the heart of burlesque. (*Nights at the Circus*, 119)

Clowns, like tricksters, are able to explore the edges and thus subvert order and challenge taboos with impunity. Liberation from repressive authority is thus achieved through a carnivalesque practice of clowning and masking. Being able to create an identity for themselves out of the scope of the dominant discourses grants

the clowns the freedom to construct an alternative perspective. As Paul Bouissac puts forward: “Clowns … mask, deform, or blur the natural features of their faces and bodies. Their makeup and attire are not designed to enhance their physical attractiveness, but instead, to construct psychological and social characters that are beyond the scope of sex and gender” (*The Semiotics*, 143). Masks, hence, allow clowns to adapt an alternative identity through disguise which situates them out of the conventional world and its rules; and as a result, empowers them to be able to transgress the forbidden zones such as taboos, morality and the sacred set of values of the established order with impunity. Masks thus help clowns achieve liberation. On one hand, clowns suffer from grief and despair. On the other hand, they have the freedom to create their identity and thus exist out of the sphere of the dominant discourses which enable them to utter what the dominant discourses endeavour to suppress through the subversive function of humour and irony in a manner which is reminiscent of carnivals in Middle Ages. As Bakhtin states,

the carnival grotesque form exercises the same function: to consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochements, to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted. The carnival spirit offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things (*Rabelais*, 34).

The clowns are able to turn the order of things upside down in a carnivalesque manner and in this way, they are able to undermine the values of the dominant discourses. For both Bakhtin and Carter, the carnival deconstructs the power, the centre, the authority but empowers the marginal, the subordinate and the subaltern. As put forward by Umberto Eco:

Now it is understandable in which sense carnival is connected with comedy. By assuming a mask, everyone can behave like the animal-like characters of comedy. We can commit any sin while remaining innocent: and we are indeed innocent, because we laugh (which means: we are not concerned with that}. But now, following Bachtin, we can go a little (?) step further. Carnival is the natural theater in which animals and animal-like beings take

over the power and become the masters. In carnival even kings act like the populace. Comic behavior, formerly an object of a judgment of superiority on our part, becomes, in this case, our own rule. The upside-down world has become the norm. Carnival is revolution (or revolution is carnival): kings are decapitated (that is, lowered, made inferior) and the crowd is crowned. (3)

Nights at the Circus, in which a number of disenfranchised groups are represented, emerges as the novel of the ‘others’. In the novel, in addition to the females, tribespeople of Siberia and clowns, the outlaws who have been forced to live in the wilderness of Siberia appear to be another subjugated group. They dynamite the train by which Captain Kearney’s circus of the Grand Imperial Tour is traveling to Siberia. They believe in the rumour spread by Captain Kearney for the publicity of the circus that Fevvers is engaged to the prince of Wales and their leader begs Fevvers to talk the Queen of England into convincing the Russian Tsar, the Queen’s granddaughter’s husband, to forgive them so that they can go to their villages as free men. Welcoming Fevvers to the brotherhood of the freemen, the leader of the outlaws explains why they have been forced to run away to the depth of the forest: for taking revenge from petty tyrants like army officers, landlords and minor officials who have dishonoured their sisters and wives:

We are neither prisoners, nor exiles, not settlers, madame, though our ranks, on occasion, have been swelled by all three conditions of men; we exist outside a law that shows us no pity and we demonstrate by our lives and deeds, how the wild life in the woods can bring liberty, equality and fraternity to those who pay the price of homelessness, danger and death. (*Nights at the Circus*, 270)

However, as a self-conscious trickster figure, Fevvers attempts to liberate them from the paradigms of the phallocentric dominant discourses by pointing out the absence of women in their (the outlaws’) community and questions where a woman’s honour lies; in her spirit or vagina. She urges them to come to realize the injustice and brutality imposed on them by the dominant discourses and instead to seek to imagine an alternative order of things out of the domain of the dominant discourses: “What idle folly is this, that you fancy these great ones care a single jot

about the injustice you suffer? Don't the great ones themselves weave the giant web of injustice that circumscribes the globe?" (*Nights at the Circus*, 274). Just like the clowns and the female, the outlaws obviously exist in the periphery as dispossessed and disenfranchised subjects. However, Fevvers attempts to make them see their flawed argument in objectifying women and pleading the authority for forgiveness and change. Instead, what Fevvers, as a revolutionary trickster figure, aims at is to deconstruct the established order and reinvent and recreate a new world where the disenfranchised groups are in control of their lives and thus construct their own self and identity. For that reason, Fevvers asks clowns to perform a show for the outlaws to make them come to feel alive as "terror is conquered by laughter" (*Rabelais*, 336). Like tricksters, clowns as liminal figures are able to undermine the very base of the established order and therefore, with Fevvers' request, the clowns who, "always summon [...] disintegration, disaster, chaos," (*Nights at the Circus*, 286) begin dancing:

This dance was the dance of death, and they danced it for George Buffins, that they might be as him. They danced it for the wretched of the earth, that they might witness their own wretchedness. They danced the dance of the outcasts for the outcasts who watched them, amid the louring trees, with a blizzard coming on. And, one by one, the outcast outlaws raised their heads to watch and all indeed broke out in laughter but it was a laughter without joy. It was the bitter laugh one gives when one sees there is no triumph over fate. When we saw these cheerless arabesques as of the damned, and heard that laughter of those trapped in the circles of hell, Liz and I held hands for comfort. (*Nights at the Circus*, 286-7)

While the others are bewildered for what had happened, Fevvers and Liz are aware of the fact that "the clowns made an invocation to chaos and chaos, always imminent in human affairs, came in on cue" (*Nights at the Circus*, 288-9) Yet, this chaos is the chaos of change and renewal just like in carnival which "celebrates the destruction of the old and the birth of the new world – the new year, the new spring, the new kingdom. The old world that has been destroyed is offered together with the new world and is represented with it as the dying part of the dual body"

(Rabelais, 410). The clowns, hence, evoke chaos and unsettle harmony so as to manifest an alternative perspective and domain. As Paul Bouissac asserts:

Thanks to the makeup, the performing identity of a clown persists, indeed, over a long period of time without showing signs of obvious aging. For these reasons the clown is perceived as standing both out of time and out of space, to the extent that an outcast is always out of place, in the margin of the socio-spatial categories that assign statuses and functions to slots in the virtual grid of the social order. (*The Semiotics of Clowns and Clowning*, 24)

However, it should be noted down that although they can offer an alternative way of making and seeing, clowns, in the western tradition, are unable to make everlasting changes. They have impunity to challenge the established order yet so long as they are not taken seriously:

The clowns. See them as a band of terrorists. No; that's not right. No terrorists, but irregulars. A band of irregulars, permitted the most ferocious piracies as long as, just so long as, they maintain the bizarrie of their appearance, so that their violent exposition of manners stays on the safe side of terror, even if we need to learn to laugh at them, and part, at least, of this laughter comes from the successful suppression of fear. (*Nights at the Circus*, 176)

The clowns are granted the privilege of transgressing the social rules only as a result of being excluded from the mainstream community. The clowns, thus, as Paul Bouissac claims, “are excluded from civil society due to their appearance, personae, and performed behavior. Their performing identities transcend the rules of propriety; they are improper by essence” (*The Semiotics*, 176). The circus as a microcosm of the world and the clowns as the agents of enlightenment thus provide a limited sense of change in both temporal and spatial spheres in the western tradition. Therefore, as Umberto Eco acknowledges:

Carnival can exist only as an authorized transgression (which in fact represents a blatant case of contradiction in adjecto or of happy double binding - capable of curing instead of producing neurosis). If the ancient, religious carnival was limited in time, the modern mass-carnival is limited in space: it is reserved for certain places, certain streets, or framed by the

television screen. In this sense, comedy and carnival are not instances of real transgressions: on the contrary, they represent paramount examples of law reinforcement. They remind us of the existence of the rule. (6)

However, even if they have an effect within a limited scope of time and space, the liminal figures like clowns, tricksters, fools, buffoons, jesters and picaros are capable of offering glimpses of change and thus come up with different layers of reality and truth. Therefore, in the text, Carter undermines the Western notions of binary oppositions and enables the disenfranchised groups to come forward and assert an identity out of the established order through such liminal figures.

CHAPTER 4

SHERMAN ALEXIE'S

THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO FISTFIGHT IN HEAVEN

This and the subsequent complementary chapter attempt to analyse Sherman Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and *Reservation Blues* in terms of trickster discourse. In both texts, Thomas Builds-the-Fire appears as the native trickster figure who divulges the historical massacres and atrocities committed by the dominant white discourse against Native Americans and overturns the current misrepresentations and stereotypical images regarding Native American identity; and constructs reverse discourses in which Native Americans' communal values and identity and their rights over their lands are restored through the subversive means of trickster discourse such as humour, irony, satire and laughter, dreams, visions, imagination, dancing and music.

The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, published in 1993 with two more chapters being added in 2003, is made up of twenty-four interrelated short stories, which are narrated by multiple first and third person narrators. All the stories deal with the problems Native Americans have experienced since they were dispossessed of their lands after the European colonization of the American continent. Apart from losing their lands and being forced to live on reservations, Native American people have faced the risk of losing their identity as a result of their confrontation with the dominant white culture. They have had to endure the consequences of being denied of their lands and communal identity and this denial has brought about insurmountable troubles of despair, misery, sorrow, unemployment, alcoholism, guilt and pain throughout generations. In this collection

of short stories, Alexie exposes these hard circumstances Native Americans have to put up with in their daily lives both on and outside Spokane Indian Reservation. However, Alexie masterfully combines pain and humour to create an alternative space through trickster discourse in order for Native Americans to be able to survive. He, therefore, “fulfils a common trope in American Indian humour: laughing at pain to survive” (Baxter, 166).

Native American life is characterized by misrepresentations and stereotypes ascribed to them by the dominant white discourse which attempts to bury Indigenous identity into the past and thus strip them of their legacy over their lands and communal values. In the story called “Every Little Hurricane” we come across a variety of such stereotypes besides the catastrophes Native Americans are exposed to. The story revolves around helplessness, poverty, alcoholism and failure which are rampant throughout Indigenous communities. The largest hurricane in tribal history befalls on them as they are celebrating the New Year’s Eve party. Such a massive destruction does the hurricane cause on Spokane Indian Reservation that houses are destroyed and memories are changed forever leading Victor to wonder whether it would be better to forget all his personal memories or just change them (*The Lone Ranger*, 4). To make matters worse, a fistfight breaks out between Victor’s two uncles, Adolph and Arnold, and everybody else around is just watching them as witnesses just like Native Americans “were all witnesses and nothing more. For hundreds of years, Indians were witnesses to crimes of an epic scale” (*The Lone Ranger*, 3).

The destructive hurricane obviously bears comparison with the arrival of Europeans on American continent, both of which have interfered and disrupted Native Americans’ lives and established order. Just like the metaphorical hurricane, white colonialism has created excruciating troubles among native people. Being dispossessed of their lands, culture and identity, Native Americans are drowned in alcoholism and violence in addition to being inundated with harsh living conditions. Even as a child, Victor comes to hate the rain, clouds and humidity which evoke

colonial history in him. During the rain, Victor feels like he is going to drown and he recalls an old indigenous man who was drowned in a mud puddle at the powwow, a social gathering event for Native Americans. The rain, interrupting the natural order in Victor's mind, leads to “[t]ragedy” (*The Lone Ranger*, 7) just like European presence on native lands. However, what Victor fails to realize as a child, as Gordon Slethaug states, is that native people have no power over their whereabouts because they are all innocent victims who have found themselves in a cultural hurricane which has brought European settlements over their lands and commodified and commercialized their identity as well as bringing about discriminatory government policies (133). Such policies have led despair and poverty to infiltrate into every part of native life and Victor, remembers how, on Christmas Eve when he was 5 years old, his father wept for not having any money to buy gifts: “Victor watched his father cry huge, gasping tears. Indian tears” (*The Lone Ranger*, 5). He remembers his father as an alcoholic whose wallet was always empty. To be able to cope with all these hardships, Victor's mother would drag them into dreams through imagination: “In those dreams, Victor and his parents would be sitting in Mother's Kitchen restaurant in Spokane, waiting out a storm. Rain and lightning. Unemployment and poverty. Commodity food. Flash foods” (*The Lone Ranger*, 5). During the hurricane, Victor's parents and other natives also remember the misfortunes they were exposed to in their personal lives. Victor's father remembers the bad memory of his own father's being spit on while waiting for a bus in Spokane, his mother remembers how she was sterilized after giving birth to Victor by the Indian Health Service doctor and all other Indians remember the misery and agony they were exposed to. Therefore, the hurricane, like the European invasion of native lands, reminds Native Americans of their past misfortunes and agonies. However, Native Americans, “the eternal survivors” (*The Lone Ranger*, 11), try to hold on to life by the power of imagination and dreams which perpetuate their connection with their cultural and social legacies.

The white dominant discourse has intended to eradicate the native identity and instead create the ‘White Man's Indian’ through both what Althusser calls ‘the

Repressive State Apparatus' and 'the Ideological State Apparatuses.' According to Althusser, the Repressive State Apparatus engages in employing direct or indirect physical violence. On the other hand, the Ideological State Apparatuses do not resort to physical violence as they operate through ideology. Therefore, the usage of physical violence in the Ideological State Apparatuses is neither "*manifest*" nor "*dominant*" (78). The Ideological State Apparatuses, Althusser emphasizes, are characterized by multiplicity as they function somewhat independently in serving the aims of the State Ideology. Those apparatuses are mainly comprised of cultural, social, religious, scholastic, political, familial institutions as well as the media. Unlike the Ideological State Apparatuses, the Repressive State Apparatus consists of centralized and single units such as the police, army, courts, prisons and the government itself (92). The assimilation process of Native American communal values and identity by the white dominant discourse starts very early in Native Americans' lives through both the Ideological State Apparatuses and the Repressive State Apparatus as Alexie reveals in the story of "Indian Education" in which the tense confrontations between a native boy Victor, and his teachers and peers from the First to Twelfth Grade are narrated. In Second Grade, Victor narrates his strained dialogue with his missionary teacher Betty Towle, which clearly exposes the conflict between the assimilation politics of the dominant white discourse against Native Americans and the native resistance to it:

"Indians, indians, indians." She said it without capitalization. She called me "indian, indian, indian."

And I said, *Yes, I am. I am Indian. Indian, I am.* (*The Lone Ranger*, 173).

From very early ages on, Victor has learned that taking a humorous and ironic approach to the racial and discriminating tendencies he has encountered is a way to resist against the paradigms of the white dominant discourses. In the Third Grade, Victor's teacher Mrs. Schluter confiscates his painting called *Stick Indian Taking a Piss in My Backyard* and this puts an end to Victor's art career. Victor, as a punishment, is made to stand in the corner and face the wall and wait till the punishment terminates which quite emblematically never ends as Victor states:

“I’m still waiting” (*The Lone Ranger*, 174). In Grade Four, Mr. Schluter advises Victor to be a doctor when he grows up so that he could go back to his tribe to help and heal them. Yet, his wife Mrs. Schluter thinks it is crazy to think of Victor as a doctor as he always looks guilty. In Grade Ten, Victor receives his driving license on the same day another native called Wally Jim drives his car into a pine tree. He has no traces of alcohol in his blood, and leaves behind a good job, a wife and two kids. Why he killed himself remains unknown, yet as the native people tell the trooper: “[W]hen we look in the mirror, see the history of our tribe in our eyes, taste failure in the tap water, and shake with old tears, we understand completely” (*The Lone Ranger*, 178). As Alexie, in an interview with Ase Nygren, states, Native Americans do not possess any social, economic and political power. Hence, as they are defenceless and powerless, they are able to change neither their lives nor the stereotypes attributed to them (159). As Victor in “The Only Traffic Signal on the Reservation Doesn’t Flash Red Anymore” narrates, every effort the natives have ever made has always ended in failure throughout generations due to their status of being powerless and defenceless. As a result, all they have are failed heroes. In the story, together with Adrian, Victor, an old basketball star who has fallen out of shape, watches a group of native boys pass by as if they were “little warriors looking for honor in some twentieth-century vandalism” (*The Lone Ranger*, 44). Among them, they spot Julius Windmaker, the best basketball player on the reservation. Julius reminds Victor of his own glorious days of being a good basketball player which in him evokes “the feeling of immortality” (*The Lone Ranger*, 46). The old warrior native heroes are now replaced by the failed basketball players. Nonetheless, unlike the white heroes who are easily forgotten, “a reservation hero,” Victor tells, “is remembered. A reservation hero is a hero forever. In fact, their status grows over the years as the stories are told and retold” (*The Lone Ranger*, 48). As a prospective hero, Julius Windmaker is unable to escape the fate of his predecessors and ends up with failure. After his failure, Victor and Adrian think about their basketball heroes and Victor explains how the natives were hurt when Julius could not make it since they regard basketball players as saviours. As Victor states:

It's hard to be optimistic on the reservation. When a glass sits on a table here, people don't wonder if it's half filled or half empty. They just hope it's good beer. Still, Indians have a way of surviving. But it's almost like Indians can easily survive the big stuff. Mass murder, loss of language and land rights. It's the small things that hurt the most. The white waitress who wouldn't take an order, Tonto, the Washington Redskins.

And, just like everybody else, Indians need heroes to help them learn how to survive. But what happens when our heroes don't even know how to pay their bills? (*The Lone Ranger*, 49).

The native heroes who prove to be indestructible by the dominant discourses and thus are able to offer glimpses of change appear to be trickster figures in Native American tradition. As has been discussed previously, in Native American mythology, the trickster and culture hero happen to be the same person. In many Native American myths, the trickster as a culture hero gives the essential elements for life such as fire, light, water, agriculture, fishing, hunting, games, languages and other skills to humans and teaches them how to perform the rituals and ceremonies. In contemporary Native American literature, trickster figures teach survival strategies. According to Vizenor, "tribal tricksters arise in imagination, a comic discourse and language game. Narrative voices are corporeal in the oral tradition" (*The Trickster of Liberty*, x). Vizenor argues that trickster stories use imagination to "open up the potential of language without for a moment feeling compelled to suggest or fix meaning" (Baxter, 68). Likewise, in the story of "Imagining the Reservation," Alexie emphasizes the power of imagination not only to enable the native people on the reservation to survive but also to undermine the white discourse imposed upon them. To point out the importance of the imagination for survival on the reservation, Alexie presents an equation: "Survival = Anger x Imagination. Imagination is the only weapon on the reservation" (*The Lone Ranger*, 159). Alexie reveals that imagination which is grounded in humour is a way to survive for Native Americans because "imagination is the politics of dreams; imagination turns every word into a bottle rocket" (*The Lone Ranger*, 152). In the story, the anonymous first person narrator attempts to create reverse discourses by making hypothetical statements and asks the readers to imagine it was Crazy Horse who invented the atom bomb in 1876 and detonated it over Washington: "Would

the urban Indians still be sprawled around the one-room apartment in the cable television reservation? Imagine a loaf of bread could feed the entire tribe. Didn't you know it Jesus Christ was a Spokane Indian? Imagine Columbus landed in 1492 and some tribe or another drowned him in the ocean. Would Lester FallsApart still be shoplifting in the 7-11?" (*The Lone Ranger*, 150). Through the power of imagination, the narrator reverses the historical narrative of the dominant discourse and instead he offers an alternative history of what might have happened in Native American and the white people's relations throughout history.

According to the narrator, the white dominant discourse has besieged them with lies of five hundred years. It is the 4th of July, American Independence Day, and the narrator says he is waiting for someone to tell the truth. He brings the official history into question and challenges the official language imposed on them: "How can we imagine a new language when the language of the enemy keeps our dismembered tongues tied to his belt? How can we imagine a new alphabet when the old jumps off billboards down into our stomachs? ... How do we imagine a new life when a pocketful of quarters weighs our possibilities down?" (*The Lone Ranger*, 152). Thus, for Alexie imagination has social and political power since it provides Native Americans a means to resist the colonial discourse.

Alexie points out the significance of humour and irony for native people to be able to cope with difficult circumstances in another story called "The Approximate Size of My Favorite Tumor." The narrator of the story, Jimmy Many Horses, tells Simon how he has pissed off his wife Norma by joking about dying because he has cancer: "Well, I told her the doctor showed me my X-rays and my favorite tumor was just about the size of a baseball, shaped like one, too. Even had stitch marks" (*The Lone Ranger*, 157). He finds his wife at the Powwow Tavern, where they had met for the first time, and Norma tells him not to make jokes about his cancer otherwise she shall leave him. After Jimmy Many Horses says something incredibly funny, Norma stands up and leaves her. Three months after being deserted by Norma, Jimmy lies at Spokane hospital where he takes radiation treatment. He tells his

physician that after a few more zaps he will be Superman. His doctor, Dr. Adams, says to him that she had never realized Clark Kent was a Spokane Indian, which makes them both laugh. The dialogue between them shows the importance of humour in bringing people of different backgrounds together:

“Hey, Dr. Adams,” I said.

“What?”

“Nothing,” I said. Just wanted to hear your name. It sounds like drums to these heavily medicated Indian ears of mine.” (*The Lone Ranger*, 163).

Alexie shows the power of humour as a medium to create a bond between people. Although they belong to two different worlds, the distance between Jimmy and Dr. Adams is shortened thanks to humour which “acts as a transcendent force” (Coulombe, 132). In the humorous conversation between Jimmy and Dr. Adams, “irony then becomes a communal achievement in a way that is reminiscent of the theory that laughter and humor can both build emotional bridges and make intellectual connections between people” (Hutcheon, *Irony’s Edge*, 89).

“Humor,” according to Lois Leveen, “is a means of ingratiating one's self, earning acceptance of one's self and- through collective identity- one's group within the established culture” (42). Throughout the story, we are able to see a humourous attitude to sad events. As Jimmy says: “Still, you have to realize that laughter saved Norma and me from pain, too. Humor was an antiseptic that cleaned the deepest of personal wounds” (*The Lone Ranger*, 164). One day, Jimmy remembers, he and Norma were stopped by a Washington State Patrolman while they were driving. When the patrolman asks him what he has been drinking, as drunkenness is a stereotype attributed to Native Americans by the white discourse, both Jimmy and Norma tell him that they do not drink. The trooper, then, says it does not make a difference because “Washington State has a new law against riding as a passenger in an Indian car” (*The Lone Ranger*, 165). Jimmy says that it is not a new law and they have known about it for a couple hundred years. The trooper asks for a bribe and Jimmy, in return, gives him all the money he has, a hundred dollars. When the

trooper tells him that he wants ninety-nine dollars, Jimmy says he can keep the rest as a tip which makes Norma laugh. Getting angry at their jokes, the trooper threatens them with misdemeanours such as reckless driving, resisting arrest and threatening an officer with physical violence. Yet, if he takes them in, Norma says: “I’ll just tell everyone how respectful you were of our Native traditions, how much you understood about the social conditions that lead to the criminal acts of so many Indians. I’ll say you were sympathetic, concerned, and intelligent” (*The Lone Ranger*, 166). As well as uniting people, humour together with irony, Alexie shows, can also move them away from each other. As Hutcheon states: “Irony’s edge, then, would seem to ingratiate and to intimidate, to underline and to undermine; it brings people together and drives them apart. Yet, however plural these functions, we still seem to want to call the thing itself by a single name: irony” (*Irony’s Edge*, 53).

Vizenor notes that “the shimmer of imagination is the liberation of the last trickster stories” (*Manifest Manners*, 15). Through imagination, Alexie subverts the colonial hegemony and offers laughter as a means of assuring survival for Native Americans who are subjected to misfortunes and suffering on a massive scale. That is why, the narrator, in “Imagining the Reservation,” asks both Adrian and the readers: “Do you believe laughter can save us?” (*The Lone Ranger*, 152). Alexie uses laughter, irony and humour not only to reveal the oppression, discrimination and tragedy of the dispossessed Native Americans but also to create reverse discourses. Therefore, Alexie turns humour into “an imaginative strategy that both transcends and deconstructs, and thus survives pain” (Moore, 229). “Such tragicomic laughter,” according to Philip Heldrich, “exposes the false ideologies and empty promises of the dominant culture as it opens a dialogue with readers about difficult issues and stereotypes. Such edgy, disruptive, even liberating humour also promotes self-actualization and social action, providing a means of survival amid often-bewildering and absurd conditions” (25). Humour, therefore, not only allows the disenfranchised people to undermine the dominant discourse but it also helps them to cope with their personal troubles because as Freud suggests, “humour can be regarded as the highest of these defensive processes. It scorns to withdraw the

ideational content bearing the distressing affect from conscious attention as repression does, and thus surmounts the automatism of defence" (*Jokes*, 289).

Through the subversive means of trickster discourse Alexie undermines and deconstructs the artificial construct of the 'White Man's Indian.' Alexie, by endeavouring to divulge the discrimination, injustice and white predominance over Native Americans, opens the historical process between Native Americans and the white dominant discourse to question and instead comes up with alternative reverse discourses to the long-established official history and truth. As Kathleen Carroll acknowledges, Alexie, by incorporating the past into the present, approximates the dominant and subordinate cultures to each other and thus opens a way to scrutinize how the efforts to recreate a modern Native American identity have been hindered by the Eurocentric stereotype of 'the white man's Indian.' To emphasize the imaginative power of the oral traditions to reconstruct the native culture and make the readers aware of the superficiality of these dominant constructions, Alexie plays with form and theme (75).

Trickster discourse allows Alexie to create reverse discourses from within the dominant white discourse by challenging its official truth and history and therefore trickster discourse sides with the marginalised and the oppressed groups in their struggle against more powerful adversaries. As Laura Makarius suggests, the trickster appears to be an ally of humanity when he defies the gods for the sake of mankind yet he is at the same time portrayed as an antisocial creature who is excommunicated by his society as a result of the antisocial nature of breaking taboos. Being guilty of committing atrocious crimes like breaching the basic social codes and laws, the trickster becomes an expiatory figure who undertakes the sins of humanity. Therefore, he, on one hand, arouses feelings of appreciation, gratitude, affection and reverence; on the other hand, he is exposed to contempt, mockery, injustice and misfortune which causes his banishment. However, being a taboo-breaker empowers him and positions him above humans. His position of being above humans, below gods makes him an intermediary figure, an intercessor. ("The

Crime of Manabozo," 670-1). In the text, Thomas Builds-the-Fire, as a trickster figure, acts as the mediator between the Native Americans and their culture, tradition and history. It is through the stories he tells Native American people come to remember their distinctive history and identity and as result, out of all their misery and hardships, they struggle to remain emancipated from the hegemonic white discourse. As Vizenor puts forward, the trickster is a 'word warrior' who struggles against the colonial discourse inflicted on native people. The trickster, therefore, is "lascivious, an erotic shimmer, a burn that sunders dioramas and terminal creeds; an enchanter, comic liberator, and word healer" (*The Trickster of Liberty*, x). Thomas Builds-the-Fire, as the trickster figure, makes both the readers and Native Americans confront the hegemony of colonial discourse and instead offers a counter history from the anti-establishment perspective and thus he functions as an agent "to interrupt, to overturn a traditional way of reading" (Schmidt, 66).

However, despite his central role in preserving the communal identity and values, the native trickster always exists on the periphery and not taken seriously due to his marginal status. Yet, as an inherently peripheral and centrifugal figure, the native trickster always subverts the monolithic perspective and he evokes plurality and multiplicity wherever he is present. In the text, people on the reservation are fed up with hearing Thomas's stories which as a matter of fact serve to connect Native Americans with their history and culture. Thus, even if he is not heeded, Thomas never stops telling stories. When Thomas together with Victor and Junior in "A Drug Called Tradition" go to Benjamin Lake to try the new drug Victor has, he looks around and tells them that he sees a better world. In the story he narrates, he wants to steal one of their (white people's) ponies to earn his name and be a hero. Upon approaching the camp, he spots a black pony. He tells the pony that he has come for him and rides it silently through the camp. He asks the pony his name and the pony says it is Flight. And Thomas tells Victor that he sees him on that pony (*The Lone Ranger*, 14-5). As a trickster figure, Thomas reminds Victor of his ancestral roots and in doing so he transcends time and space to create a reverse

discourse by challenging the dominant white discourse. As Harold Scheub corroborates:

Trickster makes the flawed moment eternal. He ties us to our ancestral past. But within the tradition of the people, he is destroying one part of us and creating another part; he is recreating us, reshaping us, but always within the tradition of the people. We have to differentiate between our own history and the tradition within which that history unfolds. So it is that Trickster recreates our world, but he must first destroy it. He is constantly in the process of taking us back to our origins, destroying what we have, then rebuilding it. We are ever involved in the ritualistic process, the creative moment, because of Trickster. (30)

When Europeans dominated the native lands, as Maureen E. Smith has noted, there were some nativistic religious movements against them from 1869 to 1872. The fundamental teachings of such movements were based on the idea that one day the deceased native people would come back and the Europeans would return to their homes. One of the most popular of these resistance movements happened to be the Ghost Dance Movement which was started in 1889 by a Paiute prophet called Wovoka. In his vision, the Creator informed Wovoka to prompt people to dance, an act which would allow people to be able to travel to another world where they would come together with their ancestors and live together in welfare, peace and happiness just like they had before the Europeans' arrival. Wovoka's tenets known as the Ghost Dance Movement had a peaceful nature, however, it did not stop the US soldiers from attacking a group of Lakota people who were practising the Ghost Dance and murdering hundreds of people including children in South Dakota in 1890 which came to be known as Wounded Knee Massacre (121). In the text, such historical massacres against Native Americans are remembered through stories, dreams, music, dancing, drums and visions which serve to unite Native Americans with their ancestral past and undermine the official white dominant discourses. Therefore, after trying the drug, Junior claims to see Thomas dancing naked around a fire: "*They are all gone, my tribe is gone.* Those blankets they gave us, infected with smallpox, have killed us. I'm the last, the very last, and I'm sick, too. So very sick. Hot. My fever burning so hot" (*The Lone Ranger*, 17). Yet, he wants to dance,

dance a Ghost Dance to bring the natives back. He, then, hears the drums and his grandparents singing. While he dances one step, his sister rises from the ash. With each step another Native American rises and with every other step another buffalo falls to the earth from the sky. They all start to dance in circles and then they see Europeans leaving American continent by ships. On these ships, Europeans wave good-bye to the native people who keep dancing till all the ships taking Europeans back to Europe disappear from sight (*The Lone Ranger*, 17). The dance in the story, as Kathleen Carroll emphasizes, turns into “the means of exercising the painful memories of the past and refashioning an authentic identity, which offers hope for the future” (81). In such trickster moments, reverse discourses, in which Native Americans are able to preserve their distinct identity and culture as well as regaining their lands from the Europeans, are established. The trickster moment, in that regard, “shows us a way to see the world by opening our minds to the spontaneous transformations of a reality that is always open and creative” (Doueihi, 200).

According to many native religions, as Maureen, E. Smith observes, everything that existed on earth and people’s relationship with them were regarded holy which required a sacred responsibility. A great number of native religions were based on land and their origin and creation stories illustrate how they were placed in where they dwell by the Creator to maintain their lives and worship there. The nationhood and religion of Native Americans were, therefore, firmly bound to particular territories. Native American tribes practised their religion through prayer, ceremonies, drama, song and dances and this religious tradition was passed on to subsequent generations via storytelling and oral tradition. Humour functioned as one of the prerequisites for the sacred ceremonies of a great number of Native American tribes and in some of such ceremonies people were urged not to take themselves too seriously by sacred clowns (117). In Native American tradition, therefore, stories, visions, dreams, music, songs, drums and dances occupy an important place and that is why, Alexie incorporating the subversive means of trickster discourse into his text employs such significant values of native communities in order to deconstruct the dominant discourse and recreate the real

native identity. Therefore, in addition to Thomas's visions and stories, traditional Native American cultural forms of dancing, drums and music are also used to create reverse discourses. In "The Fun House," Victor's aunt Nezzy, who was a beautiful dancer in the past, is having a fight with her husband and son. She goes into water although she is unable to swim and after getting out of water and feeling tired, she falls down and as she tries to stand up, she takes a step and then another when "she heard drums, she heard singing, she danced. Dancing that way, she knew things were beginning to change" (*The Lone Ranger*, 82). She becomes aware that some things should change in both her personal life and on a social level and this need for change is symbolized through drums, dancing and music. Similarly, in "All I Wanted To Do Was Dance," Victor is dancing with a Lakota woman in a Montana bar. He was dancing with an Indian woman because the white woman he loved left him and dancing was his compensation, his confession, his largest sin and his penance. Victor also remembers having fancy dancing and hearing drums at the age of 8 or 9 when his parents were drunk. Drums, music and dancing together with stories remind native people of their past, their distinct identity. As the epigraph of the story called "Distances" taken from Wovoka, the Paiute Ghost Dance Messiah shows:

All Indians must dance, everywhere, keep on dancing. Pretty soon in next spring Great Spirit come. He bring back all game of every kind. The game be thick everywhere. All dead Indians come back and live again. Old blind Indian see again and get young and have fine time. When Great Spirit comes this way, then all the Indians go to the mountains, high up away from whites. Whites can't hurt Indians then..." (*The Lone Ranger*, 104).

In his vision, Victor sees Junior singing on a stage in a ribbon shirt and blue jeans and with a guitar: "*Indians make the best cowboys*" (*The Lone Ranger*, 18), Junior tells them. He claims to have been singing at the Plantation since the age of ten and attracting big crowds. White people come to listen to his songs, and his wisdom. Yet, as the native people get the best tickets for his shows, white people have to sit at the back of the theatre, not because of the racism but because the natives camp out all nights to buy tickets. Even the President of the United States Mr. Edgar

Crazy Horse has come to listen to him once. Junior says that he has played a song for him that he has written for his great-grand father, the famous Lakota warrior who helped Native tribes win the war against the whites:

*Crazy Horse, what have you done?
Crazy Horse, what have you done?
It took four hundred years
and four hundred thousand guns
but the Indians finally won.
Ya-hey, the Indians finally won.*

*Crazy Horse, are you still singing?
Crazy Horse, are you still singing?
I honor your old songs
and all they keep on bringing
because the Indians keep winning.
Ya-hey, the Indians keep winning.*

(18-19, emphasis original).

In all three visions, historical process is reversed and alternative histories into the native and white relations are offered. In Native American spiritual tradition, stories, dreams and visions possess the potential to affect and shape the real life. Language, as Maureen E. Smith has noted, was granted to humans as a gift from the spiritual realm according to many Native religions, and thus it was believed to harbour power and a sacred potential that has endowed words with power. As in Native American belief systems everything was thought to be interconnected, the spiritual and religious doctrines affirmed a communal relationship among people and they viewed communities to be in the process of becoming, which, if directed in the right course, could enable people to transcend the limits of materiality and interact with visions and dreams which as representation of human potential could be turned into the actual (118). In Native American contemporary literature, tricksters take on this role of travelling to other dimensions for the benefit of their community as mediators. Thus, through his visions, dreams and stories, Thomas attempts to prevent Native Americans from being assimilated by the white dominant discourse and preserve their communal identity even when he is not taken seriously due to his peripheral status. Junior and Victor, after the effect of the drug

starts to wear off, watch Thomas talking to himself and telling stories to himself because nobody wants to listen to his stories. Finally, they agree to listen to Thomas's story which is about all of them in the present day, and they, in the story, decide to be real Native Americans and thus they are wearing only loincloths and braids. In the vision, they are carried away to the past, to the time before they ever drank alcohol and so they all throw away their beer, whiskey and vodka. Instead, they start singing, dancing and drumming. And they steal horses. However, when Victor and Junior make fun of Thomas as they disbelieve the story he narrates, Thomas tells them:

There are things you should learn. Your past is a skeleton walking one step behind you, and your future is a skeleton walking one step in front of you. Maybe you don't wear a watch, but your skeletons do, and they always know what time it is. Now, these skeletons are made of memories, dreams and voices ... See, it is always now. That's what Indian time is. The past, the future, all of it is wrapped up in the now. That's how it is. We are trapped in the now. (*The Lone Ranger*, 21-22)

As a trickster figure, Thomas Builds-the-Fire, challenges the western conceptions of the past, present and future division of time and instead emphasizes the now-time of the ancestral presence which indicates that "life as it is might be ironically joined in the present, a sacred *now* never finally imagined" (Vecsey, 137) and offers a new tribal identity for Native Americans through imagination and stories. This new identity is akin to Vizenor's term of the 'postindian' which is "a new kind of subject position that involves the creation of an image of the "indian" that directly debunks colonialist stereotypes" (Carlson, 21). Vizenor uses Baudrillard's concepts of simulation and simulacra to disclose the absence of Native presence in the term indian which is constructed by the colonial power. The trickster figure is crucial to understand Vizenor's postindian because "postindian writing or storytelling is comic and innovative, even when combating colonialist discourses. Postindian writing liberates even the colonizer from a life of lies and self-deception" (Carlson, 22). Vizenor, with the term postindian, creates a new space for Native American people which "undermines manifest manners through the use of imagination and

new stories” (*Manifest Manners*, 17). The trickster in these postindian stories functions as a figure who contributes to ‘survivance’ which represents “the idea of continual growth and change” (Baxter, 91). The trickster stories are, therefore, an indispensable part of native survivance. As Vizenor points out:

Trickster hermeneutics is the interpretation of simulations in the literature of survivance, the irony of descent and racialism, transmutation, third gender, and themes of transformation in oral tribal stories and written narratives. Trickster stories arise in silence, not scriptures, and are the holotropes of imagination; the manifold turns of scenes, the brush of natural reason, characters that liberate the mind and never reach a closure in stories. Trickster stories are the postindian simulations of tribal survivance. (*Manifest Manners*, 15)

According to Vizenor, “tricksters are imagined, and only imagined in stories and narrative art” (230), and “native trickster stories” argues Vizenor, “heal the heart by native irony, humour, and by the images of survivance and sovereignty” (*Native Liberty Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*, 229). Native tricksters, thus, “tease their own histories and are comic healers in stories. Tricksters are seen as wise, wicked, deceptive, stupid, and naive. The motivation of tricksters is never obvious, as the transcendence of the characters is never a sacrifice, and seldom amounts to very much at the end of stories” (*Fugitive Poses*, 29). Through the trickster figure, Alexie in *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, not only turns pain into humour but he also critiques the oppressive discourse and deconstructs the social and political norms of colonialism. In the story called “The Trial of Thomas-Builds-the-Fire” Alexie questions and critiques the colonial history through storytelling. Starting with an epigraph from Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*, “Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning” (*The Lone Ranger*, 93), the story unravels the dominant discourse imposed on Native American people through Thomas Builds-the-Fire, the trickster, who “as a mythological figure, ... exists beyond the boundaries of the visual and written ethnocentric stories of European conquest; he cannot be commercialized and commodified” (Cox, 60).

In a Kafkaesque like story, Thomas is arrested for once holding the reservation postmaster hostage for eight hours and for threatening to bring noteworthy changes in the vision of his tribe which poses a threat to the hegemonic discourse. Having surrendered voluntarily, Thomas has agreed to remain silent and he has not spoken for about twenty years when he finally starts to make small noises and then decides to speak at the court, which as an Althusserian repressive state apparatus stands for perpetuating the hundred years of white domination over native communities. The small noises and syllabuses Thomas makes contain more emotions and meaning than full sentences. By preferring to remain silent for such a long time, Thomas rejects both the language and truth of the dominant discourse. That is why, silence for Thomas acts as a language which conveys meaning. Thus, even a small noise Thomas has made makes a change and encourages Esther to break up with her husband, David WalksAlong, who was the tribal police chief when Thomas committed his initial crime. In his cell, Thomas closes his eyes and stories come to him which make him laugh, cry and get angry depending on the type of the story which enables him to survive without speech.

In his defence, Thomas tells stories of the historical Native American resistance against the dominant discourse, which pose an existential threat to the long-held truth of the establishment as a BIA official tells about Thomas: “A storytelling fetish accompanied by an extreme need to tell the truth. Dangerous” (*The Lone Ranger*, 93). The first story Thomas tells is about a young pony on September 8, 1858 when Colonel George Wright ordered the execution of 800 ponies which “was the worst kind of war crime” (*The Lone Ranger*, 96). As the sole survivor of these ponies, Thomas narrates what happened on that day. All the other ponies were shot in the head one by one which lasted for hours. Opening his eyes, Thomas realizes most Native Americans are crying at the court upon hearing the story. As the only surviving pony, Thomas would not surrender without struggle and accept defeat and thus despite being passive and letting a man ride him and laugh at his weakness initially, he rose up and tossed the man down and broke his arm. He was beaten, yet it was glorious for him, because eventually they realized that they could

not break him. Therefore, he rejected defeat and escaped from Colonel Wright. Opening his eyes again, Thomas sees Native Americans standing up straight, combing their braids gracefully and smiling at the court. As native a trickster, Thomas is indestructible and he acts as a shield against the eradication of Native American identity by prompting native people to challenge the history, order and truth of the dominant Eurocentric discourse. As a trickster, Thomas both narrates the stories and appears as a character in these stories in order to deconstruct the narratives of the dominant discourses. As Doueih put it: “It is in the language out which they are constructed that trickster stories make accessible this deeper wisdom about the nature of reality. By dividing himself, so to speak, into narrator and character, he both tells the story and is “in” the story” (200).

Thomas next tells the story of Qualchan, one of the Indian chieftains who was killed by Colonel Wright in 1958. In this story, Thomas appears as Qualchan who has been fighting for his people and their land. Colonel Wright has taken Qualchan’s father hostage and threatens to hang him unless Qualchan surrenders. Although Colonel Wright has promised to treat him fairly if he surrenders, Qualchan is put in chains after turning himself in, beaten down and hanged together with six other Native Americans one of whom called Epseal has hurt neither a white person nor a native in his life. The only reason he is hanged is being a native whose existence poses a threat to the dominant discourse and thus he needs to be exterminated. That is why, the population of native communities has decreased to a large extent after the arrival of the white people on the continent and those that stayed alive were removed from their lands and forced to live on the reservations. Asked by the judge what point he wants to make, Thomas answers: “The City of Spokane is now building a golf course named after me, Qualchan, located in that valley where I was hanged” (*The Lone Ranger*, 99). The white dominant discourse has not only dispossessed the native communities of their lands but it has also endeavoured to change their culture and assimilate them through repressive and ideological state apparatuses. As the well-known statement ‘Kill the Indian and save the man’ suggests, taking his culture away is supposed to make the native a ‘better’ and

‘civilized’ man. Native American identity, as Burkhart observes, can only assume a protocolonial or an anticolonial position because Indigenous people are either regarded as backward who are still struggling to get to “the state of the civilized colonist” or they exist as savages in binary opposition to the civilized colonist. (Introduction, xviii). The image and representation of Native Americans in popular culture, the media and films are reflected through the gaze of the dominant discourse. Native people are misrepresented and seen as ‘savages’ unlike the ‘civilized’ white settlers. Alexie refers to multiple popular cultural forms such as films and television in his text and he endeavours to question these misinterpretations. As Kathleen Carroll states, the title of Alexie’s text is taken from the popular TV show called “The Lone Ranger” which was broadcasted in the middle of the twentieth century. In the show, The Lone Ranger was the bringer of law and order while Tonto, his muted and stoic Indian companion, epitomized the Indian incorporated in the white man’s narrative. However, Alexie challenges this embodiment of the Indian in his text and instead brings the old heroic stories of the Indians and the culturally alienated Indians of the present together through storytellers in order to construct an Indian identity in a white world which rejects to acknowledge the Indians. Engaging in a fistfight with The Lone Ranger, “Tonto,” thus, “overturns the role of the white man’s Indian” and as a result “Indians reclaim their spiritual heritage and rescue themselves from the white man’s stereotypes” (76). And it is Thomas Builds-the-Fire, the trickster figure, who undermines the narratives and stereotypes attributed to Native Americans by the dominant white discourse and recreates the Native American identity through his stories and visions in the text: “Trickster tales offer a fresh look at what American culture deems “settled,” “true,” or “factual.” Instead, tricksters offer alternatives, creative insights into how things could change for the betterment of a particular group and perhaps everyone” (Morgan, 7).

In the third story, Thomas appears as Wild Coyote, a 16-year old native, who is in his first battle against Steptoe’s soldiers. Steptoe’s soldiers are weak and small and thus they demand a negotiation of peace which is rejected by the native war chiefs

as they do not trust the word of the white men. Therefore, native people attack them at dawn and kill many white soldiers with only a few casualties on their side. Opening his eyes, Thomas is asked how many soldiers he has killed on that day by the attorney general. Thomas accepts to have killed two soldiers: “Yes, I killed those soldiers, but they were good men. I did it with sad heart and hand. There was no way I could ever smile or laugh again. I’m not sorry we had to fight, but I am sorry those men had to die” (*The Lone Ranger*, 101-2). As a result of these murders, Thomas is sentenced to two concurrent life terms in Walla Walla States Penitentiary. By sentencing Thomas to life and silencing him, the court silences the atrocities and brutalities committed against Native Americans. That is why, Thomas exclaims: “The only appeal I have is for justice” (*The Lone Ranger*, 102). Thomas, who as a trickster cannot be categorized into the binary oppositions and thus poses a hazard to the very existence of the dominant discourse, has to be imprisoned and thus silenced because tricksters, as Grau suggests, are not bound to the restrictions of the system and thus they violate the established rules “as prophets of chaos” who cause disturbance and uneasiness in those who conform to the rules of that system and this makes their presence dangerous (131).

Thomas appears as a communal hero who deconstructs the narratives of the dominant discourse about Native Americans and as a modern-day saviour who helps the disenfranchised natives to hold on to life in spite of all the obstacles and misfortunes they face. The trickster’s “approximation to saviour” as Jung observes, alludes to the mythological belief that “the wounded wounder is the agent of healing, and that the sufferer takes away suffering.” (161) What Thomas does as a trickster is to heal his kinsfolk from the atrocities and brutalities they have been exposed to by the dominant discourse. Therefore, it is Thomas who accompanies Victor to bring his father’s body from Phoenix in the story called “This is What it Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona.” Waiting in the queue at the Trading Post to cash his check, Victor spots Thomas Build-the-Fire talking to himself because, according to Victor, “Thomas was a storyteller nobody wanted to listen to” (*The Lone Ranger*, 61). Although he is not taken seriously due to his liminal status as a

trickster, Thomas occupies a central role as a communal hero and a saviour who possesses all knowledge and truth. Victor remembers having been told a story by Thomas who knew beforehand that his father would leave them out of desperation and helplessness. Asked how he knew about it, Thomas answers: “I heard it on the wind. I heard it from the birds. I felt it in the sunlight. Also, your mother was just in here crying” (*The Lone Ranger*, 61). As Marion Grau suggests, tricksters’ “bodies themselves can become part of any message they may be relaying – bridging languages, peoples, and purposes” (Preface, x).

Native American trickster figures cannot be categorized into binary oppositions and they exist beyond time and space. Therefore, in contemporary literary texts, they can interact with other times and places for the benefit of their community through dreams, visions and stories. In a story Thomas tells Victor, we find out that a dream has told a 13-year old Thomas to go to Spokane and wait by the Falls for a sign. When Victor’s father sees him and asks why he is waiting there, Thomas says that he is waiting for a vision. According to Thomas, the vision he was waiting for was Victor’s father and the dream meant to take care of each other (*The Lone Ranger*, 69). As a communal hero, Thomas is aware that the only way for Native Americans to survive is communal solidarity and the stories Thomas tells aim at strengthening this solidarity. He is also aware that as a trickster he inhabits on the margins of society and does not fit into the social or cultural boundaries, thus even if he is not heeded, he never gives up telling his stories:

We are all given one thing by which our lives are measured, one determination. Mine are the stories which can change or not change the world. It doesn’t matter which as long as I continue to tell the stories. My father, he died on Okinawa in World War II, died fighting for this country, which had tried to kill him for years. My mother, she died giving birth to me, died while I was still inside her. She pushed me out into the world with her last breath. I have no brothers or sisters. I have only my stories which came to me before I even had the words to speak. I learned a thousand stories before I took my first thousand steps. They are all I have. It’s all I can do.” (*The Lone Ranger*, 72-73).

Through his subversive stories which shatter the monolithic and hierarchical structure of the dominant discourse, Thomas acts as an agent to create reverse discourses in which Native Americans are liberated from the yoke of Eurocentric dominant discourses: “It’s strange how us Indians celebrate the Fourth of July. It ain’t like it was our independence everybody was fighting for” (*The Lone Ranger*, 63). In the story Thomas tells Victor at the age of ten, he offers a glimpse of liberation from the paradigms of the dominant discourse in the modern times. Thomas narrates the story of two native boys who want to be warriors. Yet, it is too late to be traditional native warriors because they have been deprived of the horses and instead the two native boys steal a car only to leave it in front of the police station and hitchhike back to the reservation where they are congratulated for being very brave. After hearing the story, Victor tells Thomas that he wants to be a warrior, too (*The Lone Ranger*, 63).

As has been discussed in Introduction, trickster figures in Native American tradition do not obtain their trickster status because of their low social status and poor or dishonourable familial background like the European liminal figures. On the contrary, they become tricksters regardless of their age, origin or background and thus they intrinsically belong to the periphery from where they, as Bakhtinian centrifugal forces, continually subvert the monolithic perspective and construct a heteroglot world characterized by multiplicity, plurality, multivocality and polyvalence. Therefore, throughout the text, we see Thomas telling stories, seeing visions and dreams as a trickster at different ages which serve to create reverse discourses. Storytelling runs throughout Thomas’s lineage. His grandfather who is fired on his birthday from the hotel where he has been working as a hotel cleaner in in the story called “A Train is an Order of Occurrence Designed to Lead to Some Result” also had the gift of storytelling. Thomas’s grandfather, Samuel Builds-the-Fire had never stepped into a bar nor had he ever drunk because all his life he had seen his brothers, sisters and other members of the tribe suffer from alcoholism. On the day he is fired, he goes into a bar and with each glass of beer he comes to gain courage, wisdom as well as fear and failure: “All the halfway point of any drunken

night, there is a moment when an Indian realizes he cannot turn back toward tradition and that he has no map to guide him toward the future" (*The Lone Ranger*, 134). Throughout his life, he knew that "alcohol would corrupt his stories, render them useless. He knew his stories had the power to teach, to show how this life should be lived" (*The Lone Ranger*, 134). Samuel had been deserted by his children so he had to live alone on the reservation. He got a job as a hotel cleaner with minimum wage at the motel which was later turned into a place for prostitutes and drug dealers. Samuel used to see an Indian prostitute there from time to time and her face used to remind him of his own daughter's face. Being hurt, he would give some of his money to Indian prostitutes, telling them not to work on that day. One year before being fired, Samuel had found a sixteen-year-old Indian boy dead as a result of drug overdose, an incident after which the stories left Samuel and all he could do was to hum and sing songs with no sense anymore. After being pushed out of the bar, Samuel hears the whistle from the distance and trips on a rail. He closes his eyes and hands and he dies.

In the stories, the characters face "the dilemma of how to be real Indians, of how to find their true names, their adult names, of how to find a warrior dignity and courage when it is too late to be warriors in the old way ... They struggle to cope with passivity, cynicism, and despair to find healing for the pain that turns into self-pity and the anger that turns into self-loathing" (DeNuccio, 86). The stereotypes attributed to Native Americans such as alcoholism are ubiquitous in the text, however, Alexie is making an effort to decolonize our perceptions of such stereotypes and he is trying to undermine the 'Drunk Indian Trope.' And in the text, Samuel Builds-the-Fire is possibly the only character who has never consumed alcohol until the night of his death. Whether he died as a result of suicide or a tragic accident is complicated in the story: "Sometimes it's called passing out and sometimes it's just pretending to be asleep" (*The Lone Ranger*, 138). Alexie, thus, problematizes 'the drunk Indian stereotype' and he provides a humanizing depth to the drunkenness of Samuel Builds-the-Fire which has led to his death.

After about five hundred years of colonization and dispossession, Native Americans have had to endure misery, agony, despair and suffering as Alexie states in his interview with Ase Nygren: “After all, we come out of genocide, and our entire history is filled with murder and war. … there is definitely a lot of humiliation in Native literature. We write about being humiliated a lot. And that takes physical forms, emotional forms, and mental forms. I think Native literature is the literature of humiliation and shame” (155). However, in *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, Alexie attempts to subvert and undermine the official truth through humour which “unsettles the conventional ways of thinking and compels re-evaluation and growth, ultimately allowing Indian characters to connect to their heritage in new ways and forcing non-native readers to reconsider simplistic generalizations” (Coulombe, 12), and through trickster figure, Thomas Builds-the-Fire who liberates the Native Americans from the tyranny and hegemony of the dominant discourse because, as Mwinlaaru suggests, the trickster as a hero targets the mighty. He is deeply concerned about the obstacles and troubles his community faces and he emboldens his community to be nonconformist, seek novel ideas and establish a new order by standing up to authority. The trickster thus addresses the social and political issues of the disenfranchised groups “as the epitome of resistance and positive change” (253).

CHAPTER 5

SHERMAN ALEXIE'S *RESERVATION BLUES*

Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*, which was published in 1995, narrates the story of Coyote Springs, the musical band which the native trickster Thomas-Builds-the-Fire starts as a result of his encounter with Robert Johnson, the famous blues singer, in Wellpinit which is a town on Spokane Indian reservation. In the novel, Alexie incorporates African American blues into Indian experience in order to draw attention to the similarities between African Americans and Native Americans' deprival of social, economic and political rights in the USA. In the novel, the blues in spite of emanating from the African American community, "speak not just an African American history and identity, but instead seem to generate from a Native American point of reference" (Ford, 197). Therefore, Thomas Builds-the-Fire, as a liminal trickster figure, attempts to incorporate native stories into blues in order to expound the historical injustice, discrimination and maltreatment of a marginalized group as well as the problems and difficulties they go through in the present day. Through the weapons of trickster discourse such as irony, storytelling, dreams, visions and imagination, Thomas brings the established order into question and instead offers different insights into the relations between the white and Native American community. As Vizenor, in *The Trickster of Liberty*, states:

The tribal trickster is a comic holotrope³: the whole figuration; an unbroken interior landscape that beams various points of view in temporal reveries.

³ Referring to Bakhtin, Vizenor defines comic holotrope as a dialogic discourse in which the trickster emerges as "a communal sign in a comic narrative" (282). According to Vizenor, Native American literatures and worldviews are characterized by being comic and communal and this is represented by the native trickster who "as a semiotic sign, is imagined in narrative voices, a communal rein to the unconscious, which is comic liberation" ("Trickster Discourse" 285).

The trickster is immortal; when the trickster emerges in imagination the author dies in a comic discourse. To imagine the tribal trickster is to relume human unities; colonial surveillance, monologues, and racial separations are overturned in discourse. (“Prologue,” x)

Robert Johnson, the famous blues guitarist, comes to an agreement with the Gentleman to play the guitar better than anybody else in return for freedom, the thing he loves more than anything else despite being mocked by the Gentleman: “You’re a black man in Mississippi. I don’t care if it is 1930. You ain’t got much freedom to offer me” (*Reservation Blues*, 264). Running from the Gentleman to whom he, in a Faustian bargain, has sold his soul in exchange for being the best guitarist, Robert Johnson comes across Thomas “the misfit storyteller of the Spokane Tribe” (*Reservation Blues*, 5), on Spokane Indian Reservation. After telling Thomas that he is searching for a woman living on a hill to fix his problem and cure him from the sickness he has got as a result of the deal he has made with The Gentleman, Robert Johnson is sent to Big Mom who lives on the top of Wellpinit Hill in order to heal. As members of oppressed and underprivileged communities, both Thomas-Builds-the-Fire and Robert Johnson are wounded by the dominant white ideology and they need to heal. However, in order to initiate the healing process so that they can reconcile with the present times, they need to remember history, confront with it and then re-invent an alternative account of historical process of the disenfranchised groups and their relations with the dominant white culture.

Ayana Smith identifies the blues singer with Signifying Monkey, the African-American trickster figure for a number of reasons. The blues singer, Smith argues, possesses the characteristics of the trickster figure in song narratives especially when he reveals the socially destructive and intolerable atrocities. The trickster then can be regarded as the alter ego of the blues singer especially in songs regarding boll weevil and folk characters. Finally, the blues songs which include frequent allusions to railways and crossroads are associated with the peripheral nature of Signifying Monkey’s African ancestor, Esu-Elegbara, who represents the

borderline betwixt the word and that word's (mis)interpretation. (179) Robert Johnson, therefore, appears to be the doppelganger of Thomas in the novel as Karen Jorgensen suggests. Jorgensen argues that as it is made clear in the New Testament, Thomas means twin and despite being a Native American and a coloured person, Thomas and Roberts are twins who, via words and music, are storytellers as they possess an innate urge to narrate their stories. Jorgensen goes on to argue that although they are both involved in playing the magic guitar, they eventually start to resist it as they come to the realization that regardless of whether it is the grieving song of the coloured people or that of the sorrowful native lamentation, music emanates from people and thus it should not be exploited since it is sacred (20).

Taking possession of Robert Johnson's guitar, Thomas embarks on forming a music band, with himself being the lead singer, Victor as the lead guitarist and Junior Polatkin as the drummer in order to change the world with music and make the world confront the injustices, inequality and discrimination exerted on Native Americans. As a trickster figure, Thomas names the band Coyote Springs. One of the definitions of a coyote, as it is written down in Thomas's journal, is: "A trickster whose bag of tricks contains permutations of love, hate, weather, change, laughter, and tears" (*Reservation Blues*, 48) which is exactly what Alexie is doing in his texts; laughter through tears. As discussed in the Introduction, in Native American tradition coyote is one of the most popular cultural and literary trickster figures found in stories, songs, dances, rituals and tales. As, according to some Native American tribes, "language creates reality rather than describes it, Coyote's game is the word incarnate" (Rosenberg, 155) and coyote whose presence is an invocation to chaos in cultural myths and literary genres is "the essential paradisiacal deconstructionist" (Rosenberg, 156). Therefore, in most Native American tales, coyote, as a mediator, not only entertains but also teaches. Coyote, as George E. Tinker suggests, has always been identified as a teacher who has devoted himself to the welfare of mankind even when he acts foolishly and is in pursuit of his own interests (xi).

In contemporary native literature, trickster figures in the form of humans assume this role of deconstructing dominant discourses and preserving the native communal identity as cultural heroes and saviours. In the novel, Thomas as a ‘deconstructionist’ trickster figure, therefore, acts as a bulwark against the assimilation of Native Americans by the dominant white culture by creating reverse discourses through his stories and blues songs he writes for Coyote Springs. Dealing with personal and social troubles, discrimination, injustice, violence, agony and grief, blues, the folk music of African Americans, emerged after the abolition of slavery as a form of resistance. In African - American tradition, a trickster, as Ayana Smith observes, is the figure that defies the social norms and gains personal interests through deceit, cunning and humour. The African-American trickster outsmarts a more powerful rival through his wits. It is in slavery that African-American trickster tales can be found and those tales thus revolve around how to overcome power struggles as well as lack of self-determination. In those tales, the slave who obtains power through deceits and cunning comes to be identified with the folk hero and he, as a result, offers momentary consolation. Living outside the margin of society, the African-American trickster does not abide by the social norms and behaviour, and as the hero of the trickster tales, he mentions the socially unmentionable issues and thus he offers an alternative existence to that of slavery. The similar process can be seen in the early blues tradition in which a real or imaginary folk hero is glorified in a lot of blues songs (179-80). Alexie incorporates this African-American tradition of blues into his novel as a form of resistance against the dominant white discourse.

However, some significant epistemological differences between Native American and European culture should be noted down in order to reveal how native American trickster as a culture hero and saviour diverges from the western trickster figures. As Ellen Rosenberg points out, unlike the white culture, Native cultures do not view all knowledge as public domain, as a result, the dislocation of performatives as well as other materials from their precise contexts, for Native cultures, leads to a distortion that can never be restored. The next important difference is that although

the white culture defines the natives through stereotypes such as being “stoic” and “grave,” a lot of native cultures cherish jokes, laughter and humour which, according to them, are closely linked with the sacred and help keep the communal dynamic moving forward. A third significant difference is that as all knowledge, according to Native cultures, is interrelated, the conceptual divisions between disciplines are rejected. That is why, coyote reveals meaning in plenty of cultural levels and domains. Another distinguishing characteristic of Native cultures is that everything in the universe such as people, nature, animals etc. are interrelated. Therefore, unlike the dominant American culture which is characterized by being hierachal, linear, and progressive, the Native cultures as a result of their view of interrelatedness of all things that exist in the universe are characterized by their “concepts of the circular constitution of reality, a cycle of return or a balance devoid of notions of hierachal progress.” A further characteristic of Native cultures that sets them apart from the American dominant culture is their view of time and space (157-58). As in *American Indian Myths and Legends* Erdoes and Ortiz state, Native American people live in accordance with “Indian time,” which perpetuates their ties with their mythologies. Hence, unlike the Western perspective which regards rivers, lakes, mountains and rocks as inanimate objects, for Native Americans nature contains mysterious forces and it teems with life and medicine (xi).

In Native American tradition, trickster figures, as has been discussed previously, play a crucial role in preserving the Native American communal identity and preventing them from being assimilated by the white discourse. Therefore, in the novel, such characteristics that distinguish the native cultures from the dominant American culture are pointed out by Thomas, a trickster figure who “represents the destruction of a given social order and bridges the gap between the binary opposites on which this order is founded” (Grilli, 64). Thomas thus appears to be the embodiment of resistance against the disappearance of Native American values and identity in the novel. However, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, despite possessing a central role as a culture hero, creator and transformer, the trickster in Native American perspective remains an asocial and peripheral figure.

In this novel as well, Thomas appears as a liminal figure and a social outsider who “wasn’t ugly, though, just marked by loneliness, like some red L was tattooed on his forehead. Indian women had never paid much attention to him, because he didn’t pretend to be some twentieth-century warrior, alternating between blind rage and feigned disinterest. He was neither loud nor aggressive, neither calm nor silent” (*Reservation Blues*, 4). The description of Thomas as an in-between character is a symbolic referent to the nature of the trickster who:

[...] is a forerunner of the saviour, and, like him, God, man, and animal at once. He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness. Because of it he is deserted by his (evidently human) companions, which seems to indicate that he has fallen below their level of consciousness. He is so unconscious of himself that his body is not a unity, and his two hands fight each other. (Jung, 170)

On one hand, native tricksters are attributed great powers and roles and thus they are venerated, on the other hand, they are not taken seriously because of their outcast status. Therefore, in both texts, everybody on the reservation is fed up with Thomas’s stories and thus nobody is willing to listen to them yet nothing could stop Thomas from telling stories. Even when nobody shows any kind of enthusiasm to take heed of Thomas’s stories, he tells them to the trees and to Robert Johnson’s guitar. As Janine Richardson acknowledges, Thomas withstands against the perpetual efforts to deny and make Native Americans forget their suffering throughout history. The people on the reservation, Richardson argues, have given up hope and belief in terms of communal history and remembrance and thus they become unwilling to listen to what Thomas has to tell them through his stories. Once the memory of the tribe is restraint, according to Richardson, all that is left is the hegemonic culture’s official version of events to shape the identity and the history (41). Thomas with his stories and songs, therefore, poses a threat to the existing dominant social rules as he combats against the historical assimilation of Native Americans and the denial of their rights over their lands as a community. Unlike the official dominant ideology which has deprived Native Americans of

their lands and rights, Thomas aims at creating reverse discourses through his stories and songs which serve to liberate Native Americans from the white dominant discourse and compromise them with their lost lands, values and identities. Since Native American identity is entrenched into the land, their tricksters, as Burkhart notes, lead their kinsfolk to the contours of locality and urge them to step on the ground firmly. Native tricksters exist in not only locality but also in delocality whose ontology and epistemology they deconstruct from inside via creative and humorous shortcomings. In locality, Burkhart highlights, meaning exists as originary rather than in delocalized and disembodied texts, and it is constantly being fashioned through “being-in-the-land and being-from-the-land.” Meaning in locality functions as a dynamic and active force in which every single ontological and epistemic layer of kinship and the land is harboured and it is humour that serves best to create and maintain this kinship. (Introduction, xxii-i).

Most of the Native Americans’ stories, which are an intrinsic part of their community, are about grand issues of morality, environment, society and psychology no matter how much they are imbued with jokes and funny tales as Karl Kroeber suggests. Stories, Kroeber insists, form the basis of Native American community as their sacred institutions are established based on stories. The survival of the community, therefore, rests on stories. For Native Americans, Kroeber emphasizes, storytelling constituted the most essential cultural activity as their sacred rituals were embedded in a narrative (6). Storytelling, therefore, has an important function in Native American communities because in Native American experience it transmits knowledge and reminds them of their history and traditional values as well as demonstrating a stark picture of their grieving life conditions in the modern times. That is why, it is storytelling that enables Native Americans to resist the dominant culture’s interpretation of history and preserve their communal identity. As, in *Native Liberty*, Vizenor states:

The practices of survivance, however, are obvious and unmistakable in native stories. The nature of survivance creates a sense of narrative resistance to absence, literary tragedy, nihilism, and victimry. Native

survivance is an active sense of presence over historical absence, the dominance of cultural simulations, and manifest manners. Native survivance is a continuance of stories. (1)

Stories in trickster discourse are transgressive acts and they serve to create reverse discourses through the violation of the rules and order of the dominant discourses and therefore, as in “The Myth of The Trickster: The Necessary Breaker of Taboos,” Makarius suggests, “trickster accounts are surcharged with acts of rebellion, disobedience, defiance, transgression, and sacrilege: all these manifestations are intended precisely to explicate, in the symbolic language of myth, the nature and function of the hero” (73). In the novel in addition to Thomas, Chess, a Flathead native who joins Coyote Springs together with her sister Checkers, likes telling and listening to Thomas’s stories. Chess tells Thomas about her grandmother, who was a little white as she had German blood, yet who despised being Indian. She did not look like Indians and she never told anyone that she was Indian. She eventually left Chess’ grandfather and left the reservation never to be heard from again (*Reservation Blues*, 82). That’s why, Chess is not happy with Junior and Victor dating with two white girls, Betty and Veronica, who come to the Spokane Reservation to listen to Coyote Springs and later become the members of the band. As Victor and Junior are the last two full blood natives on Spokane Reservation, Chess thinks they are betraying their community. The hybridity torments native communities as well as the hybrid kids according to Chess. After Junior Polatkin commits suicide and is buried, Chess, at the graveyard, thinks she sees a blonde woman with a child in black, presumably Lynn, Junior’s little romance from college and their kid who is actually thought to have been aborted. Chess wishes to tell the white woman that her kid will always be half-Indian in spite of all her efforts to make the child white. Nor will the son be accepted by the Indians as he will never be Indian enough. In order to protect the Native Americans from the suffering the white woman and her son would cause, Chess wished to tell the white woman:

Those quarter-blood and eighth-blood grandchildren will find out they're Indian and torment the rest of us real Indians. They'll come out to the reservation, come to our powwows, in their nice clothes and nice cars, and remind the real Indians how much we don't have. Those quarter-bloods and eighth-bloods will get all the Indian jobs, chances, because they look white. Because they are safer. (283, emphasis original)

Native Americans are surrounded by a great number of insurmountable difficulties in their own communities as well as in their relations with the dominant white culture. All members of their community ranging from younger generation to the older one are afflicted with poverty, misery and despair in the novel. Samuel Builds-the-Fire, Thomas's father, is an alcoholic that is drunk and disorderly most of the time, which torments Chess and Checkers to see helplessness and hopelessness in old Indian men. Asked where her father is, Chess tells Thomas that he is gone:

The word *gone* (emphasis original) echoed all over the reservation, just a shell of its former self, just a fragment of the whole. But the reservation still possessed power and rage, magic and loss, joys and jealousy. The reservation tugged at the lives of its Indians, stole from them in the middle of the night, watched impassively as the horses and salmon disappeared. But the reservation forgave, too. [...] Thomas, Chess, and Checkers heard the word *gone* shake the foundation of the house. (96-7).

If the native experience, after their encounter with European colonization, is to be summed up in a single word, it is 'GONE', which is repeated over and over in the text and which refers to the loss of native lands, culture and identity. Thomas tells Chess and Checkers the story of his father who was a good man and a good father when he was sober. He was a great basketball player at high school and thus a prospective hero for the Spokane tribe who are in search of tribal heroes, the modern warriors, who offer them glimpses of hope out of their misery and despair. However, the modern warriors of Native American communities are mocked and looked down on by the authorial figures of the dominant culture who attempt to define the native people as savages through the unfavourable stereotypes attributed to them via the mediums of popular culture. However, as discussed previously, one of the weapons the disempowered groups possess that enables them to resist the

dominant discourse and thus helps them be liberated is irony which according to Hutcheon, “removes the security that words mean only what they say” (*Irony’s Edge*, 14). Therefore, one day, when Samuel and Lester FallsApart, while driving, are stopped by Spokane Police Officer Wilson, a white man who has been hired as a police officer on the ground of having a little native blood yet who loathes living on the reservation, they employ irony as a weapon against the hegemonic power:

“You two been drinking?”

“I’ve been drinking since I was five,” Lester said. “Kindergarten is hard on a man.”

“I’II pretend you didn’t say that,” Wilson said.

“And we’II pretend you’re a real Indian,” Samuel said.

(*Reservation Blues*, 102)

Afterwards, they agree to have a symbolic basketball match of two to six, Samuel and Lester against six tribal cops. Samuel and Lester do better in the beginning and Samuel scores for Crazy Horse, for writing a traffic ticket to a native who had no money even to nourish his children, for sand Creek, for the Wounded Knee I and II, for Malcolm X, for Martin Luther King, for Kennedys and so on. Yet, Samuel and Lester lose the match because of the fouls and cheating of the cops. The match turns out to be a symbolic representation of historical confrontation between the dominant white discourse and the disenfranchised native communities. Just like the natives who have been disposed of their lands and deprived of their communal identity and values as a result of the white injustice, Samuel and Lester lose the match due to the white cops’ hegemony over them. However, through the use of irony, they are able to divulge the brutal facts the establishment tends to ignore. Therefore, through irony, as Hutcheon suggests, “the marginalized can be heard by the center, and yet keep its critical distance and thus unbalance and undermine” (*Irony’s Edge*, 30). Irony and humour, therefore, allow native Americans to be liberated from tyranny of the authority albeit temporarily.

The native relations with the white dominant discourses have always been marked by inequality and tension throughout history. The white culture has preferred to turn

a blind eye to the legitimate demands of the native communities over their rights on their lands and over the recognition of the native communal identity. Instead, it has tended to view the native identity through stereotypical images attributed to them. However, in the novel, Sherman Alexie, deconstructs the misrepresented image of the natives and instead he “offers us a mirror image of dominant prejudices, assumptions and fears regarding American Indians, putting the reader into the role of the subaltern” (Brandt, 35). The historical confrontation between the dominant white culture and the native communities is presented to the readers through the subversive apparatuses of trickster discourse which exposes the injustice and atrocities committed against the native communities. Such apparatuses as dreams, imagination, stories and songs serve to deconstruct the binary oppositions of the ‘civilized white man’ and the ‘uncivilized Indian’ by offering alternative interpretations of historical events. Being lonely and hungry, Thomas in the novel dreams about hunger and television. Turning on his small black and white television in his dream, Thomas sees what white people possess such as clothes, food, houses, and kids which remind him of the things he has never had. Looking for traces of native people on TV, he comes across three cowboys confronted by Sioux Nation. The cowboys tell the natives they have come for friendship while, at the same time, cranking the generator and electrocuting three natives. Likewise, in Chess’s dream a small native man, who has unbraided brown hair and an unpainted body, is riding on a pale horse towards a cavalry fort. Seeing the barred windows and chains, the unpainted native pulls a knife and then he is grabbed from behind by an angry assimilated Indian who shouts: “He’s got a knife! … Kill the Indian!” (*Reservation Blues*, 85), as a result, a white soldier spears the unpainted native with his bayonet. Junior Polatkin dreams about riding a horse by the Columbia River as the leader of a big party of native warriors who are about to attack a steamship. Just then, Junior hears gunshots and native warriors are shot from all angles until only Junior survives. Junior is arrested, spat on and his pony is shot by a white soldier. A large soldier called General George Wright comes and offers his hand to Junior and tells that they have killed the pony because it is a war and they are waiting for General Sheridan by whom Junior is charged with the murder of eighteen settlers

and thus sentenced to be hung. Such historical injustice and oppression have left plenty of marks in the native experience after their encounter with the Europeans about five centuries ago and the natives are constantly reminded of those marks through dreams, visions and imagination. That is why, confronting the past in order to re-construct the present is crucial in Native American experience.

In both texts, Alexie does not only expose the historical struggle of Native Americans against the dominant discourses but he also addresses the stereotypes attributed to Native Americans ever since their confrontation with the Europeans. The Native American identity has been characterized by negative stereotypes such as savagery, brutality, degradation and violence. After Coyote Spring's performance in a cowboy bar in Ellensburg, Washington, The Ellensburg Tri-Weekly comments on their performance by reporting that there was no one injured and the owner of the bar Ernie Lively is quoted to say: "I was kind of nervous about hiring Indians and all, ... Worried they might not show up or maybe they'd stir up trouble" (*Reservation Blues*, 90). Throughout history, as Stefan Brandt contends,

[n]ative Americans were often stylized into a kind of nemesis of the westward movement. It is no coincidence that the American frontier was imagined as the dividing line between white civilization and Indian savagery. In the dualistic rhetoric of 'Us versus Them,' Native Americans were assigned the part of the rebels, the archenemies of progress and enlightenment" (38).

The natives, from the white perspective, are represented in a way that dehumanizes and devalues their identity. Being a native is misrepresented either with such negative stereotypes or it is unrealistically idealized. As indicated by Victor: "But most Indians never drink. Nobody notices the sober Indians. On television, the drunk Indians emote. In books, the drunk Indians philosophize" (*Reservation Blues*, 151). The Native American identity is either belittled and thus reduced to a variety of negative stereotypes such as violence, poverty and drunkenness or idealized through concepts like being stoic, wise and environmentalist. As Betty tells Chess and Thomas: "White people want to be Indians. You all have things we don't have.

You live at peace with the earth. You are so wise" (*Reservation Blues*, 168). However, the white culture's interest in the misrepresented stoic Indians has been commodified and commercialized in the mediums of popular culture. Sheridan tells Mr. Armstrong that they could sell the Indian idea through Betty and Veronica who have had Indian experience: "Can't you see the possibilities? We dress them up a little. Get them into the tanning booth. Darken them up a bit. Maybe a little plastic surgery on those cheekbones. Get them a little higher, you know? Dye their hair black. Then we'd have Indians. People want to hear Indians" (*Reservation Blues*, 269). As Douglas Ford states: "In Sheridan's mass market planning, Betty and Veronica become living simulacra, or what Jean Baudrillard would describe as "myths of origin and signs of reality," as well as "second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity" (208-9). They try to indianize Betty and Veronica: "As you know, Coyote Springs self-destructed. We were thinking we needed a more reliable kind of Indian. Basically, we need Indians such as yourselves" (*Reservation Blues*, 272). The popular culture and its products such as films, literature, music and art manipulate and exploit the native identity for profit through simulation. According to Vizenor: "The word Indian ... is a colonial invention, an absence in literature because it is a simulation without a real reference" (*Native Liberty*, 23). We see this simulated Indian identity with no referent in the cassette Betty and Veronica send to Coyote Springs in order to convey their condolences after Junior shots himself:

*And your hair is blonde
But you're Indian in your bones
And your skin is white
But you're Indian in your bones
And it don't matter who I am
I am Indian in my bones
I don't listen to what they say
I am Indian in my bones*

(296, emphasis original).

Listening to the lyrics of their song, Thomas takes out the cassette, smashes it and then running around the house, he tries to gather the photos, souvenirs, letter and cards that belong to his family before they are stolen by the white popular culture.

Thomas, as a trickster figure, is aware of the assimilation of Native Americans by popular culture and thus, his destruction of cultural objects is, as a matter of fact, an attempt to preserve the Native American culture from being annihilated.

According to Vizenor, Native people, today, are characterized by their fugitive poses in photographic and other visual representations. However, he claims that such representations of Native people as Indians actually demonstrate the fact that the presence of the Indian is the absence of the native. The presence of Native, for Vizenor, can be found through visual representations of their hands and eyes (*Fugitive Poses*, 145). Similarly, in the text, we see that it is the eyes that come to represent the native identity as they cannot be simulated and exploited by the popular culture. When Father Arnold the priest of the Catholic Church moves to the reservation, he realizes: “It’s their eyes … Those Indians have the most amazing eyes. Truly amazing” (*Reservation Blues*, 37). Thomas who falls in love with Chess also realizes her native eyes: “Still, she had dark, dark eyes that seemed even darker behind her glasses. They were Indian grandmother eyes that stayed clear and focused for generations” (*Reservation Blues*, 60). Therefore, in photographs and other visual representations, it is the eyes and hands in which we can find the traces of native identity and in which we as readers come to see the native gaze which undermines the established order’s commodification and misrepresentation of Native American identity. Therefore, in the products of popular culture, the presence of natives is seen in the shadows of their eyes and hands:

The eyes and hands of wounded fugitives in photographs are the sources of stories, the trace of native survivance [...] the eyes and hands have never been procured in colonial poses, never contrived as cultural evidence to serve the fever of institutional power. [...] The eyes are the narrative presence of natives, and the poses are the simulations of the other [...] The eyes and hands are the narratives not the ruins of native bodies. [...] The eyes in the photograph are the secret mirrors of a private presence, not the closure of performance or public representations. (*Fugitive Poses*, 158).

Apart from their hands and eyes in photographs and other visual representations, Vizenor emphasizes that the presence of Native people can be seen in their native

stories that create “a sense of presence, a tease of memories, and a resistance to pictures of victimry” (*Fugitive Poses*, 154). Vizenor uses Jean Baudrillard’s concepts of simulation and simulacra to show that “the indian is an imprinted picture, the pose of a continental fugitive” and that “the simulation of the other is the absence of the native” (*Fugitive Poses*, 145). According to Baudrillard, “simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (631). Vizenor, is, thus, against the term indian which is coined by the colonial power and so, according to him while the indian stands for the absence, the native is the presence. For that reason, Vizenor points out that in many narratives and motion pictures, the indian has no connection with any kind of reality because “the indian is pure simulacrum” (*Fugitive Poses*, 148).

In that regard, Thomas, as a native trickster figure in both texts, constantly attempts to remind Native Americans of their communal identity and culture by telling stories in addition to initiating a confrontation with the institutions of the dominant discourse, which have perpetuated the assimilation process of Native Americans. One of such hegemonic institutions, the Catholic Church on the Spokane Reservation is trying to undermine the native identity. In his dream, Father Arnold, a sympathetic priest to the plight of the natives, is standing in front of a crowd of natives to save them yet they are ignoring what he has to say. Just then two local missionaries named Marcus and Narcissa Whitman enter the Church carrying black boxes. They threaten the natives with opening the black boxes when they do not heed what Father Arnold is recounting. Father Arnold, being curious about what the black boxes contain, is told that the boxes are empty but they have warned the natives that the boxes contain smallpox, and threaten them with the disease in case they do not listen. While Father Arnold tells them to teach through love, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman claim that it is the only way to get the natives to listen as fear is part of religion and faith for God (*Reservation Blues*, 164-5).

When Coyote Springs is formed, most of the natives as well as the members of the Church except for Father Arnold oppose it due to associating the blues and Rock'n' roll with the music of the devil. As a benevolent Christian, Father Arnold states: "I really don't think God is too concerned about this band. I think hunger and world peace are at the top of His list of things to worry about, and rock music is somewhere down near the bottom" (*Reservation Blues*, 34). Arriving at the Reservation, Father Arnold "was impressed by the Spokanes' ability to laugh. He'd never thought of Indians as being funny. What did they have to laugh about? Poverty, suicide, alcoholism? Father Arnold learned to laugh at most everything, which strangely made him feel closer to God" (*Reservation Blues*, 36). Laughter, therefore as Bakhtin emphasizes,

purifies from dogmatism, from the intolerant and the petrified; it liberates from fanaticism and pedantry, from fear and intimidation, from didacticism, naivete and illusion, from the single meaning, the single level, from sentimentality. Laughter does not permit seriousness to atrophy and to be torn away from the one being, forever incomplete. It restores this ambivalent wholeness. Such is the function of laughter in the historical development of culture and literature. (*Rabelais*, 174)

As discussed in the Introduction, Jesus of Nazareth has many characteristics in common with trickster figures. His narration of allegorical stories, performing metamorphoses, combining the opposites and acting as a divine mediator as well as being a holy fool are similar to literary and cultural trickster figures. As Marion Grau suggests:

Jesus of Nazareth is perhaps one of the more unexpected trickster figures. He, too, can be seen as always already liminal, that divine messenger and mediator who connects the seemingly unconnected, tells parables that confound and fascinate, challenge and transform. He engages in disappearing acts and metamorphoses and acts the holy fool for us to imitate as we try to confound the death-dealing logic that rules over our lives. The human-divine body of Christ, a trickster figure who embodies and thereby holds together in powerful ways the paradoxes of human flesh and divine substance, is central to the particular cross-roads of Christian theological hermeneutics. (6)

Thomas tells Chess that he was baptized Catholic together with other natives on the reservation, yet he abandoned Catholicism at the age of nine after witnessing native records and books being burnt in the Church. Thomas still mourns for the eradication of the cultural products of Native Americans: “These are the devil’s tools! the white Catholic priest bellowed as his Indian flock threw books and records into the fire. Thomas figured that priests everywhere were supposed to bellow. [...] They were never quiet, never whispered their sermons, never let silence tell the story. Even Thomas knew his best stories never found their way past his lips and teeth” (*Reservation Blues*, 146). As in “The Shaman and the Trickster” Ricketts emphasizes, Thomas as a trickster, “embodies another experience of Reality: one in which humans feel themselves to be self-sufficient beings for whom the supernatural spirits are power not to be worshipped, but ignored, to be overcome, or in the last analysis mocked” (87). The Church together with other institutions of the dominant white discourse has contributed to the perpetuation of injustice and oppression against Native Americans in an attempt to save them from their ‘barbaric roots’ and subsequently ‘humanize’ and ‘civilize’ them. As a result, Native Americans were coerced to live on the reservations where they have been exposed to forced assimilation through governmental, educational and religious institutions for many generations for the purpose of the annihilation of native identity. As Fanon puts forward, the natives are regarded as a kind of “quintessence of evil” by the settlers, according to whom the natives not only have a lack of social values but they are also insensible of ethics, as a result of which they represent both “the absence of values” and “the negation of values.” Being an adversary of values, the native thus appears to be “the absolute evil” (41).

However, trickster discourse appears as a form of resistance against dehumanizing the native and his values by the colonial powers. In his stories and songs, Thomas as a cultural trickster hero thus expounds how the white discourses have stripped the natives of their authentic identity and communal values, and while exposing this agonizing process he also creates reverse discourses which offer alternative narratives about the native and white relationships. In the song called “My God Has

Dark Skin" he has written for Coyote Springs, Thomas alludes to the eradication of native identity for the sake of religion: "My braids were cut off in the name of Jesus / To make me look so white / My tongue was cut out in the name of Jesus / So I would not speak what's right / My heart was cut out in the name of Jesus / So I would not try to feel / My eyes were cut out in the name of Jesus / So I could not see what's real" (*Reservation Blues*, 131). Therefore, Thomas enquires Chess about how she could go to a Church that has exterminated countless native lives in the name of God and tells her a story:

We were both at Wounded Knee when the Ghost Dancers were slaughtered. We were slaughtered at Wounded Knee. I know there were whole different tribes there, no Spokanes or Flatheads, but we were still somewhere there. There was a part of every Indian bleeding in the snow. All those soldiers killed us in the name of God, enit? They shouted 'Jesus Christ' as they ran swords through our bellies. Can you feel the pain still, late at night, when you are trying to sleep, when you're praying to a God whose name was used to justify the slaughter?

I can see you running like a shadow, just outside the body of an Indian woman who looks like you, until she was shot by an eighteen-year-old white kid from Missouri. He jumps off the horse, falls on her and you, the Indian, the shadow. He cuts and tears with his sword, his hands, his teeth. He ate you both up like he was a coyote. They all ate us like we were mice, rabbits, flightless birds. They ate us whole.

(*Reservation Blues*, 167-68)

Alexie, in the text, masterfully incorporates the past into the present not only for the Native American communities to remember their history and regain their communal identity but also for the non-natives to be able to confront the historical brutalities and injustices inflicted on the Native American community through the trickster figure. The various stories of the past and the present narrated in the novel expound the perpetual process of oppression and assimilation Native Americans have been exposed to. The US army officers General Phillip H. Sheridan, George Wright and George Armstrong Custer who were responsible for the massacres of the natives in the 19th century re-appear in the novel as executives of Cavalry Records, yet their function remains the same which is to exterminate the native

identity. George Wright and Phil Sheridan come to the reservation to make a contract with Coyote Springs. In the fax they send to Mr. Armstrong, the manager of the recording company, they emphasise that they have been impressed by the band and they can “dress this group up, give them war paint, feathers, etc., and really play up the Indian angle” which “could prove to be very lucrative for Cavalry Records” (*Reservation Blues*, 190). As members of the dominant culture, the record producers Wright and Sheridan, as Blythe Tellefsen argues, have the intention of making Native American people resemble the simulations of Indians represented in the popular culture for the purpose of making profits. Although they are born Indian and brought up on the reservations with Indian parents within the Indian society, the Native Americans are made to conform to the dominant culture’s perception of what an Indian looks like. Being an Indian, therefore, comes to mean being the white man’s Indian. Commercialization of Indian identity is, thus, another kind of hegemony (128). As discussed above, the representation of Native American people in popular culture is a simulation which serves to cut all their ties with their roots and identity by turning Native Americans into Indians without a real history and culture. As Vizenor puts forward: “The indian, of course, has no real referent, no actual native ancestors. The simulation of that name is a colonial enactment. The indian is the absence of natives. The name is an ironic noun, a simulation of dominance that transposes native memories, imagic moments, and stories of survivance” (*Native Liberty*, 162).

After failing in their first recording performance mainly because of Victor’s pain in his hands caused by the guitar’s strings, Coyote Springs is not given another chance by Mr. Armstrong which triggers Victor to lash out: “It’s all lies, lies, lies. All the whites ever done was tell us lies” (*Reservation Blues*, 230). The historical confrontation between Native Americans and the dominant culture has extended to the present times far from a solution and thus perpetual conflict manifests itself during their interaction with each other. In one of her dreams, Checkers sees Phil Sheridan coming into her room and saying he has come to apologise yet he blames

them for behaving like ‘uncivilized Indians’ and bringing about plenty of damage. While Checkers maintains that it was not them to start it all, Sheridan answers:

That's what you Indians always say. The white man did this to us, the white man did that to us. When are you ever going to take responsibility for yourselves? ... You had a choice ... We gave you every chance. All you had to do was move to the reservation. We would've protected you. The U.S. Army was the best friend Indians ever had.

(236, emphasis original)

Sheridan attempts to justify the massacre they did to the natives on the excuse that it was a war. While Checkers says she does not know what he is talking about, Sheridan asserts: “*You know exactly what I'm talking about. You Indians always knew how to play dumb. You talked like Tonto, but you had brains like fucking Einstein. Had us whites all figured out. But still kept trying to change you. Tried to make you white. It never worked*” (237, emphasis original). After waking up from the nightmare, Checkers notices Wright who has come to apologize for what has happened. Looking at their faces, Wright “saw their Indian faces. He saw the faces of millions of Indians, beaten, scarred by smallpox and frostbite, split open by bayonets and bullets. He looked at his own white hands and saw the blood stains there” (*Reservation Blues*, 244). After their encounter with the European settlers, Native Americans were dispossessed of their lands and their communal rights and they were forced to conform to the order and rules of the white dominant discourse on the reservations. In the novel, however, the native loss of lands and communal values are reclaimed via trickster discourse. Remembering the past and rejecting the status quo imposed on Native Americans is what Thomas as a trickster figure aims at. Therefore, throughout the text we can see the trickster moment, the moment of reversal, in dreams, songs and stories which turn the established order upside down and instead create reverse discourses in which the weak and powerless prevail albeit briefly and reconstruct a new world.

In the novel, it is such trickster stories, together with songs and other means of the trickster discourse which enable the disenfranchised Native communities to create reverse discourses from within. As Vizenor emphasizes: “The nature of survivance is unmistakable in native songs, stories, natural reason, re-membrance, traditions, customs, and clearly observable in narrative sentiments of resistance, and in personal attributes such as the native humanistic tease, vital irony, spirit, cast of mind, and moral courage.” (*Native Liberty*, 85). Therefore, in addition to his stories, Thomas Builds-the-Fire, as a trickster figure, tries to make natives become aware of their identity and raise concern about the difficulties they have to endure in the present times through the songs he writes for Coyote Springs. In the song called “Reservation Blues,” Thomas points out the hunger and loneliness natives have to put up with on the reservation: “*Dancing all alone, feeling nothing good / It's been so long since someone understood / All I've seen is, is why I weep / And I had for dinner was some sleep / You know I'm lonely so lonely / my heart is empty and I've been so hungry / All I need for my hunger to ease / Is anything that you can give me please*” (1, emphasis original). As a result of poverty and failure, committing suicide is rampant in native communities as Thomas points out in the song called “Wake” after Junior commits suicide out of helplessness: “*I saw ten people die before I was ten years old / An I knew how to cry before I was ever born/ ... / I can't bury my grief / Unless I bury my fear / I can't bury my fear / Before I bury my friend*” (275-76, emphasis original). As underprivileged and disempowered people, the natives are pushed back to the margins of society where their voice is unheard as Thomas draws attention in the song called “Small World:” “*But it's a small world / You don't have to pay attention / It's the reservation / The news don't give it a mention / Yeah, it's a small world / Getting smaller and smaller and smaller*” (245, emphasis original).

Thomas’ songs, he writes for Coyote Springs, point out the present conditions of the natives as well as the historical injustice and atrocities the native communities have been exposed to by the dominant white discourse as Robert Johnson’s guitar tells Thomas: “The blues always make us remember” (*Reservation Blues*, 22).

Music, according to Janine Richardson, has a bearing on memory and thus music and its power might act as a healing force on people who are eager to yield to the power of music. And Thomas is aware of the fact that subduing and overlooking the excruciating history only contributes to proliferation of antagonism and agony for people who are in denial. That is why, Thomas is able to comprehend that the past and the deceased can discontinue to infect the present only if the buried agony is uncovered and acknowledged (42). And it is through his stories, songs, dreams and imagination that Thomas deconstructs the official narratives of the dominant discourses.

In the novels of contemporary writers who employ trickster discourse in their works, as Jeanne Rosier Smith puts it, “[e]lements of the sacred, of myth and fantasy, mix with history and "fact" [...] to create an altered sense of the real that challenges perceived, western ways of knowing” (17). In *Reservation Blues*, likewise, Thomas, challenging the western perceptions of reality, invokes a revolution into the relations of the native communities and the white discourse. Thomas Builds-the-Fire overturns the brutal policies of the USA government against Native Americans by parodying the Biblical Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments given to the Spokane community by the USA government are written down in Thomas' journal as such:

1. You shall have no other forms of government before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an independent and self-sufficient government, for I am a jealous bureaucracy and will punish the Indian children for the sins of their fathers to the seventh generation of those who hate me.
3. You shall not misuse my name or my symbols, for I will impale you on my flag pole.
4. Remember the first of each month by keeping it holy. The rest of the month you shall go hungry, but the first day of each month is a tribute to me, and you shall receive welfare checks and commodity food in exchange for your continued dependence.
5. Honor your Indian father and Indian mother because I have stripped them of their land, language, and hearts, and they need your compassion, which is a commodity I do not supply.

6. You shall not murder, but I will bring FBI and CIA agents to your reservations and into your homes, and the most intelligent, vocal, and angriest members of your tribes will vanish quietly.
7. You shall not commit adultery, but I will impregnate your women with illegitimate dreams.
8. You shall not steal back what I have already stolen from you.
9. You shall not give false testimony against any white men, but they will tell lies about you, and I will believe them and convict you.
10. You shall not covet the white man's house. You shall not covet the white man's wife, or his hopes and opportunities, his cars or VCRs, or anything that belongs to the white man.

(Reservation Blues, 154-55)

Throughout the novel, Thomas, as a social outsider, acts as a “violator figure” who “separates himself from the society and transcends its law through devotion to the cause of humankind. He takes upon himself the culpability of all, and from the start he is condemned to atone so that the social order may triumph, to come to terms with the contradiction that has temporarily endangered it” (Makarius, 72-3). The presence of Thomas in the novel as a centrifugal force creates a heteroglot world which subverts the authorial single presence of the dominant white discourse. Like Dostoyevsky’s hero, therefore, Thomas “is not only a discourse about himself and his immediate environment, but also a discourse about the world; he is not only cognizant, but an ideologist as well” (*Problems of Dostoyevsky’s Poetics*, 78) In the novel, he is characterized by being alone and not taken seriously, nor are his stories heeded. However, he engages in transgressive acts on behalf of his group through stories and songs. Thus, when asked by Chess about what they are supposed to do, Thomas says all they can do is to tell stories and sing songs:

Thomas thought back to all those stories he had told. He had whispered his stories into the ears of drunks passed out behind the Trading Post. He had written his stories down on paper and mailed them to congressmen and game show hosts. He had climbed up trees and told his stories to bird eggs. He had always shared his stories with a passive audience and complained that nobody actively listened. (*Reservation Blues*, 212).

Stories and music, which deconstruct the western perception of truth in the novel, remind the native people of their joys and sorrows: “Those blues created memories

for the Spokanes, but they refused to claim them. Those blues lit up a new road, but the Spokanes pulled out their old maps. Those blues churned up generations of anger and pain: car wrecks, suicides, murders. Those blues were ancient, aboriginal, indigenous” (*Reservation Blues*, 174). Songs as well as stories, therefore, function as a shield to protect Native Americans from their loss, defeat and failure. Trickster figures represent a sort of resistance against dominant discourses and despite all their misfortunes, they are indestructible. Having failed to return to the reservation as heroes as a result of their failure as a band, Thomas, Chess and Checkers make a decision to move from the reservation. On their way out of the reservation, they sing together and despite all the suffering and desperation, they survive through stories and songs. Before they leave, Big Mom sings a song to protect them and to make all the natives always remember who they are. Big Mom “taught them a new song, the shadow horses’ song, the screaming horses’ song, the slaughtered horses’ song, the screaming horses’ song, a song of mourning that would become a song of celebration: we have survived, we have survived” (*Reservation Blues*, 306). According to Gloria Bird, the horses which were massacred during the battle between white Europeans and Native Americans are likened to the natives and this association forms the main metaphor of the text. The feeling that they are not loved by the country they live in is embodied through horses which reincarnate plenty of well-known musicians that belong to the periphery such as Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Elvis and Marvin Gaye. Big Mom takes over the role of the saviour of all troubled musicians like Robert Johnson who comes to her in order to heal. Big Mom is, therefore, a catalyst for leading American musical forms such as rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, and jazz in addition to being a teacher (51).

In addition to Thomas Builds-the-Fire, Big Mom, a female trickster figure in the novel, act as the saviours of the natives. Through songs and stories, they act as agents to prevent the Native American history and communal identity from being annihilated. As Winifred Morgan suggests, “contemporary trickster stories are about attempts to compensate for losses. They explore the borderlands between what was and what is, between the imposed white world of individualism and the

traditional American Indians world that values the communal” (48). In the novel, stories, songs and dreams create the trickster moment which enables the natives to connect to their ancestors and create reverse discourses from within. As Harold Scheub corroborates:

The eternal moment, the moment of transition, the trickster moment. Why is this important? Because during that moment, we are out of ourselves. We are broken into parts: we are man and woman, god and human, hero and villain; all of the possibilities of life are there, and we select them and participate in our own re-creation. We are taken apart and rebuilt. It is for that reason that the moment revitalizes us, freshens us. That is a major reason for our love of storytelling; we allow it to dissect us and then to remodel us. The trickster is the alpha and omega of the movement, at once the force of the movement and its end. In the trickster is the hero, like a magnificent butterfly struggling to free itself of the cocoon. We are present at our dismemberment and our rebirth (3).

In the novel, Big Mom, appears to possess the characteristics of a spiritual and divine trickster. As a divine trickster figure, Big Mom is a culture heroine and transformer who is able to transcend time and space. She heals the wounded no matter from what nationalities they are. She heals the marginalized groups and restores their ties with their past. She is the witness of the brutalities the dominant discourse has inflicted on Native Americans. Ascending above the place where the horses come together, Big Mom

saw the future and the past, the white soldiers in blue uniforms with black rifles and pistols. She saw the Indian horses shot and fallen like tattered sheets. Big Mom stood on the rise and watched the horses fall, until only one remained ... After she counted the dead, she sang a mourning song for forty days and night, then wiped the tears away, and buried the bodies. But she saved the bones of the most beautiful horse she found and built a flute from its ribs. Big Mom played a new flute song every morning to remind everybody that music created and recreated the world daily.

(*Reservation Blues*, 10)

These wounded horses have come to Big Mom in different forms throughout generations and one of them is Robert Johnson who comes to be cured. Big Mom

heals the wounded through music which has the power to change the world. Music is “a dangerous thing” (*Reservation Blues*, 12), as the-man-who-was-probably-Lakota tells Thomas, because it subverts and shatters the established system by providing an alternative way out and thus Thomas “wanted his songs, the stories, to save everybody” (*Reservation Blues*, 101). Both Thomas and Big Mom, as trickster figures, construct alternative narratives through music, dreams, imagination and stories. According to James Cox, Thomas’s act of storytelling contributes to Native American people because he suggests alternative definitions of Native American identity to those of Euro-American popular cultural definitions. Functioning as a mythological figure, Thomas does not succumb to the visual and written descriptions of European occupation and therefore he is able to resist being commercialized or commodified by the dominant discourse (60). Big Mom together with Thomas, therefore, acts as an agent through whom the vulnerable and dispossessed come to recover from their pain and grief.

Big Mom and Thomas guide the disenfranchised Native Americans away from the norms, rules and values of the dominant discourses, and instead they prompt them to imagine alternative realms of reverse discourses. While Michael White Hawk tells Big Mom that he is a warrior and he is supposed to fight and wants to smash his saxophone on white people’s heads, Big Mom tells him: “Smashing your guitar over the head of a white man is just violence. And the white man has always been better at violence anyway. They’ll always be better than you at violence” (*Reservation Blues*, 208) and a musical instrument cannot be used as a bow and arrow because “music is supposed to heal” (*Reservation Blues*, 208). After arriving at the reservation and spending time with Big Mom on Wellpinit Hill, Robert Johnson is cured: “He had gained weight, his eyes were clear, his hands had healed” (*Reservation Blues*, 12). Big Mom and Thomas, as tricksters, appear to have a higher level of awareness and consciousness, and therefore they not only heal but also enlighten the disenfranchised and marginalized people. As Jung puts it: “In the history of the collective as in the history of the individual, everything depends on the development of consciousness. This gradually brings liberation from

imprisonment in $\alpha\ddot{\alpha} \gamma\delta\alpha$, “unconsciousness,” and is therefore a bringer of light as well as of healing” (179). Healing the disenfranchised groups through stories and songs, that is, strengthening their ties with their past and constructing alternative realms, Thomas and Big Mom, as trickster figures, teach the marginalized groups survival strategies out of the misery, discrimination and injustice they face in their ordinary lives. As, in *Native Liberty*, Vizenor states:

Native survivance is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion in history; survivance is the obvious continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable cultural name. Survivance stories are renunciations of state dominance, obtrusions, and the unbearable sentiments of monotheism, tragedy, and victimry. Survivance means the heritable human right of succession or re- version of a cultural estate, and, in the course of tribunals, a narrative estate of native survivance. (138).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Trickster, as Paul Radin has observed, is not a symbol of a static entity, but rather a symbol of potential differentiation. All generations, as Radin states, have attempted to come up with novel interpretations of trickster figures. Although all of these diverse interpretations into the nature, roles, and functions of trickster figures have failed to comprehend him completely, no generation has ever done without including him in its belief systems and cosmologies. Trickster's appeal to all generations as a cross-cultural figure lies in his potential of embodying both "the undifferentiated and distant past" and "undifferentiated present within every individual." For that reason, trickster appeared in quite different forms like in the form of human, animal, divine, and assumed contradictory roles such as being a creator and destroyer, a denier and affirmer, good and evil (168-69). Subversive tricksters, as discussed before, have appeared in the myths, fables, folklore, folk and fairy tales from various times and places in different forms and under different names with an attempt to violate the rules, mock the sacred, transgress long-established customs, bring the high and mighty down to earth, reverse the traditional roles and bring about chaos in a carnivalesque fashion only to reconstruct alternative realms albeit temporarily and offer glimpses of change. Trickster figures appear across cultures in both male and female forms and this study has found similarities as well as differences between European and Native American traditions of subversive trickster figures.

In this study, first of all, the ambiguous, paradoxical and contradictory nature of trickster figures whose existence in various forms, shapes and names can be traced back to the mythological times are discussed. From ancient to contemporary times, whenever and wherever they have existed, those cross-cultural tricksters have

always been characterized by their liminal status as a result of which they have been able to challenge, subvert and deconstruct all sorts of authority with immunity. As in “Inconclusive Conclusions: Tricksters – Metaplayers and Revealers” William J. Hynes suggests: “The logic of order and convergence, that is, logos-centrism or logocentrism, is challenged by another path, the random and divergent trail taken by that profane metaplayer, the trickster” (216). This study, therefore, traced the presence of trickster figures from different times and places and it has endeavoured to reveal how such Bakhtinian centrifugal forces are able to undermine the dominant patriarchal and colonial discourses and instead construct Foucauldian reverse discourses from within on behalf of the disenfranchised groups.

Those reverse discourses created by trickster figures in contemporary literary texts reject the single, unitary and monological perspective of the dominant discourses but instead they exist as heteroglot realms which are characterized by postmodern plurality, polyvalence, multivocality and ambiguity as those peripheral trickster figures cannot be categorized into the either/or limitations of binary oppositions. On the contrary, they appear as in-between and both/and entities who unite the opposites and exist beyond our temporal and spatial dimensions. In literary texts, these peripheral figures appear to be masters of language through which they attain power and challenge the centre. Therefore, trickster who, as C. W. Spinks emphasizes, appears to be the emblematic leader and shaper of the cultural stimulus, is ontologically a being of language as he turns out to be “a semiotic generator of forms, languages, cultural concepts and context” (178).

As discussed in the study beforehand, trickster discourse with its subversive means offers an alternative domain for the subordinated groups where they are able to confront the inequitable and discriminatory structure of the established order. In that regard, this study has extensively discussed the subversive means of trickster discourse. One of the most important weapons the marginalized groups possess in their confrontation with the dominant discourses appears to be humour through which they are able to initiate “a change of situation, a surrealization of the real”

(Critchley, 10). Discussing different theories of humour developed throughout ages, this study has pointed out the importance of rebellious humour of trickster discourse which, being immune to restrictions, is on the side of the disempowered and liberates the individual subjects from “repression” which is “a disciplinary force, exerting control over undisciplined instinctual forces and turning the unsocialized infant into a civilized being” (Billig, 144). This type of humour, therefore, acts as a bulwark against not only the established order but also against the prison that reason has confined individuals to. It manages to do this by constructing a space where freedom prevails over artificial constructs of dominant discourses. For marginalized groups, then, as Gordon suggests, “humour continues to be a relatively safe way to do violence to the oppressor in return for justice” (259). Other subversive means trickster discourse employs in the selected texts which expose the contradictions within dominant discourses in an attempt to bring about a transformation in the order of things, as has widely been discussed previously, include satire and irony as well as laughter, which according to Bakhtin:

has a deep philosophical meaning, it is one of the essential forms of the truth concerning the world as a whole, concerning history and man; it is a peculiar point of view relative to the world; the world is seen anew, no less (and perhaps more) profoundly than when seen from the serious standpoint. Therefore, laughter is just as admissible in great literature, posing universal problems, as seriousness. Certain essential aspects of the world are accessible only to laughter. (*Rabelais*, 66)

This study has revealed that cross-cultural tricksters manifest many similar characteristics. They are singled out by their ambiguous, paradoxical and contradictory nature; they resist being categorized into binary oppositions of either/or but rather appear to be both/and creatures; they turn out to be boundary crossers and in-between entities who belong to everywhere and nowhere at the same time; they exist beyond time and space; and they always exist as peripheral figures who mention the unmentionable and question the unquestionable with immunity. This study has therefore found that wherever a trace of trickster presence exists whether in human, animal or divine forms, the reversal of traditional roles, the overthrow of all hierarchies and the degradation of the sublime are celebrated

through transgressive acts of such peripheral figures. However, despite their idiosyncratic attributes, it has been observed that such subversive centrifugal figures might take on different roles and serve different functions depending on the culture they are found in.

In European traditions, it has been observed that tricksters and trickster-like figures are, most importantly, characterized by their low social status and disreputable backgrounds so unlike Native American tricksters, they are not venerated as sacred beings and thus they do not play a central role but rather they are in a continuous struggle to survive in a hostile world in which they are disregarded and forced to live on the periphery of society. However, they are authorized to engage in transgressive acts which challenge authority, violate taboos, mock the sacred and undermine the established order from the periphery with immunity. We see this function of such centrifugal forces in the picaro who struggles to survive by cheating, lying and stealing, yet who at the same time exposes the corruptness and hypocrisy of the society and authorial figures; in Zanni of commedia dell'arte who could engage in deceits, intrigues and theft free from restrictions as amoral peripheral figures; in Punch and Judy of English puppet tradition in which Punch evades authority through his tricks and wits and divulges the flaws and shortcomings of the society; and in the tradition of folly who as the spokesman of truth could criticise and satirise the flaws and hypocrisy of people and institutions.

European trickster figures are distinguished by their superior wisdom and knowledge however, unlike Native American tricksters, they always possess an inferior status due to their low background as we have seen in the sage fools, clowns and jesters of Shakespearean plays. As peripheral figures, they appear to be wise fools in whom the source of wisdom lies; they declare the truth as an 'all-licensed' critic; they have great insight into the nature of things; they can hold a mirror to life and see human pretence and hypocrisy; they are capable of playing with words as masters of language through which they wield their power; they are distinguished by their wits and humour which enable them to reverse serious utterances in a

sarcastic way; and they relativize the truth and thrive on ambiguity. However, as mentioned previously, unlike Native American tricksters, western trickster figures are not able to make permanent changes but rather they offer glimpses of change as we see in medieval carnivalesque celebrations.

In Native American myths, folk and fairy tales, it has been observed that animal trickster figures appear as mediators and they are characterized by their ability to explore and adapt to new terrains. Although different animal tricksters are more popular in different native tribes, raven and coyote appear to be the most popular animal trickster figures. As Bastian and Mitchell suggest, Coyote, which is one of the most ubiquitous Native American tricksters, is characterized as a contradictory, complex and colourful figure. As the prototype of tricksters, Coyote every so often appears to be a sly, astute, inquisitive, profane, fraudulent, voracious, lethargic, erratic, vicious, lewd, and foolish character who is often afflicted with the outcomes of his own misconducts. He turns out to be sometimes an animal or an ugly old man or a handsome young man from time to time, who is capable of creating and transforming and can never be destroyed. Coyote tales were narrated to entertain the listeners but also to teach proper conduct, harmony, survival skills and ensure a sense of tribal identity (76-7). In spite of his liminal status, it is observed that trickster possesses a central role as a creator, culture hero and transformer in many native myths and tales. He appears in creation stories as a creator who is responsible for creating the world, humans, animals, plants; as a transformer who grants humans and animals their present shapes and turns the world into a habitable place by putting all the geographical shapes in order; and as a culture hero who is known to have given humankind the necessities for life and taught them survival skills.

In contemporary Native American literature as mentioned previously, we come across tricksters in human forms, and similar to animal tricksters of myths and tales, they assume central roles as they serve to create reverse discourses in which Native American communities are liberated from oppression and discrimination of the white dominant discourses and their communal values and identities, which are

firmly grounded into the land, are preserved. Nevertheless, despite his central role, trickster in Native American tradition always retains his liminal and marginal status because his liminality and marginality does not arise from his low social status or disreputable background but rather he is distinguished by his unclear social status and obscure origin, which condemns him to the periphery out of which he can never exist. That is why, Native American peripheral figures like tricksters and clowns are regarded as sacred and thus venerated although they, at the same time, are not taken seriously as a result of their peripheral status. Hence, in Native American tradition, the clown, as Lucile Hoerr Charles argues, is always involved in an improper, distressing and astonishing thing. The clown on one hand is objective, his relationship with the taboo on the other hand is warm and intimate. He frequently appears to be one of the most respected and reputable people in his community. He impersonates and personifies the outrageous thing but he at the same time is aware that he is not what he does; he knows that he is not the fire despite playing with it otherwise he loses his grasp on his amusing mastery and balance but instead turns into an incompetent, pathetic and abominable figure. As a result of his balanced and dynamic impersonation, he is known as the delight maker by Pueblo Indians. He acts as a priest who carries out a ritual both for himself and for other people as they identify themselves with him and thus experience the same thing. Throughout this process, laughter appears as a spontaneous and pure expression of release into happiness and a material that is required for our progress and balance. He tampers with prohibitions and taboos yet while doing so arouses laughter and he never loses his grasp on himself. The clown, therefore, functions as the medium that restores the neglected and earthy into man (32-3).

In Chapter III, Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* was examined with regard to such centrifugal forces: Fevvers as a trickster and the clowns of Colonel Kearney's circus who live on the periphery from where they deconstruct dominant discourses with immunity as marginal figures. The chapter has discussed the trickster-like qualities Fevvers manifests: Fevvers, being double marginalized as a female trickster, wields power through language and thus her liberation comes from her

control over the act of narration; she employs the subversive functions of trickster discourse in her confrontation with the dominant patriarchal discourse; she is the master of disguise and deception; she is distinguished by her ambiguous, paradoxical and contradictory nature; she resists the binary oppositions of the dominant discourses; she appears to be a both/and creature, and an intermediate trickster figure of half-bird half woman, both real and fake; she merges the opposites and exists both in and out of temporal and spatial dimensions; she defies the conventional aesthetics of the phallocentric idea of femininity and thus her body is grotesquely deformed; and as a peripheral figure she speaks up on behalf of her group, that is the female who are silenced and victimized by the patriarchal discourse. It has, on the other hand, been observed that Fevvers as an example of western trickster diverges from Native American tricksters in some respects: She is characterized by her obscure background of hatching out of an egg and growing wings as a bird woman; she gains her trickster status as a result of her low background and thus she grows up at a brothel and she is sold and exhibited at a museum; she is distinguished by her superior wits and greater insight and awareness into the nature of things yet she holds an inferior status due to her low background; and she is able to challenge, undermine and mock the values and order of the dominant discourses with immunity due to her outcast and liminal status.

Chapter III has also discussed other liminal figures: the shaman of the Siberian wilderness, who exists in the world of fantasy and dreams and gets his visions and interpretations through sleeping and dreaming and offers Walser an alternative life and perspective of the surreal and ‘irrational’ as opposed to the ‘rational’ Western one; and the clowns who exist outside the established order and are able to challenge and undermine that order with impunity as outcast and marginal figures. It has been argued that the clowns at Captain Kearney’s circus of the Grand Imperial Tour are able to construct an identity out of the scope of the dominant discourses, and offer alternative perspectives and glimpses of change through a carnivalesque practice of clowning and masking. Unlike Native American sacred clowns who serve important functions and possess a central role in social, political and religious

spheres, the clowns in Carter's novel are, much the same as European tradition of liminal figures, characterized by their low social status and are excluded from the public sphere because of their appearance, masks and makeup. However, the circus which constructs an alternative realm like medieval carnivals enables the clowns to create reverse discourses in which the traditional roles are reversed, authority is subverted and a different order of things is offered. However, in the western tradition as it was noted previously, clowns are immune to restrictions as long as they are not taken seriously so they are unable to offer ever-lasting perspectives and changes.

The subsequent complementary chapters, have discussed how the colonial dominant discourses have been challenged and deconstructed through trickster discourse in Sherman Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* and *Reservation Blues*. In both texts, Thomas Builds-the-Fire, as the native trickster figure, embarks on confronting the colonial white discourse's hegemony over Native American communities through subversive means of trickster discourse and instead creates reverse discourses in which their communal values and identity are preserved and their rights over their lands are restored. In both chapters, the characteristics of Thomas as a trickster have been discussed and it has been argued that via the subversive means of trickster discourse the misrepresentations and stereotypes attributed to Native Americans are undermined; the artificial construct of the 'White Man's Indian' is challenged; the official language and history are brought into question; the discrimination, injustice and atrocities against native communities are disclosed; and alternative reverse discourses are constructed. In Chapter V, additionally, the role and function of Big Mom as a spiritual female trickster, who stands as the witness to historical massacres against native communities and cures the members of the marginalized groups and restores their ties with their past, has been discussed. In the same chapter, it has also been argued that Thomas Builds-the-Fire, as a liminal trickster figure, attempts to incorporate native stories into blues in order to point out the similarities between African Americans and Native Americans' disenfranchisement in the USA. As Ayana

Smith observes, the anger in blues songs metaphorically targets the more important social matters as those songs attempt to destroy the boundary that determines otherness and constructs a sense of marginalisation. In this process, the narrators of these songs are designated as signifying tricksters and their acts take place beyond the confines of social boundaries (189).

In both chapters, it has been observed that both Big Mom and Thomas Builds-the-Fire as native trickster figures differ from Fevvers in some epistemological and ontological respects: they appear as culture heroes and saviours who preserve the native communal identity and values and teach survival strategies to native people; they act as a mediator between the Native Americans and their culture, tradition and history; they always exist on the periphery regardless of their background or social status; they cannot be sold or bought by the dominant discourses; they prove to be indestructible; and they possess a central role and are venerated despite their liminal status. However, it has been observed that both Native American and European trickster figures serve to subvert the monolithic perspective of the dominant discourses by engaging in transgressive acts, they offer alternative perspectives, they evade the limitations of binary oppositions and thus they construct a heteroglot world characterized by multiplicity, plurality, multivocality and polyvalence, and they act on behalf of their disenfranchised groups by acting as an agent of resistance against dominant discourses as peripheral and centrifugal forces. This comparative study of trickster discourse in Native American and European traditions, with its emphasis on ambiguity, plurality, multivocality and polyvalence as opposed to the unitary, single perspective of dominant discourses, hopes to contribute to the postmodern studies and encourage further research into those cross-cultural and cross-gendered peripheral figures who serve to challenge and undermine dominant discourses from within in contemporary texts.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

Cahit Bakır

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EDUCATION

- 2021 Ph.D., English Literature, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.
- 2015 M.A., English Language and Literature, Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey.
- 2009 B.A., English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2012- present Lecturer, School of Foreign Languages, Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey
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FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English Advanced

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B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, Angela Carter'ın *Nights at the Circus* ve Sherman Alexie'nin *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* ile *Reservation Blues* adlı eserlerini düzenbaz söylem açısından karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Yerli Amerikalı ve Avrupalı düzenbaz figürlerin tipolojisinin karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yapmayı ve bunların oldukça farklı iki kültür içindeki benzer ve farklı özelliklerini, rollerini ve işlevlerini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlar. Bu tezde incelenen metinlerde bulunan düzenbaz figürler Alexie'nin romanlarında günümüz ABD'sinin Yerli Amerikalıları ve Carter'in romanında ise 19. yüzyıl ataerkil İngiltere'sindeki kadınlar olmak üzere ezilen kesimler adına kurulu düzeni yıkma girişir ve aynı zamanda Foucaultçu ters söylemler yaratarak postmodern edebiyat bağlamında alternatif perspektifler sunarlar. Bu nedenle, oldukça farklı yer ve zamanlardan seçilen eserler incelenerek, toplumdan dışlanılmışlığı nedeniyle ihlalci eylemlere dokunulmaz bir şekilde girişmeye yetkili olan düzenbaz figürü, kültürler arası ve cinsiyetler arası olarak tanımlanır ve haklarından mahrum edilmiş kesimler adına egemen söylemleri yıkma hizmet eden bir figür olarak ele alınır.

Düzenbaz karakterler dünya çapında oldukça geniş bir kültür yelpazesinin mitolojilerinde ve edebi metinlerinde sıklıkla karşımıza çıkar ve çelişkili, paradoksal ve periferik figürler olarak, geleneksel uygulamalara karnavalesk bir biçimde dokunulmazlıkla meydan okurlar. Düzenbaz figürler tabuları çiğnemek, otoriteye meydan okumak ve yapay toplumsal yapıları tersine çevirmek yoluyla sadece geleneksel iktidar yapılarını yok etmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda onları sürekli olarak yeniden inşa eder ve bu da onları "hem yaratıcı hem de yıkıcı bir gücün" vücut bulmuş hali yapar. (Scheub, 32). Düzenbaz figürler insanları mizah yoluyla hem eğlendirip hem eğittiği için, Hynes'in dediği gibi "aydınlanmanın taşıyıcısı" (205) olarak ortaya çıkarlar.

Düzenbazlar dünyanın neredeyse her toplumunda bulunan figürlerdir ve çeşitli toplumların mitolojilerinde, masallarında ve öykülerinde tanrı, insan ya da hayvan gibi farklı şekillerde ve farklı isimler altında karşımıza çıkarlar. Hangi zaman, yer ve şekilde bulunurlarsa bulunsunlar, düzenbazlar egemen kültürlerin yerleşmiş değerlerini, normlarını ve diğer yaygın uygulamalarını periferik ve marginal varlıklar olarak yıkmaya çalışır ve bunları yapı söküme uğratırlar. Çelişkili ve paradoksal doğaları nedeniyle düzenbazları kesin bir tanıma mahkum etmek mümkün değildir ve bu belirsiz doğaları antropoloji, ilahiyat ve edebiyat gibi farklı alanlarda birçok araştırmacının düzenbaz figürlere yönelik birbirinden farklı yorumlarla ortaya çıkmalarına yol açmıştır. Paradoksal ve çelişkili doğaya sahip kültürlerarası varlıklar olarak, düzenbazlar farklı kültürlerde farklı özelliklerle karşımıza çıkarlar. Bununla birlikte, bulundukları kültüre bağlı olarak farklı niteliklere sahip olsalar bile, bütün düzenbaz figürlerin sahip olduğu bazı ortak özellikler tanımlanabilir. William J. Hynes düzenbaz figürünün en tipik altı özelliğini ortaya koyar: "onun belirsiz ve anormal kişiliği," "hilekar/numaracı yönü," "şekil-değistiren yönü," "durumu tersine çeviren yönü", "tanrıların elçisi / taklitçisi olması" ve "kutsal / bayağı dönüştürücüsü" (34).

Bu çalışmanın, farklı zaman ve yerlerden gelen düzenbaz figürlerin karşılaşılmalı bir incelemesiyle ortaya koyduğu gibi, farklı kültürlerde bulunan düzenbaz karakterler oldukça fazla benzer özellik gösterirler. Bu figürler, belirsiz, paradoksal ve çelişkili yapıları ile ayırt edilirler; 'ya/ya da' ikili karşıtlıklarında kategorize edilmeye direnir, daha çok 'hem/hem de' diye tanımlanan yaratıklar gibi görünürler; aynı anda hem her yere hem de hiçbir yere ait olmayan, sınırları aşan ve arada bulunan varlık olarak var olurlar; zaman ve mekanın ötesinde var olurlar; ve her zaman tartışılmaz olandan bahseden ve tartışılmazı dokunulmazlıkla sorgulayan periferik figürler olarak ortaya çıkarlar. Bu nedenle, bu tür periferik figürler ihlal edici eylemleriyle geleneksel rolleri tersine çevirirler, tüm hiyerarşilerin yıkarlar ve egemen söylemlerin önemli değerlerini sorgularlar. Ancak, kendine has özelliklerine rağmen, bu tür kültürler arası ve cinsiyetler arası

periferik figürlerin, içinde bulundukları kültüre bağlı olarak farklı roller üstlendikleri ve farklı işlevler gördükleri gözlemlenmiştir.

Düzenbaz karakterler, hayvan veya insan suretinde periferik figürler olarak var olmaları, dünyevi veya tanrısal olmaları, normale karşı gelmeleri, yıkıp aynı zamanda yaratmaları, zamansal ve mekânsal alana hapsolmaya direnmeleri ve doğalarında çelişkiler barındırmaları gibi ortak özelliklerinden dolayı egemen söylemlerin sınırlamaları ve ikili karşılıkları içinde ne sınırlanırabilirler ne de tanımlanabilirler. Düzenbaz karakteri, Simon Weaver'ın vurguladığı gibi, bir "anti-yapı aracıdır" ve "düzenbaz söylem, alışılmışın dışında ve muhtemelen yıkıcı yollarla sosyal olanı etkileyebilendir" (480). Düzenbazlar kılık değiştirerek, hileler, yanlısamalar ve mizah ile yüksek ve kutsalla alay ederler, tabuları çiğnerler, engelleri aşarlar, otoriteyi devirirler ve kurulu düzeni baltalarlar.

Bir toplumda söylemler zaman içinde ortaya çıkar, gelişir ve sonunda kurumsallaşmış konuşma, yazı ve davranış biçimlerine dönüşür. Foucault, söylemi "tek bir oluşum sisteme ait olan ifadeler grubu" olarak tanımlar (*The Archeology of Knowledge*, 121). Bu söylemler insanlar ile toplum içindeki kurumlar ve yapılar arasındaki ilişkileri düzenleyen güç, bilgi ve anlam üretirler. Gerçekin ve doğrunun toplum üyeleri tarafından nasıl algılandığı bu tür söylemler tarafından belirlenir. Söylemler, sosyal, politik veya ekonomik etkileşimlerde neyin söylenip neyin söylenmeyeceği konusunda sınırlar çizer ve bunlara kısıtlamalar getirir. Bu nedenle, bilgi ve anlamın nasıl inşa edildiği ve bunların kimin çıkarlarına hizmet ettiğini gerçekini örtbas ederler. Ancak söylemler içlerinde çelişkiler barındırırlar. Foucault'nun öne sürdüğü gibi: "Söylem, bir çelişkiden diğerine giden yoldur: Görülebilir olanları öne çıkarıyorsa, gizlediğine itaat ettiği içindir. Söylemi analiz etmek, çelişkileri gizlemek ve ortaya çıkarmaktır; içерiden kurdukları oyunu göstermektir; onları nasıl ifade edebileceğini, somutlaştabileceğini veya onlara geçici bir görünüm verebileceğini ortaya koymaktır" (*The Archeology of Knowledge*, 168-69). Egemen söylemlerdeki bu çelişkiler, Foucault'nun "ters söylem[ler]" (*The History of Sexuality*, 101) dediği şeyi yaratmayı ve egemen

söylemleri içерiden yapı bozuma uğratmayı mümkün kılar. Haklarından mahrum bırakılmış ve marginalleştirilmiş kesimler, yerleşik dönemin kısıtlamalarına direnebilmelerini sağlayan bu tür ters söylemler inşa ederek egemen söylemlere içерiden karşı koymaya çalışırlar. Bu tür ters söylemlerden biri, haklarından mahrum bırakılmış grupların egemen söylemler tarafından metalaştırılmasına ve nesneleştirilmesine karşı direnişi amaçlayan düzenbaz söylemidir. Bu tezde vurgulandığı gibi, hem Carter'ın hem de Alexie'nin incelenen metinlerinde, bu yıkıcı düzenbaz söylem, baskın söylemleri baltalamanın ve içерiden ters söylemler yaratmanın bir aracı olarak işlev görmektedir.

Yerli Amerikalı mitolojisinde, en iyi bilinen düzenbaz figürleri, yeni arazileri keşfetme ve uyum sağlama yetenekleriyle bilinen kır kurdu (coyote) ve kuzgun gibi hayvanlar olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Erdoes ve Ortiz'in vurguladığı gibi: "Yarı insan yarı hayvan olan kır kurdu, doğasında kutsallığı ve günahkarlığı, büyük jestleri ve küçüklüğü, gücü ve zayıflığı, neşeyi ve sefaleti, kahramanlık ve korkaklığını bir araya getirir ve bütün bunlar insan karakterini oluşturur. [...] Bir kültür kahramanı olan Old Man Coyote, dünyayı, hayvanları ve insanları yaratır. [...] Düzenbaz olarak ağızlı, obur ve hırsızdır" (2). Kuzey Amerika mitolojisindeki düzenbaz figürler farklı türlere ayrılabilirler. Ancak, hangi isim veya biçimle görünürlerse görünüşünler, düzenbaz figürler Yerli Amerikalı topluluklarında önemli rollere ve işlevlere hizmet ederler. Birçok Yerli Amerikalı topluluğu için düzenbaz figürü, yaratılış hikayelerinde önemli bir rol oynar. Örneğin, paradoksal ve ikircikli bir karakter olan kır kurdu, Kaliforniya'nın yerli bir kabilesi olan Pomo halkı için yaratıcı rolünü üstlenir. Efsaneye göre, Mircea Eliade'nin belirttiği gibi, dünya Coyote tarafından tesadüfen yaratılmıştır. Kazara dünyayı ve sonra da kuş tüyü zerrelerinden insanları yarattıktan sonra, Coyote'ye insanlarca yiyecek verilmez ve onunla alay edilir. O da karşılığında bazı insanları hayvana dönüştürür. Bir yaratıcı olarak üstün bir konuma sahip olmasına rağmen, çok sayıda Yerli Amerikalı hikayesinde düzenbaz, insanları eğlendiren eşikte bulunan bir figür olarak karşımıza çıkar (155-6). Yaratıcı rolünün yanı sıra, çok sayıda Yerli Amerikalı masalında, eylemleriyle karaları, dağları, gölleri, nehirleri

ve okyanusları düzene sokan bir dönüştürücü rolünü üstlenen düzenbaz figürüdür ve dünya onun tarafından yaşanabilir bir yer haline getirilmiş; ve hayvanlar ve insanlar mevcut şekillerini onun sayesinde edinmişlerdir.

Dünyayı bir dönüştürücü olarak insanlara hazırlamanın yanı sıra, düzenbaz figürünün ateşi, avcılığı, tarımı ve gıdayı insanlığa tanıttığına ve aynı zamanda onlara yeryüzünde hayatı kalmak için ihtiyaç duydukları becerileri kazandırdığına inanıldığı için düzenbaz figürü birçok Yerli Amerikalı masal ve mitinde bir kültür kahramanı olarak ortaya çıkar. Nitekim, “dünyanın yaratıcı dönüştürücüsü ve kültürün kahramanca taşıyıcısı” (Ricketts, 327) olarak öne çıkan rolüne rağmen, düzenbaz figürü bazı yerli hikayelerde hala bencil bir soytarı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Yani insanoğluna, iyi kalpliliğinden değil, kendi arzu ve zevklerini tatmin etmek için pek çok temel nesne ve beceri kazandırmıştır. Yerli Amerikalı düzenbaz figürler bu nedenle çelişkili rolleriyle karakterize edilirler. Yerli düzenbaz figürü, bir yandan, kutsal ve yüce varlıklarla iletişim kurmak için bir yaratıcı, bir dönüştürücü, bir kültür kahramanı ve bir arabulucu olarak hareket eder. Öte yandan, kutsal olanla alay etme ve onun parodisini yapma, kuralları ve tabuları çiğneme gibi aşırı davranışlarda bulunur. Kutsal olanı dünyevileştirme sürecinde mizahı ve kahkahayı silah olarak kullanır. Kutsal olana olduğu kadar kendi hatalarına da güller ve bu nedenle birçok yerli hikaye ve masalda hem öğretir hem de eğlendirir.

Merkezden uzak eşikte var olan statülerine rağmen, yerli düzenbazlar, Yerli Amerikalı kimliğini korumada ve onları beyaz adamın boyunduruğundan kurtarmada temel bir rol oynarlar. Bir Yerli Amerikalı topluluğu olan Sac toplumuna göre, düzenbaz kültür kahramanları olan Wisaka, dünyayı yaşanabilir hale getirdikten ve insanlara dünyada yaşamak için ihtiyaç duydukları tüm gelenek ve becerileri öğrettikten sonra, Kuzey'e çekildi ve onun bir gün yerlileri beyaz adamın yönetiminden kurtarmak için geri dönmesi bekleniyor (Briggs, 97). Çağdaş Yerli Amerikalı edebiyatında, düzenbaz figürler daha çok insan biçiminde karşımıza çıkar ve toplumsal ortak değerleri ve normları savunarak, toprağa sıkı

sıkıya bağlı Yerli Amerikalı toplumsal kültürünün ve kimliğinin korunmasına katkıda bulunurlar. Mekânsal ve zamansal sınırlamalara hapsedilemediklerinden ve paradoksal ve çelişkili yapıları nedeniyle, edebi metinlerdeki yerli düzenbazlar, hakikati göreceleştirmeye ve egemen söylemlerin kurallarını ve değerlerini yapı bozuma uğratmaya hizmet ettikleri açısından postmodern edebiyata katkıda bulunurlar. Franchot Ballinger'in vurguladığı gibi, yerli düzenbazların insanlığa en önemli katkısı "dünyanın ve benliğin vizyonudur." Düzenbaz, gerçekliğin aldatıcılığını ortaya çıkararak ve algılarımızın bizi nasıl kolayca yanilttığını göstererek hem dünyayı hem de algılarımıza şekillendirmeye yardımcı olur (35).

Avrupa'nın edebi, kültürel ve mitolojik metinlerinde de ilahi, insan ve hayvan formlarında düzenbaz figürlere rastlarız. Avrupa geleneğindeki bu tür düzenbaz figürler, bazı sosyal, kültürel ve ontolojik açılardan farklı olsalarda, Yerli Amerikalı düzenbaz figürleriyle birçok ortak özelliklere sahiptirler. Her iki farklı kültürde de düzenbazlar kutsalla alay etmeye, otoriteye meydan okumaya ve gerceği göreceleştirmeye hizmet ederler. Avrupa geleneğinde, kültür kahramanları olarak düzenbazlar, Yerli Amerikalı mitlerde ve masallarda kır kurdu ve kuzgun gibi hayvan biçimlerinden ziyade daha çok ilahi biçimlerde karşımıza çıkarlar. Örneğin, Yunan mitolojisindeki en önemli ilahi düzenbazlardan biri olan Prometheus'un tanrılarla meydan okuyarak insanlığı yarattığı ve ona ateşi ve dolayısıyla medeniyeti verdiği bilinmektedir. Prometheus'un, kurulu düzene karşı bu isyankar eylemi nedeniyle Zeus tarafından mahkum edildiğine ve karaciğerinin bir kartal tarafından tekrar tekrar yenmesi için bir kayaya zincirlendiğine inanılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bugün Prometheus miti, insanoğlunun otoriter baskıcı söylemlere karşı özgürlüğünü temsil etmektedir.

Yerli Amerikalı mitlerinde düzenbaz figürü yaşam ve ölüm arasında bir arabulucu işlevi görür. Ayrıca tanrılarla iletişim kurar ve insanlara temel nesneler ve beceriler kazandırır. Benzer şekilde Yunan mitolojisinde de haberci tanrı olarak bilinen ve tanrılar arasında aracı işlevi gören Hermes ile karşılaşırız. Hermes, tanrıların habercisi olmasının yanı sıra, kavşakta bulunan ve sürekli bir yerden bir yere

hareket halinde olan habercilerin, hırsızların, gezginlerin ve tüccarların koruyucusu olarak da bilinir. William G. Doty, bir düzenbaz olarak Hermes'in altı özelliğini ortaya koyar: "marginalliği ve paradoksal nitelikleri; erotik ve ilişkisel yönleri; yaratıcı ve yenileyici olarak işlevleri; aldatıcı hırsızlığını; komedisi ve zekası; ve hermeneutikte ona atfedilen rol, adının ondan geldiği söylenen yorumlama sanatı" (46).

Hayvan şeklindeki düzenbaz figürler, Yerli Amerikalı kültürleriyle sınırlı değildir. Avrupa kültürünün masallarında ve halk masallarında da çok sayıda hayvan biçiminde düzenbaz figürüne rastlarız. Ancak bazı Yerli Amerikalı mit ve masallarında hayvan biçimindeki düzenbazlara dünyayı yaratmak ve/veya dönüştürmek ve kültür kahramanları gibi davranışmak gibi büyük güçler ve roller atfedilirken, Avrupa masallarında hayvan biçiminde karşımıza çıkan nükteli ve kurnaz düzenbazlar kendilerini daha güçlü yaratıklardan kurtarmak için hilelere başvururlar, kılık değiştirirler veya kendi arzu ve zevklerini tatmin etmek için planlar kurarlar. Örneğin, tilki, birçok Avrupa halk ve peri masalında en popüler hileci hayvanlardan biri olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bu masallarda, daha az güçlü bir hayvan olan tilki, masumiyet kılığına girerek doymak bilmez bir kurt ya da aslan gibi daha güçlü bir yaratığa karşı hayatta kalabilmek için planlar kurar ve sonunda onu alt edip güvenli bir yere kaçar.

Yerli Amerikalı düzenbaz figürleri gibi, Avrupa geleneğinde de düzenbazlar periferik figürler olarak sınırları keşfeder, ikili karşılıklar arasındaki ayırmaları bulanıklaştırır, arabulucu olarak işlev görür, denge ve uyumu bozar, rolleri tersine çevirir ve ardından yeni bir dönemin işaretlerini sunarlar. Batı geleneğinde düzenbaz figürlerin bu işlevi pagan Roma kültüründe yeni yıl şölenleri için düzenlenen ve Kalends adı verilen kutlamalar ve tanrı Satürn'ü onurlandırmak için kutlanan Saturnalia kutlamalarına kadar gider. Bu kutlamalar sırasında düzen ve kanun geçici olarak askiya alınmış, hizmetkar ve efendilerin rolleri tersine çevrilmiş ve bir sahte kral hüküm sürdürmüştür. Bu tür pagan kutlamalar, orta çağ Noel geleneği olan ve kiliselerde düzenlenen rahip Saturnalia kutlamalarına evrilmiştir. Bu

kutlamalar sırasında “bir Patrik, Papa ya da Aptallar Piskoposu önderliğinde güçlü kişiler alçaltıldı, kutsal şeylere saygısızlık edildi, yasalar gevsetildi ve etik fikirler tersine çevrildi” (Welsford, 199). Bununla birlikte, Avrupa pagan ve Hıristiyan geleneğinde bu rollerin tersine çevrilmesi ve tüm hiyerarşilerin yıkılması yalnızca geçici olarak düzenlenen kutlamalarla sınırlıken, Yerli Amerikalı geleneğinde bunlar daha önemli bir işlev gördüler. Birçok yerli kültürde, düzenbazlar ve palyaçolar, kutsal palyaçoların neden olduğu mizah ve kahkahaları içeren dini törenlerin ayrılmaz bir parçasıydı. Lucile Charles'in gözlemlediği gibi, bazı yerli toplulukları arasında palyaço toplulukları buluruz. Doğanın, hayvanların ve insanların doğurganlığında rolü olduğuna inanılan bu palyaçolar, dansları, ahlaksız ve gülünç esprileri ile izleyenleri eğlendirdiler; diğer yandan özellikle maskeli palyaçoların sahip oldukları inanılan doğaüstü güçler nedeniyle insanlar bu palyaçolardan oldukça korkmuştur (30). Çeşitli yerel kültürlerde palyaçoların varlığını analiz eden Charles, palyaçonun işlevinin “dünyevi, ihmali edilmiş işlevleri yeniden başlatan psikolojik ritüelin baş rahibi” olduğu sonucuna varır (34).

Avrupa'nın delilik/budalalık geleneğinde, özellikle Rönesans döneminde, karşıt kutuplar arasında gidip gelen ve çok önemli bir edebi şahsiyet olarak işlev gören Yerli Amerikalı düzenbazların benzerlerini buluruz. Erasmus'un *The Praise of Folly*'sında görebileceğimiz gibi, Rönesans zihni, budalalığı, insanların ve kurumların kusurlarını, yanlış davranışlarını ve ikiyüzlülüğünü hicvetmeye çalışan alegorik bir figür olarak gördü. Orta çağ değerlerinin zayıfladığı ve çöktüğü, ve Rönesans hümanizmine yol açtığı bir zamanda, bu yeni çağın sözcüsü olarak budalalık ortaya çıktı. Bu yeni çağın sembolik figürü olan Erasmus'un budalalık kavramı, yalnızca toplumu, insanlığın aptallığını ve kusurlu bilgeliğini eleştirmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda şeylerin özüne ve doğasına da hakimdir. Budalalığa ek olarak, Batı kültüründe ve edebi eserlerinde palyaçolar, soytarılar, pikarolar ve haydutlar gibi farklı biçimler ve isimler altında yerli düzenbazların benzerlerini buluruz; bunlar, bilge aptallar olarak gerçeğin çeşitli versiyonlarını daha derin görebilen ve toplumdan dışlanmış periferik figürler olarak bahsedilemez şeylerden bahsetmeye yetkili olan figürler olarak karşımıza çıkarlar.

Shakespeare oyunlarında, akılda üstün, ancak statüde aşağı olmakla karakterize edilen soytarılar, hem trajik hem de komik biçimlerde bulunurlar. Erasmus'un budalalık kavramı gibi, Shakespeare'in budalaları, sofistike olmadan kahkahalara neden olan geleneksel budalalardan farklıdır. Shakespeare'in yapay bilge soytarıları, şeylerin özü hakkında bir bilince sahiptir ve insanlardaki yapmacıklığı ve ikiyüzlülüğü görürler. Yerli Amerikalı düzenbaz figürleri gibi, Shakespeare'in budalaları da eşikteki figürler olarak var olurlar ve güçlerini dil aracılığıyla tahakküm ederler. Bu tür tipik batılı bilge soytarıların rolünü ve işlevini *King Lear*'in kral-aptal ikileminde görüyoruz; burada kral ve soytarının rolü tersine çevrilir ve böylelikle kral budala ve soytarı da bilgeliğin kaynağı haline gelir. Enid Welsford'un vurguladığı gibi, Lear'in soytarısı, gerçeği gören ve "tüm lisanslı" bir eleştirmen olarak konuşan bilge bir soytarıdır (257). Alay ve ironi aracılığı ile soytarı, kralın hatalarına bir ayna tutar ve sonuç olarak kral, soytarı tarafından hiçliğe indirgenir. Kral Lear'in soytarısı gibi, Shakespeare'nin *Twelfth Night* oyununda bulunan Feste de kelimelerle oynamada çok iyi olmasının yanı sıra şyelerin doğasına dair büyük bir kavrayışa sahip zeki bir gözlemci olarak ortaya çıkar. Bir palyaço olan Feste, insanların maskeler ardına gizlendiğini bildiği için başkalarının ağızından çıkan sözlere güvenmez ve bu nedenle başkalarının görünüşüne veya konuşmasına aldanmaz. Akıllı bir soytarı olan Feste, Olivia'nın yasının anlamsızlığını ve Duke Orsino'nun yüzeysellliğini ve aptallığını fark eder. Sosyal statüsünde onlardan daha aşağı olmasına rağmen, akılda üstündür ve bu üstünlüğünü, düzenbaz benzeri eşik figürleri için bir silah işlevi gören dil aracılığıyla gösterir. Harold C. Goddard'ın dediği gibi: "Bir palyaçonun temel işlevi, çoğu zaman gerçek de dahil olmak üzere, her şey alt üst olana ve tersüz olana kadar kelimelerle hokkabazlık yapmaktadır" (301) ve oyunda bunu yapan karakter zekası ve kelime oyunları ile ünlü olan Feste'dir. Düzenbaz figürlere benzer karakterleri Shakespeare'in *As You like It* oyununda Touchstone ve *Henry IV, Part I* oyununda ise Sir Falstaff'da buluruz. Lear'in soytarısı ve Feste gibi zekası, bilgeliği ve mizahi ile karakterize edilen Touchstone, şyelerin özüne ve budalalığın erdemine dair büyük bir kavrayışa sahip, bilge ve entelektüel bir soytarı olarak ortaya çıkar. Feste gibi, Touchstone da aptal olduğunun bilincindedir ve yüksek

mevkideki insanlarda yüzeyselliği ve aptallığı fark etme yetisine sahiptir. Falstaff ise sosyal geçmişi ve statüsü açısından Lear'in soytarısı, Feste ve Touchstone'dan ayrılır. Bununla birlikte, *Henry IV*, Part I'de Falstaff'ın, birçok düzenbaz benzeri özelliği vardır. Bir şövalyeden beklenmeyen uygunsuz bir yaşam tarzı sürdürden Falstaff, tavernada saray hayatını düzenler ve kral gibi yüksek mevkilerdeki kişilerle ve monarşî gibi baskın kurumlarla alay etmekten, onları taklit etmekten ve onların parodisini yapmaktan büyük zevk alır. Falstaff, karnavalvari bir tarzda rollerin tersine çevrilmesine ve hiyerarşilerin devrilmesine neden olmak gibi pek çok düzenbazlık özelliği göstergesede, periferik statülerini yoksul geçmişlerinin ve düşük sosyal statülerinin bir sonucu olarak elde eden Avrupa geleneğindeki palyaçolar, aptallar, soytarılar ve pikaro figürlerinden farklılık gösterir.

Yerli Amerikalı ve Avrupalı düzenbaz figürlerin pek çok ortak noktası vardır. Bununla birlikte, Avrupa geleneğinde, düzenbazlar genel olarak alt sınıflardan ya da yüz kızartıcı geçmişlerden gelirken, Yerli Amerikalı geleneğinde ise düzenbazlar, kökenleri veya geçmişlerinden bağımsız olarak düzenbaz statülerini elde ederler. Böylece, Yerli Amerikalı geleneğinde düzenbazlar, Franchot Ballinger'in de belirttiği gibi, "her ikisi" veya "ya/veya" terimleriyle tanımlanmayı ve sınıflandırılmayı reddederek marginal statülerine ulaşırlar ve bu nedenle içinde bulundukları çeperin dışına çıkamazlar (32). Avrupa düzenbaz geleneğinde ise tam tersine, bu tür periferik figürler, düşük sosyal statüleri ve itibarsız geçmişlerinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkar ve toplumlarının ve önemli konumlarda bulunan kişilerin ikiyüzlülüğünü ve yozlaşmasını hedef alırlar. Bunu alt sınıfından gelen pikaronun ikiyüzlü ve yozlaşmış bir dünyada hayatı kalabilmek için hırsızlık, hile ve yalancılık yaptığı pikaresk roman geleneğinde görürüz. Ballinger'in vurguladığı gibi, pikaro ve yerli düzenbaz arasında oldukça fazla paralellik vardır: her ikisi de episodik olarak anlatılan maceralı hikayelerin kahramanlarıdır; ikisi de belirsiz ve paradoksal karakterler olarak ortaya çıkarlar; her ikisinin de hiciv amaçları vardır; ve medeni ve ahlaki kurallara aykırı eylemlerde bulunmaları onları sosyal olarak marginal konumlara sokar. Öte yandan, bu iki figürü birbirinden ayıran bazı kültürel, sosyal ve ontolojik farklılıklar vardır, çünkü yerli düzenbaz figüründe

Yerli Amerikalıların hayatı bakış açısından kendine özgü bir dramatizasyonunu buluruz ve bu nedenle yerli düzenbaz, “hayatın çeşitliliğine ve modern Avrupa-Amerikan ahlaki geleneğinde büyük ölçüde eksik olan paradokslara bir açıklık getirir” (21).

Avrupa düzenbaz geleneğinin benzer rolünü ve işlevini, on altıncı yüzyılın ortalarında İtalya'da ortaya çıkan *Commedia dell'arte*'nin Zanni'sinde (hizmetçiler) de buluruz. Pazar meydanında doğaçlama bir komedi tarzında oynanan *Commedia dell'arte*, bazıları maske takan bir dizi tip karakterden oluşuyordu. Tıpkı karnavalda olduğu gibi, maskeli tip de gerçek kimliğinden sıyrılarak başka bir kimliğe bürünür ve bu yüzden de normal şartlarda suç teşkil eden davranışlarından muaf tutulurdu. Kültürel, sosyal ve ontolojik farklılıklarına rağmen, *Lazzi* olarak adlandırılan Zanni'nin gerçekleştirdiği eylem ve hileler, düzenbazların eylemlerini andırır, çünkü Zanni, típkı düzenbazlar gibi “discipline ve otoriteye karşı hoşgörüsüzdü” (Rudlin, 71). *Commedia dell'arte*, İngiliz kukla geleneğinde Punch ve Judy olarak bilinen düzenbaz benzeri figürlerin en popüler versiyonlarından birinin ortayamasına katkıda bulundu. Punch'in *commedia dell'arte*'nin Pulcinella'sından kaynaklandığı düşünülmektedir. Pulcinella dualist özelliklere sahip olmakla ünlüdür: Ya bilge bir karakter olarak aptalmış gibi yapar ya da aptaldır ama bilgeymiş gibi davranır. Punch, otoriteye itaatsizliğiyle ünlü bir edebi şahsiyettir ve ilk ortaya çıktığında “hicivci ve sosyal bir eleştirmen” olarak rol almıştır (Regan, 365).

Edebi eserlerde, düzenbazlar ve palyaçolar, budalalar, soytarılar, haydutlar ve pikarolar gibi düzenbaz benzeri figürler büyük ölçüde erkek karakterlerle özdeşleştirilmiştir. Ancak erkekler kadar yaygın olmasa da çeşitli kültürlerden kadın düzenbaz figürlere de rastlarız. Marilyn Jurich, mitlerde, halk hikayelerinde ve efsanelerde kadın düzenbazlarının ya da kendi deyişiyle “trickstar,” (xiii) dediği figürlerin varlığını araştırır ve Şehrazat'ı bir düzenbaz örneği olarak tanımlar. Jurich, kadınların cinsiyetleri nedeniyle marginalleştirildiğini ve bu nedenle kadın düzenbaz figürlerin çifte marginal figürler olduğunu gözlemler. Ancak bu kadın

düzenbaz figürler, kasıtlı olarak küstah ve ahlak dışı davranışarak marginalliklerini avantaja çevirir; toplumu harekete geçirmek için toplumsal kurallara meydan okur; “kibir gösterisi yapmak ve sosyal dokuyu yeniden yaratmak” için mizah uyandırır (34).

Batı zihninin ikili karşısılıklara dayandığı ve bu nedenle düzenbazların dünyayı yeniden şekillendirmek için meydana getirdiği düzensizlik ve kaosa karşı olduğu bilinmektedir. Bununla birlikte, farklı yerlerden ve kültürlerden metinlerin seçilmesi yoluyla bu araştırmmanın ortaya koyduğu gibi, çapraz cinsiyetli düzenbaz figürler, baskın söylemlere meydan okur ve mizah, kahkahalar, ironi, hiciv ve karnavalesk gibi bazı yıkıcı araçlar aracılığıyla içeren ters söylemler yaratırlar. Düzenbaz söylemde mizah, haklarından mahrum edilmiş gruplar için, egemen söylemlerin baskıcı ve ideolojik aygıtlarıyla yüzleşmeleri sürecinde önemli bir araç olarak işlev görür. Hilebaz söylemde mizah, yalnızca egemen söylemlerin adaletsiz yapısına ışık tutmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda haklarından mahrum bırakılmış grupların baskın iktidarı baltalamasına ve yapısını bozmasına da olanak tanır. Bu bağlamda mizah, bu tür gruplar adına özgürleştirici bir güç olarak ortaya çıkar. Bu tür bir mizah, Peter Berger'in vurguladığı gibi, “sıradan, gündelik varoluşun gerçekliğini aşar; geçici de olsa, içinde sıradan yaşamın varsayımlarının ve kurallarının askiya alındığı farklı bir gerçekliği öne çıkarır” (205). Düzenbaz söylemde mizah, gerceği göreceleştiren ve egemen söylemlerin bütünsel, tek bakış açısına karşı olarak yorumların çokluğunu ve çeşitliliğini öne çıkarır.

Bu tezde incelenen metinler politik yöneliklidir ve bu nedenle iktidar siyasetini hedef alırlar. Seçilen metinlerde yer alan düzenbaz figürler, Foucaultcu argümanlar doğrultusunda egemen söylemlerde var olan çelişkileri ortaya koyarak bu söylemlere karşı mücadele etmek için hicivden yararlanırlar. Düzenbazlar, egemen söylemlerce haklarından mahrum edilmiş gruplara dayatılan adaletsizlikleri, istismarı, ayrımcılığı ve baskıyı ortaya koyarlar. Dolayısıyla seçilen metinlerde kullanılan hicvin temel bir amacı, egemen söylemlerin otoritesini sarsmak ve bunun sonucunda bu söylemlerin kurduğu düzende bir dönüşüm meydana getirmektir.

Haklarından mahrum edilmiş gruplar tarafından kullanıldığında hiciv, onlara karşı işlenen adaletsizlikleri ve vahşeti ifşa etmek için etkili bir silah haline gelir.

Bu tezde seçilen metinler, egemen söylemleri yapıbozuma uğratmak için postmodern ironiyi kullanır. Postmodern ironi, marjinalleştirilmiş grupların egemen söylemleri zayıflatmasına ve yıkmasına izin verir, ancak Hutcheon'un gözlemlediği gibi, "marjini bir merkeze" getirmeyi amaçlamaz çünkü "[p]ostmodern farklılık her zaman çoğul ve geçicidir" (*A Poetics of Postmodernism*, 63). Seçilmiş metinlerde postmodern ironinin kullanılması, egemen söylemlerin yapay kurgularını sorgular ve okurları, bu söylemlerin marjinalleştirilmiş gruplara dayattığı zorbalığı, ayrımcılığı, adaletsizliği ve vahşeti görmeye davet eder. Ancak bunu yaparken bu söylemlerin perspektiflerini çevreninkilerle değiştirmeye çalışmaz, daha çok perspektiflerin çokluğuna ve geçiciliğine işaret eder.

Mikhail Bakhtin'in Rabelais'in metinlerindeki karnaval araştırması, orta çağ geleneksel dünyasının değerlerinin, normlarının ve tabularının karnavalın kahkahaları aracılığıyla nasıl sorgulandığını ortaya koyar. Bu geçici şenliklerin düzenlenmesi sırasında otorite sarsılmış, düzen bozulmuş ve böylece neredeyse bütün tabu ve hiyerarşiler ihlal edilmiştir. Bakhtin'e göre karnaval, "hakim hakikatten ve kurulu düzenden geçici kurtuluşu kutladı; tüm hiyerarşik rütbelerin, ayrıcalıkların, normların ve yasakların askiya alınmasını olanak kıldı. Karnaval" bu nedenle, "zamanın gerçek şöleni, oluş, değişim ve yenilenme şöleniydi. Ölümüşleştirilen ve tamamlanan her şeye düşmandı" (*Rabelais and His World*, 10). Düzenbaz söyleminde kahkaha da benzer bir işlev sahiptir. Marjinalleşmiş kesimler adına hareket eder ve onların geçici de olsa kurulu düzenden kurtulmalarını amaçlar. Bakhtin'in karnaval sırasında ortaya çıkan kahkahaları ele alış biçimini bu nedenle bu araştırma kapsamında özellikle önemlidir. Düzenbaz söylemde kahkaha, kurulu düzeni yapı bozuma uğratmaya çalışır ve bunun yerine şeylerin düzeninin nasıl yeniden kurulabileceğine dair farklı bakış açıları sunar. Bu tür karnavalvari kahkahalar yoluyla, hiyerarşinin en altındakiler, dini ve resmi

kurumlarla alay edebilir ve böylece egemen söylemleri dokunulmazlıkla baltalayabilirler. Bu nedenle ortaçağ karnavallarında otorite figürleri, resmi kurumlar, dini uygulamalar ve tabular kitleler tarafından alay konusu olabiliyordu. Bu karnavallar çağımızda mevcut olmasa da, egemen söylemlerin karnavalesk bir şekilde yapı söküme uğratılmasını edebi metinlerdeki düzenbaz figürler aracılığıyla görürüz.

Alexie ve Carter'in seçilmiş metinlerinde düzenbaz(lar)ın varlığı, Bakhtin'in özellikle Dostoyevksi romanlarını tanımlamak için "diyaloglaştırılmış heteroglossia" (*The Dialogic Imagination*, 372) dediği şeyi anımsatır. Bakhtin'in roman kuramında, bir metinde özellikle romanlarda karakterlerin konuşmalarının farklı dilleri, anlatı sesleri ve farklı bakış açıları tek bir bakış açısına meydan okur. Edebi metinlerde düzenbazlar, palyaçolar, aptallar, pikarolar, haydutlar ve soytarılar gibi eşikte bulunan karakterlerin varlığı, resmi dilin, kutsalın ve tabuların parodisini yaparak yerleşik düzeni sarsan heteroglot (çok sesli) bir dünya inşa eder. Bakhtin'e göre haydut, aptal ve soytarıda gelenekselligin ve ciddiyetin antitezini buluruz.

Kristeva'ya göre, bir metinde karşıtların bir arada bulunması, onun diyalojik olduğu anlamına gelir ve Bakhtin gibi Kristeva da, bu diyalojik geleneğin kökenini, heteroglot ve çok sesli bir dünyanın var olduğu Menippean hiciv ve karnavalda bulur. Kristeva'ya göre karnavalesk söylem, "dilbilgisi ve anlambilim tarafından sansürlenen bir dilin yasalarını aşar ve aynı zamanda sosyal ve politik bir protestodur" ("Word, Dialogue and Novel," 36). Benzer şekilde, Kristeva, Sokratik diyalogdan gelişen Menippean söylemin, hem komik hem de trajik unsurları bulduğumuz "ciddi" olmakla karakterize edildiğini ileri sürer. Menippean söylemde, Kristeva'ya göre, konuşma tarihsel kısıtlamalardan kurtarılmıştır (52). Edebi metinlerde düzenbazlar, palyaçolar ve soytarılar gibi eşikte bulunan karakterlerin varlığı da benzer şekilde monolojik yoruma meydan okur ve bunun yerine diyalojik bir anlam sunar. Bu tür periferik figürler ikili karşıtlıkların ya/veya sınırlamalarını reddeder ve bu nedenle çok seslilik, çoğulluk ve belirsizlik ile

karakterize edilirler. Dolayısıyla bu tür yıkıcı düzenbaz figürler hem arkaik hem de birçok modern kültürün mitolojisinde, folklorunda ve edebi metinlerinde tek, üniter bakış açısını yíkar, çok yönlü bakış açıları sunar ve egemen söylemleri içерiden baltalarlar.

Tezin üçüncü bölümde, Angela Carter'in *Nights at the Circus* adlı eseri düzenbaz söylemi bağlamında incelendi. Roman düzenbazlar, palyaçolar ve şaman gibi Bakhtinci periferik figürler açısından analiz edildi ve bu bağlamda düzenbaz söylemin postmodern mizah ve ironiye nasıl katkıda bulunduğu ve bunun ataerkil söylemin yapı sökümuþe nasıl yol açtığı araştırıldı. Metnin başkahramanı Fevvers bir düzenbaz figürü olarak ele alındı. Cinsiyet eşitsizliğini inşa eden ve sürdürden ataerkil söyleme meydan okumak ve altını oymak için Carter, *Nights at the Circus*'ta düzenbaz söylem yoluyla alternatif bir alan inşa eder. Carter, Fevvers'in düzenbaz nitelikleri aracılığıyla, uzun zamandır kurulmuş erkek egemen merkezli düzeni yok etmeye girişir ve bunun yerine, egemen söylemlerin dayattığı geleneksel rollerden arındırılmış "yeni erkek" ve "yeni kadın" türünü yaratmaya çalışır. Carter'ın romanı, baskın ataerkil söylemlerin yarattığı yapay toplumsal cinsiyet kurgularına dair şüpheler uyandırır ve bunun yerine postmodern ironi, mizah, kahkaha, kılık değiştirme ve aldatma gibi düzenbaz söylemin yıkıcı araçları aracılığıyla farklı bir düzen ortaya koyar.

Düzenbaz söylem, baskın söylemlerin tek ve üniter bakış açısına karşı olarak muþlaklık, coðulluk, çokselsilik ve çokdeğerliliþe yaptığı vurguya postmodern düşünceye katkıda bulunmuştur. Postmodern edebiyat, bilindiði gibi, büyük anlatıları ve söylemleri sorgular ve onları insan kurgusu olarak ele alır. Bu nedenle, yerleşik düzenin üniter perspektifini alt üst eder ve bunun yerine çokluğu, göreliliði ve farklılıklar ön plana çıkarır. Carter, geleneksel kadınlık kalıplarını ihlal eden, kadının haklarından mahrum bırakılmasını sorgulayan ve kadının erkek egemen düzene karşı konuşmaya yetkili olduğu ters söylemler yaratan periferik bir düzenbaz kadın figürü aracılığıyla ataerkil söylemi içерiden baltalamaya çalışır. Bunu yaparken, düzenbaz bir figür olarak Fevvers, ataerkil söylemin gücünü ve

hegemonyasını baltalamak ve yapı bozuma uğratmak için postmodern bir perspektiften mizah ve ironiyi kullanır. Bilindiği gibi egemen söylemlerin değerleri, pratikleri ve normları dil aracılığıyla insanlığa iletmektedir. Bu nedenle dil, bir topluluktaki şeylerin düzenini belirlemekte ve düzenlemekte muazzam bir rol oynar. İnsan etkileşimlerindeki normal ve anormal dil aracılığıyla bağlamsallaştırılırken, egemen ideolojiler, belirli bir grup insan üzerindeki otoritelerini ve güçlerini dile hakimiyetleriyle pekiştirirler. Dolayısıyla yapay cinsiyet ve cinsel kimlikler, dilin kullanımı üzerindeki güçleri ve kontrolleri aracılığıyla ataerkil söylemler tarafından inşa edilmiş ve pekiştirilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, dil, Carter'ın vurguladığı gibi, "güç, yaşam ve kültürün aracıdır, tahakküm ve kurtuluş aracıdır" ("Notes From the Frontline," 30). Ataerkil ideoloji tarafından kadınlığa atfedilen yapay yapılara meydan okuma ve onları yıkma girişiminde bulunan *Nights at the Circus*, ataerkil söylemin diliyle diyalojik bir ilişki içine girer. Bir düzenbaz figür olarak Fevvers otorite konumunu üstlenerek kendi hikayesini kontrol altına alır ve kelimeleri manipüle eder. Jeanne Rosier Smith'in gözlemlediği gibi: "Hilecinin aracı kelimelerdir. Bir parodist, şakacı, yalancı, dolandırıcı ve hikaye anlatıcısı olan düzenbaz, kelimelerle inandırıcı yanışmalar üretir ve böylece akışkan, esnek ve politik olarak radikal bir anlatı biçiminin yazarı ve somutlaş hali olur" (11). Bir söz ustası olarak Fevvers, ataerkil söylemin kadını nesnelleştirmesi ve kategorize etmesine karşı çıkar. Fevvers, dilin simgesel döneminin kimliklerimizi yapay olarak inşa ettiğinin bilincinde olarak, ataerkil kurum ve değerlere meydan okur ve anlatım yoluyla özgürleşir. Ataerkil söylemin içinden Foucaultcu ters söylemler yaratmaya yönelik bu çabada Fevvers, erkek egemen düzeni baltalamak için düzenbaz söylemin yıkıcı araçlarını kullanır. Yarı kuş yarı kadın bir ara düzenbaz figürü olarak Fevvers çelişkili doğası sayesinde onu sürekli olarak geleneksel bir kadın rolü ve kimliğine yerleştirmeye çalışan baskın söylemlerin ikili karşılıklarından kurtulur ve heterojenliği, çokluğu ve çoğulluğu işaret eden yeni bir dünya yaratır.

Dört masal kitabının editörü olan Angela Carter, kadın bedeniyle ilgili arketipsel ve kültürel yapıları yıkmak için romanlarında çok sayıda mitolojik ve peri imgesi

kullanır. Carter'a göre, "bütün mitler insan zihninin ürünleridir ve yalnızca insan pratığının maddi yönlerini yansıtırlar" ("Notes From the Frontline", 27). Carter'in peri masallarına olan ilgisi ve mitlerin insan zihninin ürünü olduğu yönündeki görüşü romanlarındaki sosyal, politik ve kültürel kurguları tersine çevirmesine olanak tanır, ki Carter kendi deyimiyle "mitter arındırma işindedir" ("Notes From the Frontline", 27). Carter *Nights at the Circus*'ta düzenbaz ve palyaço gibi eşik figürler aracılığıyla egemen söylemlerin kurduğu arketipsel ve kültürel yapıları yapı söküme uğratır ve kurulu düzenin dışında yeni bir alan yaratır.

Fevvers, bir düzenbaz olarak gücünü dil aracılığıyla kullanır ve bu nedenle özgürlüğü, anlatı eylemi üzerindeki kontrolünden gelir; baskın ataerkil söylemle yüzleşmesinde düzenbaz söylemin yıkıcı işlevlerini kullanır; kılık değiştirme ve aldatma ustasıdır; belirsiz, paradoksal ve çelişkili doğasıyla ayırt edilir; egemen söylemlerin ikili farklılıklara direnir; hem gerçek hem de sahte, yarı kuş yarı kadın bir ara düzenbaz figürü olarak ortaya çıkar; zıtlıkları birleştirir ve hem zamansal hem de uzamsal boyutların içinde ve dışında var olur; fallus merkezli kadınlık fikrinin geleneksel algısına meydan okur ve bu nedenle bedeni grotesk bir şekilde deform olur; ve periferik bir figür olarak kendi grubu, yani ataerkil söylem tarafından susturulan ve mağdur edilen kadınlar adına konuşur. Öte yandan Fevvers'in batılı düzenbazlar figürlerin bir benzeri olarak Yerli Amerikalı düzenbaz figürlerinden bazı açılardan ayrıldığı gözlemlendi: O, bir yumurtadan çıkma ve bir kuş kadın olarak kanatlar büyütme gibi belirsiz geçmişiyle karakterize edilir; alt sınıflara ait olması nedeniyle düzenbaz statüsünü kazanır ve böylece bir genelevde büyür ve bir müzede satılır ve teşhir edilir; üstün zekası ve şeýlerin doğasına ilişkin daha fazla iç görü ve farkındalığı ile ön plana çıkmasına rağmen dezavantajlı geçmişi nedeniyle aşağı bir statüye sahiptir; ve dışlanmış ve periferik konumundan dolayı egemen söylemlerin değerlerine ve düzenine dokunulmazlıkla meydan okur ve onlarla alay eder.

Üçüncü Bölümde Fevvers dışında, fantezi ve rüyalar dünyasında var olan, öngörü ve yorumlarını uyku ve rüya yoluyla alan ve Walser'a gerçeküstü ve 'irrasyonel'

alternatif bir yaşam ve bakış açısı sunan Sibiryada vahşi doğasının şamanı ile yerleşik düzenin dışında var olan fakat dışlanmış ve marginal figürler olarak bu düzene dokunulmazlıkla meydan okuyabilen palyaçolar gibi diğer periferik figürler de tartışıldı. Sosyal, politik ve dini alanlarda merkezi bir role ve önemli bir işlev sahip olan Yerli Amerikalı kutsal palyaçolardan farklı olarak, Carter'in romanındaki palyaçolar, Avrupa'nın periferik figürleri ile benzer özellikler taşırlar. Bunlar düşük sosyal statüleri ile tanımlanır ve toplumdan dışlanırlar. Ancak orta çağ karnavalları gibi alternatif bir alan inşa eden sirk, palyaçoların geleneksel rollerin tersine çevrildiği, otoritenin sarsıldığı ve farklı bir düzenin inşa edildiği ters söylemler yaratmasına olanak tanır. Nitekim daha önce de belirtildiği gibi batı geleneğinde palyaçolar, ciddiye alınmadıkları sürece kısıtlamalarдан muafırlar ve bu nedenle kalıcı bakış açıları ve değişimler sunamazlar.

Dördüncü ve beşinci bölümde Sherman Alexie'nin *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* ile Reservation Blues adlı romanları düzenbaz söylem açısından incelendi ve düzenbaz söylem aracılığıyla yerli toplulukların sömürgeci egemen söylemlere nasıl meydan okuduğu ve onları yapı bozuma uğrattığı tartışıldı. Her iki metinde de Thomas Builds-the-Fire, baskın beyaz söylemin Yerli Amerikalılara karşı işlediği tarihi katliamları ve vahşeti ifşa eden ve yerli kimliğine ilişkin mevcut yanlış beyanları ve klişeleri altüst eden yerli düzenbaz figür olarak karşımıza çıkar ve dans, müzik, rüya, hayal gücü mizah, ironi, hiciv ve kahkaha gibi düzenbaz söylemin yıkıcı araçlarıyla Yerli Amerikalıların toplumsal değerlerinin ve kimliklerinin ve toprakları üzerindeki haklarının iade edildiği ters söylemler inşa eder. Her iki bölümde de Thomas'ın bir düzenbaz olarak özellikleri tartışıldı. Bir Yerli Amerikalı düzenbaz figür olarak Thomas'ın Fevvers'ten bazı epistemolojik ve ontolojik açılardan farklılık gösterdiği gözlemlendi. Düzenbaz figürler Yerli Amerikalı geleneğinde toplumsal kimliği ve değerleri koruyan ve bunları sonraki nesillere aktaran kültür kahramanları ve kurtarıcıları olarak görülürler. Ayrıca insanlara hayatı kalma stratejileri öğretirler; Yerli Amerikalılar ile kültürleri, gelenekleri ve tarihleri arasında bir arabulucu görevi görürler; geçmişleri veya sosyal statüleri ne olursa olsun her zaman çevrede var olurlar; egemen söylemler

tarafından satın alınamazlar ve yok edilemezler; periferik statülerine rağmen merkezi bir role sahiptirler ve bu nedenle toplumda saygı görürler. Tüm farklılıklarına rağmen bu araştırmada hem Yem Amerikalı hem de Avrupalı düzenbaz figürlerin, ihlalci eylemlerde bulunarak egemen söylemlerin yekpare bakış açısını yıkmaya hizmet ettikleri, alternatif bakış açıları sundukları, ikili karşıtlıkların sınırlamalarına tabi olmadıkları, ve böylece heteroglot bir dünya inşa ettikleri ve haklarından mahrum bırakılmış gruplar adına çokluk, çoğulluk ve çokseslilik kavramlarını ön plana çıkararak ters söylemler inşa ettikleri gözlemlenmiştir.

Amerikan Yerlileri ve Avrupa geleneğindeki düzenbaz figürlerin bu karşılaşılmalı çalışması, baskın söylemlerin tekil perspektifine karşı belirsizlik, çoğulluk ve çoksesliliğe vurgu yaparak, postmodern çalışmalarla katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez, Yerli Amerikalı ve Avrupalı düzenbaz figürlerin tipolojisinin karşılaşılmalı bir analizini yapmaya ve oldukça farklı iki kültürde sergiledikleri benzer ve farklı özellikleri, rolleri ve işlevleri belirlemeye çalışmıştır. Bu çalışma, farklı zamanlardan ve yerlerden düzenbaz figürlerin varlığının izini sürmüş ve bu tür Bakhtinci eşikte bulunan figürlerin nasıl baskın ataerkil ve sömürgeci söylemleri baltalayabildiğini ve bunun yerine haklarından mahrum bırakılmış gruplar adına Foucaultcu ters söylemler inşa edebildiğini ortaya koymaya çalışmıştır. Çağdaş edebi metinlerde düzenbaz figürler tarafından yaratılan bu ters söylemler, baskın söylemlerin tek, üniter ve monolojik perspektifini reddeder, bunun yerine postmodern çoğulluk, çok değerlilik, çokseslilik ve belirsizlik ile karakterize edilen heteroglot alemler yaratırlar, çünkü periferal düzenbaz figürler ikili karşıtlıkların ya/veya sınırlamalarıyla kategorize edilemezler. Aksine, karşıtları birlestiren, zamansal ve uzamsal boyutlarımızın ötesinde var olan ve eşikte bulunan varlıklar olarak ortaya çıkarlar. Düzenbaz söylem, yıkıcı araçlarıyla, tabi kılınmış gruplara, kurulu dönemin adaletsiz ve ayrımcı yapısıyla yüzleşebilecekleri alternatif bir alan sunar. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma düzenbaz söyleminin yıkıcı araçlarını kapsamlı bir şekilde tartışmıştır.

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