

AESTHETICS OF OPPOSITION: THE POLITICS OF METAMORPHOSIS IN GERALD VIZENOR'S *BEARHEART*

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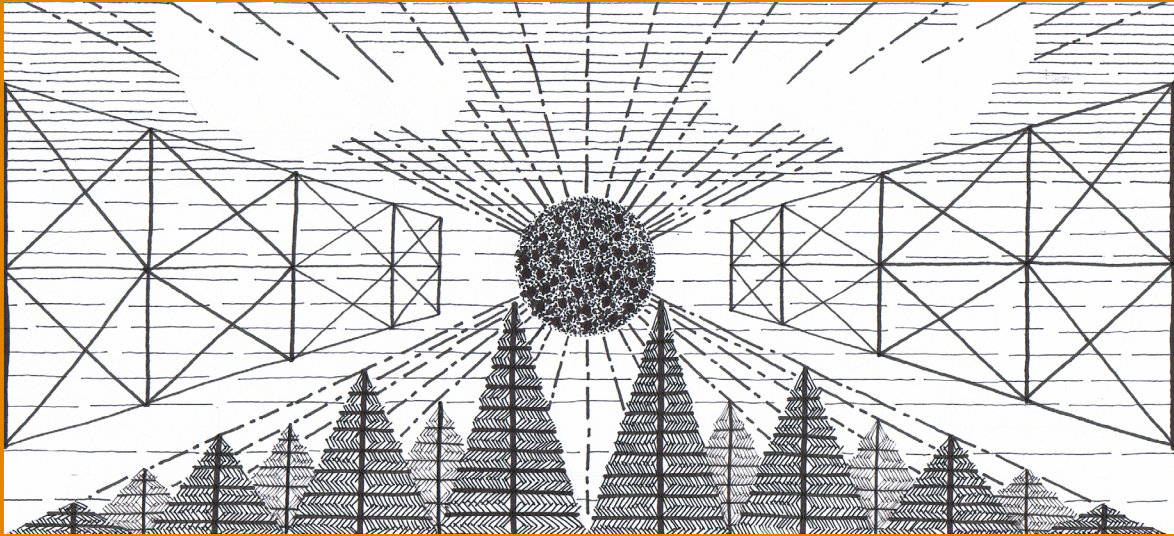
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Abstract || The Chippewa novelist Gerald Vizenor puts across his interconnected politico-philosophical notions of “survivance” and “terminal creeds” in his early novel, *Bearheart*. To do so, Vizenor implemented some of the aesthetic strategies of magical realism. He filled his novel with an excessive amount of bizarrely sexual and violent scenes—which turn out to be magical—in order to “upset” the established standards of normality. Moreover, he used American Indian mythic folktales of transformation and metamorphosis, a magical realist technique, to re-shape the cultural and tribal identity in *Bearheart*’s modernized context.

Keywords || Gerald Vizenor | *Bearheart* | Survivance | Terminal creeds | Magical realism | Metamorphosis.

“We have walked backward in your time.”
“How Backward?”
“Walking forward but seeing backward... Seeing
in time what we invent in passing... Birds and
animals see behind their motion. Place and time
lives in them not between them. Place is not an
invention of time, Place is a state of mind, place
is not notched measuring stick from memories
here to there...”
(*Bearheart*, 238)

0. Introduction

Gerald Robert Vizenor (born 1934) is a prolific Native American writer who has published numerous volumes of poetry and novels, as well as some monographs on tribal histories and literary criticism. His first novel, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart* (1978), later revised as *Bearheart: the Heirship Chronicles* (1990), brought him fame. His texts are brimming with puns, wordplay, and wild imagination in the tradition of a tribal trickster.

Heavily influenced by post-structuralism, Vizenor incorporates theories and ideas developed by philosophers such as Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard into the corpus of his works. His fiction is playful and full of allusions and humour, though it always remains serious with regard to the state of Native Americans. By dint of postmodern and poststructuralist theories, he endeavours to challenge the romanticized representation of Native Americans and constantly insinuates that “Indian” was a European invention and there was no such monolithic thing as an “Indian”—there were only peoples of various tribes before the Europeans dropped their anchors on the American shores. Following this frame of mind, much of his writing avoids the tendency towards anthropological representation of Native American cultures; instead, he takes up oral narratives that most significantly call attention to transformation, helping to keep the concepts of native-ness and Indian-ness elusive and always on the verge of developing, but never fully present.

Moreover, Vizenor dexterously blends the natural with the supernatural phenomena in his fiction, in order to question the realism of the social sciences (Benito, Manzanos and Simal 2009: 101). Vizenor notes that his interest in the reconciliation of opposites is rooted in the native Indian tribal belief system that avoids “terminal creeds” and celebrates “survivance”. In an interview, Vizenor says:

The religious attitude among most tribal cultures here is one of balance rather than annihilation, in contrast to the interest of the blest to illuminate and annihilate evil. The Christian objective is to rid the self and the soul, the family, and the community, of evil, to isolate it and

destroy it. It's a war, a holy war to end evil. The same language is a part of American consciousness – the war on poverty, the war against ignorance. The objective is completely to end and destroy it. But the experience expressed in tribal culture is not that complete elimination or annihilation of anything. It's a balance, not a terminal creed. The balance is a resolution which grows out of trickeries, of outwitting, or the modulation of experience. It may grow out of origin myths themselves, that the balance was present at the time of creation. Those origin myths are still structurally and functionally a part of belief in tribal culture, the idea that life is not created by a patriarch but [through] a balance of male and female, an androgynous balance. The restoration of balance is present at all spiritual activities. (Bowers, Silet and Vizenor 1981: 43-44)

This idea is evident in *Bearheart*, which deals with “terminal creeds” and the survivance of the American Indians. Louis Owens explains that the terminal creeds represented in *Bearheart* refer to beliefs that aim to impose static definitions on the world. According to Owens, Vizenor is highly critical of static definitions, no matter whether they arise from the supposedly «traditional» Indian convictions or Euro-American ideologies. Terminal creeds are comparable to what Bakhtin calls «authoritative discourse,» which is the language «indissolubly fused with its authority” that has political power and has a prior validity (Owens 1992: 231). Benito, Manzanos and Simal define terminal creeds as “a symbolic haven, even if an illusory one, of full meaning and presence, one that most people turn to in moments of tension and chaos” (2009: 97). “Economic power had become the religion of the nation;” *Bearheart* notes, “when it failed, people turned to their own violence and bizarre terminal creeds for comfort and meaning” (Vizenor 1990: 23).

On the other hand, survivance—which is the portmanteau of survival and resistance to cultural domination—points to the way heroes survive and show resistance to nihilism, “manifest destiny” and the typical depiction of Native Americans as victims (Vizenor 2009: 24-25). “Native survivance”, Vizenor observes, “is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent” (2009: 85). To survive the outrage of Americanization, Kimberly Blaeser contends, Vizenor’s surviving protagonists “examine, question, shift, stretch, bend, change, grow, juggle, balance, and sometimes duck—for surviving doesn’t necessarily mean winning [...] Survival is achieved, according to Vizenor, through humor and story (1996: 63).

Vizenor’s main contribution to postcolonial discourse, according to Shackleton, is his idea of “trickster hermeneutics”; which is cultural survival and resistance to stereotypical representation of Native Americans (2001: 70). Accordingly, Vizenor’s works are politically committed since they intend to stand out against the central discourses in textual and extra-textual worlds. Moreover, Vizenor strongly believes that there is a singular native aesthetic that assists

him on the path of literary survivance. He writes:

I strongly disagree, in other words, with the spurious notion that there is no singular native aesthetics. Consider, for instance, the ancestral storiers who created animal characters with a tricky sense of consciousness, the natural reason of a native aesthetics of survivance. Many contemporary native novelists present the imagic consciousness of animals in dialogue and descriptive narratives, and overturn the monotheistic separation of humans and animals. (2009: 9-10)

In *Bearheart*, Vizenor has incorporated what he defines as the “imagic consciousness of animals in dialogue and descriptive narratives,” too. He not only makes seven crows and two dogs accompany the pilgrims on their journey, but also represents the animals—especially the crows—as tricksters.

Oral American Indian folktales present ravens and crows as native tricksters (2009: 13). The crows that accompany the pilgrims on their journey in *Bearheart* are examples of native tricksters (Rigal-Cellard 1997: 99). In addition, Vizenor makes his protagonist transform into a bear—the animal that signifies strength, spiritual wisdom and shamanic power in Chippewa folklore (1997: 99). Proudé Cederfair, the protagonist who metamorphoses into a bear, can magically move from one place to another, and, when overcome by despair, he metamorphoses into a bear and “soars” back to his cedar circus to swim in the lake of the migis. He is an avatar of the trickster Nanabozho. In general, Gerald Vizenor makes animals, birds and humans accompany each other because he postulates that Native American cosmology, unlike monotheistic creation, does not separate them in either nature or literature. This union, according to Vizenor, forms a part of native aesthetics (2009: 14).

Although Vizenor believes in a unique native aesthetic, he underlines the fluidity of native culture and aesthetics; a conviction which made him suspicious of the American Indian Movement after 1960. He posits that the leaders of this movement reinforced stereotypes and wrongly fostered the illusion of an authentic tribal identity that was further sustained by the media (1994: 150). Vizenor sensibly confesses that though for a time he regarded himself as a mediator and an Indian voice, he no longer represents Native Americans. He admits he does not stand for any specific group but functions as an “upsetter” who strives to overturn terminal creeds (Bowers, Silet and Vizenor 1981: 45).

In *Bearheart*, Vizenor focuses on the motif of exile and recounts how a group of Native Americans and mixed-bloods accompanied by seven clown crows and two dogs embark on a pilgrimage across the United States in search of the “fourth world”. “In the fourth world,” Proudé Cederfair, the protagonist and the narrator, explains, “evil spirits are

outwitted in the secret languages of animals and birds. Bears and crows choose the new singers. The crows crow in their blackness” (1990: 5). As the novel progresses, the audience realizes that only the people who overcome “terminal creeds” can gain access to the utopian fourth world.

Vizenor’s unorthodox narrative tracks the adventures of the company in a post-apocalyptic American society. The entire country has run out of fuel—which may symbolize soul—and in order to survive, people would commit heinous criminal acts, such as cannibalism, without qualms. Their picaresque throughout the devastated white communities continues by car, boat, and on foot, and the characters gradually join *Bearheart* on his journey. The narrative reaches its turning point when the pilgrims meet “the evil gambler, the monarch of unleaded gasoline” who would “gamble for five gallons” and kill the losers (1990: 102-103). Structurally speaking, the chapters preceding the “evil gambler” show the accumulation of the pilgrims, and the chapters following the confrontation with the gambler depict the pilgrims’ demise and dissolution. From then on, the pilgrims fall victim to their own conceit, and the tighter a pilgrim holds to “terminal creeds,” the sooner he or she leaves the group or dies. However, they experience both tragic and comedic moments on their journey.

Vizenor’s pilgrims are stubbornly libidinal and ludicrous. Alan R. Velie claims that *Bearheart* lacks “philosophical and aesthetic depth” and symbolism (1982: 136-137). Contrary to Velie, Rigel-Cellard compares different scenes in *Bearheart* with parallel incidents in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and observes that Vizenor loads the text with thick symbolism in order to create a postmodern parody (1997: 110). She states:

By producing this Native *Pilgrim’s Progress*, a manifesto which is his own version of the canonical novel written according to the Bible, by tossing it upside down, by hiding wisdom under the most foolish of attires, Vizenor is asserting the spiritual freedom of his tribal people, even after their political power has been smothered by generations of colonists brandishing the Bible and poor Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. (1997: 112)

Moreover, in its radical presentation of sex and violence, *Bearheart* employs postmodern narrative strategies, but at the same time is considered one of the “most traditional of Native American novels” because of its extensive use of Chippewa oral tradition (Vizenor 1989: 143). The novel bears the marks of the oil embargo of the early seventies that led the Federal Government to collapse, causing the confiscation of the Native American reservations (Rigel-Cellard 1997: 94-5). The book, on a philosophical level, intends to divulge the “terminal creeds” of the Americans Indians as much as those of the central government and the whites. This is easily noticed in “The Letter to the Reader” written by Vizenor (under the pseudonym

Bearheart) at the beginning of the novel. In this letter, Vizenor denounces both the Federal Government, which “held their [tribal people’s] reservation land in trust so the timber could be cut and minerals mined” (1990: xii); and the disciples of the American Indian Movement, who wear “plastic bear claws” and whose religion is just “a word pile” (1990: x).

In addition, the thematic question “what does Indian mean?” runs through *Bearheart*, and the novel violently resists (and considers terminal creed) any preconceived definition of Indian-ness that does not embrace its opposite. For instance, Belladonna’s racist comments in favour of native blood, Little Big Mouse’s “grotesque and patronizing liberality,” and her unreasonable big-heartedness, Bishop Parasimo’s obsession “with the romantic and spiritual power of tribal people” (1990: 75), which Louis Owen interprets as “the Hollywood version of Indianness” (Owens 1990: 250) are some of the examples of terminal creeds. By the same token, although Judge Pardone Cozener and Doctor Wilde prefer to remain in the “word hospital” and thus escape the tragic fate of the majority of the pilgrims, Maureen Keady interprets “their decision to stay there [as] clearly a choice of nihilism” (1985: 64). That is, by remaining stagnant and avoiding the playfulness of the Native Indian culture, they bring about their own intellectual death.

Moreover, as Keady observes, “those who cling to words as evidence of existence will be unable to enter [‘the fourth world’]. In wasted and poisoned America, ‘survival of the fittest’ prevails, but Vizenor points out that, here, as always, it is spiritual strength that makes one fit” (1985: 65). Certainly, *Bearheart* is both a tale about the end of the world and the beginning of a new one. Vizenor celebrates tricksters’ ways of walking backward, which symbolizes the re-initiation of a time when myth was at the centre of meaning, and “oral tradition is honoured” (1990: 163). To this end, Gerald Vizenor implements techniques and elements of magical realism and incorporates magical scenes in *Bearheart*.

What follows is a discussion of the politics of magical realism in *Bearheart*. First, we will argue that Vizenor constantly draws his audience’s attention to excessive representation of surreal sexual and violent scenes in order to “upset”—in Vizenor’s terminology—the longstanding unquestioned benchmarks of normality. Second, we will discuss how American Indian mythic folktales and figures, especially the trickster Nanabozho and great gambler, who possess magical powers, function within the modernized and pseudo-realistic context of *Bearheart* to help reshape cultural and tribal identity. Finally, we will elaborate on the metamorphic nature of tricksters, which is a strategy employed for survivance in *Bearheart*.

1. The Magic of Excess

As a magical realist text, *Bearheart* exploits many representational modes of classical realism, but undermines its humanist premises. Vizenor's debut violates the humanist idea of humankind's innate civility and rationality. Without intending to create any sense of horror in the mind of its fictional characters, Vizenor in *Bearheart* presents a shocking picture of the world as if extremely violent acts were ordinary occurrences. *Bearheart* is full of illogical, irrational, and indecent incidents; offensive and rude words are constantly uttered, sex and violence are graphically portrayed, and nonsensical actions are repeatedly reported. Violence turns out to be among the people's most pleasurable hobbies in *Bearheart*. "As it turned out killing gave me a whole lot of pleasure then" evil gambler confesses,

My business has been to bring people to their death. Until I was nineteen suffocation fascinated me as a form of death. Like an artist I practiced the various means of suffocating people. Later I was attracted to traps and poisons ... secrets and surprises on the road to death. (1990: 126)

Likewise, after a "whitecannibal" kills and butchers two pedestrians, he "picked up the steaming heart from the dead whiteman and threw it across the road toward the circus pilgrims" (1990: 174-175). Vizenor explains the initial reactions of each one of the pilgrims as such:

Neither the seven crows, nor the dogs, nor the nine circus pilgrims moved from their places. Eighteen pairs of eyes focused on the heart. Sun Bear Sun imagined the smell of cooking meat until digestive saliva filled his huge mouth. Matchi Makwa would feed it to the animals. Belladonna turned from the heart in tears fearful of evil fixations. Parawoman Pio was fighting back the powerful savage urge to devour the heart raw. He could taste the blood salts and feel the soft muscles slipping between his massive teeth. He swallowed. Proude thought about the death of his fathers and the spiritual power from the hearts of animals. (1990: 175)

Although the pilgrims seem hesitant about feeding on the heart of a just-killed human being, some of them soon change their minds. Vizenor explains:

Pio moaned and his mammoth limbs trembled. Sun Bear Sun swallowed and in slow measured steps he walked across the road and talked to the whiteman with the knife. The man paused and then handed Sun Bear Sun a large piece of dried meat. When he returned, he explained that the meat was from the biceps of a young woman who had been raped and killed for flesh the month before on the interstate. The meat was prepared. The circus pilgrims were silent. Proude and Inawa Biwide and Rosina and Belladonna and Perfect Crow and Pure Gumption would not eat human flesh. Private Jones and six crows pecked and pulled at the steaming heart. (1990: 175)

This exemplifies the profusion of excessive violence and grotesquery

in the novel. Theoretically speaking, one way a literary work shows resistance to the dominant literary forms is through the strategy of “excess”. One type of excess is to overload the narrative with deformity and nudity and the transgression of “polite” language. *Bearheart* is replete with explicit descriptions of strange sexual encounters (e.g. see: xiv, 30, 45, 70, 95, 124, 180) and extremely violent actions which involve detailed description of deformities (e.g. see: 54, 87, 126, 135, 138, 140, 151, 174, 176, 232, 239). In addition, along with disrupting social norms, the subversion of norms manifests itself in characters’ and the novelist’s plays on words (e.g. playing with ‘hairship’ and ‘heirship’, ‘word war’ and ‘world war’, etc.). These deviations, in fact, show a radical reaction to mainstream realist presentations. The uncommon representations in *Bearheart* intentionally thwart the readers’ notions of morality. This is what Blaeser calls the “strategy of liberation”. She writes:

The impetus in Vizenor’s work is exactly that of checking the process of annihilation and freeing Native American identity from the grasp of literary colonialism. He does this both by struggling against established literary and linguistic structures, practices, and images, and by working to create new ones. By undermining the colonial “strategies of containment” and replacing them with the strategies of liberation.” (Blaeser 1996: 73)

Formal realism tends to perpetuate the rules of the dominating power in the society and contain the desires of the masses. A “bizarre” text like Vizenor’s *Bearheart* employs “strategies of liberation” to release its audiences of the constraints of the dominating power. As Felix Guattari notes:

The masses certainly do not passively submit to power; nor do they «want» to be repressed, in a kind of masochistic hysteria; nor are they tricked by an ideological lure. Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from micro formations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. Desire is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions: a whole supple segmentarity that processes molecular energies and potentially gives desire a fascist determination. (Guattari 1987: 215)

According to Guattari, the ruling power does not take advantage of overt ideological dicta to coerce people into assent and compliance, but controls their psyche and their power of desire by creating a system of guilt. By setting norms, traditional realism functions as an accomplice in establishing a system of guilt. Vizenor intends to upset the norms of the so-called prudent American society by transgressing moral and ethical boundaries.

According to Blaeser, suggestive language, transformations, and identification with nature are a few of the violated social norms (1996:

184). Bakhtin hails the literary approaches that intend “to destroy and rebuild the entire false picture of the world, to sunder the false hierarchical links between objects and ideas, to abolish the divisive ideational strata” (1981: 169). According to McClure, Bakhtin’s “false hierarchal links” are identical to the official, authoritative discourses that Vizenor calls terminal creeds (1997: 56). Magical realism with an excess of unusual narratives subverts the dominant norms, which have always feared the intrusion of the other. As a result, magical realism both violates and suppresses the philosophical or political “other”.

Although Vizenor illustrates excessive violent scenes in *Bearheart*, he attempts to put them on a normal footing for the audience. In this way, he follows up a strategy of banal representation of grotesquery and violence in *Bearheart*. According to Bakhtin, grotesque, which is “an aesthetic of the unfinished”, appears to challenge the classical standards (1966: 32-33). In *Bearheart*, the character Rosina best expresses the indifference of the pilgrims towards the horrific incidents on their journey. When one of the “penarchical pensioners” in the ghost city feels shocked after Rosina bluntly explains how Matchi Makwa and one of the witches were beheaded and his head arrived on the end of a stick carried by Sun Bear Sun, Rosina says:

Not so strange when you think about some of the things we had seen, [...] we have been walking from the cedar nation for more than two months now and there has been violence and death ... Death and whitepeople punishing and killing each other for no reason ... So when the head of the witch came back on a stick we never thought much about it ... (1990: 225-226)

As in *Bearheart*, magical realist texts occasionally show no reaction and use a neutral language when they represent preternatural acts of violence. This is what Hegerfeldt calls “the rhetoric of banality” which highlights “the absurd, nonsensical, fantastic nature of reality” (2005: 209). Additionally, Timothy Brennan dubs this disinterested portrayal of horrors “the stylistic veneer of [...] matter-of-fact violence” (1989: 66). By dint of the rhetoric of banality, the magical realist text de-installs the realist world-view it relies on. However, it merges the discrepancy between the humanist ideals of civility and progress and the state of the world, albeit not to downgrade the former but to indict the latter.

Conversely, in some scenic moments, Vizenor pushes banal and tedious phenomena to the centre of attention and depicts them as magical and eerie. This is what Hegerfeldt calls “the supernaturalization of the extratextual world” (2005: 199). As a case in point, Bigfoot relates that he is in love with a bronze statue of a woman he stole from a public park. The statue which the pedestrians

in the park disregarded and found absolutely dull Bigfoot thought so animated that when he found his rival had stolen the statue Bigfoot kills the thief to get the statue back (1990: 85-88). He just receives two years of house arrest for the crime because the “judicial folks were downright pleased to meet an old fashioned passion killer, a killer who made sense, because most of the killings going on are reasonless now random living and random loving and random death” (1990: 83). Having told the story of the bronze statue, Bigfoot begins to dance with her and Little Big Mouse whispers “she has warmed to my touch” after she strokes the statue (88). Vizenor, in fact, builds such a fabulous aura of mystery around a very simple and ordinary park statue that not only Bigfoot but also the rest of the characters fall for Bigfoot’s tale.

Vizenor, on the other hand, depicts plausible incidents as if they were fantastic. “The fantastic elements are not restricted to what by rational-empirical criteria is considered physically impossible,” Hegerfeldt maintains, “highly improbable events can have a similar effect.” (2005: 79). Although events such as the shortage of gasoline, beating the evil gambler in consecutive rounds (1990:123), and a parade of cripples (Vizenor 1990:145), are not beyond natural law, they strike the reader as fantastic because of their high improbability.

In brief, while Vizenor describes violent scenes in *Bearheart*, he attempts to normalize them both for the characters and the audience. Besides, Vizenor illustrates the probable phenomena as if their occurrence is fantastic and supernatural. In general, through these strategies Vizenor violates humanist claims to innate civility and rationality of humanity in order to present an appalling picture of the world, not to undermine the humanist ideals but to grieve over the state of the world, past and present.

2. “Walking Forward but Seeing Backward”; the Marriage between *Mythos* and *Logos*

Magical realist texts typically discuss the mythic past of a nation, and Vizenor’s *Bearheart* is no exception. According to Moses Valdez, however, an overemphasis on nostalgia in some magical realist fiction erases or ignores bad memories and offers “purely symbolic or token resistance to the inexorable triumph of modernity” (2001: 106). Contrary to Valdez’s argument, Windy B. Faris asserts that magical realism presents more than mere “token resistance”. As she says, a magical realist text may work in the technological and different modes of scientific progress to prevent its readers from indulging in “nostalgic return to a vanished past” (2002: 114-115). To that end, Gerald Vizenor avoids exonerating the Indians from their

own misdemeanours that led to their degeneration. He accuses the pan-tribal people for tightly adhering to their terminal creeds, which are nothing but “word piles” (1990: x). Also, when more people are attracted to the cedar nation, where holy cedar incense was produced, Vizenor laments:

Tribal religions were becoming more ritualistic but without visions. The crazed and alienated were desperate for terminal creeds to give their vacuous lives meaning. Hundreds of tribal people came to the cedar nation for spiritual guidance. They camped for a few days, lusted after their women in the cedar, and then, lacking inner discipline, dreams, and personal responsibilities, moved on to find new word wars and new ideas to fill their pantribal urban emptiness. (1990: 16)

Vizenor targets the logocentrism of the modern world in “Biavaricious word hospital” where the dreams are “words words words...” and meaning is always present (1990:160). There, Vizenor, parodies Chomsky’s “generative grammar” with what is called “degenerative grammar”, and thereby targets science and its pretensions to precision (1990:167). Justice Pardone and Doctor Wilde, two of the pilgrims who believe “words are the meaning of living now ... The word is where the word is at now”, find out that the “word hospital” is their “last chance to be part of the real word” (1990:170-171).

Authors who are generally recognized as magical realists generally refrain from giving superiority to *mythos* over *logos*, but present them as two basic modes of knowledge production, which are simultaneous and complementary (Hegerfeldt 2005: 188). Therefore, all the pilgrims except for two prefer to leave the “word paradise”, where the *logos* and aspiration for exactness reign, rather than *mythos*, which stresses on the playfulness of language (1990: 163). Yet, Jean-Francois Lyotard maintains that scientific language is as much the creation of some language games as other types of knowledge, albeit with different rules. Overemphasizing scientific paradigms and evaluating other fields of knowledge based on scientific rules, according to Lyotard, has led to cultural imperialism throughout the last centuries (1984: 26-27). Scientific discourse, in other words, is as playful and metaphoric as other narrative modes; the difference is that the former does not acknowledge its interest. In fact, Vizenor applies scientific jargon and methods to a ridiculously unlikely situation to mock scientific pretensions to impartiality and to disclose how methodical paradigms function in complicity with the authority. More to the point, as one of the sociologists in the “word hospital” suggests, scientific advancement increases at the cost of the devastation of marginalized peoples and cultures. He states that the government funds their investigations and, ironically, built two of the word hospitals on the ruins of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The sociologist explains to the pilgrims:

The government discovered that there was something wrong with our language. The breakdown in law and order, the desecration of institutions, the hardhearted investigations, but most of all the breakdown in traditional families was a breakdown in communication ... This caused our elected officials to create this word hospital and eight others in the nation ... Six of them are new buildings like this one, while two were created in the ruins of the old Bureau of Indian Affairs field offices [...] The bureau records were included in our analysis of language [...] the language of the bureau had nothing whatever to do with the reason for its existence. (166)

NOTES

1 | Brief production histories are provided by Clifford (2012), Johnston (2007) and Edwards (2007, 1998).

The “word hospital” that propagates and promotes “word wars” is built on the ruins of the Bureaus of Indian Affairs. Vizenor, in other words, allegorically divulges the fake promises of such institutes and foundations, which claim to support the Native Indians cause.

Vizenor adds myths, fairy tales and fantastic stories to his allegorical diatribe of the modern life which, according to Hegerfeldt, is a technique for “expressing a truth too painful to tell directly” (2005: 193). Vizenor implements myth and magic to both paint a picture of the future and take a trip down memory lane. The character of the evil gambler, whom Vizenor borrowed from the same character in Chippewa mythology, embodies the elaborate hoax of capitalism.¹ The mythic character of the evil gambler—who appears this time in *Bearheart*, a doubly postmodern and postcolonial narrative—is the epitome of modern senselessness. His surrogate mother kidnapped him when he was playing around in a mall; and unsurprisingly, his natural mother did not realize his disappearance until a few hours later, when he was already far from the mall. He lived with other adopted children in a van driven by their adopted mother, and he and his brothers were not asked to respect any moral codes and were allowed to do whatever they wished, including incest and violence. Later in his life, the evil gambler expands a gasoline empire and claims that he possesses gasoline, which symbolizes spirit in *Bearheart*. But when Prude Cederfair wins him over in gambling, the gambler’s promise proves to be futile and vacuous. Hence, Vizenor’s novel in a sense is a secular allegory that anticipates the prospects of capitalism.

Vizenor remembers the past in his fiction; however, he does not memorialize it with nostalgia. Toward the end of *Bearheart*, he uses magical realism to remind his audience of the tragic memories of the witch-hunt trials and the false premise on which American Dream was based. When the pilgrims embark on the “freedom train to Santa Fe”, ironically some people, called pantribal pensioners, take them to a ghost city wherein the pilgrims are forced to work. As Prude Cederfair explains that, like their Puritan ancestors, the pantribal pensioners, “founded our new nation [...] and enforced high moral and ethical codes [...] Sorcerers and shamans and witches will be

punished for their crimes” (1990: 224). In the so-called promised journey, the members of the caravan have to appear in a court to be heard by the governors. The governors “ordered an inquisition into witchcraft and shamanism” and the pilgrims “were questioned, suspicions were confirmed, and charges of evil and diabolism were brought against the pilgrims” (1990: 225). The pilgrims are taken to the inquisition room one by one. Imprisoned in an adobe room, the rest of pilgrims, drinking some of “vision vine” that Bigfoot carries, transform into clown crows and escape from the prison. But before leaving the prison, while in the form of clown crows,

moving through the time of six generations the twelve clown crows were in the palace when the first wooded floors were laid in some of the rooms ... Figured calico covered the whitewashed walls ... The old vigas were replaced when a portion of the earthen roof dropped ... Governor Don Juan Francisco Trevino was discussing the charges against tribal sorcerers and idolaters ... Tribal people liberated the prisoners and spared the governor ... The twelve crows did not hear the governor tell that four tribal people had been hanged for their terminal creeds ... The twelve crows watched the flag of the United States unfurl for the first time in Santa Fe right now from the plaza benches on August 18, 1846. (1990: 234)

Vizenor makes his characters fly back in time to witness a real historical scene in 1675 in Santa Fe, when Governor Juan Francisco Trevino, a Spanish colonizer, charged forty-seven Pueblo medicine men with sorcery and sentenced all of them to death. The aforementioned passage also alludes to the American army general Stephen Watts Kearny, who occupied Santa Fe and raised the flag of America over the Plaza in August 18, 1846.² After this visionary visit to the past of their nation—which is bereft of any nostalgia—and a review of the horrific incidents of the witch-hunt and the conquest of Mexico, they find the way out of their adobe prison and escape. Believing that the “living holds the foolishness of the past” (1990: 218), Vizenor’s novel both cleverly delineates the miseries brought on by colonization and warns about their upshot in the future.

3. Entering the Fourth World as Bears; Tricky Transformations in *Bearheart*

The Native American narratives presented in *Bearheart* often tell of the bizarre transformation of human beings into animals, and children born out of the coupling of animals and humans. Moreover, Vizenor repeatedly describes the weird metamorphoses and the practice of uncommon couplings in minute detail. The classic function of metamorphosis is to represent the duality or fragmentation of identity, but in native narrative, Rigel-Cellard contends, only the results of such transformations and copulations matter (1997: 102). That is, they often

NOTES

2 | This article focuses on paperbacks because these are the editions most likely to be sold in commercial bookshops.

explain how the world came into being and how various creatures began to exist. Vizenor further fits metamorphic transformations into the modern narrative of the pilgrims. Rigel-Cellard claims that the types of metamorphoses presented in Vizenor's fiction are simply intended to amuse the audience. According to her, not all Chippewa transformations have a "serious didactic function", and thus most transformations in *Bearheart* are gratuitous and playful (1997:102). Contrary to Rigel-Cellard's argument, shape-shifting in *Bearheart* can be explained by the idea of survivance, which is best exemplified in the character of the trickster. As mentioned above, one of the central characteristics of native tricksters is that they adapt to social changes in order to survive and resist the dominant culture. Therefore, masks and guises, as used in *Bearheart*, play a fundamental role in defining a trickster's features.

For survivance, the trickster needs to shift between various systems of thought. Mask devices help to materialize this function. The trickster characters are shape-shifters, but they do not lose their identity (Shakleton, 2001: 72). The trickster is a shape-shifter who changes its guises and produces "a confluence of narratives" and, as Shackleton observes, "Perhaps nowhere else in the world are they so significant to a people's sense of self and identity—their past, present, and imagined future—as they are among Native North Americans" (2001: 82). Native Americans are presumably more prone to incorporate tricksters into their narratives than other ethnic minorities. This, in fact, unites various Native American communities.

The mythic quality associated with tricksters is comparable to the situation of the pilgrims wearing metamasks in *Bearheart*. Two of the pilgrims in *Bearheart*, namely the stoic Proude Cederfair and the vulgar Bigfoot, represent two different aspects of the Native trickster: a "culture hero and [a] clownish menace to the community" (2001: 72). Nonetheless, it is hardly possible to exclude the shape-shifting Bishop Parsamio with his three masks, and Pio, who wears metamasks of women to hide his/her identity, from the list of tricksters in *Bearheart*.

But most important is Proude Cederfair, a shaman, a conjurer and a trickster who connects to nature and animals. "The cedar became his source of personal power," the narrator tells us, "He dreamed trees and leaned in the wind with the cedar. In the winter he stood outside alone drawing his arms around his trunk under snow. He spoke with the trees. He became the cedar wood" (1990: 7); "He roared like a bear [...] He understood the language of cedar and learned to trust the voices of the crows. He became the rhythm of cedar trees and birds. Silence and language of animals gave him power (1990: 17). Moreover, the narrator notes that Proude "would be a clown [...] a compassionate trickster for the afternoon, a bear from the cedar"

(1990: 20).

However, when Proude turns into a bear to enter the “fourth world”, he is no longer a trickster. In spite of the fact that he is a trickster, Bigfoot cannot find the entrance into the fourth world. Vizenor seems to suggest that tricksters are not allowed to enter the mythic fourth world. This is because tricksters are essentially liminal figures and, as Jalalzai explains, they would fluctuate between two opposing systems so that they could not function in a static system like the utopian fourth world (Winter, 1999: 29). A trickster figure, quite similar to a postmodern narrative, using Lyotard’s term, manifests “incredulity towards metanarratives” (1984: xxiv). Similar to postmodern narratives, tricksters in Vizenor’s *Bearheart* share disrespect for metanarratives which Gerald Vizenor terms “terminal creeds”.

Elizabeth Blair remarks that not only Vizenor’s characters but also his text—that is *Bearheart*—enjoys tricksterian qualities. Like tricksters who seek to heal the age-old communal pains, “in trickster text, words heal by refusing to take themselves seriously” (1995: 88). Through its humour, *Bearheart* affects the audience’s emotions much more than their intellects. Although wordplay, grotesque and fantastic imagery, abnormal violent actions, and gratuitous explanations of sexual encounters seem inessential to the organic unity of the text, they are involved in making what Blair calls “text as trickster”. Mostly, a trickster narrative upsets the audience’s imagination by undermining, challenging, disclosing, and deconstructing fossilized notions and ideas, as well as the presumption that language is static and one-dimensional. Accordingly, McClure proposes that Vizenor’s notion of trickster discourse should be analysed within the linguistic discourse (1997: 51). Most significantly, he refers to the way the characters use language to destabilize the dominant discourse. In fact, Vizenor, uses tricksters as both fictional characters and formalistic textual techniques to (de)educate his readers by upsetting the normalized perspectives.

In addition to his metamorphic qualities, a trickster, Vizenor stresses, has a strong and often lewd sense of humour. He points out that “trickster stories heal the heart by native irony, humor, and by the images of survivance and sovereignty” (2009: 229). “Life is humor,” he continues in defence of his tricksterian way of representation and transformation, “life always has mysteries, beauty, chaos, elements of theatre, comedy, tragedy, and the tease of a trickster. My art is about life” (2009: 229).

Metamorphosis, however, invites diverse interpretations in various contexts. When a Kafkaesque narrative uses the device of metamorphosis, it presumably aims to reflect the alienation of the modern man. Alternatively, Toni Morrison resurrects a dead child

metamorphosed as Beloved, expecting to highlight the painful memories of slavery. In addition, Angel Asturias, as Christopher Warnes observes, uses metamorphosis in *Men of Maize* as a metonym to explain a segment of cultural beliefs (2009: 15). However, Gerald Vizenor underlines the playfulness of metamorphosis not for the sake of the audience's transitory delight, but to display and materialize the tricksters' psychological attempts to survive and avoid being crushed under the dominance of non-native cultural sovereignty.

A number of critics contend that one of the distinguishing roles of metamorphosis is to represent the multiple and fluid identities of the post-colonial world. Metamorphoses incorporated in magical realist texts reflect the highly porous borders of the self. These critics distinguish between two different types of identity as reflected in magical realist texts: "Either there is a proliferation of selves within one single identity, or else readers witness an individual becoming 'the other' she was looking at [...]" (Benito, Manzanos and Simal 2009: 165). *Bearheart*, according to this definition, is subsumed under the first category. Bishop Parasimo's metamasks stand for his triple identities. Whenever he or the other pilgrims wear any of the three metamasks, the narrator refers to them by the name of the metamask while they keep maintain the beliefs they had before wearing the metamasks. Matchi Makwa is a case in point. He was in love before he wore the metamask of a woman, yet when Matchi Makwa had to put on the metamask of Princess Gallroad to save the witches, he still feels the same sexually, even though the narrator uses the female pronoun to refer to Matchi Makwa. "Obsessed with her [Matchi Makwa's] lust," explains Bearheart, "She ran into the kitchen past the waiter and returned to the table with a sharp knife which she used to shave the hair from her crotch [...] breathless she [Matchi Makwa] turns her p... into her warmth evil" (Vizenor, 1990: 180). The same is true for all the men who wear the female metamasks. The pronoun changes to female for all them but their identity remains the same.

Furthermore, metamorphosis in *Bearheart* is a voluntary and celebratory phenomenon. Unlike Samsa who is involuntarily metamorphosed into a bug in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Vizenor not only celebrates the very nature of metamorphosis, but also lets the characters in *Bearheart* decide which metamask to wear and when to turn into an animal or a plant. Nonetheless, metamasks in *Bearheart* do not change the inner qualities of the characters who wear them. They simply help the characters first to hide their very identity (for example, when the pilgrims need to enter the food fascists' restaurant for the second time). They must hide their identity, and Matchi Makwa, Pio and bishop Parasimo wear each of the three metamasks randomly (1990: 179). Also, after Bishop Parasimo dies, Pio inherits his three metamasks, all of which are in the shape of women. Soon

after s/he wears them, Pio feels no longer embarrassed about her/his facial features that are dangling between that of a man and a woman. The metamasks “give him a good feeling about himself ... herself, she is much more interesting now with the metamasks. She talks all the time [...]” (1990: 226).

Nevertheless, Vizenor sometimes brings in metamorphic characters to allegorise the bleak situation of humankind. The pilgrims on the interstates come across a procession of cripples and scoliamas. Through them Vizenor demonstrates the horrific effects of chemicals on humankind and laments the artificial wings (of imagination and hope) that people attach to themselves to forget their miseries. The cripples, Bigfoot explains, “never developed past the memories of fish and animals in our human past...less than whole less than human.” Doctor Wilde continues, “Cripples are cripples from the chemicals their parents and grandparents drank and smoked and ate” (1990: 147). On the other hand, the moths are moths “to survive and escape [their] lives” through “imagination and visions” (1990: 149). In this section, Vizenor employs the crooked and the transformed to symbolize imperfect people imprisoned in their terminal creeds. “We become our memories and what we believe,” Proude says, “we become the terminal creeds we speak. Our words limit the animals we would become...soaring through words from memories and vision. We are all incomplete...imperfect. Lost limbs and lost visions stand with the same phantoms” (1990: 147).

Accordingly, Gerald Vizenor adopts the strategy of metamorphosis for three different purposes: first to metonymically demonstrate the interconnectedness of man with nature in Indian cosmology, as in the case of Proude turning to a bear; second, to symbolically show the path Native Americans must take for the survivance of their culture, as shown in the character of tricksters; and third, to metaphorically depict the false vision and the imperfection of humankind which led them to embrace terminal creeds.

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#11

ESTÉTICA DE LA OPOSICIÓN: LA POLÍTICA DE LA METAMORFOSIS EN *BEARHEART*, DE GERALD VIZENOR

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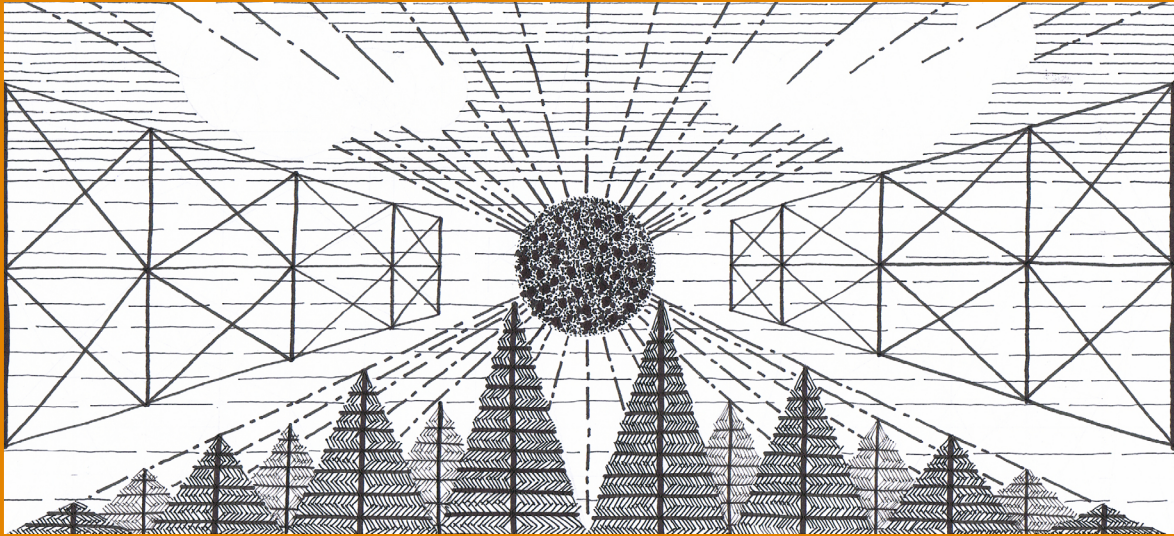
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Resumen || El novelista chippewa Gerald Vizenor expone sus nociones político-filosóficas interconectadas de «survivance» y «creencias terminales» en su primera novela, *Bearheart*. Para ello, Vizenor puso en práctica algunas de las estrategias estéticas del realismo mágico. Llenó su novela de una cantidad excesiva de escenas extrañamente sexuales y violentas, que terminan por ser mágicas, con la intención de «alterar» los estándares de la normalidad. Además, usó fábulas de la mitología de los indios americanos sobre la transformación y la metamorfosis, un técnica del realismo mágico, para reformular la identidad cultural y tribal en el contexto modernizado de *Bearheart*.

Palabras clave || Gerald Vizenor | *Bearheart* | Supervivencia | Creencias terminales | Realismo mágico | Metamorfosis

Abstract || The Chippewa novelist Gerald Vizenor puts across his interconnected politico-philosophical notions of “*survivance*” and “terminal creeds” in his early novel, *Bearheart*. To do so, Vizenor implemented some of the aesthetic strategies of magical realism. He filled his novel with an excessive amount of bizarrely sexual and violent scenes—which turn out to be magical—in order to “upset” the established standards of normality. Moreover, he used American Indian mythic folktales of transformation and metamorphosis, a magical realist technique, to re-shape the cultural and tribal identity in *Bearheart*’s modernized context.

Keywords || Gerald Vizenor | *Bearheart* | Survivance | Terminal creeds | Magical realism | Metamorphosis

“We have walked backward in your time.”
“How Backward?”
“Walking forward but seeing backward... Seeing
in time what we invent in passing... Birds and
animals see behind their motion. Place and time
lives in them not between them. Place is not an
invention of time, Place is a state of mind, place
is not notched measuring stick from memories
here to there...”
(Bearheart, 238)

0. Introducción

Gerald Robert Vizenor (nacido en 1934) es un prolífico escritor nativo americano que ha publicado numerosos volúmenes de poesía y novelas, así como algunas monografías sobre historias tribales y crítica literaria. Su primera novela, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart* (1978), después revisada como *Bearheart: the Heirship Chronicles* (1990), le condujo a la fama. Sus textos rebosan dobles sentidos, juegos de palabras e imaginación salvaje en la tradición de un trickster tribal.

Vizenor, muy influido por el posestructuralismo, incorpora teorías e ideas desarrolladas por filósofos como Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes y Jean Baudrillard al corpus de sus obras. Su ficción es lúdica y llena de alusiones y humor, aunque se mantiene siempre seria en lo que respecta a la situación de los nativos americanos. Mediante teorías posmodernas y posestructuralistas, trata de cuestionar la representación romántica de los nativos americanos e insinúa constantemente que «indio» fue una invención europea y que no había un concepto monolítico como «indio», sino pueblos de varias tribus, hasta que los europeos echaron sus anclas en las costas americanas. Siguiendo este esquema de pensamiento, gran parte de su obra evita la tendencia de la representación antropológica de las culturas nativas americanas; en su lugar, se vale de narrativas orales que llaman la atención de modo significativo sobre la transformación, contribuyendo a mantener imprecisos los conceptos de nativo y de indio, siempre cambiantes y nunca del todo presentes a sí mismos. Además, Vizenor combina hábilmente los fenómenos naturales y sobrenaturales en su ficción, cuestionando el realismo de las ciencias sociales (Benito, Manzanar y Simal 2009: 1010). Vizenor afirma que su interés por la reconciliación de los opuestos surge del sistema de creencias tribal nativo americano, que evita las «creencias terminales» y celebra la «*survivance*». En una entrevista, Vizenor dice:

The religious attitude among most tribal cultures here is one of balance rather than annihilation, in contrast to the interest of the blest to illuminate and annihilate evil. The Christian objective is to rid the self

and the soul, the family, and the community, of evil, to isolate it and destroy it. It's a war, a holy war to end evil. The same language is a part of American consciousness – the war on poverty, the war against ignorance. The objective is completely to end and destroy it. But the experience expressed in tribal culture is not that complete elimination or annihilation of anything. It's a balance, not a terminal creed. The balance is a resolution which grows out of trickeries, of outwitting, or the modulation of experience. It may grow out of origin myths themselves, that the balance was present at the time of creation. Those origin myths are still structurally and functionally a part of belief in tribal culture, the idea that life is not created by a patriarch but [through] a balance of male and female, an androgynous balance. The restoration of balance is present at all spiritual activities. (Bowers, Silet and Vizenor 1981: 43-44)

Esta idea se hace evidente en *Bearheart*, que trata las «creencias terminales» y la *survivance* de los indios americanos. Louis Owens explica que las creencias terminales representadas en *Bearheart* se refieren a creencias que tratan de imponer definiciones estáticas en el mundo. Según Owens, Vizenor es muy crítico con las definiciones estáticas, ya surjan de las convicciones indias supuestamente «tradicionales» o de ideologías euroamericanas. Las creencias terminales son comparables a lo que Bakhtin llama «authoritative discourse», que es el lenguaje «indissolubly fused with its authority» que tiene poder político y tiene una validez previa (Owens 1992: 231). Benito, Manzanas y Simal definen las creencias terminales como «a symbolic haven, even if an illusory one, of full meaning and presence, one that most people turn to in moments of tension and chaos» (2009: 97). «Economic power had become the religion of the nation», afirma *Bearheart*, «when it failed, people turned to their own violence and bizarre terminal creeds for comfort and meaning» (Vizenor 1990: 23).

Por otra parte, la *survivance* —palabra compuesta de supervivencia y resistencia a la dominación cultural— apunta a la forma en que los héroes sobreviven y muestra resistencia al nihilismo, «manifest destiny» y la típica representación de los nativos americanos como víctimas (Vizenor 2009: 24-25). «Native survivance», observa Vizenor, «is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent» (2009: 85). Para sobrevivir a la crueldad de la americanización, sostiene Kimberly Blaeser, los protagonistas supervivientes de Vizenor «examine, question, shift, stretch, bend, change, grow, juggle, balance, and sometimes duck—for surviving doesn't necessarily mean winning [...] Survival is achieved, according to Vizenor, through humor and story» (1996: 63).

La principal contribución al discurso poscolonial, según Shackleton, es su idea de «trickster hermeneutics», que es la resistencia y supervivencia cultural a la representación estereotipada de los nativos americanos (2001: 70). En este sentido, la obra de Vizenor

está comprometida políticamente, puesto que pretende oponerse a los discursos centrales en el mundo textual y extratextual. Además, Vizenor cree firmemente que hay una estética nativa singular que le ayuda en el camino de la *survivance* literaria. Escribe:

I strongly disagree, in other words, with the spurious notion that there is no singular native aesthetics. Consider, for instance, the ancestral storiers who created animal characters with a tricky sense of consciousness, the natural reason of a native aesthetics of survivance. Many contemporary native novelists present the imagic consciousness of animals in dialogue and descriptive narratives, and overturn the monotheistic separation of humans and animals. (2009: 9-10)

En *Bearheart*, Vizenor también incorpora lo que define como la «imagic consciousness of animals in dialogue and descriptive narratives». No sólo hace que los peregrinos vayan acompañados en su viaje por siete cuervos y dos perros; además, representa a los animales, y en especial a los cuervos, como *tricksters*.

Las fábulas orales indias americanas presentan a los cuervos como *tricksters* nativos (2009: 13). Los cuervos que acompañan a los peregrinos en su viaje en *Bearheart* son ejemplos de *tricksters* nativos (Rigal-Cellard 1997: 99). Además, Vizenor transforma a su protagonista en oso, el animal que representa la fuerza, la sabiduría espiritual y el poder chamánico en el folclore chippewa (1997: 99). Proude Cederfair, el protagonista que se metamorfosea en oso, puede moverse mágicamente de un sitio a otro y, cuando le vence el desespero, se metamorfosea en oso y «sale volando» hacia su circo de cedros en el lago de migis. Es una encarnación del *trickster* Nanabozho. En general, Gerald Vizenor hace que los animales, pájaros y humanos se acompañen unos a otros porque considera que la cosmología nativa americana, al contrario que la creación monoteísta, no los separa en la naturaleza ni en la literatura. Esta unión, según Vizenor, forma parte de la estética nativa (2009: 14).

Aunque Vizenor cree en una estética nativa única, subraya la fluidez de la cultura y estética nativas, una convicción que le hizo desconfiar del Movimiento Indio Americano después de 1960. En su opinión, los líderes de este movimiento reforzaron los estereotipos y fomentaron erróneamente la ilusión de una auténtica identidad tribal, que después mantuvieron los medios de comunicación (1994: 150). Vizenor confiesa sensatamente que aunque durante un tiempo se vio a sí mismo como un mediador y una voz india, ya no representa a los nativos americanos. Admite que no representa a ningún grupo específico, sino que funciona como un «upsetter» que lucha por acabar con las creencias terminales (Bowers, Silet y Vizenor 1981: 45).

En *Bearheart*, Vizenor se centra en el motivo del exilio y relata cómo

un grupo de nativos americanos y mestizos acompañados de siete cuervos payaso y dos perros se embarcan en un peregrinaje por Estados Unidos, en busca del «cuarto mundo». «In the fourth world», explica Prude Cederfair, protagonista y narrador, «evil spirits are outwitted in the secret languages of animals and birds. Bears and crows choose the new singers. The crows crow in their blackness» (1990: 5). A medida que avanza la novela, la audiencia descubre que sólo aquellos que superan las «creencias terminales» pueden tener acceso al utópico cuarto mundo.

La narrativa poco ortodoxa de Vizenor sigue las aventuras del grupo en una sociedad americana posapocalíptica. Todo el país se ha quedado sin combustible (que puede simbolizar el alma) y, para sobrevivir, la gente es capaz de cometer crímenes atroces, tales como el canibalismo, sin escrúpulos. Su picaresca a través de estas comunidades blancas devastadas continúa en coche, en barco y a pie, y los personajes van uniéndose poco a poco a Bearheart en su viaje. La narrativa alcanza su punto de inflexión cuando los peregrinos se encuentran con «the evil gambler, the monarch of unleaded gasoline» que «gamble for five gallons» y mata a los que pierden (1990: 102-103). Desde el punto de vista estructural, los capítulos que preceden al «evil gambler» muestran la acumulación de peregrinos y los capítulos que siguen al enfrentamiento con el jugador muestran la desaparición y desintegración de los peregrinos. A partir de ese momento, los peregrinos son víctimas de su propia arrogancia y cuanto más se aferra un peregrino a las «creencias terminales», antes abandona el grupo o muere. No obstante, en su viaje experimentan momentos trágicos y cómicos.

Los peregrinos de Vizenor son testarudamente libidinales y absurdos. Alan R. Velie afirma que a *Bearheart* le falta «philosophical and aesthetic depth» y simbolismo (1982: 136-137). Al contrario que Velie, Rigel-Cellard compara las distintas escenas de *Bearheart* con incidentes paralelos en *Pilgrim's Progress*, y observa que Vizenor carga el texto con un denso simbolismo para crear una parodia posmoderna (1997:110). Dice:

By producing this Native *Pilgrim's Progress*, a manifesto which is his own version of the canonical novel written according to the Bible, by tossing it upside down, by hiding wisdom under the most foolish of attires, Vizenor is asserting the spiritual freedom of his tribal people, even after their political power has been smothered by generations of colonists brandishing the Bible and poor Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. (1997: 112)

Además, en su presentación radical del sexo y la violencia, *Bearheart* emplea estrategias de la narrativa posmoderna, pero al mismo tiempo es considerada una de las «most traditional of Native American novels» por su extenso uso de la tradición oral chippewa (Vizenor 1989: 143). La novela está marcada por el

embargo petrolero de principios de los años setenta, que colapsó al Gobierno Federal, provocando la confiscación de las reservas nativas americanas (Rigal-Cellard 1997: 94-5). El libro, en un nivel filosófico, pretende divulgar las «creencias terminales» de los indios americanos tanto como las del gobierno central y los blancos. Esto se ve claramente en «The Letter to the Reader» escrita por Vizenor (bajo el seudónimo Bearheart) al inicio de la novela. En esta carta, Vizenor denuncia tanto al Gobierno Federal, que «held their [tribal people's] reservation land in trust so the timber could be cut and minerals mined» (1990: xii), como a los discípulos del Movimiento Indio Americano que llevan «plastic bear claws» y cuya religión no es más que «a word pile» (1990: x).

Además, la cuestión temática «¿qué significa ser indio?» recorre *Bearheart* y la novela resiste violentamente (y considera creencia terminal) cualquier definición de «indio» que no acepte su opuesto. Por ejemplo, los comentarios racistas de Belladonna a favor de la sangre nativa, la «grotesque and patronizing liberality» de Little Big Mouse y su desmesurada generosidad, la obsesión del obispo Parasimo «with the romantic and spiritual power of tribal people» (1990: 75), que Louis Owen interpreta como «the Hollywood version of Indianness» (Owens 1990: 250) son algunos ejemplos de creencias terminales. Por la misma razón, aunque el juez Pardone Cozener y el doctor Wilde prefieren permanecer en el «word hospital» y así escapar al trágico destino de la mayoría de los peregrinos, Maureen Keady interpreta «their decision to stay there [as] clearly a choice of nihilism» (1985: 64). Es decir, al permanecer inactivos y evitar la alegría de la cultura india nativa, provocan su propia muerte intelectual.

Además, como observa Keady, «those who cling to words as evidence of existence will be unable to enter [“the fourth world”]. In wasted and poisoned America, “survival of the fittest” prevails, but Vizenor points out that, here, as always, it is spiritual strength that makes one fit» (1985: 65). Ciertamente, *Bearheart* es a la vez una historia sobre el fin del mundo y sobre el principio de uno nuevo. Vizenor celebra la forma en que los tricksters caminan hacia atrás, que simboliza en reinicio de un tiempo en que el mito estaba en el centro del significado y «oral tradition is honoured» (1990: 163). Para ello, Gerald Vizenor pone en práctica técnicas y elementos del realismo mágico e incorpora escenas mágicas en *Bearheart*.

Lo que sigue es una discusión de la política del realismo mágico en *Bearheart*. Primero, sostendremos que Vizenor dirige constantemente la atención de su audiencia hacia la excesiva representación de escenas violentas y sexuales surreales para «alterar» —en terminología de Vizenor— los parámetros de la normalidad que durante tanto tiempo se mantuvieron incuestionables. En segundo

lugar, discutiremos en qué manera las fábulas y figuras míticas indoamericanas, especialmente el trickster Nanabozho y el gran jugador, que posee poderes mágicos, funcionan en el contexto modernizado y pseudorealista de *Bearheart* para refigurar la identidad tribal y cultural. Por último, profundizaremos en la naturaleza metamórfica de los *tricksters*, que es una estrategia empleada para la *survivance* en *Bearheart*.

1. La magia del exceso

Bearheart, como texto del realismo mágico, explota muchos modos de representación del realismo clásico, pero subvierte sus premisas humanistas. El debut de Vizenor transgrede la idea humanista de que la racionalidad y el civismo son innatos a la humanidad. Sin la intención de crear un sentido del horror en la mente de sus personajes de ficción, Vizenor presenta en *Bearheart* una imagen impactante del mundo como si los actos extremadamente violentos fueran sucesos comunes. *Bearheart* está lleno de incidentes ilógicos, irracionales e indecentes, constantemente se pronuncian palabras rudas y ofensivas, el sexo y la violencia se retratan gráficamente y las acciones sin sentido se relatan repetidamente. La violencia resulta ser una de las aficiones más placenteras para la gente en *Bearheart*. «As it turned out killing gave me a whole lot of pleasure then» confiesa el jugador malvado,

my business has been to bring people to their death. Until I was nineteen suffocation fascinated me as a form of death. Like an artist I practiced the various means of suffocating people. Later I was attracted to traps and poisons ... secrets and surprises on the road to death. (1990: 126)

De la misma forma, después de que un «whitecannibal» mate y descuartice a dos transeúntes, «picked up the steaming heart from the dead whiteman and threw it across the road toward the circus pilgrims» (1990: 174-175). Vizenor explica las reacciones iniciales de cada uno de los peregrinos así:

Neither the seven crows, nor the dogs, nor the nine circus pilgrims moved from their places. Eighteen pairs of eyes focused on the heart. Sun Bear Sun imagined the smell of cooking meat until digestive saliva filled his huge mouth. Matchi Makwa would feed it to the animals. Belladonna turned from the heart in tears fearful of evil fixations. Parawoman Pio was fighting back the powerful savage urge to devour the heart raw. He could taste the blood salts and feel the soft muscles slipping between his massive teeth. He swallowed. Proude thought about the death of his fathers and the spiritual power from the hearts of animals. (1990: 175)

Aunque los peregrinos parecen dudar sobre si alimentarse del corazón de un hombre al que acaban de matar, algunos de ellos

cambian enseguida de opinión. Vizenor explica:

Pio moaned and his mammoth limbs trembled. Sun Bear Sun swallowed and in slow measured steps he walked across the road and talked to the whiteman with the knife. The man paused and then handed Sun Bear Sun a large piece of dried meat. When he returned, he explained that the meat was from the biceps of a young woman who had been raped and killed for flesh the month before on the interstate. The meat was prepared. The circus pilgrims were silent. Proude and Inawa Biwide and Rosina and Belladonna and Perfect Crow and Pure Gumption would not eat human flesh. Private Jones and six crows pecked and pulled at the steaming heart. (1990: 175)

Esto ejemplifica la profusión de una excesiva violencia y de lo grotesco en la novela. En teoría, una de las formas en que una obra literaria muestra resistencia a las formas de la literatura dominante es mediante la estrategia del «exceso». Un tipo de exceso consiste en recargar la narrativa de deformidad y desnudez y en la transgresión del lenguaje «educado». *Bearheart* está repleta de descripciones explícitas de relaciones sexuales extrañas (véase p.ej.: xiv, 30, 45, 70, 95, 124, 180) y acciones sumamente violentas que incluyen descripciones detalladas de deformidades (véase, p.ej.: 54, 87, 126, 135, 138, 140, 151, 174, 176, 232, 239). Además, junto a la alteración de las normas sociales, la subversión a las normas se manifiesta en los juegos de palabras de los personajes y el novelista (p. ej., juegos con «hairship» y «heirship», «word war» y «world war», etc.). Estas desviaciones muestran de hecho una reacción radical a las presentaciones realistas convencionales. Las representaciones poco comunes de *Bearheart* desbaratan intencionalmente las nociones de moralidad de los lectores. Es lo que Blaeser llama la «strategy of liberation». Dice:

The impetus in Vizenor's work is exactly that of checking the process of annihilation and freeing Native American identity from the grasp of literary colonialism. He does this both by struggling against established literary and linguistic structures, practices, and images, and by working to create new ones. By undermining the colonial "strategies of containment" and replacing them with the strategies of liberation." (Blaeser 1996: 73)

El realismo formal tiende a perpetuar las reglas del poder dominante en la sociedad y a contener los deseos de las masas. Un texto «extraño» como el *Bearheart* de Vizenor emplea «estrategias de liberación» para liberar a sus audiencias de las restricciones del poder dominante. Como indica Felix Guattari:

The masses certainly do not passively submit to power; nor do they «want» to be repressed, in a kind of masochistic hysteria; nor are they tricked by an ideological lure. Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from micro formations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. Desire is never an undifferentiated

instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions: a whole supple segmentarity that processes molecular energies and potentially gives desire a fascist determination. (Guattari 1987: 215)

Según Guattari, el poder dominante no utiliza máximas ideológicas manifiestas para obligar a la gente a estar de acuerdo y cumplir, sino que controla su psique y su poder de deseo mediante la creación de un sistema de culpa. Mediante el establecimiento de normas, el realismo tradicional funciona como un cómplice en el establecimiento de un sistema de culpa. Vizenor pretende alterar las normas de la llamada prudente sociedad americana trasgrediendo las fronteras éticas y morales.

Según Blaeser, el lenguaje sugerente, las transformaciones y la identificación con la naturaleza son algunas de las normas sociales transgredidas (1996: 184). Bajtín aclama los enfoques literarios que pretenden «to destroy and rebuild the entire false picture of the world, to sunder the false hierarchical links between objects and ideas, to abolish the divisive ideational strata» (1981: 169). Según MacClure, los «false hierarchal links» de Bajtín son idénticos a los discursos autoritarios oficiales que Vizenor llama creencias terminales (1997:56). El realismo mágico con un exceso de narrativas inusuales subvierte las normas dominantes, que siempre han temido la intrusión del otro. Como resultado, el realismo mágico transgrede y suprime al «otro» político o filosófico.

Aunque Vizenor ilustra excesivas escenas de violencia en *Bearheart*, intenta ponerlas en una posición normal para la audiencia. De esta forma, sigue una estrategia de representación banal de la violencia y lo grotesco en *Bearheart*. Según Bajtín, lo grotesco, que es «an aesthetic of the unfinished», aparece para desafiar los estándares clásicos (1966:32-33). En *Bearheart*, el personaje de Rosina es quien mejor expresa la indiferencia de los peregrinos frente a los horribles incidentes de su viaje. Cuando uno de los «penarchical pensioners» en la ciudad fantasma se impresiona después de que Rosina explique abiertamente cómo fueron decapitados Matchi Makwa y uno de los brujos y su cabeza llegó en el extremo de un palo que llevaba Sun Bear Sun, Rosina dice:

Not so strange when you think about some of the things we had seen, [...] we have been walking from the cedar nation for more than two months now and there has been violence and death ... Death and whitepeople punishing and killing each other for no reason ... So when the head of the witch came back on a stick we never thought much about it ... (1990: 225-226)

Como en *Bearheart*, los textos del realismo mágico en ocasiones no muestran ninguna reacción y utilizan un lenguaje neutro

cuando representan actos de violencia preternatural. Es lo que Hegerfeldt llama «the rethoric of banality» que destaca «the absurd, nonsensical, fantastic nature of reality» (2005: 209). Adicionalmente, Timothy Brennan llama a este desinteresado retrato de horrores «the stylistic veneer of [...] matter-of-fact violence» (1989: 66). Mediante la retórica de la banalidad, el realismo mágico desinstala la visión del mundo realista sobre la que se apoya. Sin embargo, mezcla la discrepancia entre los ideales humanistas de civismo y progreso y el estado del mundo, aunque no para degradar los primeros, sino para condenar el último.

En cambio, en algunos momentos dramáticos, Vizenor lleva fenómenos banales y tediosos al centro de atención y los muestra como mágicos e inquietantes. Esto es lo que Hegerfeldt llama «the supernaturalization of the extratextual world» (2005: 199). Como ejemplo de ello, Bigfoot cuenta que está enamorado de una estatua de bronce de una mujer que robó de un parque público. La estatua, que los caminantes del parque ignoraban y consideraban aburrida, le parecía a Bigfoot tan animada que cuando supo que su rival la había robado, mató al ladrón para recuperarla (1990:85-88). Sólo recibió dos años de arresto domiciliario por el crimen porque «judicial folks were downright pleased to meet an old fashioned passion killer, a killer who made sense, because most of the killings going on are reasonless now random living and random loving and random death» (1990: 83). Después de contar la historia de la estatua de bronce, Bigfoot empieza a bailar con ella y Little Big Mouse murmura «she has warmed to my touch» tras acariciar la estatua (88). Vizenor crea tal aura fabulosa de misterio en torno a una simple y corriente estatua de parque que no solo Bigfoot, sino también el resto de personajes caen rendidos ante su historia.

Por otro lado, Vizenor describe algunos incidentes plausibles como si fueran fantásticos. «The fantastic elements are not restricted to what by rational-empirical criteria is considered physically impossible;» mantiene Hegerfeldt, «highly improbable events can have a similar effect.» (2005: 79). Aunque acontecimientos como la escasez de gasolina, dar palizas consecutivas al jugador malvado (1990: 123) o un desfile de tullidos (Vizenor 1990: 145) no incumplen las leyes naturales, resultan fantásticos para el lector debido a su alta improbabilidad.

En resumen, aunque Vizenor describe escenas violentas en *Bearheart*, intenta normalizarlas tanto para los personajes como para la audiencia. Además, Vizenor ilustra los fenómenos probables como si su ocurrencia fuera fantástica y sobrenatural. En general, mediante estas estrategias Vizenor transgrede la afirmación humanista de que la racionalidad y el civismo son innatos a la humanidad y presenta una imagen atroz del mundo, no para socavar los ideales humanistas

sino para quejarse del estado del mundo, pasado y presente.

2. «Walking Forward but Seeing Backward»; la unión entre *mythos* y *logos*

Los textos del realismo mágico suelen abordar el pasado mítico de una nación, y *Bearheart* de Vizenor no es una excepción. Sin embargo, según Moses Valdez, en algunas ficciones del realismo mágico, un énfasis excesivo en la nostalgia elimina o ignora los malos recuerdos y ofrece «purely symbolic or token resistance to the inexorable triumph of modernity» (2001: 106). Windy B. Faris, contraria al argumento de Valdez, afirma que el realismo mágico presenta más que «token resistance». En su opinión, un texto del realismo mágico puede trabajar en distintos modos el progreso científico y tecnológico para evitar que sus lectores se dejen caer en el «nostalgic return to a vanished past» (2002: 114-115). En este sentido, Gerald Vizenor evita disculpar a los indios de sus propias faltas que llevaron a la degeneración. Acusa a quienes apoyan el pantribalismo de adherirse firmemente a sus creencias terminales, que no son más que «word piles» (1990: x). Además, cuanta más gente se acerca a la nación del cedro, donde se producía el incienso de cedro sagrado, Vizenor lamenta:

Tribal religions were becoming more ritualistic but without visions. The crazed and alienated were desperate for terminal creeds to give their vacuous lives meaning. Hundreds of tribal people came to the cedar nation for spiritual guidance. They camped for a few days, lusted after their women in the cedar, and then, lacking inner discipline, dreams, and personal responsibilities, moved on to find new word wars and new ideas to fill their pantribal urban emptiness. (1990: 16)

Vizenor trata el logocentrismo del mundo moderno en «Biavaricious word hospital», en el que los sueños son «words words, words...» y el significado siempre está presente (1990: 160). Aquí Vizenor parodia la «gramática generativa» de Chomsky con lo que llama «degenerative grammar», atacando así a la ciencia y sus pretensiones de precisión (1990: 167). El juez Pardone y el doctor Wilde, dos de los peregrinos que creen que «words are the meaning of living now ... The word is where the word is at now», descubren que «word hospital» es su «last chance to be part of the real word» (1990:170-171).

Los autores que generalmente se reconocen como pertenecientes al realismo mágico suelen abstenerse de dar superioridad al *mythos* sobre el *logos*, pero los presentan como dos modos básicos de producción de conocimiento, que son simultáneos y complementarios (Hegerfeldt 2005: 188). Por ello, todos los peregrinos excepto dos prefieren dejar el «word paradise» en el

quereinan el *logos* y la aspiración por la exactitud, frente al *mythos*, que hace hincapié en las posibilidades de juego del lenguaje (1990: 163). Con todo, Jean Francois Lyotard mantiene que el lenguaje científico tiene tanto de creación de juegos de lenguaje como otros tipos de conocimiento, pero con reglas diferentes. Poner demasiado énfasis en los paradigmas científicos y evaluar otros campos de conocimiento basándose en reglas científicas, según Lyotard, ha llevado al imperialismo cultural en los últimos siglos (1984: 26-27). En otras palabras, el discurso científico es tan lúdico y metafórico como otros modos narrativos, la diferencia es que el primero no reconoce su interés. De hecho, Vizenor aplica la jerga y los métodos científicos a una situación ridículamente improbable para ridiculizar las pretensiones científicas de imparcialidad y mostrar cómo funcionan los paradigmas metódicos en complicidad con la autoridad. Yendo más al grano, como sugiere uno de los sociólogos en el «hospital de palabras», el avance científico aumenta a costa de la devastación de los pueblos y culturas marginados. Afirma que el gobierno financia sus investigaciones e, irónicamente, construyó dos de los hospitales de palabras en las ruinas de la Oficina de Asuntos Indios. El sociólogo explica a los peregrinos:

The government discovered that there was something wrong with our language. The breakdown in law and order, the desecration of institutions, the hardhearted investigations, but most of all the breakdown in traditional families was a breakdown in communication ... This caused our elected officials to create this word hospital and eight others in the nation ... Six of them are new buildings like this one, while two were created in the ruins of the old Bureau of Indian Affairs field offices [...] The bureau records were included in our analysis of language [...] the language of the bureau had nothing whatever to do with the reason for its existence. (166)

El «word hospital» que propaga y promueve «word wars» está construido en las ruinas de la Oficina de Asuntos Indios. Vizenor, en otras palabras, revela alegóricamente las falsas promesas de dichos institutos y fundaciones, que dicen apoyar la causa de los indios nativos.

Vizenor añade mitos, cuentos de hadas e historias fantásticas a su diatriba alegórica de la vida moderna que, según Hegerfeldt, es una técnica para «expressing a truth too painful to tell directly» (2005: 193). Vizenor utiliza el mito y la magia para hacer un retrato del futuro y para viajar por el recuerdo. El personaje del jugador malvado, que Vizenor tomó prestado del mismo personaje en la mitología chippewa, personifica el elaborado engaño del capitalismo¹. El carácter mítico del jugador malvado —que aparece esta vez en *Bearheart*, una narrativa doblemente posmoderna y poscolonial— es el epítome de la falta de sentido moderna. Su madre de alquiler le secuestró cuando estaba jugando en un centro comercial y, como era de

NOTAS

1 | Según las fábulas nativas, cuando el *trickster* Nanabozho, que vivía con su abuela Nookomis, descubre que su madre está encarcelada por un poderoso espíritu malvado, emprende un viaje para rescatarla. Su abuela le advierte sobre el jugador malvado: «First these evil spirits charm their victims by the sweetness of their songs, then they strangle and devour them, but your principle enemy will be the great gambler who has never been beaten in his game and who lives beyond the realm of darkness.» (1984: 4) Nanabozho descubre que el jugador malvado utiliza los mismos trucos que el jugador malvado de *Bearheart*, pero finalmente recupera a su madre, que simboliza la tierra.

esperar, su madre natural no se dio cuenta de su desaparición hasta unas horas después, cuando ya estaba lejos del centro comercial. Vivió con otros niños adoptados en una furgoneta que conducía su madre adoptiva, y él y sus hermanos no tenían que respetar ningún código moral y podían hacer todo lo que quisieran, incluyendo el incesto y la violencia. Años después, el jugador malvado crea un imperio de gasolina y asegura que posee gasolina, que simboliza el espíritu en *Bearheart*. Pero cuando Proude Cederfair le gana en un juego, la promesa del jugador se revela fútil y vacía. Así, la novela de Vizenor es en cierto sentido una alegoría secular que anticipa las perspectivas del capitalismo.

Vizenor recuerda el pasado en su ficción, aunque no lo hace con nostalgia. Hacia el final de *Bearheart*, utiliza el realismo mágico para recordar a su audiencia los trágicos recuerdos de los juicios de la caza de brujas y la falsa premisa en la que se basó el sueño americano. Cuando los peregrinos se suben al «freedom train to Santa Fe», irónicamente, una gente llamada pensionistas pantribales los llevan a una ciudad fantasma en la que se les obliga a trabajar. Proude Cederfair explica que, como sus ancestros puritanos, los pensionistas pantribales, «founded our new nation [...] and enforced high moral and ethical codes [...] Sorcerers and shamans and witches will be punished for their crimes» (1990: 224). En el llamado viaje prometido, los miembros de la caravana tienen que comparecer ante el tribunal para ser escuchados por los gobernadores. Los gobernadores «ordered an inquisition into witchcraft and shamanism» y los peregrinos «were questioned, suspicions were confirmed, and charges of evil and diabolism were brought against the pilgrims» (1990: 225). Los peregrinos son llevados a la sala de la inquisición uno por uno. Encerrados en una sala de adobe, el resto de los peregrinos, bebiendo el «vision vine» que lleva Bigfoot, se transforman en cuervos payaso y escapan de la prisión. Pero antes de escapar de la prisión, en forma de cuervos payaso,

moving through the time of six generations the twelve clown crows were in the palace when the first wooded floors were laid in some of the rooms ... Figured calico covered the whitewashed walls ... The old vigas were replaced when a portion of the earthen roof dropped ... Governor Don Juan Francisco Trevino was discussing the charges against tribal sorcerers and idolaters ... Tribal people liberated the prisoners and spared the governor ... The twelve crows did not hear the governor tell that four tribal people had been hanged for their terminal creeds ... The twelve crows watched the flag of the United States unfurl for the first time in Santa Fe right now from the plaza benches on August 18, 1846. (1990: 234)

Vizenor hace retroceder a sus personajes en el tiempo para presenciar una escena histórica real que ocurrió en 1675 en Santa Fe, cuando el gobernador Juan Francisco Treviño, un colonizador

español, acusó a cuarenta y siete hombres medicina de brujería y los condenó a muerte. El pasaje mencionado también alude al general del ejército Stephen Watts Kearny, que ocupó Santa Fe y alzó la bandera de Estados Unidos en la Plaza el 18 de agosto de 1846². Tras esta visita visionaria al pasado de su nación –despojada de nostalgia– y una revisión de los atroces incidentes de la caza de brujas y la conquista de México, encuentran una salida de la prisión de adobe y escapan. Con la creencia de que «living holds the foolishness of the past» (1990: 218), la novela de Vizenor define claramente las miserias que trajo la colonización y a la vez alerta sobre su resultado en el futuro.

3. La entrada en el Cuarto Mundo como osos; transformaciones complicadas en *Bearheart*

Las narrativas nativas americanas que se presentan en *Bearheart* suelen contar las extrañas transformaciones de humanos en animales y de niños nacidos de la cópula de animales y humanos. Además, Vizenor describe repetidamente las extrañas metamorfosis y la práctica de cópulas poco comunes al detalle. La función clásica de la metamorfosis es representar la dualidad o fragmentación de la identidad, pero en la narrativa nativa, defiende Rigel-Cellard, solo importan los resultados de dichas transformaciones y cópulas (1997: 102). Es decir, a menudo explican cómo surgió el mundo y empezaron a existir distintas criaturas. Vizenor adapta las transformaciones metamórficas a la narrativa moderna de los peregrinos. Rigel-Cellard afirma que los tipos de metamorfosis presentados en la ficción de Vizenor sólo pretenden divertir a la audiencia. En su opinión, no todas las transformaciones chippewa tienen una «serious didactic function» y, así, las transformaciones en *Bearheart* son gratuitas y lúdicas (1997: 102). En contra del argumento de Rigel-Cellard, las transformaciones en *Bearheart* se pueden explicar a partir de la idea de *survivance*, cuyo ejemplo más claro es el personaje del *trickster*. Como ya se ha mencionado, una de las características principales de los *tricksters* nativos es que se adaptan a los cambios sociales para sobrevivir y resistir a la cultura dominante. Por lo tanto, las máscaras y disfraces, como se usan en *Bearheart*, tienen un papel fundamental en la definición de las características de un *trickster*.

Para la *survivance*, el *trickster* tiene que cambiar entre varios sistemas de pensamiento. Las máscaras le ayudan a materializar esta función. Los personajes *trickster* cambian de forma, pero no pierden su identidad (Shakleton 2001: 72). El *trickster* es un cambiante que cambia su apariencia y produce una «confluence of narratives» y, como observa Shackleton, «perhaps nowhere else in the world are they so significant to a people's sense of self and identity—

NOTAS

2 | Estas líneas aluden a un momento histórico en el que la sequía causó estragos en Santa Fe de Nuevo México (actualmente Nuevo México), la hambruna se extendió entre los indios pueblo y los apaches atacaron a los indios con mayor frecuencia. Treviño acusó a cuarenta y siete hombres medicina pueblo en Santa Fe de brujería y ordenó su arresto. Tres de ellos fueron ahorcados, otro se suicidó y los demás fueron azotados públicamente y condenados a prisión. Al oír la noticia, los líderes pueblo se trasladaron a Santa Fe y obligaron a Juan Francisco Treviño a soltar a los prisioneros. Este y otros eventos llevaron a una revuelta de la mayoría de los indios pueblo contra los españoles en las regiones, en la que ganaron los pueblo, aunque los españoles consiguieron reconquistar la tierra doce años después. El dominio español sobre la tierra no cesó hasta que un general del ejército americano, Stephen Watts Kearny, ocupó Santa Fe y alzó la bandera de Estados Unidos en la Plaza el 18 de agosto de 1846 y finalmente México firmó el tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo en 1848, por el que cedió California y Nuevo México a Estados Unidos (Pike, 2004: 440).

their past, present, and imagined future—as they are among Native North Americans» (2001: 82). Los nativos americanos parecen tener más tendencia a incorporar *tricksters* en sus narrativas que otras minorías étnicas. De hecho, esto une a varias comunidades nativas americanas.

La calidad mítica asociada a los *tricksters* es comparable a la situación de los peregrinos que llevan metamáscaras en *Bearheart*. Dos de los peregrinos en *Bearheart*, en concreto el estoico Proude Cederfair y el vulgar Bigfoot representan dos aspectos diferentes del *trickster* nativo: el «culture hero and [a] clownish menace to the community» (2001: 72). No obstante, es casi imposible excluir de la lista de *tricksters* de *Bearheart* al cambiante obispo Parasimo con sus tres máscaras, y a Pio que lleva metamáscaras de mujeres para esconder su identidad.

Pero más importante es Proude Cederfair, un chamán, un hechicero y un *trickster* que se conecta con la naturaleza y los animales. «The cedar became his source of personal power», nos dice el narrador, «he dreamed trees and leaned in the wind with the cedar. In the winter he stood outside alone drawing his arms around his trunk under snow. He spoke with the trees. He became the cedar wood» (1990: 7); «he roared like a bear [...] He understood the language of cedar and learned to trust the voices of the crows. He became the rhythm of cedar trees and birds. Silence and language of animals gave him power» (1990: 17). Además, el narrador destaca que Proude «would be a clown [...] a compassionate trickster for the afternoon, a bear from the cedar» (1990: 20).

Sin embargo, cuando Proude se convierte en oso para entrar al «fourth world», deja de ser un *trickster*. Bigfoot, a pesar de ser un *trickster* no puede encontrar la entrada al cuarto mundo. Vizenor parece sugerir que los *tricksters* no pueden entrar al mítico cuarto mundo. Esto es porque los *tricksters* son esencialmente figuras liminales y, como explica Jalalzai, fluctúan entre dos sistemas opuestos y no pueden funcionar en un sistema estático como el utópico cuarto mundo (Winter, 1999: 29). Una figura del *trickster*, similar a una narrativa posmoderna, utilizando el término de Lyotard, manifiesta «incredulity towards metanarratives» (1984: xxiv). Al igual que las narrativas posmodernas, los *tricksters* en *Bearheart* de Vizenor no respetan las metanarrativas que Gerald Vizenor llama «terminal creeds».

Elizabeth Blair destaca que no sólo los personajes de Vizenor, sino también su texto, es decir *Bearheart*, tiene cualidades de *trickster*. Como los *tricksters* que buscan curar los dolores comunales ancestrales, «in trickster text, words heal by refusing to take themselves seriously» (1995: 88). Mediante el humor, *Bearheart*

se dirige a las emociones de la audiencia mucho más que a sus intelectos. Aunque los juegos de palabras, las imágenes grotescas y fantásticas, las acciones violentas anormales y las descripciones gratuitas de relaciones sexuales no parecen esenciales para la unidad orgánica del texto, tienen que ver en la creación de lo que Blair llama «text as trickster». Principalmente, la narrativa *trickster* altera la imaginación de la audiencia socavando, desafiando, revelando y deconstruyendo nociones e ideas fosilizadas, así como la presunción de que el lenguaje es estático y unidimensional. En el mismo sentido, McClure propone que la noción de Vizenor del discurso *trickster* debe analizarse dentro del discurso lingüístico (1997: 51). Más significativamente, alude a la forma en que los personajes utilizan el lenguaje para desestabilizar el discurso dominante. De hecho, Vizenor utiliza a los *tricksters* como personajes de ficción y como técnicas textuales formales para (des)educar a sus lectores alterando las perspectivas normalizadas.

Además de sus cualidades metamórficas, un *trickster*, destaca Vizenor, tiene un sentido del humor fuerte y a veces lascivo. Señala que «trickster stories heal the heart by native irony, humor, and by the images of survivance and sovereignty» (2009: 229). «Life is humor», continúa en defensa de su forma *trickster* de representación y transformación, «life always has mysteries, beauty, chaos, elements of theatre, comedy, tragedy, and the tease of a trickster. My art is about life» (2009: 229).

Sin embargo, la metamorfosis invita a diversas interpretaciones en distintos contextos. Cuando una narrativa kafkiana utiliza el instrumento de la metamorfosis, probablemente intenta reflejar la alienación del hombre moderno. En cambio, Toni Morrison resucita a una niña muerta transformada en *Beloved* con la intención de llamar la atención sobre los dolorosos recuerdos de la esclavitud. Además, Miguel Ángel Asturias, como observa Christopher Warnes, utiliza la metamorfosis en *Hombres de maíz* como metonimia para explicar un segmento de creencias culturales (2990: 15). Sin embargo, Gerald Vizenor destaca el aspecto lúdico de la metamorfosis no para el deleite temporal de la audiencia, sino para mostrar y materializar los intentos psicológicos del *trickster* por sobrevivir y evitar ser aplastado por el dominio de la soberanía cultural no nativa.

Varios críticos sostienen que una de las funciones diferenciadoras de la metamorfosis es la representación de identidades múltiples y fluidas en el mundo poscolonial. Las metamorfosis que se incorporan a los textos del realismo mágico reflejan la alta porosidad de las fronteras del ser. Estos críticos distinguen entre dos tipos diferentes de identidad reflejada en los textos del realismo mágico: «Either there is a proliferation of selves within one single identity, or else readers witness an individual becoming “the other” she was

looking at [...]» (Benito, Manzanos and Simal 2009: 165). *Bearheart*, según esta definición, estaría dentro de la primera categoría. Las metamáscaras del obispo Parasimo representan sus identidades triples. Cuando él o los demás peregrinos llevan alguna de las tres metamáscaras, el narrador se refiere a ellos por el nombre de la metamáscara, aunque mantienen las creencias que tenían antes de ponerse las metamáscaras. Matchi Makwa es un ejemplo. Estaba enamorado antes de ponerse la metamáscara de una mujer, pero cuando se tuvo que poner la metamáscara de la princesa Gallroad para salvar a los brujos, siente el mismo deseo sexual, aunque el narrador use el pronombre femenino para referirse a Matchi Makwa. «Obsessed with her [Matchi Makwa's] lust,» explica Bearheart, «she ran into the kitchen past the waiter and returned to the table with a sharp knife which she used to shave the hair from her crotch [...] breathless she [Matchi Makwa] turns her p... into her warmth evil» (Vizenor, 1990: 180). Lo mismo ocurre con todos los hombres que llevan las metamáscaras femeninas. El pronombre cambia al femenino para todos ellos pero su identidad se mantiene.

Además, la metamorfosis en *Bearheart* es un fenómeno voluntario y festivo. Al contrario que Samsa, que se ve convertido involuntariamente en un insecto en *La metamorfosis* de Kafka, Vizenor no sólo celebra la naturaleza de la metamorfosis, sino que deja que los personajes de *Bearheart* decidan qué metamáscara llevar y cuándo convertirse en un animal o una planta. No obstante, las metamáscaras de *Bearheart* no cambian las cualidades internas de los personajes que las llevan. Simplemente ayudan a los personajes a ocultar su verdadera identidad (por ejemplo, cuando los peregrinos tienen que entrar en el restaurante de los fascistas de la comida por segunda vez). Tienen que esconder su identidad y Matchi Makwa, Pio y el obispo Parasimo llevan aleatoriamente cada una de las tres máscaras (1990: 179). Además, tras la muerte del obispo Parasimo, Pio hereda sus tres metamáscaras, que tienen todas forma de mujer. Al ponérselas, Pio ya no siente vergüenza de sus rasgos faciales, que oscilan entre los de un hombre y los de una mujer. Las metamáscaras «give him a good feeling about himself ... herself, she is much more interesting now with the metamasks. She talks all the time [...]» (1990: 226).

Sin embargo, a veces Vizenor introduce personajes metamórficos para hacer una alegoría del desalentador estado de la humanidad. Los peregrinos se encuentran en las interestatales con una procesión de tullidos y polillas. De esta forma, Vizenor muestra los atroces efectos de los productos químicos en la humanidad y lamenta las alas artificiales (de imaginación y esperanza) que la gente se pone para olvidar sus miserias. Los tullidos, explica Bigfoot, «never developed past the memories of fish and animals in our human past... less than whole less than human». El doctor Wilde continua, «Cripples are

cripples from the chemicals their parents and grandparents drank and smoked and ate» (1990: 147). Por otra parte, las polillas son polillas «to survive and escape [their] lives» mediante «imagination and visions» (1990: 149). En esta sección, Vizenor emplea la deformidad y la transformación para simbolizar a gente imperfecta encerrada en sus creencias terminales. «We become our memories and what we believe», dice Proude, «we become the terminal creeds we speak. Our words limit the animals we would become... soaring through words from memories and vision. We are all incomplete... imperfect. Lost limbs and lost visions stand with the same phantoms» (1990: 147).

Por lo tanto, Gerald Vizenor adopta la estrategia de la metamorfosis para tres propósitos diferentes. En primer lugar, para demostrar metonímicamente la interconexión del hombre con la naturaleza en la cosmología india, como en el caso de la conversión de Proude en oso; en segundo lugar, para mostrar de forma simbólica el camino que deben seguir los nativos americanos para la *survivance* de su cultura, como se muestra en el personaje del *trickster* y, por último, para mostrar metafóricamente la falsa visión y la imperfección de la humanidad que los lleva a adoptar creencias terminales.

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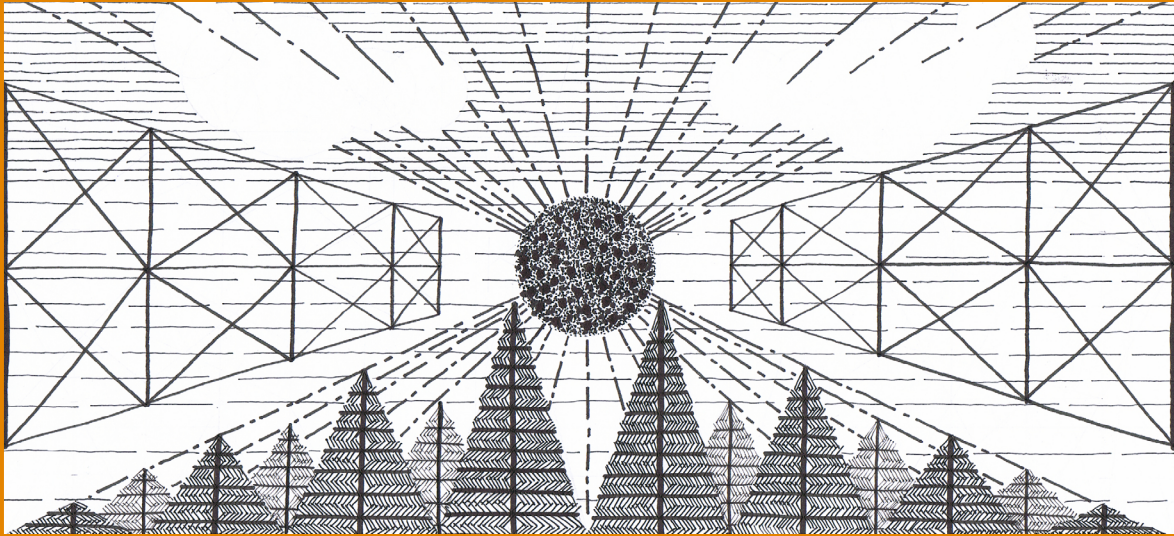
ESTÈTICA DE L'OPOSICIÓ: LA POLÍTICA DE LA METAMORFOSI A *BEARHEART* DE GERALD VIZENOR

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Resum || El novel·lista Chippewa, Gerald Vizenor, fa servir d'una manera interrelacionada les nocions politicofilosòfiques de «survivance» i «terminal creeds» a *Bearheart*, una de les seves novel·les primerenques. Per fer-ho, Vizenor va incorporar algunes de les estratègies estètiques del realisme màgic. Va omplir la novel·la d'una quantitat exagerada d'escenes violentes i sexuals estrafolàries —que pretenen ser màgiques— amb la idea de subvertir les normes establertes habituals. A més, va emprar contes folklòrics de la mitologia dels indis americans sobre transformacions i metamorfosis, una tècnica del realisme màgic, per remodelar la identitat cultural i tribal en el context modernitzat de *Bearheart*.

Paraules Clau || Gerald Vizenor | *Bearheart* | Supervivència | Creences finalistes | Realisme màgic | Metamorfosi

Abstract || The Chippewa novelist Gerald Vizenor puts across his interconnected politico-philosophical notions of “survivance” and “terminal creeds” in his early novel, *Bearheart*. To do so, Vizenor implemented some of the aesthetic strategies of magical realism. He filled his novel with an excessive amount of bizarrely sexual and violent scenes—which turn out to be magical—in order to “upset” the established standards of normality. Moreover, he used American Indian mythic folktales of transformation and metamorphosis, a magical realist technique, to re-shape the cultural and tribal identity in *Bearheart*'s modernized context.

Keywords || Gerald Vizenor | *Bearheart* | Survivance | Terminal creeds | Magical realism | Metamorphosis

“We have walked backward in your time.”
“How Backward?”
“Walking forward but seeing backward... Seeing
in time what we invent in passing... Birds and
animals see behind their motion. Place and time
lives in them not between them. Place is not an
invention of time, Place is a state of mind, place
is not notched measuring stick from memories
here to there...”
(Bearheart, 238)

0. Introducció

Gerald Robert Vizenor (nascut l'any 1934) és un prolífic escriptor d'arrels índies americanes que ha publicat nombrosos volums de poesia i novel·les, així com monografies sobre històries tribals i crítica literària. La seva primera novel·la, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart* (1978), posteriorment editada com *Bearheart: the Heirship Chronicles* (1990), li va donar una certa fama. Els seus textos són plens d'acudits, jocs de paraules i una imaginació desbordant, en la millor tradició dels xarlatans de la tribu.

Molt influenciat pel postestructuralisme, Vizenor incorpora teories i idees desenvolupades per filòsofs com Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes i Jean Baudrillard al seu corpus literari. La ficció és divertida i n'és plena d'al·lusions i humor, encara que sempre conserva un caràcter seriós en tot allò relatiu als indis americans. A còpia de teories postmodernes i postestructuralistes, prova de trencar la representació romàntica dels indis americans i, contínuament, insinua que «Indian» va ser una invenció europea i que no hi existia un concepte tan monolític com «Indian», sinó que hi havia diverses tribus abans que els europeus desembarquessin a terres americanes. A partir d'aquest marc mental, bona part de la seva obra evita caure en el parany de representar les cultures nadiues americanes des d'una perspectiva antropològica; en comptes d'això, pren les narratives orals que més criden l'atenció sobre la transformació, la qual cosa l'ajuda a mantenir la imprecisió sobre els conceptes *nadivitat* i *indianitat* i la impressió d'estar sempre a punt de desenvolupar-los, però no acabar de fer-ho mai.

A més, Vizenor barreja amb habilitat els fenòmens sobrenaturals i els naturals en la ficció, amb la voluntat de qüestionar el realisme de les ciències socials (Benito, Manzanos and Simal 2009: 101). Vizenor s'adona que l'interès en la reconciliació dels contraris està arrelat en el sistema de creences tribals dels indis, que evita els «terminal creeds» i celebra la «survivance». Va declarar en una entrevista:

The religious attitude among most tribal cultures here is one of balance

rather than annihilation, in contrast to the interest of the blest to illuminate and annihilate evil. The Christian objective is to rid the self and the soul, the family, and the community, of evil, to isolate it and destroy it. It's a war, a holy war to end evil. The same language is a part of American consciousness – the war on poverty, the war against ignorance. The objective is completely to end and destroy it. But the experience expressed in tribal culture is not that complete elimination or annihilation of anything. It's a balance, not a terminal creed. The balance is a resolution which grows out of trickeries, of outwitting, or the modulation of experience. It may grow out of origin myths themselves, that the balance was present at the time of creation. Those origin myths are still structurally and functionally a part of belief in tribal culture, the idea that life is not created by a patriarch but [through] a balance of male and female, an androgynous balance. The restoration of balance is present at all spiritual activities. (Bowers, Silet and Vizenor 1981: 43-44)

Aquesta idea es fa evident a *Bearheart*, on aborda la qüestió dels «terminal creeds» i la supervivència dels indis americans. Louis Owens explica que les creences finalistes representades a *Bearheart* es refereixen a creences que tracten d'imposar definicions estàtiques sobre el món. Segons Owens, Vizenor és molt crític amb les definicions estàtiques, tant se val si procedeixen de les suposades conviccions *tradicionals* índies com de les ideologies euroamericanes. Les creences finalistes són similars al concepte que Bakhtín anomena «authoritative discourse», que es l'idioma «indissolubly fused with his authority» que té poder polític i una validesa a priori (Owens 1992: 231). Benito, Manzanos i Simal defineixen les creences finalistes com «a symbolic haven, even if an illusory one, of full meaning and presence, one that most people turn to in moments of tension and chaos» (2009: 97). «Economic power had become the religion of the nation», considera Bearheart que, «when it failed, people turned to their own violence and bizarre terminal creeds for comfort and meaning» (Vizenor 1990: 23).

D'altra banda, la supervivència —que és el bagul de la supervivència i la resistència a la dominació cultural— apunta a la manera en què sobreviuen els herois i mostren resistència al nihilisme, al «manifest destiny» i la típica descripció dels indis americans com a víctimes (Vizenor 2009: 24-25). «Native survivance», observa Vizenor, «is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent» (2009: 85). Per sobreviure a la tragèdia de l'americanització, Kimberly Blaeser sosté que els protagonistes supervivents de Vizenor «examine, question, shift, stretch, bend, change, grow, juggle, balance, and sometimes duck—for surviving doesn't necessarily mean winning [...]» La supervivència s'assoleix, segons Vizenor, a través de l'humor i la història (1996: 63).

La principal contribució de Vizenor al discurs postcolonial, d'acord amb Shackleton, és la idea de «trickster hermeneutics»; que és la

resistència i supervivència cultural a la representació estereotipada dels indis americans (2001: 70). De manera semblant, els treballs de Vizenor es comprometen des d'un punt de vista polític, ja que tracten de resistir els discursos predominants en els mons textuais i extratextuais. A més, Vizenor realment creu que existeix una estètica nadiua singular que l'ajuda en el camí de la supervivència literària. Escriu:

I strongly disagree, in other words, with the spurious notion that there is no singular native aesthetics. Consider, for instance, the ancestral storiers who created animal characters with a tricky sense of consciousness, the natural reason of a native aesthetics of survivance. Many contemporary native novelists present the imagic consciousness of animals in dialogue and descriptive narratives, and overturn the monotheistic separation of humans and animals. (2009: 9-10)

A *Bearheart*, Vizenor ha incorporat el que ell defineix també com la «imagic consciousness of animals in dialogue and descriptive narratives.» No tan sols fa que acompanyin els pelegrins set gralles i dos gossos en el seu viatge, sinó que també representa els animals —especialment les gralles— com a xarlatans.

Els rondallaires indis americans representen corbs i gralles com a xarlatans nadius (2009: 13). Les gralles que acompanyen els peregrins en el seu viatge a *Bearheart* són exemples de xarlatans nadius (Rigal-Cellard 1997: 99). A més, Vizenor aconsegueix que el seu protagonista es transformi en un ós: l'animal que significa força, saviesa espiritual i potència xamànica al folklore Chippewa (1997: 99). Proude Cederfair, el protagonista que es metamorfosa en ós, pot moure's d'un costat a un altre màgicament i, quan es veu sobrepassat per la desesperació, es metamorfosa en ós i torna a «soars» en la reserva de Cedar Circus per nedar al llac dels Migis. És una reencarnació del xarlatà Nanabozho. En general, Gerald Vizenor fa que animals, ocells i humans s'acompanyin mútuament perquè postula que la cosmologia dels indis americans, al contrari que la creació monoteista, no els separa ni en la natura ni en la literatura. Aquesta unió, segons Vizenor, forma part de l'estètica nadiua (2009: 14).

Encara que Vizenor creu en una estètica nadiua única, subratlla la fluïdesa de la cultura i l'estètica nadiua; una convicció que el fa sospitar del Moviment Indi Americà posterior a l'any 1960. Suggereix que els líders d'aquest moviment havien reforçat els estereotips i havien alimentat erròniament la il·lusió d'una identitat tribal autèntica que els mitjans s'havien encarregat d'enunciar (1994: 150). Vizenor confessa amb sensatesa que malgrat que durant un temps ell mateix s'havia vist com un mitjancer i una veu índia, ja no representava els indis americans. Admet que no dóna suport a cap grup, sinó que funciona com a un «upsetter» que lluita per anular les creences

finalistes (Bowers, Silet and Vizenor 1981: 45).

A *Bearheart*, Vizenor posa l'èmfasi en el tema de l'exili i relata com un grup d'indis americans i mestissos acompanyats de set gralles i dos gossos es llancen a un pelegrinatge per tot Estats Units a la recerca del «fourth world». «In the fourth world», Proudé Cederfair, el protagonista i el narrador, explica que «evil spirits are outwitted in the secret languages of animals and birds. Bears and crows choose the new singers. The crows crow in their blackness» (1990: 5). A mesura que la novel·la transcorre, el lector s'adona que només les persones que superen les «terminal creeds» poden accedir al quart món utòpic.

La narrativa heterodoxa de Vizenor segueix les aventures del grup en una societat americana postapocalíptica. S'ha acabat el combustible a tot el país—la qual cosa podria simbolitzar l'ànima— i per sobreviure-hi, la gent comet actes criminals atroços, com canibalisme, sense cap escrúpol. La picaresca per totes les comunitats blanques aniquilades continua en cotxe, vaixell o a peu, i, de forma gradual, van adherint-se personatges al viatge de *Bearheart*. La narració assoleix la clau de volta quan els pelegrins troben «the evil gambler, the monarch of unleaded gasoline», que «gamble for five gallons» i es capaç de matar els perdedors (1990: 102-103). Si parlem des d'un punt de vista estructural, els capítols anteriors al «evil gambler» mostren la suma de pelegrins, i els capítols següents a la confrontació amb el jugador en descriuen la desaparició i dissolució. A partir de llavors, els pelegrins són víctimes de la seva arrogància i com més a prop hi són de les «terminal creeds» més aviat deixen el grup o moren. Durant el viatge, experimenten moments tràgics i també còmics.

Els pelegrins de Vizenor són tossudament libidinosos i ridículs. Alan R. Velie reivindica que a *Bearheart* hi manca «philosophical and aesthetic depth» i simbolisme (1982: 136-137). Contràriament a Velie, Rigel-Cellard compara diverses escenes de *Bearheart* amb incidents similars de *Pilgrim's Progress*, i observa que Vizenor carrega el text amb molt de simbolisme amb la idea de crear una paròdia postmoderna (1997: 110). Expressa:

By producing this Native *Pilgrim's Progress*, a manifesto which is his own version of the canonical novel written according to the Bible, by tossing it upside down, by hiding wisdom under the most foolish of attires, Vizenor is asserting the spiritual freedom of his tribal people, even after their political power has been smothered by generations of colonists brandishing the Bible and poor Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. (1997: 112).

A més, en la presentació crua que fa del sexe i la violència, *Bearheart* emprà estratègies narratives postmodernes, però alhora es considera una de les «most traditional of Native American novels» gràcies a l'ús

extens de la tradició oral Chippewa (Vizenor 1989: 143). De forma intrínseca, la novel·la fa esment de l'embargament del petroli a la primeria dels anys setanta, que va provocar que el Govern Federal caigués i va ser la causa de l'expropiació de les reserves dels indis americans (Rigal-Cellard 1997: 94-5). El llibre, des d'un punt de vista filosòfic, tracta de divulgar les «terminal creeds» dels indis americans de la mateixa manera que els del govern central i els dels blancs. Això es comprova fàcilment a «The Letter to the Reader», escrit per Vizenor (amb el pseudònim de Bearheart) al principi de la novel·la. En aquesta carta, Vizenor denuncia tant al Govern Federal, que «held their [tribal people's] reservation land in trust so the timber could be cut and minerals mined» (1990: xii) com els deixebles del Moviment Indi Amèrica, que vesteixen «plastic bear claws» i la religió dels quals és només «a word pile» (1990: x).

A més, la pregunta temàtica «what does Indian mean?» travessa tot *Bearheart*, i la novel·la resisteix intensament (i té en compte la creença finalista) les definicions preconcebudes de la *indianitat* que no s'adhereix al seu contrari. Per exemple, els comentaris racistes de Belladonna a favor de la sang nadiua, la «grotesque and patronizing liberality» de Little Big Mouse i l'obsessió poc raonada i bondadosa de Bishop Parassimo «with the romantic and spiritual power of tribal people» (1990: 75), que Louis Owen interpreta com «the Hollywood version of Indianness» (Owens 1990: 250) són alguns dels exemples de creences finalistes. Pel mateix motiu, encara que Judge Pardone Cozener i Doctor Wilde prefereixen romandre al «word hospital» i, per tant, escapolar-se del destí tràgic de la majoria dels pelegrins, Maureen Keady interpreta «their decision to stay there [as] clearly a choice of nihilism» (1985: 64). Això és, en romandre inactiu i evitar el caràcter juganer de la cultura índia americana, provoquen la seva pròpia mort intel·lectual.

A més, com observa Keady, «those who cling to words as evidence of existence will be unable to enter ["the fourth world"]. In wasted and poisoned America, "survival of the fittest" prevails, but Vizenor points out that, here, as always, it is spiritual strength that makes one fit» (1985: 65). Certament, *Bearheart* és alhora un conte sobre la fi del món i sobre el principi d'un de nou. Vizenor celebra les vies de tornada enrere dels xarlatans, que simbolitza el reinici d'un temps en què el mite era el centre del coneixement i «oral tradition is honoured» (1990: 163). Amb aquesta idea, Gerald Vizenor introdueix tècniques i elements del realisme màgic i incorpora escenes màgiques a *Bearheart*.

A continuació, exposem els aspectes del realisme màgic a *Bearheart*. En primer lloc, argumentarem que Vizenor atreu de forma sistemàtica l'atenció dels lectors amb la representació excessiva d'escenes de sexe surrealista i violentes amb la voluntat de «upset» (seguint la

terminologia de Vizenor) les cotes de normalitat durant tant de temps no posades en dubte. En segon lloc, debatrem com els rondallaires i les figures mítiques dels rondallaires indis americans, especialment el xarlatà Nanabozho i del fantàstic jugador, que posseeix poders màgics, funcionen dins del context modernitzat i pseudoreal de *Bearheart* per ajudar a remodelar la identitat tribal i cultural. Per últim, donarem detalls de la natura metamòrfica dels xarlatans, que és una estratègia emprada per a la supervivència a *Bearheart*.

1. La màgia de l'excés

Tenint en compte que el text està impregnat de realisme màgic, *Bearheart* explota molts modes representatius del realisme clàssic, però en soscava les premisses humanistes. El debut de Vizenor infringeix la idea humanista de la racionalitat i la urbanitat innates de l'ésser humà. Sense pretendre crear cap sentiment d'horror en la ment dels personatges ficticis, a *Bearheart*, Vizenor presenta una imatge impactant del món, com si els actes de violència extrema fossin esdeveniments ordinaris. *Bearheart* és ple d'incidents il·lògics, irracionals i indecents; es pronuncien constantment paraules ofenedores i mal educades, es perfilen escenes de sexe i violència molt gràfiques i s'informa d'accions sense sentit repetides contínuament. La violència esdevé l'entreteniment més plaent de la gent a *Bearheart*. «As it turned out killing gave me a whole lot of pleasure then» confessa el jugador malvat,

My business has been to bring people to their death. Until I was nineteen suffocation fascinated me as a form of death. Like an artist I practiced the various means of suffocating people. Later I was attracted to traps and poisons ... secrets and surprises on the road to death. (1990: 126).

Així mateix, després que un «whitecannibal» assassinés i degollés dos caminants, «picked up the steaming heart from the dead whiteman and threw it across the road toward the circus pilgrims» (1990: 174-175). Vizenor explica les reaccions inicials de cadascun dels pelegrins, com ara:

Neither the seven crows, nor the dogs, nor the nine circus pilgrims moved from their places. Eighteen pairs of eyes focused on the heart. Sun Bear Sun imagined the smell of cooking meat until digestive saliva filled his huge mouth. Matchi Makwa would feed it to the animals. Belladonna turned from the heart in tears fearful of evil fixations. Parawoman Pio was fighting back the powerful savage urge to devour the heart raw. He could taste the blood salts and feel the soft muscles slipping between his massive teeth. He swallowed. Proud thought about the death of his fathers and the spiritual power from the hearts of animals. (1990: 175)

Encara que els pelegrins no estiguin segurs d'alimentar-se del cor d'un ésser humà tot just acabat d'assassinar, alguns canvien de

parer ràpidament. Vizenor explica:

Pio moaned and his mammoth limbs trembled. Sun Bear Sun swallowed and in slow measured steps he walked across the road and talked to the whiteman with the knife. The man paused and then handed Sun Bear Sun a large piece of dried meat. When he returned, he explained that the meat was from the biceps of a young woman who had been raped and killed for flesh the month before on the interstate. The meat was prepared. The circus pilgrims were silent. Proude and Inawa Biwide and Rosina and Belladonna and Perfect Crow and Pure Gumption would not eat human flesh. Private Jones and six crows pecked and pulled at the steaming heart. (1990: 175)

D'aquesta manera s'exemplifica la profusió excessiva de violència i escenes grotesques a la novel·la. Des d'un punt de vista teòric, una manera en què una obra literària pot demostrar la resistència a les formes literàries predominants és a través de l'estratègia del «excess». Un tipus d'excés és sobrecarregar la narració amb deformitats i nuses i la transgressió del llenguatge «polite». *Bearheart* és ple de descripcions explícites d'estranyes trobades sexuals (com ara, xiv, 30, 45, 70, 95, 124, 180) i actes molt violentes que impliquen descripcions molt detallades de deformitats (com ara: 54, 87, 126, 135, 138, 140, 151, 174, 176, 232, 239). A més, amb l'alteració de les normes socials, la subversió d'aquestes normes es manifesta per si mateix en els jocs de paraules dels personatges i del novel·lista (per exemple, jugant amb «hairship» i «hiership», «world war» i «word war», etc.) Aquestes digressions, de fet, mostren una reacció radical a les presentacions realistes més usuals. Les representacions poc habituals de *Bearheart* frustren de manera intencionada les nocions de moralitat del lector. Això és el que Blaeser anomena la «strategy of liberation». Escriu:

The impetus in Vizenor's work is exactly that of checking the process of annihilation and freeing Native American identity from the grasp of literary colonialism. He does this both by struggling against established literary and linguistic structures, practices, and images, and by working to create new ones. By undermining the colonial «strategies of containment» and replacing them with the strategies of liberation.» (Blaeser 1996: 73).

El realisme formal tendeix a perpetuar les regles del poder dominant de la societat i conté els desitjos de les masses. Un text «bizarre» com *Bearheart* de Vizenor empra «strategies of liberation» per donar compte als lectors dels límits del poder dominant. Com fa notar Felix Guattari:

The masses certainly do not passively submit to power; nor do they “want” to be repressed, in a kind of masochistic hysteria; nor are they tricked by an ideological lure. Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from micro formations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. Desire is never an undifferentiated

instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions: a whole supple segmentarity that processes molecular energies and potentially gives desire a fascist determination. (Guattari 1987: 215)

Segons Guattari, el poder legislador no pren avantatge de les màximes ideològiques públiques per obligar la gent a assentir i complir, però controla la seva psique i el seu poder de desig creant un sistema de culpa. En establir normes, el realisme tradicional funciona com un còmplice a l'hora d'establir un sistema de culpa. Vizenor tracta de desbaratar les normes d'una societat americana, que alguns qualifiquen com a prudent, mitjançant la transgressió de les fronteres morals i ètiques.

Segons Blaeser, el llenguatge suggeridor, les transformacions i la identificació amb la natura són unes quantes de les normes socials infringides (1996: 184). Bakhtín lloa els enfocaments literaris que pretenen «to destroy and rebuild the entire false picture of the world, to sunder the false hierarchical links between objects and ideas, to abolish the divisive ideational strata» (1981: 169). Segons McClure, els «false hierarchal links» de Bakhtín són idèntics als discursos oficials i autoritzats que Vizenor anomena creences finalistes (1997: 56). El realisme màgic amb un excés de narracions inusuals subverteix les normes dominants, que sempre han temut la intrusió dels altres. Com a conseqüència, el realisme màgic infringeix i elimina els «other» polítics o filosòfics.

Encara que Vizenor il·lustra un nombre excessiu d'escenes de violència a *Bearheart*, prova de presentar-les a un ritme normal per als lectors. D'aquesta manera, segueix una estratègia de representació banal de la violència i d'allò grotesc a *Bearheart*. Segons Bakhtín, allò grotesc, que és «an aesthetic of the unfinished», sembla un repte per als estàndards clàssics (1966: 32-33). A *Bearheart*, Rosina és el personatge que millor expressa la indiferència dels pelegrins respecte als terribles incidents del viatge. Quan un dels «penarchical pensioners» a la ciutat fantasma se sent sacsejat després que Rosina expliqui francament com Matchi Makwa i una de les bruixes havien estat decapitats i el cap els havia arribat punxat en un pal que portava Sun Bear Sun, Rosina diu:

Not so strange when you think about some of the things we had seen, [...] we have been walking from the cedar nation for more than two months now and there has been violence and death ... Death and whitepeople punishing and killing each other for no reason ... So when the head of the witch came back on a stick we never thought much about it ... (1990: 225-226)

Com a *Bearheart*, en algunes ocasions el realisme màgic no mostra cap reacció i utilitza un llenguatge neutre quan representa actes de

violència sobrenatural. És el que Hegerfeldt anomena «the rhetoric of banality», que subratlla «the absurd, nonsensical, fantastic nature of reality» (2005: 209). A més, Timothy Brennan anomena aquest quadre d'horrors desinteressats «the stylistic veneer of [...] matter-of-fact violence» (1989: 66). A còpia de retòrica de la banalitat, el realisme màgic desinstal·la la visió del món realista en què confia. Tanmateix, barreja la discrepància entre els ideals humanistes d'urbanitat i progrés i l'estat del món, tot i que no es tracta de degradar l'antic, sinó de condemnar el darrer.

Per contra, en alguns moments dramàtics, Vizenor col·loca fenòmens banals i tediosos en el centre del focus i els descriu com a màgics i inquietants. Hegerfeldt ho anomena «the supernaturalization of the extratextual world» (2005: 199). Arribat el moment, Bigfoot relata que està enamorat d'una estàtua de bronze d'una dona que va robar d'un parc públic. L'estàtua que els caminants del parc menystenien i trobaven absolutament gris Bigfoot pensava que era tan animada que quan trobés el rival que l'havia robat el mataria per retornar l'estàtua (1990: 85-88). Tot just acabava de rebre dos anys d'arrest domiciliari pel crim perquè els «judicial folks were downright pleased to meet an old fashioned passion killer, a killer who made sense, because most of the killings going on are reasonless now random living and random loving and random death» (1990: 83). Un cop explicada la història de l'estàtua de bronze, Bigfoot comença a ballar amb ella i Little Big Mouse xiuxiueja «she has warmed to my touch» després que acarones l'estàtua (88). De fet, Vizenor construeix una aura de misteri fabulosa al voltant d'una estàtua de parc molt senzilla i ordinària de la qual no tan sols Bigfoot, sinó també la resta de personatges, se sent atret per la història de Bigfoot.

D'altra banda, Vizenor, descriu incidents plausibles com si fossin fantàstics. «The fantastic elements are not restricted to what by rational-empirical criteria is considered physically impossible», diu Hegerfeldt, «highly improbable events can have a similar effect.» (2005: 79). Encara que els esdeveniments, com ara l'escassetat de benzina, la victòria sobre el jugador pervers en partides consecutives (1990: 123) i una desfilada d'esguerrats (Vizenor, 1990: 145), no van més enllà de les lleis naturals, copegen el lector com a successos fantàstics gràcies a la seva improbabilitat.

Per resumir, mentre que Vizenor descriu escenes violentes a *Bearheart*, prova de normalitzar-les tant per als personatges com per als lectors. A més, Vizenor il·lustra els probables fenòmens com si succeïssin producte d'allò fantàstic i sobrenatural. En general, amb aquestes estratègies, Vizenor infringeix les reclamacions humanistes de la urbanitat i la racionalitat innates de la humanitat amb la idea de presentar una imatge espantosa del món, no pas per socavar els ideals humanistes, sinó per entristir-se de l'estat del

món, passat i present.

2. «Walking Forward but Seeing Backward»; el matrimoni entre *Mythos* i *Logos*

El realisme màgic s'ocupa habitualment del passat mític d'una nació i *Bearheart* no n'és cap excepció. Segons Moses Valdez, no obstant això, un èmfasi exagerat envers la nostàlgia d'algunes ficcions del realisme màgic esborra o ignora els mals records i ofereix «purely symbolic or token resistance to the inexorable triumph of modernity» (2001: 106). En sentit invers a l'argumentació de Valdez, Windy B. Faris afirma que el realisme màgic presenta quelcom més que una mera «token resistance». Com bé diu, un text fonamentat en el realisme màgic pot funcionar en l'aspecte tecnològic i en altres vessants del progrés científic per evitar que els lectors es permetin un «nostalgic return to a vanished past» (2002: 114-115). Amb aquesta intenció, Gerald Vizenor evita exonerar els indis de les seves faltes, les quals els van portar a la degeneració. Acusa els pantribals d'adherir-se fortament a les creences finalistes, que no són res més que «word piles» (1990: x). També, quan més gent és atreta per la nació del cedre, on es produïa l'encens sagrat del cedre, Vizenor es plany:

Tribal religions were becoming more ritualistic but without visions. The crazed and alienated were desperate for terminal creeds to give their vacuous lives meaning. Hundreds of tribal people came to the cedar nation for spiritual guidance. They camped for a few days, lusted after their women in the cedar, and then, lacking inner discipline, dreams, and personal responsibilities, moved on to find new word wars and new ideas to fill their pantribal urban emptiness. (1990: 16).

Vizenor se concentra en el logocentrisme del món modern a «Biavaricious word hospital», on els somnis són «words words words...» i el significat sempre hi és present (1990: 160). Allà, Vizenor, parodia la «generative grammar» de Chomsky amb el que anomena «degenerative grammar» i, així, es fixa amb la ciència i les seves pretensions de precisió (1990:167). Justice Pardone i Doctor Wilde, dos dels pelegrins que creuen que «words are the meaning of living now ... The word is where the word is at now», esbrinen que el «word hospital» és la seva «last chance to be part of the real word» (1990:170-171).

El autors, classificats generalment dins del moviment del realisme màgic, com a norma, s'abstenen d'atorgar-li superioritat al *mythos* sobre el *logos*. Més aviat els presenten com a dos modes bàsics de producció de coneixement, que són simultanis i complementaris (Hegerfeldt 2005: 188). Per tant, tots els pelegrins, llevat de dos,

prefereixen deixar el «word paradise», on el *logos* i l'aspiració d'exactitud regnen, més que el *mythos*, que insisteix en el caràcter juganer del llenguatge (1990: 163). A més, Jean-François Lyotard manté que el llenguatge científic és igual que la creació d'alguns jocs de llenguatge, o altres tipus de coneixements, encara que amb regles diferents. Posar massa èmfasi en els paradigmes científics i avaluar altres camps de coneixement a partir de les regles científiques, segons Lyotard, ha estat la causa de l'imperialisme cultural durant els darrers segles (1984: 26-27). En altres paraules, el discurs científic és tan juganer i metafòric com altres maneres narratives; la diferència és que el primer no en reconeix l'interès. De fet, Vizenor aplica l'argot i els mètodes científics a una situació molt poc probable per parodiar les pretensions científiques d'imparcialitat i per revelar com funcionen els paradigmes del mètode en complicitat amb l'autoritat. És més, com suggereix un dels sociòlegs del «word hospital», l'avenç científic augmenta a costa de la devastació de persones i cultures marginades. Afirmar que el govern financia les investigacions i, irònicament, construeix dos dels hospitals de la paraula sobre les runes del Ministeri d'Afers Indis. El sociòleg explica als pelegrins:

The government discovered that there was something wrong with our language. The breakdown in law and order, the desecration of institutions, the hardhearted investigations, but most of all the breakdown in traditional families was a breakdown in communication ... This caused our elected officials to create this word hospital and eight others in the nation ... Six of them are new buildings like this one, while two were created in the ruins of the old Bureau of Indian Affairs field offices [...] The bureau records were included in our analysis of language [...] the language of the bureau had nothing whatever to do with the reason for its existence. (166)

El «word hospital» que propaga i fomenta «word wars» es construeix sobre les runes del Ministeri d'Afers Indis. En altres paraules, Vizenor divulga al·legòricament les promeses falses d'aquests instituts i fundacions, que reclamen el suport a la causa dels indis americans.

Vizenor afegeix mites, contes de fades i històries fantàstiques a la seva diatriba al·legòrica de la vida moderna, que, segons Hegerfeldt, és una tècnica per «expressing a truth too painful to tell directly» (2005: 193). Vizenor incorpora el mite i la màgia per dibuixar una imatge del futur i per fer un viatge per sota de la línia de la memòria. El personatge del jugador malvat, el qual Vizenor va prendre prestat del mateix personatge de la mitologia Chippewa, encarna la crida elaborada del capitalisme.¹ El personatge mític del jugador malvat —que apareix aquesta vegada a *Bearheart*, una narrativa doblement postmoderna i postcolonial— és l'epítom de la manca de sentit moderna. La seva mare de lloguer el segresta quan estava jugant en un centre comercial i, com era d'esperar, la seva mare

NOTES

1 | Segons els rondallaires nadius, quan el xarlatà Nanabozho, que vivia amb la seva àvia Nookomis, comprèn que sa mare és presonera d'un esperit dolent molt poderós, fixa un viatge per rescatar-la. L'àvia adverteix el net del jugador malvat: «First these evil spirits charm their victims by the sweetness of their songs, then they strangle and devour them, but your principle enemy will be the great gambler who has never been beaten in his game and who lives beyond the realm of darkness.» (1984: 4) Nanabozho esbrina que el gran jugador fa els mateixos jocs d'apostes que el jugador de Bearheart, però Nanabozho, per fi, recupera sa mare, és a dir, la terra.

natural no s'adona de la desaparició fins unes hores més tard, quan ja és lluny del centre comercial. Va viure amb altres nens adoptats en una furgoneta que conduïa la seva mare adoptiva i a ell i als seus germans no se'ls demana que respectin cap codi moral i se'ls permet fer el que desitgin, fins i tot practicar l'incest i la violència. Més tard a la vida, el jugador malvat expandeix un imperi de benzina i reclama que ell posseeix la benzina, la qual cosa simbolitza l'esperit de *Bearheart*. No obstant això, quan Proude Cederfair li guanya l'aposta, el jugador promet tractar de ser fútil i vacu. Per tant, la novel·la de Vizenor, en cert sentit, és una al·legoria secular que anticipa el destí del capitalisme.

Vizenor recorda el passat a la ficció; tanmateix, no ho fa amb recança. Cap al final de *Bearheart*, fa servir el realisme màgic per recordar els lectors els tràgics records dels assaigs de la cacera de bruixes i la premissa falsa en què es basava el somni americà. Quan els pelegrins s'embarquen en el «freedom train to Santa Fe», que alguns anomenen irònicament pensionistes pantribals, els porten a una ciutat fantasma on els obliguen a treballar. Com explica Proude Cederfair, a l'estil dels seus ancestres puritans, els pensionistes pantribals «founded our new nation [...] and enforced high moral and ethical codes [...] Sorcerers and shamans and witches will be punished for their crimes» (1990: 224). En el així anomenat viatge promès, els membres de la caravana han de fer acte de presència en un jutjat perquè els escoltin els governadors. Els governadors «ordered an inquisition into witchcraft and shamanism» i els pelegrins «were questioned, suspicions were confirmed, and charges of evil and diabolism were brought against the pilgrims» (1990: 225). Porten els pelegrins d'un en un a la sala d'inquisició. Empresonats en una habitació d'adob, la resta dels pelegrins, mentre beuen «vision vine» que porta Bigfoot, es transformen en gralles de broma i s'escapoleixen de la presó. Però abans d'escapar-se'n, mentre tenen la forma de les gralles,

moving through the time of six generations the twelve clown crows were in the palace when the first wooded floors were laid in some of the rooms ... Figured calico covered the whitewashed walls ... The old vigas were replaced when a portion of the earthen roof dropped ... Governor Don Juan Francisco Trevino was discussing the charges against tribal sorcerers and idolaters ... Tribal people liberated the prisoners and spared the governor ... The twelve crows did not hear the governor tell that four tribal people had been hanged for their terminal creeds ... The twelve crows watched the flag of the United States unfurl for the first time in Santa Fe right now from the plaza benches on August 18, 1846. (1990: 234)

Vizenor fa que els seus personatges viatgen cap enrere en el temps per ser testimonis d'una escena històrica real de l'any 1675 a Santa Fe, quan el governador Juan Francisco Trevino, un colonitzador

espanyol, va acusar quaranta-set nigromants de bruixeria i els va sentenciar a tots ells a mort. El passatge esmentat anteriorment també fa referència al general de l'exèrcit americà Stephen Watts Kearny, que va ocupar Santa Fe i va aixecar la bandera d'Estats Units al lloc, el 18 d'agost de 1846.² Després d'aquesta visionària visita al passat de la seva nació (mancada de qualsevol tipus de recança) i una revisió dels terribles incidents de la cacera de bruixes i la conquesta de Mèxic, troben una via de sortida de la presó d'adob i s'escapen. En creure que els "living holds the foolishness of the past" (1990: 218), la novel·la de Vizenor traça de forma intel·ligent les misèries que porta la colonització i adverteix del resultat en el futur.

3. Entrada al quart món com a ossos; transformacions enganyoses a *Bearheart*

Les narratives dels indis americans presentades a *Bearheart* amb freqüència expliquen transformacions estrafolàries d'éssers humans en animals i nens nascuts de l'apariament d'animals i humans. A més, Vizenor descriu de forma repetida les estranyes metamorfosis i la pràctica d'apariaments insòlits de forma minuciosa. Rigel-Cellard sosté que la funció clàssica de la metamorfosi és representar la dualitat de la fragmentació de la identitat, però en la narrativa nadiua, només els resultats d'aquestes transformacions i còpules té importància (1997: 102). És a dir, sovint expliquen com neix el món i com comencen a existir diverses criatures. Vizenor ajusta més a fons les transformacions metamòrfiques en la narrativa moderna dels pelegrins. Rigel-Cellard assegura que els tipus de metamorfosis presents en la ficció de Vizenor pretenen simplement distreure els lectors. Segons ella, no totes les transformacions Chippewa tenen una «serious didactic function» i, per tant, la majoria de les transformacions a *Bearheart* són gratuïtes i juganeres (1997:102). Al contrari de l'argument de Rigel-Cellard, els canvis de forma de *Bearheart* es poden explicar mitjançant la idea de la supervivència, que té el millor exemple en el personatge del xarlatà. Com hem esmentat més amunt, una de les característiques fonamentals dels xarlatans nadius és que s'adapten als canvis socials per tal de sobreviure i resistir-se a la cultura dominant. Per tant, les màscares i les disfresses, com les que es fan servir a *Bearheart*, tenen un paper fonamental per definir les característiques d'un xarlatà.

Per supervivència, el xarlatà ha de canviar entre diversos sistemes de pensament. Els ginyes emmascaradors ajuden a materialitzar aquesta funció. Els personatges dels xarlatans canvien de forma, però no perden la identitat (Shakleton, 2001: 72). El xarlatà és un personatge metamòrfic que es canvia les disfresses i produeix "a

NOTES

2 | Aquestes línies fan referència a un moment històric en què la sequera feia estralls a Santa Fe de Nuevo México (l'actual New Mexico), la gana s'havia expandit entre els indis Pueblo i els apatxes van atacar els indis cada cop amb més freqüència. En aquest moment, el governador espanyol Juan Francisco Trevino va acusar quaranta-set bruixots dels pueblo a Santa Fe per bruixeria i va ordenar-ne l'arrest. Tres d'ells van ser penjats, un altre es va suïcidar i la resta van ser fustigats públicament i sentenciats a presó. En sentir les notícies, els líders dels pueblo van anar a Santa Fe i van forçar Juan Francisco Trevino a alliberar els presoners. Aquest i altres esdeveniments van posar les bases d'una revolta de la majoria dels indis pueblo contra els espanyols en les regions en què els pueblo van guanyar, encara que els espanyols van tornar a reconquerir-les dotze anys més tard. El domini espanyol sobre la terra no va acabar fins que un general de l'exèrcit americà, Stephen Watts Kearny, va ocupar Santa Fe i va hissar la bandera americana a la plaça, el 18 d'agost de 1846, i, finalment, Mèxic va signar el Tractat de Guadalupe Hidalgo l'any 1848, en què cedia New Mexico i Califòrnia als Estats Units (Pike, 2004: 440).

confluence of narratives” i, com Shackleton observa: «Perhaps nowhere else in the world are they so significant to a people’s sense of self and identity—their past, present, and imagined future—as they are among Native North Americans» (2001: 82). Els indis americans estan presumiblement més orgullosos d’incorporar els xarlatans a les seves narratives que altres minories ètniques. Això, de fet, uneix diverses comunitats d’indis americans.

La qualitat mítica associada als xarlatans és comparable amb la situació dels pelegrins que es posen metamàscars a *Bearheart*. Dos dels pelegrins de *Bearheart*, en concret l’estoic Proude Cederfair i el vulgar Bigfoot, representen dos aspectes diferents del xarlatà nadiu: un «culture hero and [a] clownish menace to the community» (2001: 72). No obstant això, és gairebé impossible excloure el metamòrfic Bishop Parsamio amb les seves tres màscars, i Pio, qui vesteix metamàscars de dones per ocultar la identitat, de la llista de xarlatans de *Bearheart*.

Però el més important és Proude Cederfair, un xaman, un fetiller i un xarlatà que connecta amb la natura i els animals. «The cedar became his source of personal power», ens explica el narrador, «He dreamed trees and leaned in the wind with the cedar. In the winter he stood outside alone drawing his arms around his trunk under snow. He spoke with the trees. He became the cedar wood» (1990: 7); «He roared like a bear [...] He understood the language of cedar and learned to trust the voices of the crows. He became the rhythm of cedar trees and birds. Silence and language of animals gave him power (1990: 17). A més, el narrador subratlla que Proude «would be a clown [...] a compassionate trickster for the afternoon, a bear from the cedar» (1990: 20).

Tanmateix, quan Proude es converteix en un ós per entrar al “fourth world”, ja no és un xarlatà. Malgrat que és un xarlatà, Bigfoot no pot trobar l’entrada del quart món. Vizenor sembla suggerir que als xarlatans no se’ls permet entrar al mític quart món. Això passa perquè els xarlatans són essencialment figures liminars i, com explica Jalalzai, fluctuarien entre dos sistemes d’oposats perquè no podrien funcionar en un sistema estàtic com l’utòpic quart món (Winter, 1999: 29). Un personatge de xarlatà, força semblant a una narrativa postmoderna, emprant el terme de Lyotard, manifesta «incredulity towards metanarratives» (1984: xxiv). De manera semblant a narratives postmodernes, els xarlatans de *Bearheart* comparteixen la manca de respecte per metanarratives que Gerald Vizenor qualifica com a «terminal creeds».

Elizabeth Blair ressalta que no tan sols els personatges de Vizenor, sinó també el text, és a dir *Bearheart*, fan ostentació de les qualitats dels xarlatans. Com els xarlatans que tracten de guarir els mals

tradicionals de la comunitat, «in trickster text, words heal by refusing to take themselves seriously» (1995: 88). Amb el seu humor, *Bearheart* influeix en les emocions dels lectors molt més que en el seu intel·lecte. Encara que el joc de paraules, la imatgeria grotesca i fantàstica, les accions violentes anòmales i les explicacions gratuïtes de trobades sexuals semblen supèrflues en la unitat orgànica del text, tenen a veure amb allò que Blair anomena «text as trickster». En general, la narrativa dels xarlatans commou la imaginació dels lectors en soscar, reptar, divulgar i desconstruir nocions i idees fossilitzades, així com la presumpció que el llenguatge és estàtic i unidimensional. En conseqüència, McClure proposa que la noció de discurs del xarlatà de Vizenor s'ha d'analitzar dins del discurs lingüístic (1997: 51). Sobretot, es refereix a la manera que tenen els personatges d'emprar el llenguatge per desestabilitzar el discurs dominant. De fet, Vizenor, fa servir els xarlatans com a personatges de ficció i com a tècniques textuais formals per (des)educar els lectors mitjançant la sacsejada de les perspectives normalitzades.

A més d'aquestes qualitats metamòrfiques, un xarlatà, emfasitza Vizenour, té un sentit de l'humor poderós i, sovint, indecent. Assenyala que «trickster stories heal the heart by native irony, humor, and by the images of survivance and sovereignty» (2009: 229). «Life is humor», segueix defensant la via ensarronadora de la representació i transformació, «life always has mysteries, beauty, chaos, elements of theatre, comedy, tragedy, and the tease of a trickster. My art is about life» (2009: 229).

Tanmateix, la metamorfosi convida a interpretacions diverses en contextos distints. Quan la narrativa kafkiana empra l'artefacte de la metamorfosi, amb tota probabilitat, tracta de reflectir l'alienació de l'home modern. Per contra, Toni Morrison ressuscita un nen mort metamorfosejat com *Beloved*, amb l'esperança de subratllar les doloroses memòries de l'esclavatge. A més, Angel Asturias, com observa Christopher Warnes, utilitza la metamorfosi a *Men of Maize* com una metonímia per explicar un segment de creences culturals (2009: 15). No obstant això, Gerald Vizenor ressalta el caràcter juganer de la metamorfosi, no perquè els lectors obtinguin un plaer transitori, sinó per mostrar i materialitzar els intents psicològics dels xarlatans per sobreviure i evitar ser destruïts sota el domini de la sobirania cultural no nadiua.

Una bon nombre de crítics sostenen que un dels papers principals de la metamorfosi és representar les identitats múltiples i fluïdes del món postcolonial. Les metamorfosis incorporades al realisme màgic reflecteixen les fronteres absolutament poroses de la natura. Aquests crítics distingeixen entre dos tipus diferents d'identitat, com es reflecteix en el realisme màgic: «Either there is a proliferation of selves within one single identity, or else readers witness an individual

becoming 'the other' she was looking at [...]» (Benito, Manzanas and Simal 2009: 165). *Bearheart*, segons la seva definició, s'inclou en la primera categoria. Les metamàscars de Bishop Parasimo simbolitzen la seva triple identitat. Sempre que ell o els altres pelegrins es posen alguna de les tres metamàscars, el narrador s'hi refereix pel nom de la metamàscara, mentre que mantenen les creences que tenien abans de posar-se-les. Matchi Makwa és un bon exemple. Estava enamorat abans de posar-se la metamàscara d'una dona, fins i tot quan Matchi Makwa s'ha de posar la metamàscara de la princesa Gallroad per salvar les bruixes, encara se sent el mateix sexualment, malgrat que el narrador emprí el pronom femení per referir-se a Matchi Makwa. «Obsessed with her [Matchi Makwa's] lust,» explica Bearheart, «She ran into the kitchen past the waiter and returned to the table with a sharp knife which she used to shave the hair from her crotch [...] breathless she [Matchi Makwa] turns her p... into her warmth evil» (Vizenor, 1990: 180). El mateix és cert per a tots els homes que es posen metamàscars femenines. El pronom canvia a femení per a tots ells, però la identitat segueix igual.

A més, la metamorfosi a *Bearheart* és un fenomen voluntari i festiu. Al contrari de Samsa, que es metamorfoseja involuntàriament en un cuc a *Metamorphosis* de Kafka, Vizenor no tan sols celebra la mateixa natura de la metamorfosi, sinó que també permet que els personatges de *Bearheart* decideixen quina metamàscara es posaran i quan es convertiran en animal o planta. Tanmateix, les metamàscars a *Bearheart* no canvien les qualitats internes dels personatges que se les posen. Senzillament, ajuden els personatges primer a ocultar la seva veritable identitat (per exemple, quan els pelegrins han d'entrar als restaurants dels feixistes per segon cop). Han d'ocultar la identitat, i Matchi Makwa, Pio i Bishop Parasimo es posen les tres metamàscars de forma aleatòria (1990: 179). També, després de la mort de Bishop Parasimo, Pio hereta les tres metamàscars, totes les quals tenen forma de dona. Molt ràpidament, un cop se les posa, Pio ja no se sent incòmode amb els seus trets facials, que varien entre els d'una dona i els d'un home. Les metamàscars «give him a good feeling about himself ... herself, she is much more interesting now with the metamasks. She talks all the time [...]» (1990: 226).

No obstant això, algunes vegades, Vizenor introdueix personatges metamòrfics per crear una al·legoria sobre la depriment situació de la humanitat. Els pelegrins en el seu camí interestatal es troben amb una processó d'esgarriats i arnes. Amb això, Vizenor mostra els terribles efectes de les substàncies químiques en l'ésser humà i es plany de les ales artificials (de la imaginació i de l'esperança) que la gent s'agencia per oblidar-ne les misèries. Explica Bigfoot que els esgarriats «never developed past the memories of fish and animals in our human past...less than whole less than human.» Doctor Wilde continua dient que els «Cripples are cripples from the chemicals their

parents and grandparents drank and smoked and ate» (1990: 147). D'altra banda, els cucs són cucs «to survive and escape [their] lives» a través de la «imagination and visions» (1990: 149). En aquesta secció, Vizenor empra allò torçat i allò transformat per simbolitzar les persones imperfectes empresonades en les seves creences finalistes. «We become our memories and what we believe,» diu Proude, «we become the terminal creeds we speak. Our words limit the animals we would become...soaring through words from memories and vision. We are all incomplete...imperfect. Lost limbs and lost visions stand with the same phantoms» (1990: 147).

En conseqüència, Gerald Vizenor adopta l'estratègia de la metamorfosi per assolir tres objectius diferents: primer per demostrar metonímicament la interconnexió de l'home amb la natura de la cosmologia índia; en segon lloc, per mostrar simbòlicament el camí que han de prendre els indis americans perquè sobrevisqui la seva cultura, com es mostra en el caràcter dels xarlatans; i en tercer lloc, per descriure metafòricament la visió falsa i la imperfecció de la humanitat que els ha portat a acollir les creences terminals.

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#11

AURKAKOTASUNAREN ESTETIKA: METAMORFOSIAREN POLITIKA GERALD VIZENORREN *BEARHEART-EN*

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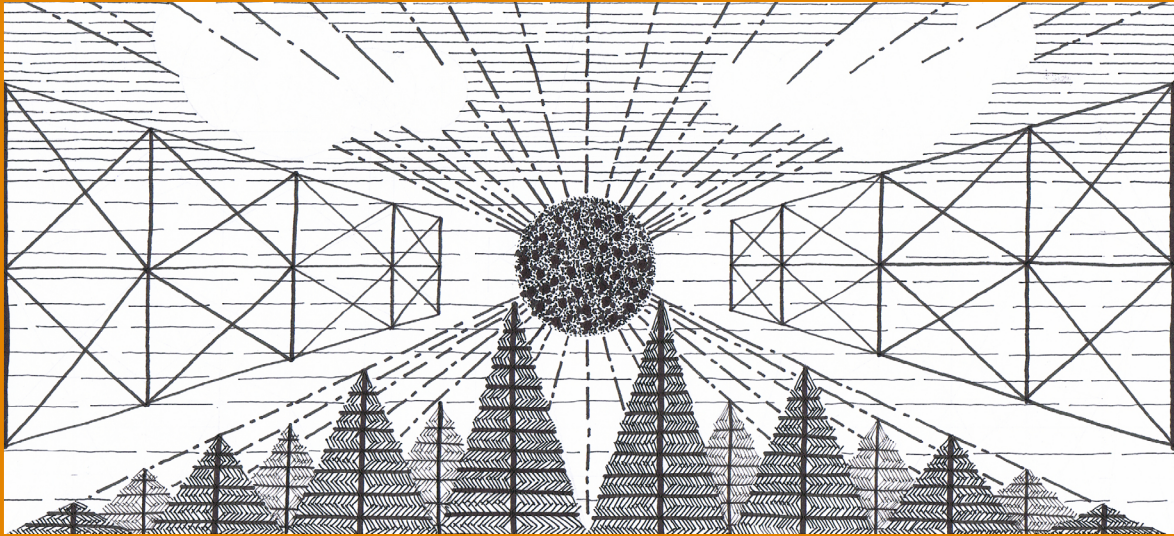
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Laburpena || Gerald Vizenor *Chippewa* eleberrigileak «biziraupenari» eta «fede terminalei» buruz dituen ideia politiko-filosofiko interkonektatuak adierazten ditu bere eleberri goiztiarrean, *Bearheart*-en. Horretarako, Vizenorrek errealismo magikoaren zenbait estrategia estetiko abiarazi ditu. Bere eleberria bitxiegiak diren sexuzko eta indarkeriazko esenez bete du, magikoak gertatzen direnak normaltasunaren estandar ezarriei «enbarazu» egiteko. Gainera, teknika errealista magikoak diren eraldatzeari eta metamorfosiari buruzko amerindiar elezahar mitikoak erabili ditu *Bearheart*-en testuinguru zaharberriaren nortasun kultural eta tribala birmoldatzeko.

Gako-hitzak || Gerald Vizenor | *Bearheart* | Biziraupena | Fede terminalak | Errealismo magikoa | Metamorfosia

Abstract || The Chippewa novelist Gerald Vizenor puts across his interconnected politico-philosophical notions of “survivance” and “terminal creeds” in his early novel, *Bearheart*. To do so, Vizenor implemented some of the aesthetic strategies of magical realism. He filled his novel with an excessive amount of bizarrely sexual and violent scenes—which turn out to be magical—in order to “upset” the established standards of normality. Moreover, he used American Indian mythic folktales of transformation and metamorphosis, a magical realist technique, to re-shape the cultural and tribal identity in *Bearheart*’s modernized context.

Keywords || Gerald Vizenor | *Bearheart* | Survivance | Terminal creeds | Magical realism | Metamorphosis

“We have walked backward in your time.”
“How Backward?”
“Walking forward but seeing backward... Seeing
in time what we invent in passing... Birds and
animals see behind their motion. Place and time
lives in them not between them. Place is not an
invention of time, Place is a state of mind, place
is not notched measuring stick from memories
here to there...”
(Bearheart, 238)

0. Sarrera

Gerald Robert Vizenor (1934ean jaioa) amerindiar idazle emankorra da, poesia liburuki ugari, eleberriak eta baita historia tribal eta kritika literarioen zenbait monografiko ere argitaratu dituena. Bere lehenengo eleberriak, *Darkness in Saint Louis Bearheart* (1978), beranduago *Bearheart: the Heirship Chronicles* gisa gaurkotua (1990), ekarri zion ospea. Bere testuak hitz jokoez eta trickster tribal baten tradizioaren imajinazio basatiz gainezka daude.

Postestrukturalismoak gogor eragindakoa, Vizenorrek Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes eta Jean Baudrillard bezalako filosofoek garatutako teoria eta ideiak gehitzen ditu bere lanen corpusetan. Haren fikzioa jostaria da eta aipamen eta umorez josia dago, nahiz eta beti serio mantentzen den amerikar natiboen egoerari dagokionez. Teoria postmoderno eta postestrukturalisten indarrez, amerikar natiboen irudikapen erromantikoari desafio egiten saiatzen da eta etengabe iradokitzen du «indiar» kontzeptua asmakizun europarra dela eta ez zegoela «indiar» gisako ezer monolitikorik, baizik eta hainbat tributako jendea besterik ez, europarrek aingura amerikar itsasaldeetan bota aurretik. Aldarte horri jarraituz, bere idazkietako askok saihestu egiten dute kultura amerikar natiboen errepresentazio antropologikoarekiko joera; horren orde, batez ere eraldaketari arreta jartzen dioten ahozko narratibak onartzen ditu. Horrek lagundu egiten du natibo-tasun eta indiar-tasun kontzeptuak zehaztugabe eta beti erakargarriaren mugan mantentzen, baina sekula ez guztiz presente.

Gainera, Vizenorrek bere fikzioan trebeki konbinatzen ditu naturala eta naturaz gaidikoa gizarte zientzien errealismoa zalantzan jartzeko (Benito, Manzanos eta Simal 2009: 101). Vizenorrek azpimarratzen du aurkakoak adiskidetzeko bere interesa indiar natiboen sinesmen sistema tribalean errotuta dagoela, «fede terminalak» saihestu eta «biziraupena» ospatzen duena. Elkarrizketa batean, honakoa dio Vizenorrek:

The religious attitude among most tribal cultures here is one of balance rather than annihilation, in contrast to the interest of the blest to illuminate

and annihilate evil. The Christian objective is to rid the self and the soul, the family, and the community, of evil, to isolate it and destroy it. It's a war, a holy war to end evil. The same language is a part of American consciousness – the war on poverty, the war against ignorance. The objective is completely to end and destroy it. But the experience expressed in tribal culture is not that complete elimination or annihilation of anything. It's a balance, not a terminal creed. The balance is a resolution which grows out of trickeries, of outwitting, or the modulation of experience. It may grow out of origin myths themselves, that the balance was present at the time of creation. Those origin myths are still structurally and functionally a part of belief in tribal culture, the idea that life is not created by a patriarch but [through] a balance of male and female, an androgynous balance. The restoration of balance is present at all spiritual activities. (Bowers, Silet eta Vizenor 1981: 43-44)

Idea hori agerikoa da *Bearheart*-en, «fede terminalei» eta amerindiarren biziraupenaz eztabaidatzen baitu. Louis Owensék azaltzen du *Bearheart*-en irudikatutako fede terminalek munduaren definizio estatikoak inposatzea helburu duten sinismenei egiten dietela erreferentzia. Owensék arabera, Vizenor oso kritikoa da definizio estatikoekin, ez dio axola ustez indiar «tradizionalak» diren usteetatik edo euro-amerikar ideologietatik sortu diren. Fede terminalek konparagarriak dira Bakhtinek «authoritative discourse» deitzen dion horrekin, «indissolubly fused with its authority» hizkuntza dena eta botere politikoa eta lehenagoko baliotasuna duena (Owens 1992: 231). Benito, Manzanos eta Simalek honela definitzen dituzte fede terminalek: «a symbolic haven, even if an illusory one, of full meaning and presence, one that most people turn to in moments of tension and chaos» (2009: 97). «Economic power had become the religion of the nation;» azpimarratzen da *Bearheart*-en, «when it failed, people turned to their own violence and bizarre terminal creeds for comfort and meaning» (Vizenor 1990: 23).

Beste aldetik, biziraupenaren ideiak, mendekotasun kulturalaren biziraupen eta erresistentziaren bidai-kutxa denak, heroiek nihilismoari biziraun eta hari erresistentzia erakusten dioten modua nabarmentzen du, eta baita indiar natiboak biktima gisa irudikatze tipikoari ere (Vizenor 2009: 24-25). «Native survivance», erreparatzen du Vizenorrek, «is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent» (2009: 85). Amerikartzearen basakeriari bizirauteko, Kimberly Blaeserrek zera argudiatzen du, Vizenorren biziraundako protagonistek «examine, question, shift, stretch, bend, change, grow, juggle, balance, and sometimes duck – for surviving doesn't necessarily mean winning [...] Survival is achieved, according to Vizenor, through humor and story» (1996: 63).

Esan daiteke Vizenorrek diskurtso postkolonialari egiten dion ekarpen nagusia, Shackletonen arabera, «trickster hermeneutics» delakoaren ideia izan dela, biziraupen eta erresistentzia kulturala izan dena indiar

natiboen irudikapen estereotipatuaren aurrean (2001: 70). Ondorioz, Vizenorren lanak politikoki konprometituak dira haien asmoa testu eta testuz kanpoko munduetako diskurtso zentralen aurka altxatzea denez gero. Gainera, Vizenorrek hertsiki sinesten du badagoela estetika singular natibo bat zeinek biziraupen literarioaren bidean laguntzen dion. Honako hau idazten du:

I strongly disagree, in other words, with the spurious notion that there is no singular native aesthetics. Consider, for instance, the ancestral storiers who created animal characters with a tricky sense of consciousness, the natural reason of a native aesthetics of survivance. Many contemporary native novelists present the imagic consciousness of animals in dialogue and descriptive narratives, and overturn the monotheistic separation of humans and animals. (2009: 9-10)

Bearheart-en, Vizenorrek «imagic consciousness of animals in dialogue and descriptive narratives» gisa definitzen duena ere erantsi du. Idazleak ez du soilik eragiten zazpi bele eta bi txakurrek erromesei haien bidean laguntzea, baizik eta animaliak, bereziki beleak, “trickster” (iruzurgile) gisa irudikatzen ditu.

Ahozko elezahar amerindiarrek beleak trickster natibotzat aurkezten dituzte (2009: 13). *Bearheart*-en erromesei haien bidean laguntzen dieten beleak trickster natiboen adibide dira (Rigal-Cellard 1997: 99). Horrez gain, Vizenorrek bere protagonista hartz bilakatzen du, Chippewa folklorea indarra eta jakinduria espirituala eta botere xamanikoa adierazten dituen animalia (1997: 99). Proude Cederfair, hartz bilakatzen den protagonista, magikoki lekualdatu daiteke toki batetik bestera, eta, etsipenak garaitzen duenean, hartz bilakatzen da eta bere zedro zirkura «planeatzen» du «migis»-en lakuan igeri egiteko. Nanabozho tricksterraren avatar bat da bera. Orokorrean, Gerald Vizenorrek animaliak, txoriak eta gizakiak elkarri laguntzen jartzen ditu aldarrikatzen duelako kosmologia amerikar natiboak, sorkuntza monoteistak ez bezala, ez dituela animaliak, txoriak eta gizakiak banatzen naturan edo literaturan. Bateratze hau, Vizenorren arabera, estetika natiboaren parte da (2009: 14).

Vizenorrek estetika natibo bakarrean sinesten duen arren, kultura eta estetika natiboen jarioa azpimarratzen du, Mugimendu Amerindiarrekiko mesfidati izatea eragin ziona 1960az geroztik. Iradokitzen du mugimendu horretako liderrek berrindartu egin zituztela estereotipoak eta modu okerrean sustatu zutela egiazko nortasun tribal baten ilusioa, zeini beranduago hedabideek eutsiko zioten (1994: 150). Vizenorrek zentzuz aitortzen du denboraldi batez bere burua bitartekari eta ahots indiartzat ikusten bazuen ere, orain ez dituela ordezkatzeko Ameriketara bizi diren indiar natiboak. Onartzen du ez duela ordezkatzeko talde zehatz bat, baizik eta «traba» gisa funtzionatzen duela, azken fedea baliogabetzen saiatzen dena (Bowers, Silet eta Vizenor 1981: 45).

Bearheart-en, Vizenorrek erbesteratzearen zergatiari jartzen dio arreta eta kontatzen du nola amerikar natibo eta odol nahasiko talde bat, zazpi bele-pailazok eta bi txakurrek lagunduta, ontziratu egiten diren erromesaldi batean Estatu Batuetan behera «laugarren mundua»-ren bila. «Laugarren mundu»-an, Proude Cederfairrek, liburuaren protagonista eta narratzaileak, zera azaltzen du: «evil spirits are outwitted in the secret languages of animals and birds. Bears and crows choose the new singers. The crows crow in their blackness» (1990: 5). Eleberria aurrera doan heinean, irakurleak konturatzen dira «fede terminalak» garaitzen dituzten pertsonak soilik aurki dezaketela laugarren mundu utopikorako sarbidea.

Vizenorren narratiba heterodoxoak taldearen abenturak monitorizatzen ditu jendarte amerikar post-apokaliptiko batean. Herrialde osoan amaitu da erregaia (posible da erregaia arimaren sinbolo gisa ulertzea), eta jendeak, bizirauteko, edozein ekintza kriminal lazgarri egingo du, kanibalismoa kasu, inongo nardarik gabe. Suntsitutako komunitate zurietan zehar duten kokinkeriak hala autoz nola itsasontziz eta oinez jarraitzen du, eta apurka-apurka pertsonaia guztiek egiten dute bat *Bearheart*-ekin bere bidaian. Narratiba bere inflexio-puntura iristen da erromesek «the evil gambler, the monarch of unleaded gasoline » ezagutzen dutenean, zeinek « gamble for five gallons » egingo lukeen eta galtzaileak eraiko lituzkeen (1990: 102-103). Egiturari erreparatuz gero, “Evil Gambler”-aren (apustulari gaiztoa) aurretik doazen kapituluek erromesen pilatzea erakusten dute eta Evil Gamblerrekin dagoen konfrontazioaren ondoren doazenek haien desagerpen eta desegitea irudikatzen dute. Hortik aurrera, erromesak haien harrokeriaren biktima bilakatzen dira eta zenbat eta estuago eutsi «fede terminalei», orduan eta lehenago utziko dute taldea edo hil egingo dira. Hala ere, momentu zorigaitzoko zein barregarriak izaten dituzte bidaian zehar.

Vizenorren erromesak setaz lizunak eta irigarriak dira. Alan R. Veliek dioenez, *Bearheart*-ek ez du ez «philosophical and aesthetic depth» ezta sinbolismorik ere (1982: 136-137). Velie ez bezala, *Bearheart*-eko hainbat eszena *Pilgrim's Progress*-eko gertakari paraleloekin alderatzean, Rigel-Cellard konturatzen da Vizenorrek testua sinbolismo potoloarekin kargatzen duela modu postmodernoan parodia bat sortzeko (1997: 110). Honakoa dio:

By producing this Native *Pilgrim's Progress*, a manifesto which is his own version of the canonical novel written according to the Bible, by tossing it upside down, by hiding wisdom under the most foolish of attires, Vizenor is asserting the spiritual freedom of his tribal people, even after their political power has been smothered by generations of colonists brandishing the Bible and poor Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. (1997: 112)

Horrez gain, erradikala da sexua eta indarkeria aurkezteko duen moduan, eta *Bearheart* estrategia narratibo postmodernoez baliatzen

da, baina, aldiz berean, «most traditional of Native American novels» gisa hartzen da ahozko tradizio Chippewaren garrantzizko erabilerarengatik (Vizenor 1989: 143). Eleberriak hirurogeita hamargarren hamarkada hasierako petrolioaren bahimenduari keinu egiten dio, zeinek Gobernu Federala kolapsora eraman zuen, eta horrek tribu amerikar natiboak bizi zireneko erreserben desjabetzea eragiten zuen (Rigal-Cellard 1997: 94-5). Horrekin batera, liburua, maila filosofikoan, amerindiarren «fede terminalak» hedatzen saiatzen da gobernu zentralarenak eta zurienak bezainbeste. Hau begi-bistakoa da Vizenorrek idatzitako «The Letter to the Reader» delakoan, Bearheart izengoitiaz sinatuta eleberriaren hasieran. Gutun horretan Vizenorrek salatu egiten ditu alde batetik Gobernu Federala, zera egiten duelako, «held their [tribal people's] reservation land in trust so the timber could be cut and minerals mined» (1990: xii); eta bestetik Mugimendu Amerindiarren jarraitzaileak, «plastic bear claws» daramatzatenak eta erlijiotzat «a word pile» besterik ez dutenak (1990: x).

Gainera, «what does Indian mean?» galdera tematikoa *Bearheart*-en zehar dabil eta eleberriak bortizki aurre egiten dio eta fede terminal gisa imajinatzen du aurrez burututako indiaritasunaren edozein definizio, haren aurkakoa onartzen ez duena. Esaterako, Belladonnaren odol natiboaren aldeko ohar arrazistak, Little Big Mousen «grotesque and patronizing liberality» eta bere bihotz-ontasun zentzugabea, Bishop Parasimoren obsesioa «with the romantic and spiritual power of tribal people» (1990: 75), Louis Owensek «the Hollywood version of Indianness»-tzat irudikatzen duena (Owens 1990:250), fede terminalen adibidetako batzuk dira. Arrazoi berdinegatik, nahiz eta Judge Pardone Cozener eta Doctor Wildek nahiago duten «word hospital» izenekoan gelditu eta, beraz, erromesen gehiengoaren zorigaitzoko patuari ihes egin, Maureen Keadyk zera interpretatzen du «their decision to stay there [as] clearly a choice of nihilism» (1985: 64). Hau da, geldirik mantenduz eta kultura indiar natiboen bizitasuna saihestuz haien heriotza intelektuala eragiten dute.

Horrez gain, Keadyk nabarmentzen duen bezala, «those who cling to words as evidence of existence will be unable to enter [“the fourth world”]. In wasted and poisoned America, ‘survival of the fittest’ prevails, but Vizenor points out that, here, as always, it is spiritual strength that makes one fit» (1985: 65). Zalantzarik gabe, *Bearheart* munduaren amaierari eta baita beste berri baten hasierari buruzko ipuin bat ere bada. Vizenorrek ospatu egiten ditu trickster moduko atzera jotzeak, mitoa esanahiaren erdigunea zeneko eta «oral tradition is honoured» zeneko garaiaren ber-hasieraren sinbolo direnak (1990: 163). Horretarako, Gerald Vizenorrek errealismo magikoaren teknika eta elementuak barneratzen ditu eta eszena magikoak eranstean ditu *Bearheart*-en.

Jarraian doana *Bearheart*-en errealismo magikoaren politikari buruzko eztabaida da. Lehendabizi, argudiatuko dugu Vizenorrek etengabe bilatzen duela irakurleen arreta sexuzko eta indarkeriazko eszena surrealisten gehiegizko irudikapenen bitartez, Vizenorren terminologia erabiliz, «enbarazu» egiteko asmotan normaltasunaren betiko alderatze estandar eztabaidaezinei. Bigarrenik, eztabaidatuko dugu nola funtzionatzen duten elezahar eta figura mitiko amerindiarrek, batez ere Nanabozho trickster eta gambler itzelak, botere magikoak dituenak, *Bearheart*-en testuinguru zaharberritu eta sasi-errealistan, nortasun kultural eta tribala birmoldatzeko. Eta azkenik, tricksterren izaera metamorfikoa garatuko dugu, *Bearheart*-en erabilitako biziraupen estrategia bat dena.

1. Gehiegikeriaren magia

Testu errealista magiko gisa, *Bearheart* errealismo klasikoaren molde figuratibo askoz baliatzen da, baina bere premisa humanistak indargabetzen ditu. Vizenorren estreinaldiak gizadiaren berezko gizabide eta arrazoizkotasunaren ideia humanista hausten du. Bere fikziozko pertsonaien buruetan laztura zentzurik sortzeko asmorik gabe, Vizenorrek, *Bearheart*-en, munduaren ikuspegi harrigarria aurkezten du, zeharo bortitzak diren ekintzak ohiko gertaerak bailitzan aurkeztuz. *Bearheart* logikarik gabeko gertakari zentzugabe eta lizunez beteta dago; hitz iraingarri eta oiesak etengabe esaten dira, sexua eta indarkeria grafikoki azaltzen dira eta zentzurik gabeko ekintzak behin eta berriz deskribatzen dira. Indarkeriazko ekintzak jendearen zaletasun atsegingarrienetako bat dira *Bearheart*-en. «As it turned out killing gave me a whole lot of pleasure then» aitortzen du Evil Gamblerrek,

My business has been to bring people to their death. Until I was nineteen suffocation fascinated me as a form of death. Like an artist I practiced the various means of suffocating people. Later I was attracted to traps and poisons ... secrets and surprises on the road to death. (1990: 126)

Horrela, «whitecannibal» batek bi oinezko erail eta sarraskitu ondoren, «picked up the seaming heart from the dead whiteman and threw it across the road toward the circus pilgrims» (1990: 174-175). Vizenorrek erromes bakoitzaren hasierako erreakzioak honela azaltzen ditu:

Neither the seven crows, nor the dogs, nor the nine circus pilgrims moved from their places. Eighteen pairs of eyes focused on the heart. Sun Bear Sun imagined the smell of cooking meat until digestive saliva filled his huge mouth. Matchi Makwa would feed it to the animals. Belladonna turned from the heart in tears fearful of evil fixations. Parawoman Pio was fighting back the powerful savage urge to devour the heart raw. He could taste the blood salts and feel the soft muscles slipping between

his massive teeth. He swallowed. Proude thought about the death of his fathers and the spiritual power from the hearts of animals. (1990: 175)

Erromesak zalantzati badaude ere erail berri duten gizaki baten bihotza elikagai gisa erabiltzearen inguruan, azkar aldatzen dute iritziz haietako batzuek. Hauxe azaltzen du Vizenorrek:

Pio moaned and his mammoth limbs trembled. Sun Bear Sun swallowed and in slow measured steps he walked across the road and talked to the whiteman with the knife. The man paused and then handed Sun Bear Sun a large piece of dried meat. When he returned, he explained that the meat was from the biceps of a young woman who had been raped and killed for flesh the month before on the interstate. The meat was prepared. The circus pilgrims were silent. Proude and Inawa Biwide and Rosina and Belladonna and Perfect Crow and Pure Gumption would not eat human flesh. Private Jones and six crows pecked and pulled at the steaming heart. (1990: 175)

Adibide horrek argi uzten du gehiegizko indarkeria eta groteskoaren ugaritasuna eleberrian. Teorikoki hitz eginez, lan literario batek eredu literario nagusiei erresistentzia erakusteko duen moduetako bat «gehiegizkoaren» estrategia da. Gehiegikeria modu bat narratiba gainkargatzea da itxuragabetasun eta biluztasunarekin eta «errespetuzko» hizkuntza urratzea. *Bearheart* sexu topaketa bitxi eta arraroren deskribapen esplizituz betea dago (adibidez, ikus: xiv, 30, 45, 70, 95, 124, 180), eta baita zeharo gogorak diren ekintzaz ere, itxuragabetasunen deskribapen zehatzak dituztenak (adibidez, ikus: 54, 87, 126, 135, 138, 140, 151, 174, 176, 232, 239). Gainera, arau sozialak etetearekin batera, arauen subertsioa pertsonaien eta eleberrigilearen hitz jokoetan erakusten da (adibidez, ingelesezko hitz hauek darabiltzanean: «hairship» eta «heirship», «word war» eta «world war», eta abar). Izan ere, desbideratze hauek gailentzen diren irudikapen errealistekiko erreakzio erradikala erakusten dute. *Bearheart*-eko ez-ohiko irudikapenek irakurleen moralitasun ideiak nahita zapuzten dituzte. Hau da Blaeserrek «strategy of liberation» deitzen dion hori. Honela dio:

The impetus in Vizenor's work is exactly that of checking the process of annihilation and freeing Native American identity from the grasp of literary colonialism. He does this both by struggling against established literary and linguistic structures, practices, and images, and by working to create new ones. By undermining the colonial "strategies of containment" and replacing them with the strategies of liberation." (Blaeser 1996: 73)

Errealismo formalak joera du jendartearen botere menderatzailearen arauak betikotzeko eta jendetzaren desioak geldiarazteko. Vizenorren *Bearheart* gisako testu «bitxi» batek «strategies of liberation» erabiltzen ditu irakurleak botere menderatzailearen indarkeriatik askatzeko. Flix Guattarik azpimarratzen duen bezala:

The masses certainly do not passively submit to power; nor do they

«want» to be repressed, in a kind of masochistic hysteria; nor are they tricked by an ideological lure. Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from micro formations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. Desire is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions: a whole supple segmentarity that processes molecular energies and potentially gives desire a fascist determination. (Guattari 1987: 215)

Guattariren arabera, botere menderatzaileak ez ditu arau ideologikoak erabiltzen jendea amore ematera eta esana egitera derrigortzeko, horren orde, haien psikea eta desiraren boterea kontrolatzen ditu erruduntasun sistema bat sortuz. Arauak ezarriz, errealismo tradizionalak gaizkide gisa funtzionatzen du erruduntasun sistema bat ezartzerakoan. Vizenorren asmoa jendarte amerikar zuhur delakoaren araei enbarazu egitea da muga moral eta etikoak hautsiz.

Blaeserren arabera, hizkuntza iradokitzailea erabiltzea, eraldatzea, eta naturarekin identifikatzea arau sozialei egindako zenbait urradura dira (1996: 184). Bakhtinek ikuspuntu literarioak aldarrikatzen ditu, «to destroy and rebuild the entire false picture of the world, to sunder the false hierarchical links between objects and ideas, to abolish the divisive ideational strata» (1981: 169) McCluren arabera, Bakhtinen «false hierarchal links», Vizenorrek fede terminalak deitzen dien diskurtso ofizial eta autoritarioaren berdin-berdinak dira (1997: 56). Ez-ohiko narratiben ugaritasuna duen errealismo magikoak irauli egiten ditu arau menderatzaileak, bestearen intrusioaren beldur izan direnak beti. Horrenbestez, errealismo magikoak «beste» filosofiko edo politiko hori bortxatzen eta zapaltzen du.

Kontuan hartuz Vizenorrek gehiegizko indarkeria duten eszenak azaltzen dituela *Bearheart*-en, haiek irakurleentzat egoera normal batean jartzen saiatzen da. Groteskoaren eta indarkeriaren irudikapen hutsalaren estrategia jarraitzen du *Bearheart*-en. Bakhtinen arabera, groteskoak, «an aesthetic of the unfinished» denak, estandar klasikoak desafiitzen ditu (1966: 32-33). *Bearheart*-en, Rosinaren pertsonaiak adierazten du ondoen erromesen axolagabekeria bidaiako gertaera izugarrien aurrean. Mamu hiriko «penarchical pensioners»-tako bat harritzen denean Rosinak itzulingururik gabe azaltzen duenean nola Matchi Makwa eta sorginetako bati burua moztu zieten eta Matchiren burua Sun Bear Sunek zeraman makil baten amaieran agertu zela, zera dio Rosinak:

Not so strange when you think about some of the things we had seen, [...] we have been walking from the cedar nation for more than two months now and there has been violence and death ... Death and whitepeople punishing and killing each other for no reason ... So when the head of the witch came back on a stick we never thought much about it ... (1990:

Bearheart-en bezala, testu magiko errealistek ez dute erreakziorik erakusten eta hizkuntza neutrala darabilte naturaz gaindiko indarkeria ekintzak irudikatzean. Hau da Hegerfeldtek «the rhetoric of banality» deitzen dion hori, «the absurd, nonsensical, fantastic nature of reality» (2005: 209). Gainera, Timothy Brenanek lazturaren deskribapen axolagabe honi «the stylistic veneer of [...] matter-of-fact violence» ezizena jartzen dio (1989: 66). Hutsalkeriaren erretorika horren indarrez, testu errealista magikoak bera oinarritzen den munduaren ikuskera errealista ezabatzen du. Hala ere, gizabide eta aurrerapenaren ideal humanisten eta munduaren egoeraren arteko desadostasunak gehitzen ditu; alabaina, ez lehenagokoa doilortzeko, baizik eta azkena salatzen.

Aitzitik, une eszeniko batzuetan, Vizenorrek gertakari hutsal eta aspergarriak arreta-gunera bultzatzen ditu eta magiko eta ikaragarri gisa irudikatzen ditu. Horri deitzen dio Hegerfeldtek «the supernaturalization of the extratextual world» (2005: 199). Horren adibide gisa, Bigfootek kontatzen du maiteminduta dagoela herri parke batetik lapurtu zuen emakumezko baten brontzezko estatua batekin. Parkeko oinezkoek estatuari jaramonik egiten ez dioten eta hura zeharo aspergarritzat duten bitartean, Bigfootentzat hain da biziduna ezen erail egiten duen estatua lapurtzen duen lapurra berriz ere hura berreskuratzeko (1990: 85-88). Hilketa horrengatik bi urte baino ez ditu pasatzen etxean atxilotuta, zeren eta «judicial folks were downright pleased to meet an old fashioned passion killer, a killer who made sense, because most of the killings going on are reasonless now random living and random loving and random death» (1990: 83). Brontzezko estatuaren istorioa kontatu ondoren, Bigfoot harekin dantzan hasten da eta Little Big Mousek zera xuxurlatzen du «she has warmed to my touch», estatua laztandu ondoren (88). Izan ere, Vizenorrek parkeko estatua zeharo simple eta ohiko baten inguruan sortzen duen misterio aura hain da sekulakoa, ezen ez soilik Bigfoot baizik eta beste pertsonaia guztiak ere liluratzen baitiren Bigfooten narratiban.

Vizenorrek, bestalde, gertakari naturalki onargarriak fantastikoak bailiran irudikatzen ditu. «The fantastic elements are not restricted to what by rational-empirical criteria is considered physically impossible;» eusten dio Hegerfeldtek, «highly improbable events can have a similar effect.» (2005: 79). Gasolina urritasuna, Evil Gamblerri irabaziz ondoz ondoko erasoetan (1990:123), eta elbarrien desfilea bezalako gertakariak naturaren legeetatik haratago ez dauden arren, irakurlearengan fantastiko itxura hartzen dute duten gertagaiztasunarengatik.

Labur esanda, Vizenorrek *Bearheart*-en indarkeria eszenak

deskribatzen dituen bitartean, haiek normalizatzen saiatzen da, bai pertsonaiantzat eta baita irakurleentzat ere. Horretaz gain, Vizenorrek gertakari gertagarriak fantastikoak edo naturaz gaindikoak bailiran azaltzen ditu. Orokorrean, estrategia hauek erabilia Vizenorrek gizakiaren gizabidea eta arrazoizkotasunaren adierazpen humanistak bortxatzen ditu munduaren irudi higuin garria aurkezteko. Ez ideal humanistak ahultzeko baizik eta munduaren egoeraz, hala iraganekoaz nola egungoaz, atsekabetzeko.

2. «Aurrerantz oinez baina atzerantz begira»; *Mythos* eta *Logos*-en arteko ezkontza

Testu errealista magikoek normalean nazio baten iragan mitikoaz hitz egiten dute eta Vizenorren *Bearheart* ez da salbuespena. Moses Valdezen arabera, hala ere, iragan nostalgikoaren gehiegizko hanpadurak deuseztatu edo jaramonik ez die egiten oroitzen txarrei eta «purely symbolic or token resistance to the inexorable triumph of modernity» (2001: 106). Valdezen argumentuan ez bezala, Windy B. Farisek baieztatzen du errealismo magikoak «token resistance» hutsa baino gehiago irudikatzen duela. Berak dioen bezala, testu errealista magiko batek aldi bat ezarri dezake aurrerabide zientifikoaren eredu teknologiko eta desberdinetan, eta honela, irakurleak ez dira asebetetzen «nostalgic return to a vanished past»-rekin (2002: 114-115). Helburu berarekin, Gerald Vizenorrek saihestu egiten du indiarrek haien endekapenera daramatzaten hutsegiteez libratzea. Jende pantribala salatzen du haien fede terminaletara estu lotzeaz, «word piles» besterik ez direnak (x). Gainera, zedro intsentsu sakratua ekoizten zen zedro nazioak jende gehiago erakartzen duenean, Vizenor honakoaz kexatzen da:

Tribal religions were becoming more ritualistic but without visions. The crazed and alienated were desperate for terminal creeds to give their vacuous lives meaning. Hundreds of tribal people came to the cedar nation for spiritual guidance. They camped for a few days, lusted after their women in the cedar, and then, lacking inner discipline, dreams, and personal responsibilities, moved on to find new word wars and new ideas to fill their pantribal urban emptiness. (1990: 16)

Vizenorrek mundu modernoaren logozentrismoa «Biavaricious word hospital»-ean fokatzen du, non ametsak «words words words ...» diren eta esanahia beti dagoen presente (1990:160). Bertan, Vizenorrek Chomskyren «gramatika sortzailea» parodiatzen du «endekapenezko gramatika» delakoarekin, eta horrela zientzia eta bere asmoak zehaztasunean fokatzen ditu (1990:167). Justice Pardone eta Doctor Wild, «words are the meaning of living now ... The word is where the word is at now» sinesten duten bi erromes, ohartzen dira «word hospital» hori haien «last chance to be part of the

real word» dela (1990:170-171).

Oro har errealista magikotzat ezagutzen diren autoreek ez diote *mythosi logosen* gaineko nagusitasunik ematen baina jakituriaren ekoizpenaren oinarrizko bi eredu gisa aurkezten dituzte bi haiek, aldi-berekoak eta osagarriak direnak (Hegerfeldt 2005: 188). Beraz, erromes guztiek, bik izan ezik, nahiago dute «word paradise» uztea, non *logos* eta zehaztasungai nagusi diren, eta ez *mythos*, hizkuntzaren jostagarritasuna nabarmentzen duena (1990: 163). Haatik, Jean-Francois Lyotardek defendatzen du hizkuntza zientifikoa hizkuntza jolas batzuen sormena eta beste jakituria mota batzuen arteko batura dela, baina arau desberdinekin. Paradigma zientifikoa gehiegi nabarmentzeak eta arau zientifikoetan oinarritutako beste jakituria arlo batzuk ebaluatzeak, Lyotarden arabera, inperialismo kulturalera zuzendu gaitu azken mendeetan (1984: 26-27). Diskurtso zientifikoa, beste hitz batzuetan, beste eredu narratibo batzuk haina jostari eta metaforikoa da; desberdintasuna da aurrengoak ez duela onartzen bere interesa. Izan ere, Vizenorrek jargoi eta metodo zientifikoa erabiltzen ditu halakoak agertzea inolaz ere imajinatuko ez genukeen testuinguru batean zientziaren inpartzialtasun asmoak parodiatzeko eta azaltzeko nola paradigma metodikoek autoritatearekin batera funtzionatzen duten. Zehatzago esanda, «word hospital»-eko soziologo batek iradokitzen duen bezala, aurrerabide zientifikoa haziz doa baztertutako jende eta kulturen suntsipenaren kontura. Berak dio gobernuak bere ikerketak finantzatu eta ironikoki bi «word hospital» eraiki dituela *Bureau of Indian Affairs*-en (Indiarren arazoan bulegoa) hondakinen gainean; soziologoak zera azaltzen die erromesei:

The government discovered that there was something wrong with our language. The breakdown in law and order, the desecration of institutions, the hardhearted investigations, but most of all the breakdown in traditional families was a breakdown in communication ... This caused our elected officials to create this word hospital and eight others in the nation ... Six of them are new buildings like this one, while two were created in the ruins of the old Bureau of Indian Affairs field offices [...] The bureau records were included in our analysis of language [...] the language of the bureau had nothing whatever to do with the reason for its existence. (166)

«Word wars» hedatzen eta sustatzen dituen «word hospital»-a *Bureau of Indian Affairs*en hondakinetan eraikita dago. Vizenorrek, beste hitz batzuetan, alegorikoki zabaltzen ditu institutu eta fundazioen agintari faltsuak, indiar natiboen kausak defendatzen dituztela segurtatuz.

Bizitza modernoaren diatriba alegorikoari, Vizenorrek mitoak, maitagarrien ipuinak eta alegiazko istorioak gehitzen dizkio, Hegerfeldten arabera, «expressing a truth too painful to tell directly» helburua duten teknikak direnak (2005: 193). Vizenorrek abiarazi

egiten ditu mitoa eta magia etorkizunaren irudi bat margotzeko eta iraganerako bidaia bat egiteko. Evil gamblerraren pertsonaiak, Vizenorrek Chippewa mitologiako pertsonai beretik maileguan hartuak, kapitalismoaren iruzur landua gorpuzten du.¹ Oraingoan *Bearheart*-en agertzen den Evil Gamblerraren pertsonaia mitikoa, narratiba bi aldiz postmoderno eta postkoloniala, zentzugabekeria modernoaren epitomea da. Bere ordezeko amak bahitu egin zuen parke baten inguruan jolasten ari zenean; eta ez harrigarriki, bere egiazko ama bere desagerpenaz ohartu zen ordu batzuen buruan, parketik urruti zegoenean. Adoptatutako beste hurrekin bizi izan zen beti, adopziozko amak gidatutako furgoneta batean, eta bera eta bere anaiei ez zitzaien inoiz eskatu kode moralik errespetatzeko eta nahi zuten edozer egiteko libre ziren, intzestua eta indarkeria barne. Beranduago bere bizitzan, Evil Gamblerrak gasolina inperio bat hedatzen du eta segurtatzen du gasolina daukala – espiritua sinbolizatuz *Bearheart*-en. Baina Proude Cederfairrek apustuetan irabazten dionean, gamblerraren promesa alferrikakoa eta hutsala dela frogatzen da. Hortaz, Vizenor, hein batean, kapitalismoaren ikuspuntuetara aurreratzen den mendeetako alegoria da.

Gainera, Vizenorrek iragana gogoratzen du bere fikzioan; hala ere, ez du modu nostalgikoan memoriara ekartzen. *Bearheart*-en amaiera aldera, errealismo magikoa erabiltzen du bere irakurleei gogorarazteko sorgin-ehizaren epaiketen zorigaitzoko oroitzapenak eta amerikar ametsa oinarrituta zegoen oinarri faltsua. Erromesak «freedom train to Santa Fe»-n ontziratzen direnean, ironikoki zenbait jendek, Pantribal Pensioner deituak, erromesak lan egitera behartuta dauden mamu hiri batera eramaten dituzte. Arbaso Puritanoek bezala, Pantribal Pensionerrek ere, Proude Cederfairrek azaltzen duen moduan, «founded our new nation [...] and enforced high moral and ethical codes [...] Sorcerers and shamans and witches will be punished for their crimes» (1990: 224). Hitzemandako bidaia delakoan, karabanako partaideak auzitegi batean agertu behar dute gobernadoreek entzun ditzaten. Gobernadoreek «ordered an inquisition into witchcraft and shamanism» eta erromesak «were questioned, suspicions were confirmed, and charges of evil and diabolism were brought against the pilgrims» (1990: 225). Erromesak ikerketa gelara banan-banan eramaten dituzte. Pezozko gela batean giltzapetuta, beste erromesak, Bigfootek ekarri duen «vision vine» edaten, "Clown Crow" (bele-pailazo) bihurtu eta espetxetik ihes egiten dute. Baina espetxetik joan aurretik eta artean Clown Crow itxura dutelarik,

moving through the time of six generations the twelve clown crows were in the palace when the first wooded floors were laid in some of the rooms ... Figured calico covered the whitewashed walls ... The old vigas were replaced when a portion of the earthen roof dropped ... Governor Don Juan Francisco Trevino was discussing the charges against tribal sorcerers and idolaters ... Tribal people liberated the prisoners and

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1 | Elezahar natiboen arabera, Nanabozho tricksterrak, bere amonarekin bizi denak, ulertzen duenean espiritu gaizto boteretsu batek bere ama giltzapetuta duela, bidaia bat hasten du bera salbatzeko. Amonak bere biloba Evil Gamblerraz ohartarazten du:

First these evil spirits charm their victims by the sweetness of their songs, then they strangle and devour them, but your principle enemy will be the great gambler who has never been beaten in his game and who lives beyond the realm of darkness. Invalid source specified.

Nanabozhok igartzen du apustulari handiak *Bearheart*-eko Evil Gamblerraren apustu joko berberak egiten dituela baina azkenean bere ama berreskuratzen du, zeinek lurrak irudikatzen dituen.

spared the governor ... The twelve crows did not hear the governor tell that four tribal people had been hanged for their terminal creeds ... The twelve crows watched the flag of the United States unfurl for the first time in Santa Fe right now from the plaza benches on August 18, 1846. (1990: 234)

Vizenorrek bere pertsonaiak denboran atzera bidaltzen ditu Santa Fe 1675an gertatutako egiazko eszena historiko bat ikusteko, Juan Francisco Treviño gobernadoreak, kolonizatzaile espainiar batek, berrogeita zazpi Pueblotar “Medicine Men” (petrikilo) aztikeriaz salatu eta heriotza zigorra ezarri zienean. Arestian aipatutako pasarteak amerikar armadako jeneralari ere, Stephen Watts Kearnyri, egiten dio erreferentzia, Santa Fe okupatu eta Amerikako bandera goititu zuena Plazan 1846ko abuztuaren 18an.² Haien nazioaren iraganera egindako bisita ameslariaren ondoren –oroiminik ez duena– eta sorgin-ehizaren eta Mexikoren konkistaren gertakari izugarriak berraztertu ondoren, pezozko espetxetik ateratzeko modu bat bilatzen dute eta ihes egiten dute. «Living holds the foolishness of the past» (1990: 218) sinetsiz, Vizenorrek eleberri honetan abileziaz iraganen kolonizazioak ekarritako miseriak marraztu eta etorkizunean izango dituen ondorioei buruz ohartarazten du.

3. Laugarren mundura hartz gisa sartzea; eraldatze korapilatsuak *Bearheart*-en

Bearheart-en proposatu diren narratiba indiar natiboetan sarri ageri dira animalia bihurturiko gizakiei eta gizakien eta animalien arteko bateratzearen ondorioz jaiotako hurrei buruzko kontakizun arraroak. Are gehiago, Vizenorrek zehaztasunez eta behin eta berriz deskribatzen ditu metamorfosi arraroak eta ez-ohiko bateratzeen praktikak eleberriaren egiazko munduan. Metamorfosiaren betekizun klasikoa nortasunaren zatiketaren dualtasuna narratiba natiboan irudikatzea denez, Rigel-Cellardek baiesten duen moduan, eraldatze eta batze horien emaitzek soilik dute garrantzia (1997: 102). Hau da, sarri azaltzen dute nola existitzen den mundua eta nola hasi ziren existitzen hainbat izaki. Vizenorrek sakonago kokatzen ditu eraldatze metamorfikoak erromesen esparru modernoan. Rigel-Cellardek dio Vizenorren fikzioan agertzen diren metamorfosi motek irakurleen arreta galaraztea dutela xede. Bere arabera, Chippewaren eraldatze guztiek ez dute «serious didactic function», eta beraz *Bearheart*-eko eraldatze gehienak arbitrarioak eta jostariak dira (1997:102). Rigel-Cellarden argumentuetan ez bezala, *Bearheart*-eko forma aldaketa biziraupenaren ideiarekin bitartez azal daiteke, eta horren adibiderik adierazgarriena tricksterraren pertsonaiak irudikatzen duena da. Arestian aipatu bezala, trickster natiboen ezaugarri nagusietako bat da aldaketa sozialetara egokitzea, kultura menderatzaileari biziraun eta hari erresistentzia egiteko. Beraz, maskara eta mozorroek,

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2 | Lerro hauek garai historiko bati egiten diote erreferentzia, lehorreak kaosa eragin zuenean Santa Fe de Nuevo Mexicon (egungo Mexiko Berria), eta gosetea indiar Pueblotarren artea zabaldu eta apatxeek indiarrei eraso egiten hasi ziren geroz eta gehiago. Une hartan, Juan Francisco Treviño Espainiar gobernadoreak berrogeita zazpi Pueblotar medicine men aztikeriaz salatu eta haiek atxilotzeko agindu zuen. Haietako hiru urkatu egin zituzten; beste batek bere buruaz beste egin zuen eta gainontzekoak jendaurrean zigortu zituzten eta espetxe zigorra ezarri zitzaion. Berriak entzundakoan, Pueblotar liderrak Santa Fea joan ziren eta Juan Francisco Treviño presoak askatzera behartu zuten. Hau eta beste hainbat gertakari Pueblotar indiar gehienek matxinadaren aurrekariak izan ziren eskualdeko espainiarren aurka, non Pueblotarrak garaile izan ziren nahiz eta espainiarrek lurra birkonkistatu zuten hamabi urte beranduago. Espainiarren lurraren menderatzea ez zen amaitu amerikar armadako jeneralak, Stephen Watts Kearnyk, Santa Fe okupatu eta 1846ko abuztuaren 18an Amerikako bandera goititu, eta, azkenean, Mexikok Guadalupe Hildalgoko ituna sinatu eta Mexiko Berria eta Kalifornia Estatu Batuei eman zien arte (Pike, 2004: 440).

Bearheart-en erabiltzen diren bezala, oinarrizko rola dute trickster baten ezaugarriak definitzerakoan.

Biziraupenerako, tricksterrak hainbat pentsaera sistemaren artean mugitu behar du. Maskarak lagundu egiten dio betekizun horretan. Tricksterraren pertsonaiak eraldatu egiten dira baina ez dute haien nortasuna galtzen (Shakleton, 2001: 72). Tricksterra bere mozorroak aldatzen dituen eta «a confluence of narratives» ekoizten duen itxuraldatzailea da, eta, Shackletonek adierazten du, «perhaps nowhere else in the world are they so significant to a people's sense of self and identity - their past, present, and imagined future- as they are among Native North Americans» (2001: 82). Amerikar natiboek ustez joera handiagoa dute tricksterrak sartzeko haien narratibetan beste gutxiengo etnikoek baino. Izan ere, horrek batzen ditu amerikar natibo erkidego desberdinak.

Tricksterrekin lotutako ezaugarri mitikoa *Bearheart*-en metamaskarak dramatzaten erromesen egoerarekin alderatu daiteke. *Bearheart*-eko erromesetako bik, Proude Cederfair estoikoak eta Bigfoot oiesak zehazki, trickster natiboaren bi alderdi desberdin adierazten dituzte: «culture hero and [a] clownish menace to the community» (2001: 72). Haatik, nekez baztertu daitezke *Bearheart*-eko trickster zerrendatik formaz aldatzen den Bishop Parsamio, bere hiru maskarekin, eta Pio, emakumeen metamaskarak dramatzana bere nortasuna ezkutatzeko.

Baina horien gainera dago Proude Cederfair, xaman bat, natura eta animaliak lotzen dituen aztia eta tricksterra. «The cedar became his source of personal power,» dio narratzaileak, «He dreamed trees and leaned in the wind with the cedar. In the winter he stood outside alone drawing his arms around his trunk undersnow. He spoke with the trees. He became the cedar wood» (1990: 7); «He roared like a bear [...] He understood the language of cedar and learned to trust the voices of the crows. He became the rhythm of cedar trees and birds. Silence and language of animals gave him power» (1990: 17). Gainera, narratzaileak nabarmentzen du Proude «would be a clown [...] a compassionate trickster for the afternoon, a bear from the cedar» (1990: 20).

Hala ere, Proude hartz bilakatzen denean «laugarren munduan» sartzeko, jada ez da trickster bat. Gainera, Bigfootek, trickster bat izan arren, ezin du laugarren mundurako sarrera aurkitu. Hau da, inongo tricksterri ez zaio uzten, Vizenorrek iradoki bezala, laugarren mundu mitikoan sartzan. Horren zergatia da tricksterrak funtsean mugan dauden figurak direla, eta, Jalalzaik azaldu bezala, kontrako bi sistemaren artean ibiliko dira, beraz, agian ez dute funtzionatzen laugarren mundu utopikoa bezalako sistema estatiko batean (Winter, 1999: 29). Trickster baten figurak, narratiba postmoderno

baten oso antzekoa, Lyotarden terminoa erabiliz, «incredulity towards metanarratives» agertzen du (1984: xxiv). Narratiba postmodernoen antzeko, Vizenorren *Bearheart*-eko tricksterrek errespetugabekeria elkarbanatzen dute metanarratibekiko, Gerald Vizenorrek «fede terminal»-tzat duena.

Elizabeth Blairrek azpimarratzen du Vizenorren pertsonaiek ez ezik haren testuak ere – hau da, *Bearheart*-ek – ezaugarri tricksterrak gustuko dituela. Antzina-antzinazko oinaze komunez sendatzea bilatzen duten tricksterrek bezala, «in trickster text, words heal by refusing to take themselves seriously» (1995: 88). Bere umoretik, *Bearheart*-ek irakurleen emozioan du eragina adimenean baino gehiago. Hitz jokoak, irudi grotesko eta fantastikoak, indarkeriazko ekintza ez-ohikoak eta sexu topaketen azalpen arbitrarioak beharrezkoak ez diruditen arren eta testuaren batasun organikoaren soberakina diruditen arren, Blairrek «text as trickster» deitzen dion horren sorkuntzan inplikaturik daude. Oro har, narratiba trickster batek irakurleen irudimena eragozten du ideia fosilduak, hala nola hizkuntza estatikoa eta dimentsio bakarrekoa dela bezalako usteak, hondoratuz, desafiatuz, agerraraziz eta eraitsiz. Ondorioz, McClurek proposatzen du Vizenorren diskurtso tricksterraren ideiak aztertu egin behar direla diskurtso linguistikoaren barruan (1997: 51). Are nabarmenago, pertsonaiek diskurtso menderatzailea ezegonkortzeko hizkuntza erabiltzen duten moduari egiten dio erreferentzia. Izan ere, Vizenorrek tricksterrak erabiltzen ditu bai fikziozko pertsonaia gisa eta bai testu-teknika formalista gisa ere irakurleak (ber)hezteko ikuspuntu normalizatuak hankaz gora jarriz.

Ezaugarri metamorfikoez gainera, trickster batek, Vizenorrek nabarmentzen duen eran, umore indartsu eta sarritan lizuna dauka. Nabarmentzen du «trickster stories heal the heart by native irony, humor, and by the images of survivance and sovereignty» (2009: 229). «Life is humor», jarraitzen du bere irudikapen eta eraldatze modu tricksterrak defendatzeko, «life always has mysteries, beauty, chaos, elements of theatre, comedy, tragedy, and the tease of a trickster. My art is about life» (2009: 229).

Metamorfosiak, hala ere, interpretazio desberdinak ditu hainbat testuingurutan. Kafkatar narratibak metamorfosiaren estrategia darabilenean, ustez gizaki modernoaren alienazioa irudikatu nahi du. Aldizka, Toni Morrisonen *Beloved*en eraldatutako hildako haur bat berpizten du, esklabotasunaren oroitzapen mingarriak azpimarratzea esperoz. Gainera, Angel Asturiasek, Christopher Warnesek nabarmendu bezala, *Men of Maize* laneko metamorfosia metonimia gisa erabiltzen du sinesmen kulturalen alor bat azaltzeko (2009: 15). Hala ere, Gerald Vizenorrek metamorfosiaren jostagarritasuna azpimarratzen du, ez irakurleen aldi baterako gozamenaren izenean, baizik eta tricksterraren bizirauteko saiakera psikologikoak

erakutsi eta gauzatzeko, baita subiranotasun kultural ez-natiboaren mendekotasunean birrintzea saihesteko ere.

Kritikari ugari baiesten dute metamorfosiaren rol bereizgarritako bat mundu post-kolonialaren nortasun anizkun eta jariakorrak irudikatzea dela. Testu errealista magikoetan gehitutako metamorfosiek norbanakoaren erabateko ertz porotsuak islatzen dituzte. Kritikari hauek bi nortasun mota desberdin bereizten dituzte testu errealista magikoetan; «Either there is a proliferation of selves within one single identity, or else readers witness an individual becoming ‘the other’ she was looking at...» (Benito, Manzanos eta Simal 2009: 165). *Bearheart*, bere definizioaren arabera, lehenengo kategoriaren barnean dago. Bishop Parasimoren metamaskarek bere nortasun hirukoitzak irudikatzen dituzte. Berak edo beste erromes batek hiru metamaskaretako bakoitza daramanean, narratzaileak metamaskararen izenez deitzen die, berau eraman aurretik zituzten sinesmenak gogor mantentzen dituzten bitartean. Matchi Makwa horren adibide da. Maiteminduta zegoen emakumezko baten metamaskara eraman aurretik, baina, Matchi Makwak Princess Gallroaden metamaskara jantzi behar duenean sorginak salbatzeko, oraindik ere sexualitate berbera sentitzen du nahiz eta narratzaileak izenorde femeninoan darabilen Matchi Makwari erreferentzia egiteko. «Obsessed with her [Matchi Makwa’s] lust», azaltzen du Bearheartek, «She ran into the kitchen past the waiter and returned to the table with a sharp knife which she used to shave the hair from her crotch [...] breathless she [Matchi Makwa] turns her p... into her warmth evil» (Vizenor, 1990: 180). Berdina gertatzen da emakumeen metamaskarak jantzen dituzten gizon guztiekin. Izenordea femenino bilakatzen da denentzat baina haien nortasuna berdin mantentzen da. Are gehiago, metamorfosia *Bearheart*-en borondatezkoa eta ospatzekoa den fenomeno da. Kafkaren *Metamorfosian* Samsa nahi gabe zomorro bat bilakatzen denean ez bezala, Vizenorrek metamorfosiaren natura ospatzeaz ez ezik, *Bearheart*-eko bere pertsonaiek ere erabakitzen dute zein metamaskara jantzi eta noiz eraldatu animalia edo landare batean. Haatik, metamaskarek *Bearheart*-en ez dituzte aldatzen haiek daramatzaten pertsonaien barneko ezaugarriak. Soilik pertsonaiei laguntzen diete haien nortasuna ezkutatzeko, erromesak janari faxistaren jatetxean bigarrenkoz sartu behar dutenean kasu. Bertan, haien nortasuna ezkutatu behar dute, eta Matchi Makwak, Piok eta Bishop Parasimok hiru metamaskaretako bakoitza ausaz jantzen dituzte (1990: 179). Gainera, Bishop Parasimo hil ondoren, Piok hiru metamaskarak jaraunsten ditu, hirurak emakumeen itxura dutenak. Jantzi bezain pronto, Piok jada ez du lotsa sentitzen gizonezko eta emakumezkoen artean dauden bere aurpegiko ezaugarriengatik. Metamaskarek «give him a good feeling about himself ... herself, she is much more interesting now with the metamasks. She talks all the time...» (1990: 226).

Hala ere, Vizenorrek batzuetan pertsonaia metamorfikoak ahokatzen ditu gizadiak orokorrean duen egoera etsigarria alegorizatzeko. Estatuarteko erromesak elbarri eta scoliama sitsen ilara batean aurkitzen dira. Haien bitartez, Vizenorrek gai kimikoek gizadian dituzten eragin lazgarriak erakusten ditu eta jendeak bere miseriez ahazteko eransten dituen hego artifizialez penatzen da (irudimen eta itxaropenezkoak). Elbarriek, Bigfootek azaltzen duenez, «never developed past the memories of fish and animals in our human past ... less than whole less than human.» Doctor Wildek jarraitzen du, «Cripples are cripples from the chemicals their parents and grandparents drank and smoked and ate» (1990: 147). Bestalde, sitsak sitsak dira «to survive and escape [their] lives» «imagination and visions» bitartez (1990: 149). Zati honetan, Vizenorrek konkortutakoak eta eraldatutakoak darabiltza haien fede terminaletan kartzelatutako jende akastuna irudikatzeko. «We become our memories and what we believe,» dio Proudek, «we become the terminal creeds we speak. Our words limit the animals we would become ... soaring through words from memories and vision. We are all incomplete ... imperfect. Lost limbs and lost visions stand with the same phantoms» (1990: 147).

Ondorioz, Gerald Vizenorrek metamorfosiaren estrategia darabil hiru xedetarako. Lehendabizi, metonimikoki erakusteko gizakia eta naturaren arteko lotura indiar kosmologian, Proude hartz bilakatzen denean kasu; bigarrenik, sinbolikoki erakusteko amerikar natiboek jarraitu behar duten bidea haien kulturak bizirik iraun dezan, tricksterren pertsonaietan erakusten den moduan; eta hirugarrenik, metaforikoki irudikatzeko gizadiaren perfekziorik ezaren gezurrezko ikuspegia, fede terminalak onartzera eraman dituena.

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