

BLM 1 – *Highway on the Trickster*

The dream world of North American Indian mythology is inhabited by the most fantastic creatures, beings and events. Foremost among these beings is the “Trickster,” as pivotal and important a figure in our world as Christ is in the realm of Christian mythology. “Weesageechak” in Cree, “Nanabush” in Ojibway, “Raven” in others, “Coyote” in still others, this Trickster goes by many names and many guises. In fact, he can assume any guise he chooses. Essentially a comic, clownish sort of character, his role is to teach us about the nature and the meaning of existence on the planet Earth; he straddles the consciousness of man and that of God, the Great Spirit.

The most explicit distinguishing feature between the North American Indian languages and the European languages is that in Indian (e.g., Cree, Ojibway), there is no gender. In Cree, Ojibway, etc. unlike English, French, German, etc., the male-female-neuter hierarchy is entirely absent. So that by this system of thought, the central hero figure from our mythology – theology if you will – is theoretically neither exclusively male nor exclusively female, or is both simultaneously.

Some say that Weesageechak left this continent when the white man came. We believe she/he is still here among us – albeit a little the worse for wear and tear – having assumed other guises. Without the continued presence of this extraordinary figure, the core of Indian culture would be gone forever.

“A Note on the Trickster,” by Tomson Highway
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