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The Ways of the Trickster. Meaning, Discourse and Cultural Blasphemy

Abstract: In this paper, I try to focus on some cultural consequences of the mythical figure of the trickster. Known as a complex mythological character, the trickster comprises contradictory traits, from intelligence to foolishness or perversity. The omnipresence of the trickster in religious myths and practices throughout this world may lead us to the belief that it serves certain cultural goals, has cultural functions beyond its necessary presence as key ingredient of folklore or religious explanations. The blasphemy as a cultural event is interesting from both the point of view of political and social challenge and the point of view of discourse change. The blasphemy is not just a religious issue, but a very versatile discursive tool used to criticize or attack the omnipotence of the dominant paradigms.

Keywords: trickster discourse, meaning, blasphemy, social change, transgression of social norms

1. The Myth of the trickster and its cultural significance

The myth of the trickster contains extremely useful insights about the way meaning is conveyed in human societies. Meaning, discourse and culture are deeply connected by means that are not always evident; the construction of social reality (to use Searle's phrase) implying intricate mechanisms that involve psychological, social, and symbolic levels of cooperation between individuals. For Carmen Robertson, „the trickster remains a ubiquitous force in aboriginal literature, art, and culture. Trickster stories abound among First Nations of the Americas, handed down from generation to generation. The coyote, the fox, and the spider have entered popular culture as trickster figures which shock and communicate serious lessons in humorous and often bawdy ways” (Robertson 2008, 5). But the trickster is not to be found only in America; as Claude Levi-Strauss noticed, the trickster is characterized by its duality, being an ambiguous and equivocal entity. Defined this way, we can find it almost everywhere, almost in every known human culture.

The trickster is a very complex mythological character, being described both as malicious, foolish, cunning, clown and intelligent, heroic or saviour. He/she/it is a bearer of subversive meaning, but in the same time an aesthetic and narrative tool for telling stories. By using different tricks and practical jokes,

the trickster is not only „stealing” something – in a gesture that reiterates the story of Prometheus – but it is also destructing/creating a new world that involves, at the beginning, a new constellation of meanings. The destructive/creative work of the trickster may serve different functions, such as raising awareness, creating optimal conditions for a cultural paradigm shift or introducing a fundamental metanarrative in the life of a community. As it has been shown for quite sometime (see the Brer Rabbit character, for instance) the functions of the trickster's discourse also include societal deconstruction, rule breaking or critique of oppressive discourse. This is why the first nations of the Americas still hold such great admiration for the trickster (Schmidt 1995).

One point of view concerning the trickster mythology links the trickster with the comic side of the discourse: „at the heart of the trickster discourse is a comic spirit that demands a break from formulas; it disrupts social and cultural values. Trickster discourse involves risk taking, boundary testing, deception, and cruelty in an effort to teach culturally appropriate attitudes and behavior” (Robertson 2008, 18).

The works of Ioan-Petru Culianu (1998, 2002) described yet another cluster of meanings that can be assigned to the trickster myths. Culianu cites Radin, Mac Linscott Ricketts, Ugo Bianchi, Dumézil and other scholars who tackled the trickster problem. Despite some differences (for instance, Radin believes in a purity of the trickster character, while Ricketts underlines a three-ply character that is in the same time demiurge, cultural hero and trickster – Culianu 2002, 32), Culianu thinks that we have strong reasons to link the trickster mythology with dualism and gnosticism. In zurvanism or in Dogon myths, Culianu argues, we already have the figures of the „charlatan demiurge”, the antagonist or the myth of the ignorant Creator. The solid connection between dualism and tricksters is proven by the presence of tricksters in the main religions. Seth, for instance, is described as unfair, uncivilised, with prominent and promiscuous sexuality, a thief, but also involved in cosmogony. Indra has a similar ambiguity, while Prometheus, Culianu adds, is perhaps the best known. The myth of Prometheus maintains a lot of common features with other trickster myths, both found in Europe and in North America: someone who dares to challenge the Gods (or the Creator), someone involved in helping humans survive and develop, someone who creates a different state of affairs by stealing something valuable from the Gods. For Culianu, what is really important in trickster myths is the relationship that the trickster has with the existing *order* (cosmic, social, moral, political). Good or bad, malevolent or benevolent, the trickster usually challenges our „natural ways” of behavior, judgement and action. The irony of the trickster has the power to dissolve our conceptual schemata, but also our relationships; as Dorsey (2002, 14) put it, „tricksters further distinguish themselves as anti-heroes by breaking the borders of the traditional hero's persona. Whereas traditional heroes generally exhibit a feeling of goodwill in their relationships, the tricksterish anti-hero appears bitter and sarcastic. In other

words, while heroes usually interact with other protagonists in a largely good-nature fashion, this new hero subverts the usual tranquillity of his relationships”.

2. Meaning and linguistic practices

The trickster challenges our linguistic practices, seen as a central aspect of our life. This may be a part of the trickster's general strategy of challenging the cultural models, but also a thing in itself. The trickster assumes the role of deity of the blasphemous language. He/she/it not only does the unthinkable, but also speaks the unspeakable.

In times of cultural change, the trickster is not only present, but also one of the most active agents of that change. The trickster, nevertheless, is a part of the very deep cultural background, a part that seldom disappears or changes. It belongs to a certain culture, but in the same time it tries to undermine that very culture; it creates a type of anarchic discourse that puts to the test the dominant discourse within that culture. The trickster does not offer us just one discourse, but it is the possibility of the discourse, in fact the continuous possibility of the undermining discourse. It is the seed of the alternative speech (and thus, of the alternative meanings) that emerge at a certain point in time. New meanings are given, new speeches are born, new ideas seem persuasive and seductive. Why does the trickster alter meanings? Just because this is the fabric people use when they live their lives (that is when they try to adapt to the physical and social environment). To assign meanings to sentences, things, events, social ties is to open yourself to the possibility of sociality. Whatever is meaningless is important only when 1) it challenges what we know about meaningful/and what we judge as being meaningful; 2) it is interpreted on the background of what is considered meaning. It looks as though the trickster was created in order to ensure the pass from one type of social situation to the other.

As Bakhtin showed (1981, 273), „at the time when poetry was accomplishing the task of cultural, national and political centralization of the verbal-ideological world in the higher official socio-ideological levels, on the lower levels, on the stages of local fairs and buffoon spectacles the heteroglossia of the clown sounded forth, ridiculing all 'languages' and dialects; there developed the literature of the *fabliaux* and *Schwänke* of street songs, folksayings, anecdotes, where there was no language-center at all, where there was to be found a lively play with the 'languages' of poets, scholars, monks, knights and others, where all 'languages' were masks and where no language could claim to be an authentic, incontestable face.” His concept of *dialogized heteroglossia* helps us understand the function and development of the trickster discourse. The trickster discourse was in direct opposition with the official discourse in the same way that the heteroglossia of the clown was opposed to the literary language. A useful distinction, in this context, is that between *centripetal* and *centrifugal* forces within language. While the centripetal forces try to create unification and centralization, the centrifugal forces work for decentralization

and fragmentation. I think that we are making a mistake if we perceive this opposition in naïve terms, ignoring the subtle link between the two. Like in Physics, the spiral movement of culture is, at any moment, defined by the two forces.

Following some of Jung's texts on the trickster theme, Susan Rowland (2006, 294) notices that „meaning is both created and found, here in the interaction between 'inner' image and 'outer' narrative structure. The strategy that Jung adopts for his 'Trickster' text, that of the frame is how he regards the individual psyche as working in the collective space of a social group: powerful narratives, 'frame' and 'make intelligible' inner contents through dialogical relationship. The result is myth. So myths animate the dialogical psyche: they are made by images made psychologically dynamic by interacting with framing narratives. The trickster is a signifier of a certain type of 'framing' which enables narrative to be flexible and multiple.” Our habit of reading a text and searching for its meaning can be labelled as theological and, at any rate, has theological roots (and this is one trait that was later borrowed by the scientific discourse). This means that we are accustomed to searching for one core meaning of the text that we are reading. This can be a serious semantic trap, because we know that originally words and phrases had a lot of meanings. One of the toughest things about this trap is that someone might believe that the single description offered at the end of the quest is the only one possible, and thus, necessary. Instead of this univocal approach, Jung suggests we should search for a better balance between Logos and Eros, a re-balancing of the whole discourse of modernity, actually. The practice of the trickster opens the possibility of multiple meanings and multiple narratives; Jung himself experienced this type of writing in different moments of his life.

3. The trickster and the possibility of transitional speech

The transitional speech may be defined as that type of speech that is active during the periods of transgression from one paradigm to another, from one historical age to another. As Arnds showed (2008), Grass's *The Tin Drum* or Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* are perfect literary examples of the idea that trickster-like persons and trickster discourses arise in times of change. Is there a cultural need for a trickster in such a moment? The answer is probably affirmative. In times of cultural and historical change, memories, facts, fiction, legends, myths, fears, illusions and ideologies mix in unpredictable ways. The trickster does the same thing: he blasphemously mixes different entities. A new religious leader, for instance, may use the same technique. Martin Luther is not just any religious leader. Through his actions, he undermines the Catholic Church and its official discourse, criticizing it from the inside. He offers an alternative, setting the base for a new type of Christian speech. Luther creates the possibility of a different speech for Western Christianity. He opens a new niche for the understanding of life, salvation, piety and relationship with God.

His works? A blasphemy. His deeds? Blasphemous. The effects of his actions, on the other hand, are countless and impossible to be grasped in one single analysis. The birth of Protestantism and Capitalism may be just the tip of the iceberg. As Culianu argued, a closer analysis may prove that Reformation and Counter Reformation were in fact not opposed movements, but allies in the struggle against Renaissance and its pendant, magic.

The idea of transgression of social and cultural norms can be related to the idea of the trickster as *jivan mukta*. This time, the clown or trickster is presented as a mediation tool with the sacred. The person who reached this state is described in Hinduism as being eliberated from all known constraints, including the physical constraints given by space and time. The *jivan mukta* is free because he identifies himself with the unmanifested, noncosmic spirit (*avyatka*). Culianu (1996, 185-196) uses the name *antinomists* for this category of initiates (ascetics, shamans, medicine men). The ritual of norm breaking is, in fact, another norm within our culture, the negation of culture being nothing else than a part of our culture, namely a sub-programme of our cultural software. The majority of people experience the feeling of transgression of norms through the usual, socially tolerated rituals. This experimentation of power, Culianu thinks, is just an illusion or a mask, but it serves a fundamental social function, that of keeping the society safe. For Culianu, only the antinomists embody the subjectively experienced power. The antinomists assimilate a certain cultural model and become authentic incarnations and keepers of culture. They can actually transcend culture, cultural norms, climbing up to their origin. The shaman, the yogi, the christian ascetic or the medicine man are examples of *specialists of power* who experience a symbolic death which is followed by a rebirth. This symbolic scenario produces real powerful individuals, that are freed from the usual social norms, but also from illness and death. As the history of religion and the study of myths show, the antinomists claim that they reach the *jivan mukta* state using the strategy of *negation of negation*. This includes the performance of paradoxical rituals, behaviours that are strictly forbidden (in Shaiva Tantra, for instance, this includes drinking wine, eating meat or fish, using ritualistic sexual acts), incomprehensible deeds or outrageous acts. Culianu identifies the presence of these specialists of power in gnosticism, the gnostic religion having a noncosmic aspect, manifested by the will to speed the end of the world in order to escape the prison of this world.

G. Vizenor, on the other hand, is interested in the transgressive discourse of the trickster from the angle of colonialism, freedom and political change. As a trickster-writer, he is interested in the disruptive force of literature. As Schmidt (1995) shows, Vizenor is well aware of the power of language and of its possibilities of imposing a dominant discourse. Subverting this dominant discourse is one of the main tasks of the writer, seen as a modern warrior, a warrior that fights with and against words. The revolutionary, the radical work of the writer is the only one who adds real value to a culture and to a community. Studying conspiracy myths and tricksters, Leroy Dorsey (2002, 3)

argues that „such a contemporary story has abandoned the typical portrayal of conspiracy characters' motivations and behaviors, introducing protagonists – tricksters – whose beliefs are nebulous and whose actions are less clear given the complexity of their universe. As a result, traditional concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are rendered more ambiguous, making the major characters representing those states more accessible for viewers who likewise negotiate such conflicts in their lives. While trickster characters are not new in literature, their introduction in the conspiracy myth heralds a change in the way such discourse has traditionally functioned”.

4. Blasphemy and cultural change

Blasphemy is one of the tools of special importance. First, it has the role of introducing a new idea to the public conscience. Being tagged as „blasphemous”, this idea may be mocked, laughed at, criticized, violently attacked. But from the trickster's point of view, this is not the same danger as in the case of total ignorance. In a very good description offered in literature by Chinua Achebe in his 1958 novel *Things fall apart*, the people from Umuofia village offer the Christian missionaries a place to build their church. In a mix of irony and self confidence, the natives give the missionaries a piece of bad, sinister land, called the „doomed woods”. Of course, the natives wait to see what happens with the blasphemous white men (who dare walk on evil land). Nothing really „bad” happens, to the bewilderment of the village people. Evidently, the blasphemy of the white men triggers a form of religious conversion for some members of the tribe. Other members of the tribe (including the main character of the story) see, in this blasphemy, the beginning of the end for their autonomous community and, more important, for their cultural habits. In a desperate act, he attacks and kills a person perceived as „the enemy”, but it was, of course, in vain. The cultural change was already on its way, nothing else than trying to adapt to it would work out. The (pseudo)heroic deed was one of the last symbols of a dying culture. Second, blasphemy is useful in the process of cultural erosion: with the notable exceptions of brute force, revelation or accident, cultures usually decay slowly. It takes pretty much time until the factors of erosion do their silent and steady work. In this context, blasphemy can be used as start, as the first step of the process, or as a way to intensify the process of erosion.

Third, we have the phenomenon of criminalisation of blasphemy. As Tomes (2010, 241) put it, „the criminalisation of blasphemy is, historically, the attempt to secure doctrinal conformity in speech. Laws against blasphemy maintain fixed parameters by which to locate the religious 'other', and serve to demarcate the speech and practises of the other from that of 'true believers’”. What is really interesting about this phenomenon is that, on the long term, it generally does more harm to the doctrine than in the case in which the blasphemous discourse would not have been banned. This is one of the nightmares of censorship,

actually. On the one hand, to safeguard the doctrinal conformity in speech, as Tomes says, the censorship has to act by banning a certain cultural product (theory, idea, book, myth, belief, image, artwork etc.), thus ensuring that the dangerous content does not spread very fast. On the other hand, the minute something is banned, people will start having desires for that thing. The latter is determined by two conditions: the scarcity of that resource (what is banned is generally hard to find) and the undeniable pleasure of searching and finding and experiencing something banned.

Peter Arnds (2008) offers three very rich examples of the role played by blasphemy in literature, namely in the case of magical realism. Right at the beginning of his paper, Arnds notices that

„Fortunately, at times in which the right to freedom of speech is threatened, there are artists who remind us of that right. In the face of those telling us that we ought to stand united behind our political leaders and who want to blacklist unpatriotic academics, in the face of these, we ought to brandish certain books. Books full of blasphemy and sacrilege reminding us that at times of political and religious monologism, we need to hear conflicting voices in order to preserve the spirit of liberalism. Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia still enforces this message. According to the Russian critic, in the comic modern novel, heteroglossia is 'parodic and aimed sharply and polemically at the official languages of its given time'. Bakhtin challenges the tyranny of unitary languages of regimes founded on religious, national, cultural, racial, or even linguistic monologues.”

Moreover, the author perceives a certain similarity in Grass's and Rushdie's work. These two authors revisit a very old symbolic and religious tradition in which there was little or no separation between forces that would produce social or cosmogonic chaos and forces that produce social or comogonic order, between agents of distruction and agents of creation. In this tradition, the deities or the cultural heroes were not characterized by a very firm distinction between good and bad. Good deeds and bad deeds merged in a story that was sometimes difficult to understand (and is even more difficult to understand now without proper explanations), seemed to lack cohesion and to hide a cluster of meanings behind the incoherent surface. This tradition is to be found, again, almost everywhere, even if Hinduism, the Greek pantheon or Egypt offer the most prominent examples. In the case of the Greek pantheon, for instance, you get a story that describes Zeus as a creator, a powerful and knowledgeable leader, but also a cheat, a thief, an oversexualized entity and a continuous schemer. This makes the trickster/human parallel even more appealing a thesis, in a circle inside which gods resemble humans, humans resemble tricksters, and tricksters envy and challenge the leadership of the gods. In Arnds (2008, 70) terms,

„The difference between aboriginal peoples and pagan societies, which manage to wed the forces of chaos with the forces of order, and Christianity, which started separating these two principles by distinguishing between Jesus and Satan,

becomes interesting within the context of Grass's novel, which reflects this pagan union of the Apollonian and Dionysian sphere. It does this by merging in Oskar Matzerath the figures of Jesus and Satan, of victim and fascist. Oskar can never be just one: the dividing line of any dialectic is blurred in this book and, like all archetypal tricksters, Oskar finds himself on the threshold between two domains. The trickster's typical location in European culture is the marketplace, and as Bakhtin tells us in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, this was the place in which curses, profanities, and oaths reigned. While the sacred was reserved for the church, the profane reigned outside of church, primarily in the marketplace."

Bulgakov himself behaves just like a trickster, but of course this is not his choice, but his only option. As Arnds points out (2008, 74), in times of severe or extreme censorship writers and artists have to stick to the metaphorical language. They have to be involved in a process of „white magic” in order to re-establish the equilibrium that was compromised by the extensive use of „black magic” (*witchcraft* is the metaphor used by Bulgakov to describe the totalitarian practices of the Stalin regime). Both Grass and Bulgakov, Arnds holds, use the old idea that certain forms of music have the power to deliver us from evil, to get us rid of the demons that were either there since the beginning or were brought by the Nazi or Communist ideologies. Both Grass and Bulgakov use jazz as a symptomatic genre for the people's quest for liberty. Jazz music proves destructive/creative both in the case of Nazi hymns and Communist rituals. In fact, Oskar responds to the Nazi hymns by performing his own ritual, the beating of the drum, an extremely complex symbol that signifies danger, opposition, exorcism and, perhaps the most important thing, the necessary awakening of the German people. Culiănu (2000, 153-161; 199-200) gives a few clues about Bulgakov's gnostic sources, along the inspiration he took from Goethe's *Faust*. For Arnds (2008, 73),

„This is very different from Grass's kind of blasphemy, a blasphemy within and directed against the Church. Bulgakov's novel abounds if not in blasphemy then in a sort of secular sacrilege targeted at the state and the absence of any church. In the two central figures, the Master and Pontius Pilate, we obtain the two positions of the persecuted artist and the tyrant. The Master is to an extent a self-portrait of Bulgakov and his difficulties as a writer under Stalin. Stalin can be discerned both in the figure of Pontius Pilate, who condemns innocent people to death, and Woland, the Devil. The novel shares with Grass's *The Tin Drum* the installation of a vagrant Jesus figure, who in both cases has to carry the burden imposed upon him by the crimes of a totalitarian regime, its cowardice, betrayals, and murders. That Oskar Matzerath increasingly identifies with Jesus at the end of Grass's novel indicates that he is the victim of the crimes of humanity *par excellence* and, like Bulgakov, Grass intends to remind us that the story of Jesus continues to have metaphorical relevance for our own day, that there will always be a Pontius Pilate who ends up crucifying a Jesus.”

Grass and Rushdie fully develop, in their works, the discursive possibilities of heteroglossia. As Bakhtin noticed in Rabelais's case, we witness again a revival and a renewal of the grotesque and picaresque tradition. It is not a coincidence, by the way, that both Oskar and Saleem share a lot of traits with the usual profile of the trickster: mental and physical peculiarities, a certain degree of weirdness, an extraordinary appetite for rebellion and disobedience, uncomprehensible behaviour and even a magical challenge of the usual space-time frame of human experience. As for the latter, Oskar and Saleem are not ordinary children. They were both born in a special moment of their nation's history, thus having to accomplish a special destiny. Bulgakov, Grass and Rushdie, each in his own way, recreate the old path magic-blasphemy-(possible)change. In Arnds's terms (2008, 75):

„One of the most interesting connections between *The Tin Drum* and *Midnight's Children* is their fantastic realism, their revival of the picaresque tradition. Most of Rushdie's characters display the kind of homelessness of which Bakhtin speaks, the dubious origin of the picaro, the great blasphemer in world literature. We realise to what extent the picaro himself stems from an intercultural archetype that transcends Europe, the mythological trickster, whose central function is to criticise society from its margins. As tricksters, Oskar Matzerath and Saleem Sinai, the hero of *Midnight's Children*, have in common that they are equipped with magic weapons allowing them to commit deeds of blasphemy and sacrilege. What is Oskar's scream, by which he destroys the glass in churches, is Saleem's extremely sensitive nose that allows him to smell the thoughts of people. As tricksters, they are marginalised, figures on the threshold, and find themselves in what the anthropologist Victor Turner has called a zone of liminality.”

The cosmogonic marginality of the tricksters within the religious myths is reinterpreted socially, historically, politically and culturally. The discourse of the trickster is meant to challenge the powerful and central doctrines in a community, and to take this even further by challenging the distinction between popular culture and high or elite culture. It seems that if we see it from a certain angle, the high culture appears hypocritical and full of stereotypes. It is as if we should force our minds to think that it is possible to have a monumental history as a general category, while all the particular cases are miserable. It is as if a nation lives its magical moment, while all the citizens are trapped in a gray, trivial existence. Politically, the recurrent strategy of the leaders through which they try to reach the souls of people is the patriotic call. The trickster's role in this last example is clear: to criticize the strategy and to mock it, showing its true identity as pure rhetoric.

„Like Grass, Rushdie thus reinstalls 'low' culture over 'high' culture, elevates the marginalised over those at the centres of power. The subversion of an official discourse is, in both cases, achieved specifically through the sacrilegious conflation of important historical events with the banality of the protagonist's private life and

through a revival of myth and irrationalism suppressed by both new states, both under Adenauer's politics of rationalism and Nehru's secularisation." (Arnds 2008, 77).

I'm not sure that Arnds's phrase – „a revival of myth and irrationalism” – covers the whole picture. Of course, he is at least partially right because it is now quite clear that the thesis of secularisation and modernisation has to overcome serious criticism. As David Nash shows, the idea that Enlightenment and secularisation would privatize religion and religious reflexes, thus liberating the public space from religious-related content and behaviour is highly debatable. As Nash (2008, 18) put it, „the survival of blasphemy as a crime and as an accusation also offers a temptation to suggest that blasphemy as a cultural phenomenon may suit a more dystopian view of the West in crisis. Those Western critics that were (and are) suspicious of the Enlightenment, and its supposed empowerment of the individual, are the important figures here. Foucault, Derrida and the postmodernists not only regard this empowerment to be a sham but also are likely see the supposed authority of Enlightenment truth as a collection of controls whose ultimate explanatory cohesion disintegrates before them”.

Bakhtin's idea of dialogized heteroglossia is, again, fruitful because it explains the continuous presence of blasphemy and sacrilege in society in spite of our beliefs (or illusions) about Enlightenment, progress and secularisation. The dialogised heteroglossia is probably a necessary presence as an underlying structure of discursiveness the same way the antagonist is a necessary presence in any dualist scenario. The centrifugal forces of discourse are, amongst other things, a reminder of the fact that most of our utterances of today are nothing more than relative depictions of the social reality, that will lose their relevance when the context has changed. Our practice of heteroglossia helps us put any type of discourse to the test, and, more important, helps us choose laughter and freedom over conformity and fear (Schmidt 1995). We may change our language games along with the changes of the power and discursive centers.

5. Culture as trickster

Susan Rowland (2006, 294) claims that „modernity lost a valuable psychic resource in abandoning its trickster/medial fool myth. The only *solution* to the static imprisonment of the shadow in image (as opposed to its dialogical integration as image enacts a dialogue with narrative frame), is to recognize the potential role of history as the location of multiple stories of questionable human activity. Connect the narrative resources we call 'history' to the inner shadow image and you have the potential for a psychological narrative of ethics and relating: a myth. History, Jung suggests, is the modern world's trickster narrative. It works by enabling the past to remain past, by keeping it before consciousness as a possible present: that is how conscious discrimination works.”

Ultimately, the culture itself is maybe the biggest trickster. It reinvents itself and it forces us to reinvent ourselves by means of discursive strategies. Our fidelity to culture may be bigger than the fidelity of culture to us. Sometimes, the cultural products behave as if they would form an eco-system of their own. Cultural models try to adapt to new environments the same as organisms do in nature. Some of them succeed, and some of them fail. Power, history, chance and luck decide who survives. But the seductive power of culture – namely, of every cultural model powerful enough – is still there. The victims of the trickster usually understand what happened to them only at the very end of the story, even though it is not uncommon to see that many times the trickster's lore remains unexplained and untouched by our intellectual effort: sometimes we just don't get it. A part of the explanation resides in Ficino's saying "*Iocari serio, studiosissime ludere*", developed by Culianu (2003). Our culture seduces us into a play that is way beyond our intellectual powers of grasping it. Of course, a question arises here: is there a sort of „anthropic principle”? Is our culture testing us and tempting us to understand its goals and structures? Is the democratization of the culture (trickster) content the right solution or this is a puzzle to be solved by just a few? Let's remember that in native American myths the trickster (a raven, a rabbit or a coyote) is seldom seen by everybody.

At a certain moment, we suddenly realize that we speak differently, and maybe we behave differently. The dialogized heteroglossia that we subjected ourselves to led to an inversion of values. What we thought as just, good and acceptable now seems meaningless and vane. Our culture moved forward, and dragged us in the process.

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