

THE TRICKSTER

A Theory of Modern Branding and Advertising

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The Trickster is that part of ourselves that secretly desires the fantastic. The phenomenon exists in all cultures and persists today in modern branding and advertising.

This paper describes the nature of the ‘Trickster’ phenomenon and how to harness its powers to optimise brand strategy and advertising executions. As sources we use examples of successful branding and advertising from around the world, which show how the Trickster manifests itself, globally and in specific cultures.

The upshot is a compelling model of the modern consumer mind by which we can obtain a deeper and better understanding of brands and advertising, and how to achieve competitive edge.

INTRODUCTION

‘The Trickster’ phenomenon is one of the most powerful sources of communication and persuasion known, rivalling logic, rationality, and the arts of rhetoric. It operates at a deep psychological level appealing to our wishes to be persuaded, using a complex array of devices to entice, convince, and seduce. The Trickster is not merely a con-man’ as the name may suggest, nor are the tricks trivial stunts, slights of hand, or gimmicks. On the contrary, its powers are archetypal and compelling, creating the extraordinary out of ordinary, and dazzling us with its charms.

The Trickster, as we shall show, is alive and well in modern branding and advertising.

THE TRICKSTER

The presence of a Trickster figure in human affairs is universal. The Trickster is that part of ourselves that secretly desires the fantastic, representing our wishes for exaggeration, seduction and the absurd, hovering on the borders of consciousness and the unconscious. The Trickster is at one and the same time:

- Creator Saviour
- Mischievous Primitive
- Self-centred Infantile
- Magical Cunning
- Outrageous Subtle

The Trickster breaks taboos, overturns conventions, stretches the mind, and challenges the limits of belief. The Trickster is both moral and immoral, good and evil, sub-human and super-human, earthly and divine. Few other myths have persisted with their fundamental content unchanged. We are in the presence of a figure, which has a very special significance indeed.

Trickster figures exists in all cultures in the form of Shaman, Sorcerer, Magician, Fool, Clown, Joker, Jester and Enchanter. In ancient Greece for example, the Trickster was Hermes, the God of commerce, profit and luck, the bringer of dreams. Or, Prometheus who cheated the Gods, as well as Dionysos, who was born of mortal mother and divine father:

*I am Dionysos, God born
The youngest of the Gods and oldest
Born in lightning, a fire-child*

*Shape-changer, now in mortal guise
I am light and darkness ...
Madness I inspire, the frenzy
Wild Bacchic dancers ...
In me you find your own pure selves
Dionysos, son of Zeus, brings double gifts
Raw Punishment, and Sweet Rewards.* (The Bacchae, Euripedes)

In Greek theatre, the Trickster mediates between satire and tragedy. In Rome, the Trickster was Mercurius, the God of trade and persuasion; in Hebraic culture Jacob; in Norse myths Loki, the co-creator of the world who brought fire to mankind; and Ahti son of Lempi in the Finnish Kalevela. Amongst the Ashanti of Ghana, the Trickster is Anansi, the spider-trickster. In Japan, the Trickster is Susano who plunged the world into darkness by mistake; in Polynesia, Maui was the trickster who captured the sun to slow it down. And so on around the world.

The 'Prince of Tricksters' is Hermes, and it is worthwhile elaborating on his significance and symbolic role in human affairs through the ages. In Greek mythology, Hermes the illegitimate son of Zeus became the messenger of the gods, and of Zeus in particular. On the day of his birth, to lay claim to his suitability for divine status, he stole the cattle of his half-brother Apollo; these he subsequently returned on the instructions of his father and, as a peace offering, the young god gave Apollo the lyre, the gift of music. In return he received a magic wand, the 'caduceus' that could both inspire and dumbfound whomever it touched. As Homer wrote of Hermes in the Iliad (24: 322-38):

"Immediately he bound upon his feet the fair sandals gold and immortal ... He caught up the staff with which he mazes the eyes of those mortals he would maze, or wakes again the sleepers."

In psychological terms, the Olympian gods represent our deepest psychic selves in their various manifestations. Hermes, as an intermediary, transfers signs, good and bad, from our psychic selves to our egos, guiding us through life and beyond. He appears particularly at moments of transition, or liminalities, as the god of the crossroads, at night, in the interplay between reality and fantasy that is the twilight, during impulse and phases of change in our lives, our child and teenage years, childbirth and midlife crises. Ultimately he guides us to Hades, 'Hermes Psychopompous' - the 'Conductor of Souls'.

Hermes therefore is the ruling force during flux and change, between doing one thing and another. This is the state we see in everyday marketing life too, when consumers switch brands during life stages, buy on impulse, change routines in

the supermarket, or respond to advertising. During this intermediate state, the mind is open, creative, and highly influencable.

Hermes is also the god of commerce and trade, both legal and illegal. As an early negotiator - he convinced the other Olympians by the power of his youthful argument that he should be numbered among them - he was associated with communication and the arts of persuasion, necessary attributes for the buying and selling of goods. When Zeus asked him what he could possibly be god of, given that his brother had the sun and his sister the moon, Zeus himself commanded the heavens, Poseidon the seas, and Demeter the earth, Aphrodite the hearts of men, and Ares their rage - what was left? Hermes replied 'everything in between'. So he became a god of movement, of the passage of time, of the ether that breathes between heaven and earth, and of the swiftness of a single thought. Not surprisingly, Hermes is the master of modern advertising.

The Trickster often takes on an animal form, for example in North American Indian cultures, as a Coyote or Raven. Special attention has been given to the Trickster figure amongst the Winnebago Indians of central Wisconsin and eastern Nebraska (Radin, 1956), and earlier the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico (Bandelier, 1918). The Winnebago know the Trickster as 'wakdjunkaga', 'the tricky one'. Elsewhere the Trickster is ape, monkey, hare, fox, spider, bat, chameleon, fish, bird or dragon, and other animals or half-humans often with fantastical and magical wings (see Appendix 1).

By appearing as an animal, the Trickster combines animal and human qualities, the powers of animals with recognisable human appetites, engaging in one mischievous exploit after another. If not an animal the Trickster frequently wears animal masks or animal clothes. Our continued fascination with the half-animal, half-human is clear in the Disney characters and the multitude of anthropomorphic Trickster figures in modern branding and advertising.

The Trickster is usually portrayed in myth as male. But the Trickster has the ability to transform into female, or to be both sexes at the same time. And as we show below there are both male and female Tricksters. As male, the Trickster can perform extraordinary sexual feats with an enormous penis. Otherwise in primitive cultures there is a fascination with the anus, liver, kidney and heart. The female equivalent is the witch, but we all have the Trickster within us. The Trickster is the spirit of disorder, and the enemy of boundaries, law and order everywhere. The Trickster represents protest and the pleasures of illogic and chaos.

The Trickster can be ‘good’ and ‘evil’, as in the Batman films (Harris, 1997), where the Trickster is the Joker but also Batman himself:

- Bruce Wayne, seemingly innocent and bemused, is transformed in Trickster-like fashion into a super-hero – the positive Trickster – a black ‘bat’ with amazing powers who is charged with repelling the forces of evil.
- Jack Napier, the white-faced, green haired Joker is the evil side of the Trickster.
- As in other global Trickster stories there is the guardian-angel (Alfred, the butler and mentor), a fair damsel (Vicki Vale), the forces of good (the Mayor of Gotham, the Police Commissioner), and the chorus of evil (Joker’s henchmen).

A further feature of the Trickster is irony. In Medieval times for example the Fool’s Pope (Fatuorum Papam) satirised papal pomp; at the Ass’s Festival (Festum Asinorum) the congregation brayed like asses; the more ridiculous the noise so the more this ‘pleasurable blasphemy’ was celebrated. Humour and irony permeate much of what the Trickster gets up to. The same is true in the modern world as we too satirise, caricaturise, and lampoon our leaders, our institutions, and sometimes our brands and advertising. It helps us cope with them.

There are many figures who are ‘tricksterish’ in their own right. In Sport, Eric Cantona, Paul Gascoigne, Maradona (‘Hand of God’), Muhammed Ali (‘Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee’), and so on. In the world of music, David Bowie, Michael Jackson the ‘arch-Trickster’, Madonna, Marilyn Manson. In entertainment, Charlie Chaplin of course, Mr Bean, Jack Nicholson, and not to forget the worlds of Luxury and Fashion. In Politics, Bill Clinton who reinvents himself. Elizabeth I appeared to have a Trickster character but Elizabeth II does not. Tony Blair probably does not although some caricaturists attempt to make him so. The late Princess of Wales seemed to have Trickster characteristics, as did Eva Peron. Some have suggested that Jesus Christ was a Trickster figure, obliging the Church to invent the Devil in contrast.

Politics abounds with Tricksters, supported by their modern trickster shaman – the ‘spin doctors’. In fact, some qualities of ‘tricksterishness’ are part of political charisma. We know they do not quite mean what they say, but are engaging nonetheless. Neither should we forget Thomas Mann’s Felix Krull, the Pied Piper of Hamelin, nor the figures in Alice in Wonderland, and Through the Looking Glass, nor of course Punch & Judy.

Trickster is Jung’s fourth archetype along with Mother, Rebirth, and Spirit. In his description of Trickster - ‘Der Göttliche Schelm’ or ‘Divine Joker’ - Jung (1972) could have been writing about modern branding and advertising, such

are the similarities between them and the psychology of the Trickster. As he points out:

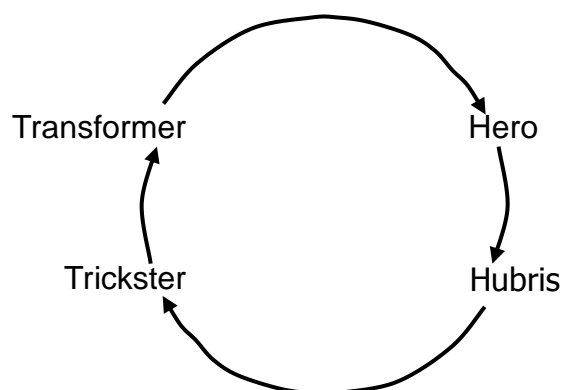
“So-called civilised man has forgotten the trickster...Outwardly people are more or less civilised, but inwardly they are still primitives. Something in man is profoundly disinclined to give up his beginnings, and something else believes it has long since got beyond all that”

The Trickster then represents the oppositions and contradictions of life, how we deceive ourselves that we are rational when in fact we are not. The Trickster is superior to mankind because it is superhuman, but inferior because it is irrational. The Trickster archetype is a powerful and instructive aspect of the collective unconscious. As Jung put it, "an old river bed in which the water still flows". It is not, as Freud would have said, a mere symptom of the 'distorted wishful fantasies of whole nations', but at the roots of human behaviour.

Other classics in the psychological and anthropological literature, apart from the original work of Baudelier (1918) and Radin (1956), are Kerényi (1976), Otto (1979), and Stein (1983).

The Trickster both creates heroes and causes their downfall. The ‘Hero myth’ exists in all cultures, and indeed modern westernised societies. Its essential characteristics are to portray the evolution of human consciousness, from its most primitive form (the Trickster), to the establishment of society (the Transformer), the emergence of divine figures (the Hero), and finally to the fall of man (Hubris). The Trickster figure contributes at all stages (see Figure 1):

Figure 1
THE TRICKSTER IN THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS



Powerful tales describe the Hero's rise and fall:

- There is typically a miraculous birth, usually from humble origins, with early signs of superhuman powers.
- Followed by rapid rise to power and prominence, and triumphant struggle against the forces of evil.
- Typically the Hero has the aid of a 'guardian' or 'magical spirit' who compensates for weaknesses and helps perform those tasks which cannot be done unaided. The Trickster is often this guide, magical and mischievous.
- But with all this success, the Hero is fallible to the sins of pride, or hubris, becomes over-confident, subsequently falling from grace. The hero is then betrayed by the very people that he came to save. Trickster is also at work here.
- The end is death at the hands of the people or self-sacrifice. Out of that comes a rebirth, and the cycle repeats itself. The Trickster never dies.

This description also befits the life cycles of brands. They too often come from humble origins, show early promise and begin to triumph over competition often with the aid of some special added ingredient or 'USP'; they too often over-reach or extend themselves, and are betrayed by their own management, only to die later. Hence the life cycle of brands. The history of marketing is littered with brands which were once heroes or tricksters of their time. In the United Kingdom, for example: Rinso detergent, Fry's chocolate, Strand cigarettes. Each market has its own graveyard of such fallen famous brands. The future will see more.

The difference between the ancient role of the Trickster and now is that the Trickster was a more overt part of human experience, a way of understanding and learning about the world. In the modern experience the Trickster is suppressed and overlaid by rationality. However, the stresses of modern life disturb this apparent orderly consciousness and the Trickster now regularly surfaces in different guises, of which one is branding and advertising.

The role of the Trickster in modern society is as follows:

- Much of our fantasy and emotion is repressed by rationality in the modern world, creating a sense of false confidence in our own power and control.
- The Trickster sends messages from our deepest selves to our conscious mind.
- We need the Trickster to express our inner selves and collective feelings, and in particular the mundanities, tragedies and joys of everyday life.
- The release of the Trickster is a necessary part of the human condition, and even more so in the modern, competitive and stressful world.

- The Trickster disturbs false confidence and stretches the boundaries of belief. Its functions are to test, create, and offer new visions.
- And, as in archaic form the modern Trickster too tells moral stories of the possible and the impossible, the desired and denied.

Since products and materialism have become the secular equivalent of belief, it is not surprising that the Trickster plays a role – an increasing one – in our relationship with the everyday world of consumption, branding and advertising.

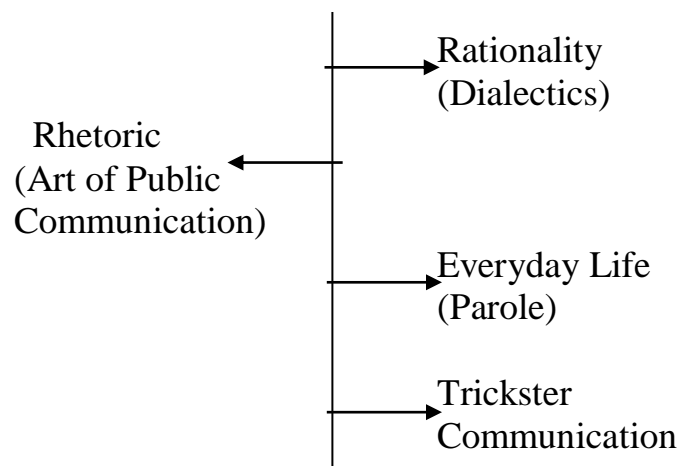
The Trickster is more than the ‘child’ in us, although the Trickster’s appetites resemble the creative, playful or naïve, tiresome child of transactional analysis. The Trickster is richer and deeper than the child, touching upon archetypal stages of human evolution. Nor is the Trickster endowed with the high culture of rhetoric, which demands civilised arts of eloquence in public communication. The Trickster uses more primitive rhetorical forms of persuasion like puns, tautologies, paradoxes, creating false similarities, differences and ambiguities (see Appendix 2). Nor is the Trickster like Plato’s ‘daimon’ guide (Hillman, 1998); the Trickster is more irresponsible than this. The Trickster stands apart from all of these in representing the sheer magic of self-deception.

The Trickster works at an older level of consciousness, hovering on the borders of conscious and unconscious. At a neuro-physical level, the Trickster is buried deep in the limbic system of the brain, that source of primitive, collective feelings, myths and archetypes, which confuses the cerebral cortex in the modern world.

TRICKSTER BRANDING AND ADVERTISING

In the main persuasive processes of branding and advertising the Trickster lurks low down the scale of logic, but is all the more persuasive because of that (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
TRICKSTER BRANDING AND ADVERTISING



That is not to say the Trickster will not use logic, or rhetoric, and certainly does if helpful to its aims. But Trickster persuasion is more mischievous. The Trickster plays with our minds, fantasy and destiny.

We all spend a great deal of time examining attitudes to branding and advertising, and consumers take a great deal out of advertising whether they are conscious of it or not. Advertising conveys information, but more important, images, feelings, and meanings about products, services, and brands. It is also evident that people will criticise advertising as exaggerated, childish, immoral, foolish or deceptive, particularly ‘treating us like idiots’. Middle class intellectualised consumer groups vigorously attack it out of fear of its influence and sorcery, ostensibly for social concern but privately because they cannot face the Trickster in themselves.

Yet there is a compulsion to watch TV commercials, which goes beyond what would otherwise be expected. Ads are registered, fantasised about, hummed, linger in memory even years after they have been taken off the air. So-called ‘bad’ ads – like those for washing powders – work even amongst people who reject them. Commercials are often judged superior to surrounding programmes. They are social and media discussion points (“have you seen the latest ad for ...?”).

Although research can often satisfactorily explain how and why a specific ad works, there is no universally agreed theory of advertising and in particular no satisfactory explanation of its overall fascination or the level of criticism it can attract. By invoking the Trickster one gets a glimpse into why people react as

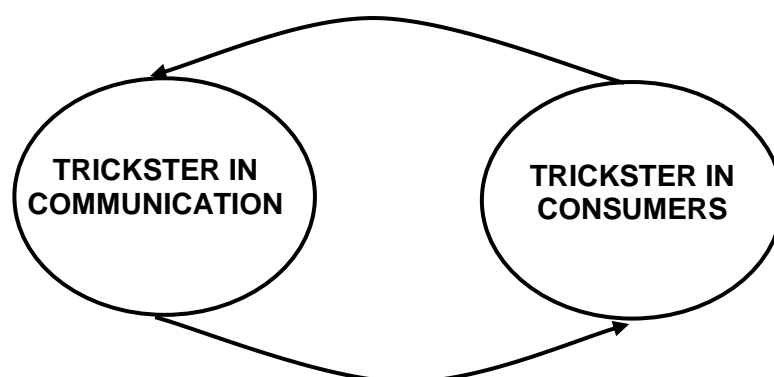
they do, and the exciting feeling that this particular archetype could help to provide a more adequate theory, if only the manifestations can be properly understood.

‘Trickster’ advertising works best as a mass level and in living form, and is powerful for specific audiences. The Trickster taps into our unconscious, and our playful, aggressive, feelings. The Trickster can do amazing things, promise the earth. Yet ‘he’ (it) is acknowledged as stupid, almost as if he has to be:

- People in commercials behave in extraordinary ways and this seems to be necessary for their effectiveness.
- The absurdity of many ads compared with what a sensible person should do is central to their appeal.
- The hypothesis is that viewers are unconsciously engaging with the ‘Trickster’ in communication, and the Trickster within themselves (see Figure 3).

Branding and advertising are expected to exaggerate, sing praises and to transform physical products into brand values. Where successful, they fascinate and compel. We ‘know’ we are being sold to, but suspend our judgement in order to be surprised, seduced and indeed duped. This sort of branding and advertising lures us in, inviting us to become part of the process, to become ‘accomplices to our own seduction’. This is the typical process by which the Trickster phenomenon works.

Figure 3
PROCESS OF THE TRICKSTER PHENOMENON



Otherwise, we judge branding and advertising artificially by logic and credibility, which is the opposite of how we use them. This is why there are so many criticisms of advertising research – pretesting and evaluation. They apply methods of ‘science’ which cannot ‘see’ the Trickster. Or, because of the

mindset in such tests, the Trickster elements are destroyed in favour of rational claims, which are often dull or bland, lacking persuasive power.

Another symptom of the 'Trickster's' manifestation lies in ad agency 'creatives'. They need to be and look different, to adopt idiosyncrasies, and to dissociate themselves from the rational world. Like Shaman of old, they engage in mysterious rituals to create and enchant. Their creative thoughts emerge from dark recesses, only 'recognised' when they appear. They respond strongly to competition, as does the Trickster. Pressure and deadlines force out creative ideas. They have an intense conviction they are right and they need an audience, but chiefly of their own kind, to praise and award. They resist the idea of control. They resist research for fear that it will strangle their creative thoughts.

They have a priestly quality about them, and having been fed with consumer research and marketing objectives will emerge with the 'creative executions' (rather like the Shaman or the Trickster himself) which we see in TV commercials. They need to keep their 'creative edge', and of course, large sums of money are devoted to supporting their creations. The most successful ads are those regarded as capable of stretching credulity in an emotional, motivating way, as do the best of the Trickster's exploits. As far as we can see, much of what they do is not deliberate but draws upon their own unconscious symbols and ideas.

TRICKSTER THEORY

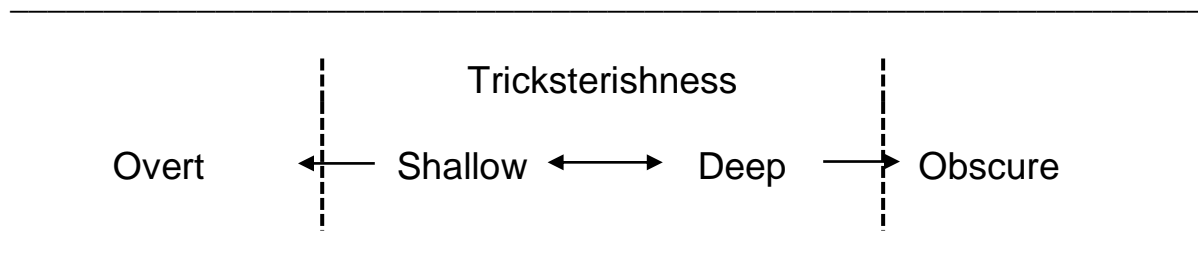
Trickster Theory as applied to modern branding and advertising is as follows:

1. *The Trickster transforms the ordinary product or 'stuff' into something extraordinary, a brand.* By 'brand' we mean the physical product is entwined with symbols, images and meanings so the two are indistinguishable. The real and the created world are as one.
2. *Its branding and advertising breaks taboos and conventions.* It has astonishing powers. The Trickster is capable of all things reason is not, as is advertising. The Trickster deliberately pushes, questions and extends the boundaries of logic and rationality.
3. *Trickster advertising fascinates and compels.* Our conscious selves know we're being sold to, but we also need to project, to get involved, be surprised, be attracted, to enjoy our irrational selves. To be, as we say, 'accomplices to our own seduction'.
4. *The Trickster frequently appears as the brand, in animal, cartoon, or exaggerated human form.*

5. *Trickster advertising is at one and the same time childish and adult, simple and complex, foolish and serious, exaggerated yet practical.* The Trickster is ironical and satirical, including satire on itself.
6. *The Trickster incorporates both 'good' and 'bad', the oppositions and conflicts of life.* In the 'good' role the brand as Trickster is saviour, hero and creator of life. In the 'bad' role the Trickster represents the enemies of the brand - boredom, ugliness, unhappiness, waste and meaninglessness.
7. *Overall, Trickster branding and advertising provides secret attractions and fascinations to the unconscious mind, which are enjoyable, compulsive, rudimentary and irrational to the conscious mind.* It connects with our deeper selves. Trickster brands and their advertisements enter us and we become part of them. They in turn become part of our collective culture.

In modern life, the Trickster is present in folklore, comic strips, politics, business and the arts, and contemporary marketing. In particular, the Trickster appears in modern film, cinema and TV, and their derivative the TV commercial. The filmic form and the use of visual-verbal devices are important modern tools of the Trickster, just as the visual image has become the dominant mode of communication and persuasion in today's society.

Figure 4
BRANDS OR ADS VARY IN DEGREE OF 'TRICKSTERISHNESS'.



Some ads operate at the level of the product, offering little beyond overt, conventional information about its functions and performance. There is little of the Trickster in this – maybe a touch of exaggeration here and there. These ads and the brands that go with them are essentially boring. They promote similar products which merge into one.

At the other extreme, the work of the Trickster can make advertising obscure and unrecognisable. Examples are the early 'Man with a Guinness' commercials which left consumers frustrated. The brand was unrecognisable to most. Some pop video forms have the same effect, although what is important is that consumers struggle to understand because they wish to.

Between these two (see Figure 4) the Trickster effect is at work in shallow and deep ways, the former being more transparent, and playful in transgressing conventions; the latter being more demanding and inevitably more unconscious. To give some examples:

- Pirelli and Carl Lewis challenging the laws of physics
- The Marlboro Man and his horse
- Kodak and the “kodakettes” the “thief of colours”
- Häagen-Dazs pure sex
- PG Tips Chimps
- Nike challenging the Devil
- Lipton Ice Tea with Cantona walking on water
- The Esso Tiger
- Ronald McDonald and McDonald’s
- The Colonel and Kentucky Fried Chicken
- Ferrero Rocher and the Ambassador’s Reception
- Folha de São Paulo and its anti-hero mouse
- Invicta, Adidas, Tacchini, Moschino, Diesel in Italy
- Hypo-bank and Audi lifestyles in Germany
- Orange telecommunications, ‘the future is bright, the future is Orange’
- Levi’s Flat Eric
- BBK - Chinese Trickster
- Dutch Scoot
- Sprite Italia
- Golden Wonder ‘Hari Kari’
- Birds Custard ‘Glup Glup’

From previous eras, the celebrated Apple Computers woman who broke 1984 conventions, the Bisto Kids, The Ovaltinies, Hofmeister Bear, and so on. The Trickster whilst essentially archetypal is also culturally dependent. Different cultures draw upon their own Trickster myths as we found in our early work on The Trickster in Finland and the Kalevala (Cooper, 1982).

In terms of filmic devices, the Trickster manipulates our minds by bringing elements into the foreground, marking, emphasising, stressing and contrasting, as a result manipulating visual and linguistic structures, to alter the meaning or significance of the information presented (Harris, 1981). ‘Foregrounding’ is common, for example in how photos are captured in gender terms. A good example is how the lens of the camera is changing. Traditionally, the male and female ‘gaze’ is very different (see Figure 5):

Figure 5
MALE GAZE VS. FEMALE GAZE

<i>Male Gaze</i>	<i>Female Gaze</i>
<p>Isolates the object as a ‘passive object’ to be ‘consumed’ by the viewer.</p> <p>Truncates and dissects and focuses on parts (of the female body).</p> <p>Obsessed with detail.</p>	<p>Takes a broader view.</p> <p>Shows the context and relationships.</p> <p>Reveals a ‘person’ beyond the image.</p> <p>The Viewer is part of the scene.</p>

The Trickster was characterised by male domination, treating female as object (‘thingification’ to use Sartre’s term), but more and more, the female gaze is assuming prominence at least in ‘liberated’ western advertising. In Asian markets according to one study over 90% of magazine ads were ‘Male Gaze’. The Trickster adapts to social change.

Specific Trickster devices include: enlarging pupils in female models to enhance sex appeal; showing frontal rather than side views to suggest approach; using tight close-ups to increase attention and involvement; or simply presenting products larger than life or deliberately miniaturised (cf. Tom Thumb).

The Trickster is also accomplished at ‘backgrounding’ by making it seem to disappear from conscious attention. Yet as we know the background or context play crucial parts in subliminal communication, working below thresholds of attention – the set, props, music – are all critical to creating mood, style and consumer involvement. These are the ‘silent’ Trickster persuaders.

The different media of advertising themselves encourage the Trickster:

- *Cinema advertising*. There is already a ‘detached-from-reality’ experience in the cinema for the Trickster to appear on screen and from within ourselves.
- *TV*. TV sets in the home are ‘friend’, ‘companion’, ‘in my living room’, which enables the Trickster to enter our lives, sometimes by stealth as our defences lower, and at other times by sheer entertainment.
- *Posters*. The Trickster is strikingly present, as he has to be to attract our attention through visual and verbal tricks. The Trickster is skilled at ‘penetrating the clutter’.

- *Magazines*. The mental involvement through reading and absorption allows the Trickster to emerge through the pages of ads.

In short, Trickster advertising treats the consumer as a complicit participant in the advertising process.

RESEARCHING THE TRICKSTER

The research issues are threefold: (i) to understand the Trickster in the brand; (ii) Trickster devices in advertising executions - casting, animation, irony, illusion, foregrounding, backgrounding, and plot; and (iii) how these degrees of 'Tricksterishness' interact to produce credulity, and seduction.

To identify 'The Trickster' in modern branding and advertising we need to access the complexities and subtleties of the consumer mind, and for advertising specifically to understand the form of modern filmic communication. Therefore we need to employ the processes of projection, identification and catharsis. This is an area where in-depth creative qualitative psychodynamic research has no equal. We need to note too that the Trickster can also appear in the research process (Cooper and Patterson, 2000).

This type of qualitative or motivational research stands in sharp contrast to the use of focus groups or quantitative pretesting. Focus groups have enormous value assembling opinion, positives and negatives, constructing overviews, language, and for identifying 'sound bites'. Quantitative pretesting provides necessary benchmarks to measure the apparent performance of advertising. But both avoid confronting the Trickster.

Here we are deliberately applying extensive and intensive psychological techniques in group (Extended Creativity Groups™) and individual interviewing to go deep into the consumer mind. For its external validity we draw upon successful case studies, and for its internal validity, psychodynamic knowledge of the Trickster phenomenon.

Our requirement is to tap into areas of the human mind which are normally inaccessible and incommunicable. Alternatively, we may use a more organic form in which the Trickster phenomenon is represented bordering the realms of consciousness and the collective unconscious. In all events, we need to look for symptoms of the Trickster in consumer responses (see Figure 6). This requires in-depth examination, but top-of-mind, spontaneous reactions often reveal much of what is going on at unconscious and collective unconscious levels.

Figure 6
LAYERS OF MIND (Cooper, 1987)

		<i>Layer</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Output</i>	
PUBLIC	COMMUNICABLE	ACCESSIBLE	Spontaneous	Simple questioning	Immediate, spontaneous. Top of mind needs.
			Reasoned, conventional	Asking Discussing	Justifications, explanations. Rational wants.
			Pre-conscious	Pressing Reminding	Detailed elaborations/ introspections.
PRIVATE	INCOMMUNICABLE	ACCESSIBLE	Concealed, personal	Sympathetic probing, empathy. Elicitation. Building trust.	Personal admissions, private wants.
			Intuitive imagination Fantasy	Play, drama, collage. Non-verbal processes.	Symbols, metaphors. Latent wants.
	INACCESSIBLE	Personal Unconscious Collective Unconscious	Projective approaches. Semiotic Analyses.	Repressed wishes. Hidden needs. Archetypal needs.	

To explore the Trickster specifically, particular methods employed are:

- The brand or brand communication is brought alive as a person. This is done in detail, using respondents' own spontaneous constructions and then presented with a set of standardised images. The rationale behind this is:
 - ❖ brands have primitive souls and multiple personalities;
 - ❖ consumers around the world project personalities onto brands, from which we can decipher the types of relationship consumers have with brands and their advertising.
- Cartoon Characterisation is used in which consumers 'play' with images to express their views and relationships with the brand or its communication.
- Brands and communication are then examined by the use of metaphors to explore the sensory powers of The Trickster. Metaphors are familiar as ways of understanding a brand and its advertising in terms of something else, e.g. colour, touch, taste, sound. Metaphors are fundamental to the creation of human understanding and meaning.
- The 'Hermetic' method then involves deconstructing the Trickster in similar ways to how the Trickster operates. Free-association data is analysed for conscious and unconscious responses to generate solutions that go beyond sheer appearances.

Sensory metaphors are used to identify how the Trickster creates and gives meaning and brand value through graphics and visual communication. Successful brands and ads are recognised by consumers through metaphors - however dimly - as having multiple meanings beyond the rational.

CONCLUSIONS

The result is a theory of branding and advertising based upon the archetypal Trickster. As we noted at the outset, the Trickster is alive and well in modern branding and advertising. The Trickster phenomenon is a major force for persuasion.

Now the Trickster is recognised, the main question is how to incorporate the phenomenon into management and brand strategy. We know that in spite of our rational defences we want to be sold to, to believe. The Trickster tells us that its form needs to be subtle, and in the modern world uses contemporary forms of visual and verbal communication to persuade and seduce.

Critical to this will be the shared understanding of The Trickster and its subtle mechanisms between research, brand management, and advertising agencies. We may rest assured that The Trickster itself will assist in that process!

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APPENDIX 1

EXAMPLES OF TRICKSTER MYTHOLOGY

1. Gluskap and Malsum

In North American Indian mythology (Abnaki), twin brothers. Gluskap - a creator god, culture hero, and trickster - killed his evil brother Malsum. Gluskap and Malsum discussed their birth while still in their mother's womb.

"I will be born as others are born," said Gluskap. But Malsum, being evil, said it was not proper that he should be born as others were. He wished to have an extraordinary birth. Gluskap was born first in the natural manner, but Malsum forced his way out of his mother's armpit, killing her as a result. The two brothers grew up together.

One day Malsum asked Gluskap how he would be killed since Gluskap, as well as Malsum, possessed a charmed life. Gluskap, remembering how Malsum had caused the death of their mother, told a lie.

"I can be killed by the stroke of owl's feathers," replied Gluskap.

One day Malsum decided he would kill his brother. He took his bow and arrow and shot Ko-ko-khas, the owl, and with one of his feathers struck Gluskap while he was asleep. Gluskap awoke suddenly and said it was not by an owl's feather that he would die but by a blow from a pine root.

The next day Malsum led Gluskap into the deep forest to hunt. After the hunt, while Gluskap slept, Malsum hit him on the head with a pine root. Gluskap awoke and in anger chased Malsum deeper into the woods. Gluskap then came to a brook and said to himself, "Malsum does not know, but only a flowering rush can kill me."

Beaver, who was hidden among the reeds, heard Gluskap, and rushed to Malsum to tell him the secret. In return for the secret Malsum promised to give Beaver whatever he wanted. When Beaver asked for wings like a pigeon, Malsum laughed at him, and Beaver left in anger. Beaver then went to Gluskap and told him what had happened. Gluskap took a large-footed fern and killed Malsum, driving his evil magic below the earth. Malsum then became an evil wolf.

With Malsum out of the way and evil underground, Gluskap created the world from the body of his dead mother. He then took his bow and arrows and shot at

ash trees, and people came out of the bark. Gluskap then made all of the animals and taught humankind the arts.

But people were not grateful to Gluskap. This saddened him until he could no longer endure it. One day he made a feast by the shore. All of the beasts came to it. When the feast was over he boarded a great canoe and left. The beasts could hear him sing, but his voice grew fainter as the canoe moved on. Then a deep silence fell on the animals. Until then they could all understand one another's language, but from that time they could not, so each fled to his home. One day Gluskap will return to restore the earth and make people and animals live together once more in peace and love.

2. Maui

In Polynesian mythology, great trickster and culture hero who snared the sun and brought fire to mankind but died while attempting to give man immortality.

Maui's father was Tama, the sky, and his mother was Taranga, who gave birth to him prematurely. When he was born, she wrapped him in a tuft of her hair and cast him into the surf, but a jellyfish surrounded the body of the young child, protecting him from any harm.

Tama saw the object floating in the ocean and came down to investigate. When he removed the jellyfish he found the baby and took him to his home in the sky, placing the boy on the roof of his house so that he would be warmed by the fire inside. After a short time Maui became restless and decided to go to earth to see his mother and brothers.

He entered the assembly hall while his family was attending a dance. Sitting behind his brothers, he waited for his mother, Taranga, to come and count her sons. When she reached Maui, she said he was not one of her children. But when the lad told her his story, she was convinced and said, "You are indeed my last born son."

She brought him home and let him sleep in her bed, which annoyed his brothers.

When Maui's father, Tama, saw his son, he was pleased and decided to perform a naming ceremony, which would make Maui sacred and would cleanse all impurities. After the ceremony it was discovered that some prayers had been omitted and that the gods would punish Maui because of the omission.

Maui is credited with setting the length of the day. Annoyed with the shortness of the day, Maui persuaded his brothers that they should capture the sun in a net and force the sun to slow down.

His brothers at first objected to his plan but later agreed. They made a noose, and Maui took his magic jawbone that he had procured from his grandmother Muri-ranga-whenuam. The brothers then travelled all night to the desert where the sun rises and hid themselves. Maui made a large circle with a length of rope.

Maui said to his brothers, “Keep yourselves hidden, and do not show yourselves to the sun; if you do you will frighten him. Wait patiently until his head and forelegs are well into the snare, then I will shout. You haul away as hard as you can on both ends of the rope, and I will rush out and beat him until he is nearly dead. And, my brothers, do not let him move you to pity with his shrieks and screams”.

When the sun was caught, Maui beat him until he began to move at a slower pace, thus setting the length of the day.

Maui also captured fire for mankind. He went to the underworld and asked Mahu’ike for some fire with which to cook. She (in some accounts a male) gave him one of her fingernails, which contained fire. He later returned to her and said the fire had gone out, he needed another fingernail, which she gave him. This went on until the goddess was left with only one toenail, she then realised what Maui was up to. She threw her last toenail to the ground, and it immediately burst into flame. Maui then transformed himself into an eagle in order to escape, but his wings were singed. Mahu’ike saved some of the flames by throwing them into the treetops. To this day men make fire by rubbing two sticks together.

Maui next tried to obtain immortality. He set off with some birds to find Hina-nui-te-po (great goddess of the night), the goddess who ruled the dead. When he arrived in the underworld, he found her asleep.

“My little friends,” he said to the birds, “when you see me enter the body of this old chieftainess, be careful not to laugh. If you do, she will awaken and kill me. But when you see me coming out of her mouth, you can laugh, and I will live and Hina-nui-te-po will die”.

Maui took off his clothes and entered the goddess through her vagina. When the birds saw his feet sticking out of the goddess’s vagina, they almost burst into laughter. Once wagtail could not contain himself and let out a laugh, which

awoke Hina-nui-te-po, who crushed Maui inside herself. So Maui failed to achieve immortality for humankind.

3. Olifat

In Micronesian mythology, trickster and culture hero, son of a mortal woman and the Sky God Luk (Lukelong).

Olifat was born from his mother's head when she pulled a twist of coconut leaf rib that was tied around a lock of her hair. He was no sooner born than he began to run about. Luk told his wife that the boy was never to drink from a coconut with a hole bored at its top.

But one day Olifat did just that. As he tipped back his head to get the last drop of juice, he saw his father in the sky. Immediately, he decided to visit his father's home. Riding on a column of smoke that workmen were building a Farmal, or house, for the spirits of the dead. Though his father recognised him, we did not let the workmen know who the boy was. The workmen decided to sacrifice Olifat to ensure the foundations of the house.

They had planned to put him in a hole and then jam the house post on top of him. But Olifat knew their plans. While the hole was being dug, he made a hollow to one side of it at the bottom. When the men threw him in, he climbed into the side hole as the post was pushed down. With the help of some termites, Olifat made his way to the top of the pole and shouted, almost frightening the men to death. After that he went on various adventures, many of which concerned seducing relatives' wives.

Once he turned himself into a mosquito so that he could be swallowed by his brother's wife in her drinking water in order to father a son with her. In a more beneficent role Olifat sent a bird down to earth with fire in its beak. The fire was placed in different trees so that men might learn to obtain fire from rubbing sticks together.

4. Susano

Susano means swift-impetuous male, the impetuous god. In Japanese Shinto mythology, storm god, brother of the sun goddess Amaterasu. He was born from the nose of the primeval creator god Izanagi.

Susano is both good and evil in Japanese mythology, often displaying the traits of a trickster. After he had driven his sister Amaterasu to hide in a cave, thereby plunging the world into darkness, he was exiled by the gods from the

Plain of Heaven to earth. In the Kojiki (records of ancient matters) his subsequent fate is told. He arrived at the river Hi in Izumo, where he saw some chopsticks floating down the stream. He thought, therefore, that there must be people above. Proceeding upstream in search of them, he discovered an old man and woman with a young girl between them. They were crying. He asked who they were.

“I am an earth spirit,” the old man said, “and my name is Foot-Stroking Elder. My wife’s name is Hand-stroking Elder. And this is our daughter whose name is Mistress Head Comb.”

Susano then asked, “And what is the cause of the weeping?”

“Once we had eight daughters, “ the old man said, “but there is an eight-forked serpent that comes each year and eats one. His time has come round again. That is why we weep”.

“What is the serpent’s form?” Susano asked.

“Its eyes are as red as the winter cherry. It has one body with eight heads and tails. On that body moss grows, and conifers. Its length extends over eight valleys and eight hills, and if one looks at the belly, it is constantly bloody and inflamed.”

Then, looking at the girl, Susano asked, “Your daughter, will you give her to me? The old man replied, “With reverence. However, I do not know your name.” I am the elder brother of the goddess Amaterasu, and I descended here from heaven.” “That being so, with reverence, she is yours,” the old man replied.

Susano took the girl at once, changed her into multitudinously close-toothed comb and placed it in his hair.

“Distil a brew of eightfold refined liquor, he told the old couple. “Also, make a fence round about, and in that fence let there be eight gates; at each gate let there be eight platforms and on each platform a liquor and wait.”

They did as they were told. The eight-forked serpent came at the appointed time and dipped a head into each vat. Then, as the dragon became drunk, every one of its heads lay down to sleep. Susano drew his sword and cut the monster into pieces.

5. Winnebago Trickster

After that he walked down a slope and finally came to a lake. On the opposite side he saw a number of women swimming, the chief's daughter and her friends. 'Now', exclaimed Trickster, 'is the opportune time: now I am going to have intercourse'. There upon he took his penis out of the box and addressed it. 'My younger brother, you are going after the chief's daughter. Pass her friends, but see that you lodge squarely in her, the chief's daughter.

Thus speaking he dispatched it. It went sliding on the surface of the water. 'Younger brother, come back come back! You will scare them away if you approach in that manner!'

So he pulled the penis back, tied a stone around its neck, and sent it out again. This time it dropped to the bottom of the lake. Again he pulled it back, took another stone, smaller in size, and attached it to its neck. Soon he sent it forth again. It slid along the water, creating waves as it passed along. 'Brother, come back, come back! You will drive the women away if you create waves like that!'

So he tried a fourth time. This time he got a stone, just the right size and just the right weight, and attached it to its neck. When he dispatched it, this time it went directly towards the designated place.

It passed and just barely touched the friends of the chief's daughter. They saw it and cried out, 'come out of the water, quick!'. The chief's daughter was the last one on the bank and could not get away, so the penis lodged squarely in her. (The Trickster, P. Radin)

6. Winnebago Trickster

As he was engaged in this cleansing he happened to look in the water and much to his surprise he saw many plums there. He surveyed them very carefully and then dived down into the water to eat some. But only small stones did he bring back in his hands.

Again he dived into the water. But this time he knocked himself unconscious against a rock at the bottom.

After a while he floated up and gradually came to. He was lying on water, flat on his back, when he came to and, as he opened his eyes, there on the top of the bank saw many plums. What he had seen in the water was only reflection.

Then he realised what he had done. ‘Oh my, what a stupid fellow I must be! I should have recognised this. Here I have caused myself a great deal of pain.
(The Trickster, P. Radin)

7. Medieval

“In the very midst of divine service masqueraders with grotesque faces disguised as women, lions and mummers, performed their dances, sang indecent songs in the choir, ate their greasy food from a corner of the altar near the priest celebrating mass, got out their games of dice, burned a stinking incense made of old shoe leather and ran and hopped about all over the church.”

(Du Cange, *Gloss. Med. Et Inf. Lat.*, 1733, S.V. Kalendae, p.1666 – for ‘church’ read reason, ‘priest’ ego, and all the other symbols of rationality: for the ‘masqueraders’ read the unconscious shadow for all of us).

Fool’s Pope (Fatuorum Papam) and Ass’s Festival (Festum Asinorum). The congregation brays, the more ridiculous, the more it was celebrated.
Pleasurable blasphemy.

APPENDIX 2: RHETORICAL PROCESSES

<i>Transformations</i>	<i>Additions</i>	<i>Suppression</i>	<i>Substitution</i>	<i>Exchange</i>
<p><i>IDENTITY</i> (A → A)</p>	<p><i>Simple repetition of brand/words/graphics</i></p>	<p><i>Omission/Ellipsis</i> (images implied)</p>	<p><i>Hyperbole</i> (exaggeration, accent, emphasis - or understatement)</p>	<p><i>Reversal/Inversion</i> (of the normal order - fantasy)</p>
<p><i>SIMILARITY</i> (A → B)</p>	<p><i>Rhyme Simile</i> (X is like ...)</p>	<p><i>Circumlocution</i> (part is missed out, just reflections)</p>	<p><i>Allusion/Metaphor</i> (transforming meanings from one context to another)</p>	<p><i>Hendiadys</i> (X and Y for emphasis) <i>Homology</i> (similar themes put together)</p>
<p><i>DIFFERENCE</i> (A → B)</p>	<p><i>Accumulation</i> (adding different elements - abundance/disorder)</p>	<p><i>Suspension/Digression</i> (holding back messages/2 part ads)</p>	<p><i>Metonymy</i> (substitution of a different element which echoes the product) <i>Synecdoche</i></p>	<p><i>Asyndeton</i> (disconnected items - to focus on specifics)</p>
<p><i>OPPOSITION</i> (A ⇄ B)</p>	<p><i>Zeugma</i> (same idea in different places/time) <i>Antithesis</i> (juxtaposition of opposites)</p>	<p><i>Dubitation</i> (opposed forms) <i>Reticence</i> (censorship of name/label/etc.)</p>	<p><i>Periphrasis</i> (avoiding the issue) <i>Euphemism/Epithet</i> (for sensitive subjects)</p>	<p><i>Anacoluthon</i> (the rules of visual/verbal grammar are contravened to create the impossible) <i>Chiasmus</i> (abnormal relationships)</p>
<p><i>FALSE SIMILARITIES/ DIFFERENCES/ AMBIGUITIES</i> (A → B)</p>	<p><i>Antanaclasis</i> (similarities conceal real differences) <i>Paradox</i> (differences conceal real similarities - solving problems)</p>	<p><i>Tautology</i> <i>Preterition</i> (only summary mention - secrets)</p>	<p><i>Pun</i> (play on words - substituting one meaning for another) <i>Antiphrasis</i> (substituting similarities for differences)</p>	<p><i>Antimetabole</i> (converted double meanings) <i>Antilogy</i> (reverse of paradox, bringing together contradictions)</p>

